

DOCKETED

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State of California

California Natural Resources Agency

Memorandum

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

Date: April 30, 2024

From: California Energy Commission
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Subject: STATUS REPORT #7 FOR MORTON BAY GEOTHERMAL PROJECT (23-AFC-01)

The Presiding Member's Scheduling Order for the Morton Bay Geothermal Project (MBGP) Proceeding (Scheduling Order) filed on September 15, 2023, orders the parties to file a status report on "October 31st, and by the last business day of every month thereafter." California Energy Commission staff (CEC staff) is ordered to "include summaries of the progress of discovery in each monthly report, including descriptions of significant communications with other federal, state, and local agencies, and tribal governments, and identify any factors that may impact the schedule of the proceeding. Status reports shall also include a description of the outcome of any public workshop or other meeting held during that month."

Significant Communications with Other Government, Tribal Government, or Interested Entities

A meeting is scheduled for April 30, 2024, with Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) to discuss public and intervener concerns about the analysis of air quality impacts in the ICAPCD's Preliminary Determination of Compliance (PDOC). The discussions with ICAPCD will help inform staff air quality analysis in the Preliminary Staff Assessment (PSA).

Cultural/Tribal Cultural Resources staff continues to wait to be able to physically access Mullet Island and the New Mud Pots, due to lingering "quicksand" like conditions caused by winter rains. A complete assessment requires at least one additional in-field meeting. Staff is working to ensure that all known cultural districts are thoroughly assessed, and potential impacts are identified and accounted for. CEC staff's estimate of the end of May 2024 to complete the Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources section of the PSA remains accurate.

CEC staff, with assistance from CalGEM staff, prepared clarifying questions for the applicant regarding potential impacts to power production in the Salton Sea Geothermal

Resource (SSGR) and specifically the factual basis for concluding the resource can support existing geothermal production and the amount proposed for the MBGP. The questions, intended to vet the factual assertions in the Cyrq-filed document (TN 254691) related to the greater SSGR, were provided to the applicant on April 16, 2024. CEC staff and the applicant conducted two follow up telephone meetings to facilitate responses to the questions. The first call was on Monday, April 22, 2024. A second call was held on Thursday April 25, 2024, to solicit clarification of certain technical details from CalGEM staff. Staff requested responses from applicant by Friday, April 26, 2024; the Morton Bay Geothermal Project Responses to Informal Data Request Set 1 (TN 256064) was filed to the project docket on April 30, 2024. Staff's intent remains to evaluate the assertions and ensure any eventual construction of the three projects would be in a manner that preserves the ability of the SSGR to provide the identified and adequate commercial quantities of the geothermal resource without reducing current clean electricity production in the region. Depending on the responses, additional data requests are possible.

Factors That May Impact the Schedule

Staff is diligently working to publish the PSA by the deadline granted in the Committee's April 9, 2024 Order, and to avoid further schedule delays due to issues related to the PDOC and outstanding questions regarding placement and configuration of wells to optimize and preserve the SSGR.