

DOCKETED

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**Defenders of Wildlife Comments on 2023 Final Land Use Screens
Staff Report and Mapping Tool**

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



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California Energy Commission
Docket Unit, MS-4
Docket No. 21-SIT-01
715 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814-5512

Delivered via email to: docket@energy.ca.gov

RE: 2023 Final Land Use Screens for Electric System Planning Staff Report and Electric System Planning Web Mapping Application (Docket 21-SIT-01)

Defenders of Wildlife (Defenders) respectfully submits these comments on the Draft Staff Report (Staff Report) on Land Use Screens for Electric System Planning and the Electric System Planning Web Mapping Application (Mapping Tool). Defenders and our 2.1 million members and supporters in the United States, 316,000 of whom reside in California, is dedicated to protecting all wild animals and plants in their natural communities. To that end, Defenders employs science, public education and participation, media, legislative advocacy, litigation, and proactive on-the-ground solutions to prevent the extinction of species, associated loss of biological diversity and habitat alteration and destruction.

We strongly support the development of renewable energy production. A low-carbon energy future is critical for California's economy, communities, and environment. Achieving this future—and *how* we achieve it—is critical for protecting California's internationally treasured wildlife, landscapes and diverse habitats. We believe transitioning to a renewable energy future need not exacerbate the ongoing extinction crisis by thoughtfully planning projects while protecting habitat critical to species.

Commission and staff's efforts in developing the 2023 Staff Report and Mapping Tool for use in all levels of energy planning have resulted in precisely the type of tools California and the West needs to effectively plan for our clean energy future while protecting wildlife and their habitat along with our iconic landscapes. We have been long-time supporters of geospatial planning for generation and transmission that is fundamentally built upon robust biodiversity, habitat, and agricultural datasets to identify appropriate least conflict areas for energy and transmission development.

We appreciate the Commission staff's intensive efforts to bring the methodology in the Staff Report and the Mapping tool to life. The Commission's collaborative approach with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the California Independent System Operator (CAISO), and stakeholders from industry and, particularly, the environmental community has resulted in an energy planning platform that will enable thoughtful, effective energy planning for years to come. Commission staff's stakeholder engagement and responsiveness to questions and input on the mapping tool is greatly appreciated. We encourage a similar approach for future energy planning efforts at the Commission.

We thank the Commission staff for all their hard work and strongly support the use of the Staff Report on Land Use Screens for Electric System Planning and Electric System Planning Web Mapping Application in Senate Bill 100 proceedings, the CPUC's Integrated Resource Planning, the CAISO's 20 Year Outlook, and elsewhere in the energy planning sphere. We look forward to actively participating in future evolutions of the methodology and mapping tools. Please contact Pamela Flick at (916) 442-5746 or pflick@defenders.org or Kate Kelly at (530) 902-1615 or kate@kgconsulting.net with any questions.

Sincerely,



Pamela Flick
California Program Director



Kate Kelly
Consultant