

La Cuna de Aztlan Sacred Sites Protection Circle

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September 20, 2010

Special Rapporteur on the Situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people c/o OHCHR-UNOG, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Palais Wilson, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
E-mail: indigenous@ohchr.org

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500
Facsimile: (202) 456-2461

DOCKET	
07-AFC-6	
DATE	SEP 20 2010
RECD.	SEP 22 2010

U.S. Department of the Interior-By US mail
Secretary of the Interior
Ken Salazar
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Recovery.gov
Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board
Attention: Hotline Operators
P.O. Box 27545
Washington, D.C. 20038-7958
Facsimile: (877) 329-3922
E-mail: Ray.Madden@hq.doe.gov

Docket No. 07-AFC-6-By US mail
**Notice to Correct or Cure Violations
of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act**
Energy Commission's Docket Unit,
1516 Ninth Street, MS-4,
Sacramento, CA 95814

Attn: Allison Shaffer,
BLM Project Manager,
Palm Springs South Coast Field Office,
1201 Bird Center Drive,
Palm Springs, CA 92262

E-mail: CAPSSolarBlythe@blm.gov

BLM Director (210),
Attention: Brenda Williams,
P.O. Box 66538,
Washington, DC 20035
Protests: [Brenda Hudgens-Williams@blm.gov](mailto:Brenda.Hudgens-Williams@blm.gov)

RE: Public Protest Comments

La Cuna de Aztlán Sacred Sites Protection Circle is hereby protesting and submitting this public comment against the California-based concentrating solar power (CSP) developer Solar Millennium, the California Energy Commission (CEC), the United States Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the United State Department of Energy (US DOE) for violating human rights to fast track the development of large industrial solar thermal electric projects that will literally pave over and completely destroy hundreds of square kilometers of undeveloped wilderness whose entire landscape (including this project's site) is considered sacred to our indigenous nations along the Colorado River and the entire American Continent.

Special Rapporteur this project specifically violates Article 8¹ of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (7 September 2007) because the development of the Blythe Solar Power Project (BSPP) will cover 9.3 square miles in Riverside County in Southern California with long rows of parabolic troughs that are right over the top of the giant geoglyphs of Kokopilli/Quetzalcoatl, Cicimitl, El Tosco and ancient Indian trails interconnecting other geoglyphs considered sacred to the Mojave, Paiute, and Chemehuevi peoples. This would violate Article 8 d) which prohibits "action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them [Indigenous Peoples] of their lands, territories or resources". Specifically the United States proposed action would destroy cultural resources; these giant geoglyphs of Kokopilli/Quetzalcoatl, Cicimitl, El Tosco and the trails that interconnect them and other giant geoglyphs. Such destruction would be tantamount to cultural genocide to the Mojave, Paiute, and Chemehuevi peoples.

For the past 54-years we have been studying the sacred sites along the Colorado River and our relations with the Uto-Aztec Culture and Codex's. In 2008, thanks to our Arizona Congressman Raul Grijalva, we received a Memorandum of Understanding from the Bureau of Land Management (Yuma, Arizona office) to be the guardians of the world famous Blythe Giant Intaglios and over 250 other geoglyphs (Ground images) along the Colorado River, beginning in Needles, California (In the North) down to Yuma, Arizona (In the South).

Our Tribes and other organizations are fully aware of the situation of trying to provide renewable energy with solar power plants. However, these solar power projects are proposed to be built on top of some of our most sacred sites. Especially the Blythe Solar Power Site, that is proposed to be built next to the Blythe Airport, where the world famous giant image of Kokopilli (The Hunchback Figure with the Flute) that is seen all over the Southwest United States and Northwest Mexico is located. The Kokopilli geoglyph is 200 feet long, by 50 feet wide. Included in the same area are the geoglyphs of Cicimitl (The Great Spirit) which is 50 feet long, by 50 feet wide and El Tosco (The Spirit that descends from Tamoanchan) which is 95 feet long by 35 feet wide. The area also includes a 16-Level Temple which is 200 feet long by 30 feet wide and hundreds of other sacred sites and trails.

According to Chief Gary Harrison, the Athapaskans left the Colorado River and went north to Alaska before the last Ice Age. Many nations left the area, beginning with the Olmeca, who went south, thousands of years ago. The Chichmeca followed soon after and then the Tolteca and Yaqui in the 5th century, followed by the Azteca/Mexica in the 12th century. The Lower Colorado River Valleys have been a major crossroad within the western hemisphere, with some of the nations going full circle. These nations traveled to the four directions and later returned to the Colorado River Valleys. (Krober, 1976)

The major interests to this study are the three main linguistic families that claim to have originated on the Colorado River. They are the Uto-Aztecan (Nahua): Pima, Tohono O'odam, Yaqui, Hopi, Chemehuevi, Paiute, Cahuilla, Azteca/Mexica, Tarahumara, Cora, Huichol, Tlaxcalteca, Tarasco and Chichimeca. In addition, the Hokan (Yuman) Mojave, Quechan, Kamias, Yavapai, Hualapai, Cocopah, Halchidoma, Havasupai, Pai Pai, Chumash, Pomo, Shasta, Seris (in Sonora) and the Maya Chontal (in Yucatan and Guerrero). As well the Athapaskan, Apache, Navajo, Janos, Athapaskan (in Alaska and Canada).


There are five native reservations in the Lower Colorado River Valleys from north to south, including the Fort Mojave, near Needles, California, Chemehuevi, Colorado River Indian Tribes, Quechan and Cocopah, south of Yuma, Arizona. Of those five, the Mojave and Chemehuevi are the most prominent nations in the Palo Verde/Parker Valleys.

For years, Blythe residents have known of these images, hence the off road damages that can be seen on the aerial photos. In the book of the Cahuilla "*Mukat's People*" by Mr. Lowell John Bean, he states that the trails and other sites were maintained throughout their lifetime.

In conclusion, the Chemehuevi Tribe, La Cuna de Aztlán Sacred Sites Protection Circle and Bureau of Land Management will have to work closely together to be able to save our sacred sites from total destruction.

Unfortunately, all the publicity given to the sacred sites during this campaign against the solar panel sites has created another form of destruction. Many people have become curious and these areas are being swamped with visitors from all over to visit the sacred sites. We are discouraging them from canvassing the area until we have these areas secured and fenced off.

Sincerely,



Alfredo Acosta Figueroa

Chemehuevi Tribal Monitor

La Cuna de Aztlán Sacred Sites Protection Circle Elder/Historian