

City of Ridgecrest



DOCKET

09-AFC-9

DATE _____

RECD. MAY 24 2010

100 west California Avenue – Ridgecrest, CA 93555-4054

Dear Mr. Solorio,

I am writing this e-mail in regards to the Solar Millennium project based just outside of Ridgecrest California. I am specifically writing about the possible impact the project may have on the Mojave ground squirrels.

I have learned that thus far there has been no evidence of the Mojave ground squirrel inhabiting the area in question. I also understand that there is concern that the project may affect the migration of the Mojave ground squirrels between the north and south. If the information that I have obtained is correct, it seems that the narrowest point between the north and south solar fields of the project is about ¼ mile. If this is indeed true approximately 2000 3" wide Mojave ground squirrels could travel side by side through the narrowest point of the project. Obviously we have Mojave ground squirrels living to the north and south of our city as well as amongst us in the city limits. This tells me weather we are here or not they find a way to pass through our city to reach their destination safely.

As a planning commissioner for the city of Ridgecrest the Mojave ground squirrel issue comes up on a regular basis. In my opinion if the developer is willing to take on the responsibility and properly execute the removal and replacing of the Mojave ground squirrels to an appropriate safe area, it is a win win situation. It is also my opinion that Solar Millennium has demonstrated the willingness to do just that.

It does not seem to me that fencing or structures in the proposed project area will significantly impact the connectivity of the Mojave ground squirrel populations that exist to the north and south. I am always for protecting our wildlife when necessary. In this particular case I do not see the need to delay this project for this valid, yet minor issue.

Very respectfully,

Jason Patin
Planning commissioner
City of Ridgecrest, CA

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Phone (760) 499-5000