

DOCKETED

Docket Number:	21-AFC-02
Project Title:	Willow Rock Energy Storage Center
TN #:	251175
Document Title:	Willow Rock Energy Storage Center Status Report No 11
Description:	N/A
Filer:	Amanda Cooley
Organization:	Ellison Schneider Harris & Donlan LLP
Submitter Role:	Applicant Representative
Submission Date:	7/26/2023 12:23:39 PM
Docketed Date:	7/26/2023

**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. 11**

Pursuant to the *Committee Scheduling Order* (“Scheduling Order”) docketed August 31, 2022,¹ 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” or “the Project”).

RESPONSE TO STAFF’S MOTION

On July 12, 2023, California Energy Commission (“CEC”) Staff filed a motion seeking an order to allow Staff to suspend, temporarily, project related review until the Applicant files a supplemental AFC regarding the project optimization (“Staff’s Motion”).² CEC Staff also requested that the Applicant continue filing monthly status reports to keep the Committee and the public apprised of the Project’s status. On July 26, 2023, the Applicant will file a response stating that it does not object to Staff’s Motion and proposing draft language for the interim order.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES SURVEYS

As noted in prior Status Reports, the Applicant has continued to be diligently engaged in conducting biological resources surveys. The Applicant continues to anticipate that all surveys will be completed by the end of July, unless the weather or other environmental conditions require otherwise. There are currently several data requests issued by CEC Staff and Intervenor California Unions for Reliable Energy (“CURE”) relating to the biological resources surveys. In its response to Staff’s Motion, the Applicant will request that responses to all data requests, including those relating to biological resources, be stayed pending resumption of the proceeding. The information from the recent biological resources surveys will be incorporated into the Applicant’s supplemental AFC filing.

PROJECT OPTIMIZATION

Project optimization efforts remain ongoing and are being diligently pursued by the Applicant. As reported in the Applicant’s last Status Report, the Applicant is actively considering

¹ TN#: 245754.

² TN#: 251029.

optimizations to the surface facility configurations, cavern engineering options given the site geotechnical results, and alternative sites that may better support the cavern design. Alternative sites include adjacent and offsite properties in the area with potentially more favorable geologic conditions. The Applicant anticipates that it will file a supplemental AFC towards the end of the year.

PROJECT STATUS

The Applicant continues to progress all other development activities necessary to achieve a shovel-ready status for the Project, in parallel. This includes necessary site control for project optimization, transmission easement design, Large Generator Interconnection Agreement finalization, and execution of an Energy Storage Agreement for 200 MW of the project output, with the balance of output under commercial offtake negotiations. The Applicant looks forward to providing further updates on all project elements as we move forward with the filing of a supplemental AFC.

The Applicant will continue to file Status Reports on or before the 26th of each month with an update regarding the Project's status.

Dated: July 26, 2023

Respectfully Submitted,

ELLISON, SCHNEIDER HARRIS & DONLAN LLP

By  _____

Jeffery D. Harris

Samantha G. Neumyer

jdh@eslawfirm.com

sgn@eslawfirm.com

Attorneys for Applicant