

DOCKETED

Docket Number:	21-AFC-02
Project Title:	Willow Rock Energy Storage Center
TN #:	249876
Document Title:	CEC Staff Status Report #8
Description:	monthly status report
Filer:	Lon Payne
Organization:	California Energy Commission
Submitter Role:	Commission Staff
Submission Date:	4/26/2023 1:49:20 PM
Docketed Date:	4/26/2023

Memorandum

To: Commissioner Andrew McAllister, Presiding Member
Commissioner Noemi Gallardo, Associate Member

Date: April 26, 2023

From: California Energy Commission
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Subject: STATUS REPORT #8 FOR WILLOW ROCK ENERGY STORAGE CENTER (21-AFC-02)

In its August 31, 2022, Order directing parties to file Monthly Status Reports, the Committee required that the parties file and serve a Status Report on or before the 26th of each month.

The California Energy Commission (CEC) staff has commenced work on a Preliminary Staff Assessment, which we expect to publish within 60 days of acknowledging in a status report that no responses to data requests remain outstanding.

The CEC staff remains engaged in discovery efforts, in accordance with the joint statement by the parties regarding data requests (TN 248337). CEC staff has filed multiple sets of data requests, most recently Data Requests Set 4 (TN 248978) on February 27, 2023, which the applicant responded to on March 29, 2023.

The CEC staff appreciates that the applicant filed its March status report early and included additional detail on the geotechnical evaluation effort and the ongoing effort to conduct necessary biological resources surveys. While there were no specific filing estimates associated with responses to outstanding data requests and follow-up filings including project description changes, the CEC staff believes that the applicant is being diligent in its pursuit of necessary baseline information. In the applicant's next status report, the CEC staff would appreciate a full accounting of any ongoing or anticipated efforts associated with securing an extension to its conditional use permit with Kern County to conduct further geotechnical investigations of the project site and adjacent parcels, as necessary. The CEC staff believes that information gained through that effort is critical for the conduct of its environmental analysis of the project.