

From: Eric Solorio
To: Docket Optical System
Date: 1/15/2010 3:54 PM
Subject: Fwd: RSPP Docket # 09-AFC-9

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>>> "Margaret Luebs" <maluebs@forethought.net> 1/15/2010 3:39 PM >>>
January 15, 2010

California Energy Commission
Attention: Eric K. Solorio, Project Manager
1516 Ninth Street, MS-15
Sacramento CA 95814-5512

RE: Ridgecrest Solar Power Project (RSPP - Docket Number: 09-AFC-9)

Mr. Solorio and Commissioners:

I am writing to comment on the Ridgecrest Solar Power Project (RSPP). I am very much in favor of power generation from renewable energy sources and am glad that the State of California is supporting projects of this sort.

However, I feel strongly that the site chosen for this particular project is the wrong one. Although Solar Millennium claims (in literature sent to Ridgecrest residents) that the land is "disturbed" and that "mitigation" will be performed, in fact these statements are very misleading. The land was used for grazing at some time in the past, but it has been successfully rehabilitated. It has been protected by the BLM and the results are impressive. Essentially it is now once again pristine desert. It is home to a large number of desert tortoises and other desert animals such as the Mojave ground squirrel. Relocating these animals would be nearly impossible. Tortoises seldom survive relocation and there are fewer and fewer sites available for relocation. In fact, this site would be a very good place to relocate tortoises from other areas.

I have been told that the BLM, and/or Fish & Wildlife did not conduct complete surveys in support of the West Mojave Plan some years back. If this site had been surveyed correctly it would have been off limits to development and Solar Millennium would never have proposed using it. The fact that it was not off limits has caused a lot of needless expense and wasted time by Solar Millennium and the California Energy Commission. However, the endangered desert tortoise must not pay the price for BLM's mistakes.

It seems particularly ironic that such a wonderful tortoise habitat has been chosen for the project, because there are many areas in the vicinity that are truly "disturbed." For example, there are fallow alfalfa fields

in Fremont valley around Cantil, or those north of Inyokern, that would be much better sites. I strongly suggest that this project not be approved and that Solar Millennium be encouraged to explore one of these other nearby sites instead.

Sincerely,

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