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THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**Energy Resources Conservation
and Development Commission**

In the Matter of:

Application for Certification for the
Morton Bay Geothermal Project

Docket No. 23-AFC-01

**MORTON BAY GEOTHERMAL PROJECT
STATUS REPORT NO. 16**

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Pursuant to the *Presiding Member's Scheduling Order for the Morton Bay Geothermal Project Proceeding*,¹ Morton Bay Geothermal LLC ("the Applicant") provides this *Status Report No. 16* to update the Committee regarding the status of the Application for Certification ("AFC") proceeding for the Morton Bay Geothermal Project ("MBGP" or the "Project").

I. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS OF PROCEEDING

On December 3, 2024, California Energy Commission ("CEC") Staff docketed their fifth set of requests for additional information to address comments raised during the Preliminary Staff Assessment Technical and Mitigation Workshops and the Tribal Mitigation Workshops.² The Applicant is finalizing details on the general arrangement refinement for the MBGP, which reflects realignment of the cooling tower to address issues raised by tribal representatives and expansion of the freshwater storage pond to address comments made by the Imperial Irrigation District ("IID"). The Applicant is also preparing the requested air quality and public health modeling. Further, the Applicant has been drafting an analysis of the potential impacts to the Salton Sea from decreased agricultural runoff that incorporates the data and information received from the IID in December 2024.

On December 9, 2024, the Committee issued a *Revised Joint Scheduling Order and Request for Information Regarding Cultural and Tribal Resources* ("Revised Joint Scheduling Order") directing parties to consider the adequacy, feasibility, and potential impacts of Mitigation Measure CUL/TRI-8, as proposed in the AFC, and to determine the implementation of related mitigation measures.³ On January 17, 2025, the Applicant filed its Response to the Revised Joint Scheduling Order.⁴

¹ TN#: 252284.

² TN#: 260393.

³ TN#: 260569.

⁴ TN#: 261141.

II. DESCRIPTION OF SIGNIFICANT COMMUNICATIONS WITH OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL AGENCIES, AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

Descriptions of the Applicant's significant communications with other federal, state, and local agencies and tribal governments are provided below.

- On January 7, 2025, the Applicant met with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians regarding the MBGP. The Applicant also continues to engage with the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe and conduct outreach to the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians and Kwaaymii Laguna Band of Indians.
- The Applicant continues to consult with IID to discuss the Project's related facilities, interconnection, the proposed conservation easement, and IID infrastructure such as water supply canals, irrigation drains, transmission lines, and power distribution lines.
- Following the completion of IID's reform of its Open Access Transmission Tariff⁵ on December 9, 2024, the Applicant has been evaluating its options for transmission interconnection and associated restudy of the MBGP. IID's current deadline to submit interconnection request packages for the 2025 Transitional Cluster Study is February 7, 2025, following two extensions issued on January 9, 2025, and January 23, 2025.
- The Applicant continues to engage with representatives of Imperial County to discuss options to address potential impacts to agricultural resources.
- On January 8, 2025, the Applicant met with the Sonny Bono National Wildlife Refuge ("SBNWR") and discussed the Applicant's preliminary alternative flood protection plan.⁶ The Applicant is also discussing the flood protection plan with IID to seek their feedback on the measure. Both the SBNWR and IID manage land nearby to the proposed infrastructure modifications associated with the flood protection management plan.
- CEC Staff contacted a BHE Renewables, LLC employee associated with the Desert Valley Company Monofill regarding the MBGP. CEC Staff's report of conversation was filed in the proceeding docket.⁷ The Applicant is reviewing the report of conversation.
- On January 30, 2025, the Applicant had a status meeting with Imperial County Planning and Development Services to discuss the MBGP and associated permitting and project activities.

III. OUTCOME OF PUBLIC WORKSHOPS OR MEETINGS

No public workshops were held in January 2025.

IV. SCHEDULE

The Applicant has been diligently working on preparing its responses to outstanding information requests from CEC Staff. CEC Staff has identified these responses as critical information

⁵ TN#: 258772.

⁶ TN#: 260505.

⁷ TN#: 261333

necessary for publication of the Final Staff Assessments in CEC Staff's *Motion to Extend the Due Date for the Final Staff Assessments*.⁸ As described above, the Applicant has also been evaluating its options for transmission interconnection, which may also affect the schedule for the proceeding.

Dated: January 31, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

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