

La Cuna de Aztlan Sacred Sites Protection Circle

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February 1, 2012

This letter is in reference to our opposition regarding the Rio Mesa Solar Electric Generating Facility

Our non-profit La Cuna de Aztlan Sacred Sites Protection Circle is a Native American organization which mission is to protect and preserve sacred indigenous sites that are located along the Colorado River. Our organization has an MOU with the BLM to be guardians of these sacred sites that begin in Spirit Mountain (North of Laughlin, NV) and are centered in the Palo Verde/Parker Valleys, down to the Gulf of California (South). These sites include the world famous Blythe Giant Intaglios, Kokopilli, Cicimiltl, El Tosco, and Bouse Fisherman Geoglyphs as well as over 300 other geoglyphs (Intaglios), thousands of petroglyphs, hundreds of pictographs and mountain images.

The 5,750 acre BrightSource Rio Mesa Solar Project (located 13-miles southwest of Blythe, California) is proposed to be built at the base of the sacred Mule Mountains also known as "Calli" for the Uto-Aztec and "Hamock-Avi" for the Mojave/Hokan linguistic families.

Calli means "Earth/House" and its glyph is on the Aztec Sun Stone Calendar with the 20-day glyphs. The origin of the word "California" derives from "Calli-Fornax" meaning "The Hot House." In the Aztec cosmic tradition when the body of a person dies they first go to "Calli." There at Calli, "The Great Spirit Cicimiltl" takes the spirit to one of the four final resting places all based on how the person died and how they lived during their life. In the beginning of the 19th century, the Mule Mountains were referred to as the Upside-down Mountains and as the "Molcajate Mountains" because of their 3-peaks.

Ron Van Fleet, a Mojave Elder descendent of the last Traditional Mojave Chief Peter Lambert, explains that Mastumho, with his magic wand, stirred the contents of a three-legged pot, or molcajete. He threw the contents behind him, thus creating the Milky Way, the entire universe, water, and air. When he was finished, he placed the empty pot upside down on earth, with the three legs up, which created the three peaks of "Hamock-Avi," the Mule Mountains (15-miles southwest of Blythe, California). The Mojave oral creation story Hamock-Avi is similar to the Aztec creation story in the Mule Mountains.

The Bureau of Land Management has designated the Mule Mountains as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and is included in their maps because this area includes geoglyphs, hundreds of petroglyphs, cremation/burial sites, major trails and many other indigenous ritual artifacts.

In 1975, San Diego Gas & Electric proposed to construct the Sun Desert Nuclear Power Plant that was going to be built within the same area as the proposed Rio Mesa Solar project site. After 5-years of protest by members of the Riverside County and Colorado River Tribes, we were able to stop the construction of this nuclear plant. Also, the SDG&E had brought the John Norton 10,000 acre ranch that was to provide water to run the nuclear power plant. During California Governor Jerry Brown's first-term, he was able to establish the California Atomic Energy Commission and they would schedule their meetings in Blythe, California so that the community could be well informed of the pros and cons of the construction of the nuclear power plant that was eventually the first nuclear power plant to be stopped in the United States.

Again in 2001, the Pacific Gas & Electric was going to construct a natural gas power line called the North Baja Pipeline that was going to traverse through the base of the Mule Mountains that would eventually destroy some of the sacred sites that were within the area. In June 2001, Native Americans from the Colorado River, Chumas, Chemehuevi, Mojave, Quechan, the EDAW Inc, representatives of the Bureau of Land Management (El Centro, California & Yuma, Arizona office), archeological and anthropological consultants toured the area. After seeing the significance and the sacredness of the area, the Pacific Gas & Electric circumvented the sacred sites and placed the natural gas line over traversed routes. In appreciation to our tour, Dr. James H. Cleland from the EDAW Inc. sent the following recommendation to our organization:

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you well in your future endeavors (1) to educate the public About the importance of cultural heritage and (2) to work within the context of environmental and historic Preservation programs to protect these unique and non-renewable resources from unnecessary damage.

The construction of the Rio Mesa solar energy project near Blythe, California would place hundreds of thousands of reflective mirrors or heliostats which reflect heat from the sun onto a central boiler tower, turning water to steam that runs a power plant generating electricity. Along with the mirrors there will be three mammoth towers that would stand as high as a 75-story building that could easily be seen from Interstate-10.

The Rio Mesa Solar Project will be constructed on open lands at the base of the Mule Mountains in the Lower Colorado River Valley approximately 5-miles from the Colorado River, on the bluffs overlooking the floodplain, wetland, and the rich Palo Verde Valley agricultural habitats. Based on United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) analysis, this area is an important migratory route for numerous species as well as breeding and wintering stopover destination. This area has been designated as a Globally Important Bird Area (see California Audubon <http://ca.audubon.org/iba/>). In addition, four National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) have been established along the lower Colorado River valley. These NWRs (Havasu, Bill Williams, Cibola and Imperial) were established to restore and protect historic habitat and wintering grounds for migratory birds and other wildlife.

Based on available information from Cibola NWR, approximately 4-miles south of the Rio Mesa Solar project site, at least 288 bird species, including numerous species of migratory passerine species (songbirds), upland species (quail, roadrunners, mourning and white-winged doves, waders/shorebirds and waterfowl (greater sandhill cranes, Canada and snow geese, ibis, egrets, herons, ducks), and raptors (buteos, accipiter's, falcons, eagles, vulture) (see <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/birds/chekbird/r2/cibola.htm>). The importance of this habitat for migratory birds is known, and is further highlighted by the use of the area by birds designated by the USFWS as Birds of Conservation Concern and by the California Department of Fish and Game as Species of Special Concern.

Given the area's importance for maintaining health and breeding fitness of migratory and resident birds, the USFWS and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) are concerned that avifauna protected by the

Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), migrating Swainson's hawks (State listed as threatened under the California Endangered Species Act), and eagles protected by the MBTA, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and designated as fully protected under Section 3511 of the Fish and Game Code may be impacted by the construction and operation of the proposed Rio Mesa Solar project.

Special status species at risk also include the state-listed Gila Woodpecker (occurs on site) and elf owl (suitable habitat is on the site); bald eagle and golden eagle (both protected by federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and fully protected under Fish and Game Code); burrowing owls, and several additional State-designated bird and bat Species of Special Concern and BLM designated Sensitive Species.

Migratory birds and Special status species will be injured or killed due to collision with the three 750-foot tall power towers and thousands of associated heliostats proposed for construction or may be burned as a result of flying through the thousand degree heat beams generated from the heliostats or via attempted perching on the power towers.

Alluding to the many endangered species, the proximity of the agricultural fields of the Palo Verde Valley to the Rio Mesa Solar site will be greatly affected by the immense heat generated by the thousands of heliostats. Thus, it will create change in the atmosphere, affecting the agriculture industry within the Palo Verde Valley.

In a recent article regarding the Jenko Solar Project in China, the Chinese are setting an example in protesting against the solar panel projects in their country because they have not only contaminated their water but also the climate change has ruined their agriculture industry. Apparently not even China is benefitting from these thousands of solar panel projects. The Jenko Solar Project is an excellent example of why we do not need these projects near agricultural land much less the Colorado River which it's water reserve in Lake Mead is barely 1/3 of its capacity.

The government fast-track stimulus money programs have been a complete failure as demonstrated by the Solyndar Company disaster, the Solar Trust of America Blythe Solar project bankruptcy and other companies which are also filing bankruptcy. According to Desert Sun reporter K. Kaufmann, the Rio Mesa project received a \$1.6 billion guarantee from the Department of Energy despite the fact that the construction of the project is uncertain due to the company's failure to generate sufficient financing.

We do not oppose to solar panels, we feel that they should be placed in areas that have already been disturbed as well as placing them on roof-tops and in urban areas where energy is mostly need (warehouses, supermarkets, apartments complexes, abandoned air bases, and along the current electrical transmission lines). This will exclude the need for transmission lines which has now presented major terrorist threats like the blackout that occurred on September 8, 2011 in Mexico, Yuma, Imperial, San Diego and Riverside Counties.

We wholeheartedly support Joan Taylor, Chair of the Sierra Club's Desert Energy Committee that sees the Rio Mesa Solar projects three 750ft. towers as a potential threat to all species. As Taylor explains, "*bottom line, you don't put something that's a potential bird killer near a National Wildlife Refuge.*"

We are also opposing to the construction of solar panel projects because of their gross violation to the following indigenous State, Federal, Mexico and United Nation laws that support our demands and why these projects should not be constructed within sacred areas:

***United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous People. Resolution adapted by the General Assembly during the 107th plenary meeting, September 13, 2007. (61/295) (Includes: Article 11 that stipulates Indigenous archeological rights.)**

***Native American Sacred Places, March 6, 2003 (S.B. 18)**

***Native American Sacred Lands Act, June 11, 2003 (H.R. 2419)**

***The Sacred Land Protection Act, July 18, 2002 (H.R. 5155)**

***The Native American Sacred Sites Protection Act, February 22, 2002 (S.B. 1828)**

***Accommodations of Sacred Sites and Federal Land, Signed by President Bill Clinton on May 24, 1996 (Executive Order 13007)**

***Native American Graves Protection & Repatriation Act of 1990**

***Archeological Resource Protection Act of 1979**

***American Indian Religious Freedom Act, August 11, 1978**

***The Civil Right Act of 1968**

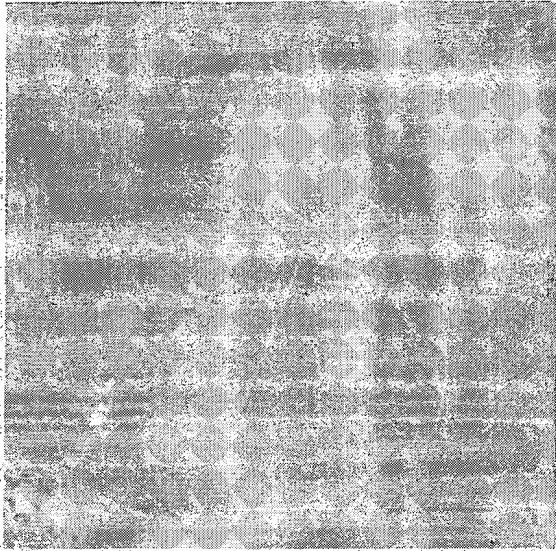
***Antiquities Act of 1906**

For all these reasons, we are opposing to construction of the Rio Mesa Solar project that is proposed to be place within sacred sites and pristine desert environment.

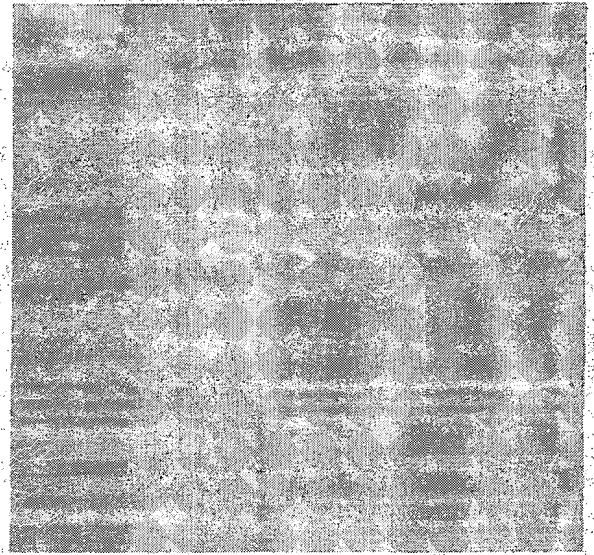
Sincerely,


Alfredo Acosta Figueroa

Sacred Sites are Threaten by the Proposed Solar Panel Projects in Riverside County



Geoglyph image of the Creator in the form of Kokopilli (200ft long & 50ft wide) located within the Blythe Solar Power project site.



Geoglyph image of Cicimiltl "The Spirit of the Underworld" which takes human spirits to their final resting place. (10x10 yards)

The images of Kokopilli & Cicimiltl as well as numerous other Sacred Sites and trails are all located within the proposed Blythe Solar Project area that has already been approved by the California Energy Commission on September 15, 2010.

Kokopilli deciphered means Koko "Hurt" and Pilli "Our Lord" (in the Nahuatl language) and this is the Creator's image of Quetzalcoatl in the form of a half human and half insect. In this image he is leaving because he is hurt and it represents the end of the third Sun as shown in the Five Suns of the Aztec Sun Stone Calendar. The image of Kokopilli is found all over the southwest United States and Mexico.

Cicimiltl is one of the most important images of the Creator because it tells the story of the 4 places and directions that our spirits go according to how we lived and how we died on Mother Earth (This is all based in the Mexica Codex).

Included below are State, Federal, Mexico and United Nation laws that support our demands and why these projects should not be constructed in these Sacred areas:

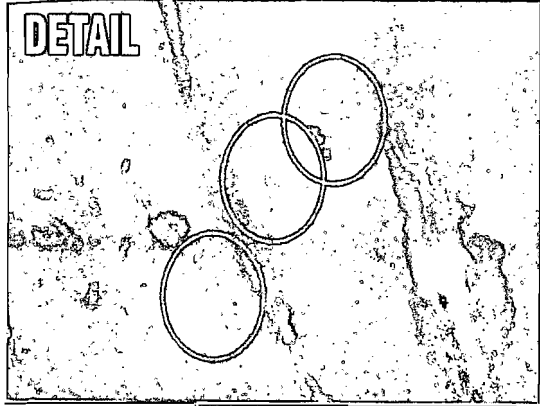
- *Estrella Newman, Chairman of the Mexicanidad Movement visit to Blythe, California on March 28, 2010 was to confirm the Sacred Sites and their relation to the Mexica Codices.
- *United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous People. Resolution adapted by the General Assembly during the 107th plenary meeting, September 13, 2007. (61/295) includes: Article 11 that stipulates Indigenous archeological rights.
- *Native American Sacred Places, March 6, 2003 (S.B. 18)
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- *Accommodations of Sacred Sites and Federal Land, Signed by President Bill Clinton on May 24, 1996 (Executive Order 13007)
- *Native American Graves Protection & Repatriation Act of 1990
- *Archeological Resource Protection Act of 1979
- *American Indian Religious Freedom Act, August 11, 1978
- *The Civil Right Act of 1968
- *Antiquities Act of 1906

Please help our struggle by contacting Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar, President Barack Obama and your Congressman and Senators

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The Sun Complex

BEFORE/2005



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Image 2008 Dec 14/14:14

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April 12 2011

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