

**DOCKETED**

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<b>Project Title:</b>	Willow Rock Energy Storage Center
<b>TN #:</b>	248552
<b>Document Title:</b>	Willow Rock Energy Storage Center Status Report No 5
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**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Energy Resources Conservation  
and Development Commission**

In the Matter of: )  
 )  
Application for Certification for the ) Docket No. 21-AFC-02  
Willow Rock Energy Storage Center )  
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**WILLOW ROCK ENERGY STORAGE CENTER  
STATUS REPORT NO. 5**

Pursuant to the *Committee Scheduling Order* docketed August 31, 2022<sup>1</sup>, GEM A-CAES LLC (“the Applicant”) hereby submits this status report to inform the Committee regarding the progress of the Application for Certification proceeding for the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center (“Willow Rock”).<sup>2</sup>

**STATUS OF PROCEEDING**

On January 6, 2023, California Energy Commission (“CEC”) Staff, Intervenor California Unions for Reliable Energy (“CURE”), and the Applicant submitted a joint statement summarizing an agreement amongst the parties to extend the discovery period for this proceeding.<sup>3</sup> On January 11, 2023, the Applicant and Staff submitted a joint statement summarizing the outcome of the issues resolution workshop that was held on October 11, 2022 and subsequent discussions.<sup>4</sup> On January 23, 2023, the Applicant submitted responses to data requests filed by CEC Staff and CURE.<sup>5</sup> On January 25, 2023, the Applicant submitted the geotechnical update for December 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**STATUS OF PROJECT OPTIMIZATION**

The Applicant has been diligently working to complete project optimization activities. As described in the Applicant’s *Status Report No. 1*, the Applicant’s project optimization has focused on responding to stakeholder comments, ongoing geotechnical data collection activities, incorporating engineering enhancements, and potentially acquiring additional acreage.<sup>7</sup>

On January 12, 2023, the Applicant submitted its *Notice Pursuant to 20 C.C.R. § 1716(f) for CEC Staff’s Data Requests Set 3* stating that an updated timeframe for submission of project optimization information, including responses to outstanding data requests, would be provided in

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<sup>1</sup> TN#: 245754.  
<sup>2</sup> TN#: 244313.  
<sup>3</sup> TN#: 248337.  
<sup>4</sup> TN#: 248367.  
<sup>5</sup> TN#: 248497.  
<sup>6</sup> TN#: 248518.  
<sup>7</sup> TN#: 246209.

this Status Report.<sup>8</sup> In prior data responses, the Applicant anticipated that it would complete project optimization activities in sufficient time to respond to project design and optimization data requests by January 31, 2023. However, unanticipated developments with geotechnical data collection and testing necessitates further investigation of geologic conditions at the Willow Rock site.

An optimized project design, including cavern design, will incorporate the additional geotechnical data collection and analysis. The Applicant expects that the necessary geotechnical data collection activities will advance sufficiently in the upcoming months. Project optimization activities will proceed in parallel while additional geotechnical data collection activities and analysis advance. The Applicant will work closely with CEC Staff during this time, particularly to coordinate project optimization submissions.

The Applicant continues to diligently pursue other necessary components of the application. Spring biological resources surveys will be commencing soon, and the Applicant will be coordinating closely with CEC Staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (“CDFW”) with respect to those surveys. In addition, the Applicant has requested an information exchange with CEC Staff and CDFW to discuss issues relating to the Crotch’s Bumble Bee.

The Applicant will continue to provide scheduled and expected project optimization response updates in its Status Reports.

Dated: January 26, 2023

Respectfully Submitted,

ELLISON, SCHNEIDER HARRIS & DONLAN LLP

By  \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>8</sup> TN#: 248386.