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M e m o r a n d u m

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

Date: November 26, 2024

From: California Energy Commission
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Subject: STATUS REPORT #14 FOR MORTON BAY GEOTHERMAL PROJECT (23-AFC-01)

The Presiding Member’s Scheduling Order for the Morton Bay Geothermal Project (MBGP) Proceeding 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.” The California Energy Commission (CEC) staff is further 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.”

Summary of Progress of Discovery and Known Issues

On October 30, 2024, Jacobs filed Morton Bay Geothermal LLC Response to Workshop Follow Up Informal Data Request, Set 1 (TN 259789)

On November 6, 2024, CEC staff filed Follow Up from Workshop Discussion, 3rd Request (TN 259921)

On November 12, 2024, Michael McKibben filed, Michael McKibben comments- Are the Salton Sea mud pots and volcanic domes a tribal cultural resource that is truly threatened by geothermal development (TN 259966)

On November 13, 2024, CEC staff filed Follow Up from Workshop Discussion, 4th Request (TN 260000)

On November 13, 2024, Jacobs filed Morton Bay Geothermal LLC Response to Workshop Follow Up Informal Data Request Set 2 (TN 260018)

November 18, 2024 – CEC staff conducted tribal consultation with four California Native American tribes.

Scheduled Workshop(s)

Staff has scheduled the second workshop to conclude a targeted discussion of tribally focused issues for December 9, 2024. At the request of tribal representatives, a hybrid workshop is anticipated, to include in-person staff presence. Staff conducted a consultation meeting with four tribes on November 18, 2024, including a tribe new to the consultation process on this project. Staff expects consultation to continue beyond the conclusion of the workshop. CEC staff anticipates that any remaining miscellaneous technical discussion of the PSAs would be able to be covered during the same day as the focused tribal discussion; however, CEC staff acknowledges the possible need for future workshops.

Schedule Impacts

Staff has requested and continues to receive significant amounts of data that the applicant has agreed to provide through the course of the workshops. This includes supplemental information requested to inform CEC staff's Alternatives analysis (revised general project site arrangements; reoriented cooling tower placement; alternate locations), Biological Resources (related to a recent decision by the California Fish and Game Commission listing the burrowing owl as a candidate under the California Endangered Species Act), and Air Quality (revised modeling for updated PM 2.5 standards, as well as in response to reoriented cooling towers). Revised general arrangement figures are due to be submitted by the end of November 2024; additional air quality modeling is due from the applicant by the end of December 2024.

Supplemental information related to transmission infrastructure was received from Imperial Irrigation District (TN 259554). The applicant's responses to staff's post-workshop information request Set 1 and Set 2, contain partial responses, and follow up questions are pending.

CEC staff continues to look for outstanding reports and studies, including the Study of Impacts on the Salton Sea and a decision on a Federal Emergency Management Agency Letter of Map Revision for flood determination. Staff anticipates work related to alternatives analysis, air quality analytical work related to supplemental modeling, and additional coordination and consultation with partnering resource agencies to continue to ensure potentially affected species populations are protected and project impacts are mitigated, all of which may affect the schedule.

Staff will continue to follow the directives of the September 15, 2023, April 12, 2024, and July 26, 2024, Scheduling Orders and provide regular updates to the Committee.