

**DOCKETED**

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<b>Project Title:</b>	Willow Rock Energy Storage Center
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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 )  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

**WILLOW ROCK ENERGY STORAGE CENTER  
STATUS REPORT NO. 9**

Pursuant to the *Committee Scheduling Order* (“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 (“AFC”) proceeding for the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center (“Willow Rock”).

**GEOTECHNICAL PROGRAM AND PROJECT OPTIMIZATION**

On May 1, 2023, Intervenor California Unions for Reliable Energy (“CURE”) issued its Data Requests Set 2. The Applicant is in the process of preparing responses CURE’s data requests, with the exception of those related to project optimization and ongoing biological resources surveys. On May 22, 2023, the Applicant submitted a notice that additional time is needed to respond to those data requests.

The Applicant is completing final processing of the monthly geotechnical update for April 2023. The geotechnical report will include the lab results from testing of the cores obtained through the drilling program at the site.

In Data Response Attachment DR70-1, the Applicant described a series of geologic conditions for economic cavern development that would constitute “ideal,” “minimum acceptable,” and “unacceptable,” with “unacceptable” defined as conditions that may require selection of another site. Based on the initial results to date from the geotechnical drilling program and lab analyses, the geotechnical conditions at the site are non-optimal for a cavern at the target depth of 1,800-2,000 feet. The lab results indicate that the geotechnical conditions may be more optimal for a shallower cavern that would require different engineering than proposed in the AFC.

In light of the geotechnical lab results, the Applicant is actively considering alternative surface facility configurations, cavern engineering options, and alternate sites to support the cavern design. Alternative sites include adjacent and offsite properties in the area with potentially more favorable geologic conditions.

In assessing its options, the Applicant is prioritizing opportunities that respond to issues raised by Kern County and community groups, such as proximity to sensitive receptors. The Applicant

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<sup>1</sup> TN#: 245754.

will provide further updates about the status of the project optimization, alternative surface facility configurations, cavern engineering options, and alternative site evaluations in the June Status Report.

**BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES SURVEYS**

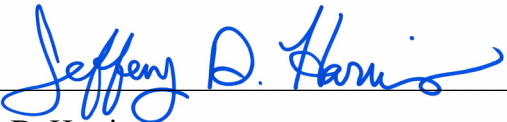
Biological resources surveys remain ongoing and will continue through July.

The Applicant will provide further updates regarding the biological resources surveys in the June Status Report.

Dated: May 26, 2023

Respectfully Submitted,

ELLISON, SCHNEIDER HARRIS & DONLAN LLP

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