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| Document Title: | CEC Staff Status Report #10 |
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Memorandum

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

Date: June 23, 2023

From: California Energy Commission
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Leonidas Payne
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Subject: STATUS REPORT #10 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. CEC staff remains engaged in discovery efforts, in accordance with the joint statement by the parties regarding data requests (TN 248337).

The applicant is currently working to complete geotechnical evaluation efforts and biological resources surveys, the results of which are needed to respond to CEC staff's outstanding data requests and are expected to result in project description changes.

CEC staff appreciates the early filing of applicant's most recent status report (TN 250707) so that we can respond to it. Based on that filing, CEC staff understands that the applicant is considering "alternative surface facility configurations," "cavern engineering options," and "alternate sites." The applicant did not provide a definite timeline for selecting a best path forward to ensure a viable project. Accordingly, we believe the best course for CEC staff to take would be to pause active work on the project until the applicant submits a new project proposal backed up by the necessary geological and engineering reports that confirm site viability for the next iteration of the project design and location. In the coming weeks, staff will prepare a motion requesting that the Committee suspend all staff work on the project, including submission of monthly status reports, although we would encourage the Committee to continue to require status reports from the applicant so that interested parties can be kept apprised of the applicant's progress in selecting and confirming the best option for meeting their project objectives.