

DOCKETED

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Sierra Club Opposition to Petition to Extend Commencement of Construction

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



To: California Energy Commission

From: Sierra Club

Re: DOCKET NO. 09-ACF-7C, Amendment for Palen Solar Electric Generating System

Sierra Club opposition to petition to extend commencement of construction

Sierra Club concurs with Intervenors Center for Biological Diversity, Basin and Range Watch, and the Colorado River Indian Tribes that the California Energy Commission (the “Commission”) should deny Abengoa SP Holdings LLC (the “applicant”)’s petition for extension of time to commence construction of the Palen Solar project for the following reasons:

1. The applicant has failed to state good cause for an extension, because the delay was not due to circumstances beyond the applicant’s control, but rather through its own decision not to proceed with the project most recently proposed.
2. The applicant’s project is not the project currently approved by the Commission. Indeed, the current applicant has indicated they plan to construct a power tower with storage.
3. The environmental review to date fails to meet the basic requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to provide clear, concise, up to date and coherent information to the public and decision makers regarding the significant impacts of the proposed project. To perpetuate the enormous record for the Palen project, which morphed over five years and contains much extraneous, out of date and confusing information – is overly burdensome for the reviewer of the instant project and serves to confuse rather than inform the reviewer. This is contrary to the public interest. Compounding this problem, the Commission gave short shrift to project alternatives (entirely dismissing proper analysis of a photovoltaic project) in its most recent review of the project, in violation of CEQA.

We urge the Commission to deny the petition to extend time for the Palen project, and instead start afresh with environmental review of the most recent iteration of the project. The environmental review for this project should incorporate the best available information and should consider a reasonable range of alternatives.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah K. Friedman".

Sarah K. Friedman
Senior Campaign Representative
Sierra Club