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M e m o r a n d u m

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

Date: March 26, 2025

From: California Energy Commission
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**Subject: STAFF STATUS REPORT #8 FOR THE WILLOW ROCK ENERGY
STORAGE CENTER (21-AFC-02)**

In its *Second Revised Committee Scheduling Order* filed December 11, 2024 (TN 260601), the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center AFC Committee (Committee) on the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center (WRESC) project ordered the parties to “continue submitting monthly status reports no later than the 26th day of every month” and further clarified that “[s]tatus reports shall inform the Committee whether the case is progressing satisfactorily and bring potential delays and other relevant matters to the Committee’s attention.”

On February 26, 2025, staff sent an email to the applicant requesting follow-up information on biological and water resources (TN 262088). On March 10, 2025, staff sent an email to the applicant requesting follow-up information on the drill cuttings pond for the water resources section (TN 262149). In a meeting on March 6, 2025, the applicant indicated they will be removing the evaporation pond and provided written information via email on March 17, 2025. On March 12, 2025, the applicant responded via email to TN 262088 and TN 262149 with background and intention to provide information within the following week (TN 262180). On March 14, 2025, the applicant filed the Incidental Take Permit Application information for the burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) and Crotch’s bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*) as requested in TN 262088. On March 17, 2025, the applicant confidentially filed a Phase II Cultural Resources Testing and Evaluation Report. On March 19, 2025, the applicant filed Additional Information Related to DR128 - Delineation of Jurisdictional Waters and Jurisdictional Delineation Map Book – Temporary Impacts (TNs 262243 and 262244) as requested in TN 262088. On March 21, 2025, the applicant filed Willow Rock Notice of Intent Application Rev for the drill cuttings pond as requested in TN 262149. On March 25, 2025, the applicant filed a document of compiled emails related to the removal of the evaporation pond (TN 262349).

With the submittal of additional project information and removal of the evaporation pond, CEC staff continues to coordinate with partner agencies, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), California Department of Water Resources,

Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD), the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and the Department of Conservation to finalize the PSA sections related to the recently submitted information. Staff also is working with DSOD to obtain confirmation that the applicant's description for the reservoir dam is sufficiently stable to finalize relevant PSA technical sections. Staff continues to consult with California Native American tribes, specifically engaging with them concerning the results of archaeological test excavations in the project area.

On March 13, 2025, staff filed a partial Preliminary Staff Assessment (PSA) for the WRESC (TN 262184). This partial PSA is staff's analysis to date, based on site visits, data requests and responses, and additional staff research, including consultation with other expert agencies, and relevant information received during any public meetings. CEC staff is working diligently to produce a complete PSA that will be subject to the 45-day comment period and expects to publish the PSA by late April.

Staff will continue to follow the directives of the Second Revised Committee Scheduling Order and provide regular updates to the Committee.