

DOCKETED	
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Willow Rock Energy Storage Center 21-AFC-02

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California Energy Commission Informational Hearing
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Center for Biological Diversity



The Center is a nonprofit organization with offices nationwide, including California. The Center advocates for the protection of threatened and endangered species and their habitats through science, policy, and environmental law.



The Center's mission also includes protecting air quality, water quality, and public health while supporting the timely development of renewable energy sources in California.

The Center's Interest in Willow Rock Energy Storage Center

- August 23, 2024: Center petitioned to intervene
- Center's interests include:
 - protection of the western Joshua tree, desert tortoise, and Mojave ground squirrel
 - conservation of migratory birds and other avian species
 - conservation of rare and imperiled native plants
 - conservation of other wildlife species found in the project area

Issue Identified: Western Joshua Tree Impact

Approximately 3,449 western Joshua trees and 74.66 acres of Joshua tree woodlands are present in the surveyed areas

Issues:

- Potential impacts to western Joshua trees and woodlands
- Statutory obligation to avoid and minimize impacts to western Joshua trees to the “maximum extent practicable” Cal. Fish & Game Code § 1927.3(a)(2)



Issue Identified: Biological Resource Surveys

Western Burrowing Owl:

Protocol adherence and survey coverage

Desert Tortoise:

Survey coverage due to access limitations

Mohave Ground Squirrel:

Disturbances affecting survey integrity

Crotch's Bumble Bee:

Survey coverage

Swainson's Hawk:

Survey coverage

Other Concerns:

Desert kit fox, American badger, le Conte's thrasher, and others await sensitive species management plan

Issue Identified: Surface Reservoir and Retention Pond

Surface Reservoir:

- Potential for attracting predators (ravens) impacting local wildlife, e.g., juvenile tortoises
- Risks of wildlife entrapment and entanglement
- Material composition of floating cover, associated evaporation potential and need for additional water supplies over time

Retention Ponds:

- Environmental impact on wildlife

Thank You

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