

# Memorandum

Date: September 30, 2010

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To: James D. Boyd, Vice Chair and Presiding Member  
Anthony Eggert, Commissioner and Associate Member

From: **California Energy Commission** – Eric K. Solorio, *Project Manager*  
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<b>DOCKET</b>
<b>09-AFC-9</b>
DATE <u>SEP 30 2010</u>
RECD. <u>SEP 30 2010</u>

Subject: **Staff's Status Report #4 for the Ridgecrest Solar Power Project (09-AFC-9)**

Staff respectfully submits this Status Report #4 for consideration by the Committee.

## Recent Activities

On September 9, 2010, staff held a public workshop at the Energy Commission to discuss the applicant's proposed Mohave Ground Squirrel (MGS) habitat connectivity study. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) participated in the workshop together with most of the interveners. Participating staff of the Commission also included the Terrestrial Resources Lead for a similar, yet non-duplicative, proposed research project, "Potential Habitat Modeling, Landscape Genetics and Habitat Connectivity for the Mohave Ground Squirrel". This research is being proposed by the Commission's Public Interest Energy Research (PIER) Program and is awaiting approval at an upcoming Business Meeting.

During the workshop the applicant introduced a new consultant, Dr. Fraser Shilling, who is a habitat connectivity expert and researcher at the University of California at Davis. Dr. Shilling and Dr. Philip Leitner presented and described an approach to scoping and conducting the proposed MGS study. Staff, agencies and the interveners commented on various aspects of the proposal and engaged in productive dialogue with the applicant. The workshop resulted in the applicant agreeing to develop a Study Plan to submit to staff, BLM, FWS, CDFG and the interveners for comment, which will be provided in a follow up workshop.

## Future Workshops

Staff anticipates receiving the Study Plan by October 15, 2010. Staff will then notice a workshop for the last week of October, 2010 to provide feedback, as noted above. Staff expects to hold at least one additional workshop in November to provide feedback on the likely revisions that will be made to the Study Plan after the October workshop.

## Noteworthy Observation

The similar MGS habitat study being proposed by PIER would have a nearly identical timeline, also utilize Dr. Leitner as a key expert and generally benefit from and complement the efforts of the applicant's MGS habitat study. However, the PIER study has a much broader, range-wide scope (20-50 km buffer around currently known range), is focused on potential habitat modeling and landscape genetics using existing data and

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does not involve field work. The applicant's study is focused on field work, trapping, genetic testing and regional data gathering from an area up to 10 miles in and around the project site. This field data will also be used in computer modeling of MGS habitat and movement corridors.



**BEFORE THE ENERGY RESOURCES CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
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**APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION  
For the *RIDGECREST SOLAR  
POWER PROJECT***

**Docket No. 09-AFC-9**

**PROOF OF SERVICE  
(Revised 7/9/2010)**

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DECLARATION OF SERVICE

I, Sabrina Savala, declare that on, September 30, 2010 I served and filed copies of the attached **Staff's Status Report # 4**. The original document, filed with the Docket Unit, is accompanied by a copy of the most recent Proof of Service list, located on the web page for this project at: [http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/solar\_millennium\_ridgecrest].

The document has been sent to both the other parties in this proceeding (as shown on the Proof of Service list) and to the Commission's Docket Unit, in the following manner:

*(Check all that Apply)*

**For service to all other parties:**

sent electronically to all email addresses on the Proof of Service list;

by personal delivery;

by delivering on this date, for mailing with the United States Postal Service with first-class postage thereon fully prepaid, to the name and address of the person served, for mailing that same day in the ordinary course of business; that the envelope was sealed and placed for collection and mailing on that date to those addresses **NOT** marked "email preferred."

**AND**

**For filing with the Energy Commission:**

sending an original paper copy and one electronic copy, mailed and emailed respectively, to the address below (preferred method);

**OR**

depositing in the mail an original and 12 paper copies, as follows:

**CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION**

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I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct, that I am employed in the county where this mailing occurred, and that I am over the age of 18 years and not a party to the proceeding.

Original Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Sabrina Savala