

**DOCKETED**

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## **Rural Communities Rising Comments on Darden Clean Energy Project**

I am Jose Antonio Ramirez, Acting Executive Director for Rural Communities Rising, and attended via Zoom the Darden Clean Energy Project meeting held at Harris Ranch on 3-26-25 - and provided testimony represented by the following which I request be of record for the Darden Clean Energy Project:

â€¢ Through one-to-one, small group and community meetings the past 9 months, over 600 residents have been engaged and registered on the Rural Communities Rising website from 36 rural communities across western Fresno County that will elect 18 new board members by the end of April, 2025. <https://ruralcommunitiesrising.org/>

â€¢ The founding board of Rural Communities Rising generally supports the need and purpose of the Darden project, but strongly feel the community engagement process and resulting community benefits plan is not representative of the regional communities impacted and their needs, either qualitatively or quantitatively.

â€¢ We encourage the CEC to champion policies and/or promote legislation that legitimately positions organized impacted communities with their own multi-community resident representative nonprofit, like that created by Rural Communities Rising for example, as lead entities for engaging energy developers with respect to community benefit agreements and community siting reviews. We believe by doing so, impacted communities will predominantly become advocates for clean energy development.