

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

REPORT OF CONVERSATION Page 1 of 1

DOCKET
11-AFC-2
DATE DEC 15 2011
RECD. DEC 15 2011



Siting, Transportation, and Environmental Protection Division

FILE: 11-AFC-2

PROJECT TITLE: Hidden Hills SEGS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Email	<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Location:	
NAME: Mike Monasmith	DATE: 12/15/11	TIME:
WITH: Brad Hardenbrook, Nevada Department of Wildlife		
SUBJECT: HHSEGS -- water		

To:
Mike Monasmith, Energy Commission Senior Project Mgr
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5112
Mike.Monasmith@energy.state.ca.us

Dear Mr. Monasmith,

I understand the comment deadline on the AFC for the proposed Hidden Hills Solar Energy Generation System (HHSEGS) has lapsed. Early on there was some confusion on my part in discriminating between the two projects until fairly recently. Notwithstanding, groundwater drawdown in the Pahrump Valley has been a concern and as you may be aware that in the past water diversions and groundwater drawdown for a variety of uses led to extirpation of the now Federally listed as Endangered Pahrump Poolfish from its endemic habitat by the late 1970's and the extinction of two other subspecies of this fish native only to Pahrump Valley. Hopefully, the present operations need of 140 ac ft yr of water by the HHSEGS will not result in further lowering of the water table in the greater Pahrump Valley adversely affecting remaining springs or the future of locally extant Mesquite/Catclaw Acacia stands. These areas literally provide oases for a variety of wildlife, whether resident or migrant. The Mesquite/Catclaw Acacia stringers and galleries (aka bosques) support wildlife of conservation priority in Nevada, most notably the phainopepla which has an intimate ecological relationship with mature mesquite and catclaw acacia parasitized by mistletoe. Should an adverse drawdown scenario result, it would not likely be observable for many years. The Nevada Department of Wildlife does not have studies or other data quantifying or predictably demonstrating that groundwater drawdown below existing levels would cause local ecological degradation or collapse; however, a request is made that effective, meaningful water draw monitoring and mitigation for such an event is woven into stipulations of the AFC or related mitigation instruments.

For your files, please find the attached pdf file containing the Nevada Department of Wildlife's EIS scoping comments to the BLM regarding the Valley Electric Association's proposed Hidden Hills Transmission project.

Sincerely,

Brad

D. Bradford Hardenbrook
Supervisory Habitat Biologist
Southern Region
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CC: Carol Watson, Staff Biologist Mike Conway, Staff Hydrologist/Geologist Chris Davis, Siting Office Manager Dick Ratliff, Staff Counsel	Prepared by: Mike Monasmith, Project Manager
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