

RE: Ridgecrest: Solar Millennium Proposal:

"Follow-up" correspondence to the Dave Maggie e-mail sent: on 21 January, 2010.

24 January, 2010

California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission &
Environmental Protection Division
ATTENTION: Eric K. Solorio, Project Manager

DOCKET	
09-AFC-9	
DATE	JAN 24 2010
RECD.	FEB 02 2010

Dear Mr. Solorio

Firstly, I wish to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share my comments and concerns.

The following comments, I would like to add...

My husband and I are "Residents of the Indian Wells Valley", and are "very supportive" of certain forms of renewable energy, and in fact (at various times during our lives), have lived happily, and comfortably "off-the-grid". In the near-future, we plan on incorporating the use of solar power, inter-connected to grid-utility power to service our residence.

The harnessing of solar energy by way of "photovoltaic panels" for gaining sun-generated electricity, and for water heating purposes, is at the top of the list as far as being "clean and green" goes. Particularly when it comes to rooftop-mounted, or ground-[pole]-mounted solar panels, that are situated-on, and service-only, Individual: residences, multi-housing complexes, commercial businesses, plus government, school, church, public, city, ... (real) properties.

A solar power [photovoltaic] system on a utility-connected home, business, etc., can both buy power from the utility (company) when needed, and sell power to the utility (company) when there is a surplus produced. This truly is a "clean and green" renewable energy method, (for already-existing urban areas, large or small), and does not create any "new" physical footprint on the land, nor does it need water, or liquid propane, (or natural) gas for basic operations.

With that been said, here is a (slightly-revised/corrected) copy of the letter which was e-mailed to you, Mr. Eric Solorio, (as well as a hand-delivered copy taken to the local B.L.M. Field Office), before the 21 January, 2010 deadline.

Thankyou again.

Sincerely, Maggie Gire

P.O. Box 880
Ridgecrest, CA
93556-0880

Subject: Ridgecrest: Solar Millennium Proposal

January 21, 2010

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

Dear Mr. Solorio

After spending much time researching, reviewing, observing, and making personal inquiries...I find myself more-than-compelled to share the following comments and concerns...

Please note: For future reference purposes....when referring to "Residents"..... I am referring to the general (public) population Residents -of the Indian Wells Valley only, and am excluding the inclusion of any of the local business community, City /and or/ Gov. Agencies, as well as any other private interest groups that would most likely gain monetarily (in some form, or another).....from Solar Millennium's presence.

There is a lot of confusion among Residents of the Indian Wells Valley, and understandably so, since there has NOT been much in the way of readily- available, (supplied to "the public"), accurately-detailed, non-biased, factual information.

Speaking about information (pertaining to Solar Millennium's proposal) that is supposed to be available to "the public".....is an "Environmental Impact Statement", thoroughly done by The B.L.M., and then made accessible to us Residents.

As I was saying, so many Residents are confused about Solar Millennium's "Ridgecrest Solar Power Project" Proposal, and infact believe that Solar Millennium's intention is to supply the Ridgecrest area with (Clean & Green) Solar Energy Power, as well as the offer of lots and lots of jobs for local Residents.

Well this sounds too good to be true, and it is (too good to be true)..

For one thing, Solar Millennium is NOT supplying the Ridgecrest area with Solar Power !

And then there is 'their' (estimated) needs for daily, operational usage of: Large consumptions (in gallons): of L.P. Gas, which "they" propose to have trucked in, and (not to forget) the enormous volumes (in gallons) of water that is needed, "potable" water which would come from our Indian Wells Valley's groundwater supplies.

It is sounding less and less...like a "Clean & Green" way to obtain "Renewable Solar Energy" !

And as far as the actual number of potential jobs the locals might obtain, will probably not be any where near as numerous....as optimistically anticipated, and taking into account that it is common

around here....to have the large, out-of-town construction companies, and their crews...come to Ridgecrest to do the work.

Regardless of how many (possible) employment positions locals could gain (on a temporary, or full-time basis), it still does not out-weigh, or diminish what we....as the general population Residents of The Indian Wells Valley could lose....IF - Solar Millennium's Proposed "Ridgecrest Solar Power Project"....was given approval..

(NATIVE) GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES:

Whether it is our "potable" water supplies, or even our "brackish" water supplies: (which, if need be in the future could be treated by reverse-osmosis to become "potable"), both are invaluable, and as documented and well-known in this valley... our native groundwater is NOT replenishing.

With this knowledge, (why should we and) why would we, Residents willingly allow Solar Millennium access to our ever-decreasing native groundwater supplies....!?!

After looking over some of Solar Millennium's estimations on Water Usage, particularly when it comes to "Dust Control" and "Washing the Solar Mirrors", their estimations look to be "unrealistically low".

"Dust" is an ongoing, endlessly-perpetuating problem in the Indian Wells Valley, particularly when the desert ground is constantly disturbed, (by being driven on, ...for example), plus this desert area's natural hot, dry climate, and long-term state of drought, along with wind.....can create, and move "the dust". And it does !

"Dust Control" would be more than a full-time job, which Solar Millennium would not get the upperhand on, although they would probably use massive volumes of water trying to achieve that goal.

HEALTH CONCERNS:

On account of the disturbed desert ground, and "the dust" that develops because of it, (and then blows in the wind...), the Ridgecrest/ Indian Wells Valley has numerous respiratory/ bronchial/ lung, ...ailments.

One of these ailments is: Valley Fever (Coccidioidomycosis). Valley Fever is a soil-dwelling fungi-which once air-borne, (and if wind-driven) can travel a significant distance.

Our prevailing winds, place the City of Ridgecrest, and The China Lake Weapons Center -directly downwind from Solar Millennium's proposed site.

The CDC, California Department of Health Services, among other agencies, and medical professionals that have been studying, and documenting Valley Fever and its recent (and notable) increase in reported cases, all seem to agree that this increase (in certain Desert areas) seems to be related to disturbance of desert land due to new construction / scaping the ground, etc.

Valley Fever can, and does infect humans, and animals, and in severe cases, it can be fatal.

CULTURAL CONCERNS:

El Paso Wash, and vicinity, (and Black Mountain), are rich in Native American History. This History is more than evident by "Burrial sites", and other "Archaeological sites" found throughout the region. Not only is this area Historical, and Spiritual, but is considered a Sacred place by local Native Americans..

The importance of this "Sacred Land"...should be Acknowledged, Respected, and Protected as such !

DARK SKIES:

As I recall from the first Ridgecrest meeting held at City Hall, (on December 15, 2009), you Mr. Solorio, were telling all of us present..... about your driving into Ridgecrest (the night before the meeting)...and your personal observance of....just how dark our "Dark Skies" were.

As it stands at present, we already experience (some) nighttime "Light Pollution" (most likely coming from Apple Valley/ Adlanto/ Victorville, California, ...and from Las Vegas, Nevada). Fortunately this above-mentioned "Light Pollution" has not seriously interfered with being able to experience our area's "Dark Skies".

IMPORTANT TO NOTE: If we can, (and we do), have nighttime "Light Pollution" coming from as far away as the above-mentioned locations, it certainly is NOT unreasonable to think that Solar Millennium (and its massive, far-reaching complex) would definately have a detrimental effect in diminishing, if not "seriously" diminishing....the ability to view our "Dark Skies", regardless of Solar Millennium's proposal of: "...using hooded light fixtures - to minimize nighttime glare - in deference to "Dark Skies" initiatives that strive to protect views of night skies..."

People, including the Residents of the Indian Wells Valley...are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of "protecting" our community-accessible "Dark Skies", (which are becoming more and more scarce, and threatened).

IMPORTANT:

Solar Millennium's Project (site).....Proposal..... totals an aproximate: 3,920 acres of B..L.M. land.

Thousands of B.L..M. acres mentioned-above, have NOT been previously disturbed, and are infact, undeveloped, "Pristine Desert Land", which is "Prime Desert Tortoise Habitat", and an important connectivity breeding area, and "Habitat for Mojave Ground Squirrel", as well as a self-chosen Habitat area for the rest of the many, many wildlife species, (endangered, rare, or not), which call this area of the desert...HOME !

And, El Paso Wash (Sacred Native American Grounds) are also found within this area, as well as our "Dark Skies".

IF- Solar Millennium were allowed the use of this very special, thriving, precious, and environmentally-fragile section of Desert,.....wildlife, and "proctected" wildlife, along with native vegetation, washes, streambeds, animal movement corridors, and the delicate eco-systems, and so much more, would be forever changed, and in time, would be lost.

RELOCATION / TRANS-LOCATION- OPTIONS
of "PROTECTED", and "NON-PROTECTED"
WILDLIFE SPECIES :

Since relocating "Desert Tortoise" has not had a good track record, as far as relocation success rates/ statistics go,and the fact that the relocation of the "Mojave Ground Squirrel" is virtually an impossibility," ...since they are physically-tied to the area...", the logical solution, and in keeping with the best interest of the "Protected" Desert Tortoise, and the "Protected" Mojave Ground Squirrel" in mind, would be - to leave them undisturbed, therefore "protecting" them in their self-chosen habitats... Habitats where they rightfully belong !

IF - decisions were made in favor of Solar Millennium's Proposal, and "attempts" at wildlife relocation was the chosen option, (although in actuality it is a non-option), allowing these Government-sanctioned "relocation attempts" to take place, would be a serious crime (and on so many levels)," against nature", ... and so-called "protected" nature, at that !

Thinking about the fragility and vulnerability of so many things that could, (and would), very well be placed in the path of Jeopardy, (depending upon an all-important decision that is to be made), makes me reiterate once again....that we, "Residents of the Indian Wells Valley" would stand to lose.....way more, than we could ever possibly gain.....from having Solar Millennium come into "our" desert valley.

Signed, Maggie Gire

P.O.. Box 880, Ridgecrest, CA, 93556-0880

Cc.. B.L.M.. Ridgecrest Field Office
Cc. B.L.M. State Office
Cc. California Fish and Game Department
Cc. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
Cc. Nuuicunni Indian Cultural Center
Cc. Kern County Water Resources Board
Cc.. Lahonton Water District
Cc. Cerro Coso Community College
Cc. Creg Peterson: Kern County Supervisor Assistant
Cc. Kern County Planning Department
Cc.. Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce
Cc. Inyokern Chamber of Commerce