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Docket Number: 21-AFC-02*

Kern County Conditional Position of Support

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF KERN**

SUPERVISORS

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April 29, 2025

California Energy Commission
Docket No. 21-AFC-02 Willow Rock Energy Center
Submitted via CEC e-comment

**RE: Willow Rock Energy Center – Docket Number 21-AFC-02
Conditional Position of Support**

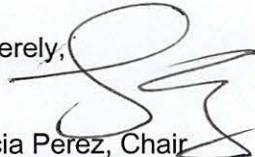
Dear Commissioner McAllister, Presiding Member

The Kern County Board of Supervisors supports the approval of the Willow Rock Energy Center Project (Docket Number 21-AFC-02), as Kern County has been on the frontlines of providing energy for America for over 120 years and continues today with oil, gas, wind, solar and alternative fuels. Our oil, gas, and renewable energy industries have long-term investments and commitments in our over 8,000 square miles of land and thoughtfully developing the next generation of energy innovation is critical to our future for local tax revenue and high road jobs for our communities. All of California enjoys the benefits of the over 21,000 megawatts (MW) of wind, solar, and associated battery storage we have permitted and hosted in our desert and valley areas. These projects all required careful, thoughtful location selection, full Environmental Impact Report analysis, and specific conditions that ensure critical services can be provided without an impact to the Kern County General Fund.

To date, the requested conditions provided by the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department to address the impacts to our Fire Department, surrounding roads, and concerns for traffic impacts have not been included in the Preliminary Staff Assessment as a recommendation to the Hearing Committee. To emphasize the importance of specific conditions, our Board took action on the April 29, 2025, agenda to provide our support for this project only if our specific conditions are included. They are detailed in the attached document – Requested Conditions of Approval.

Kern County is the center of energy for California and, when appropriately conditioned, the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center will be an asset to the Kern County energy portfolio and long-term contribution to our communities and fiscal stability.

Sincerely,


Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

Willow Rock Energy Storage Project by Hydrostor
APN 413-022-13

KERN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REQUESTED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

1. All necessary building permits must be obtained.
2. Prior to the commencement of construction, the applicant shall provide an irrevocable offer of dedication to the County of Kern for:
 - a. Dawn Road - 55 feet from the centerline of the road for all subject property and the off-site portion of Dawn Road from the westerly project boundary line to the westerly boundary line of Lot 3 of Parcel Map No. 260 (attached).
 - b. Sierra Highway – 90 feet total; 45 feet from the centerline of the road for both sides.
3. All easements shall be kept open, clear, and free from buildings and structures of any kind pursuant to Section 19.08.225 and Section 19.80.030.C of the Kern County Zoning Ordinance and Chapters 18.50 and 18.55 of the Kern County Land Division Ordinance. All obstructions, including utility poles and lines, trees, pole signs, or similar obstructions, shall be removed from the ultimate road rights-of-way in accordance with Section 18.55.030 of the Land Division Ordinance. Compliance with this requirement is the responsibility of the applicant and may result in significant financial expenditures.
4. Prior to the commencement of construction for the excavated rock disposal route, the applicant shall submit a Traffic Control Plan for review and approval by the Public Works Department.
5. Prior to the commencement of any and all construction activities on the transmission lines, the applicant shall submit a Traffic Control Plan for the entire route for review and approval by the Public Works Department. The plan shall provide specific details of construction activities that ensure no closure of Rosamond Boulevard at any time. Limitations on travel on Rosamond Boulevard at any location shall not stop traffic for more than 10 minutes at any time and shall not stop traffic on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday at any time.
6. Prior to the commencement of construction, the applicant shall, under encroachment permit issued by the Kern County Public Works Department, construct an asphalt concrete paved road approach for the proposed Dawn Road entrance at Sierra Highway to the facility and for the first 200 feet.
7. Prior to the commencement of construction, the applicant shall provide the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department with the location of all properties accepting excavated rock in unincorporated Kern County, including quantity. All appropriate permits shall be obtained for the locations identified to stockpile or otherwise utilize the excavated

rock. Any provision of excavated rock to be provided to Kern County Public Works for use in road construction or operations shall be at no cost to the county for either the material or the trucking and shall only be stockpiled at an approved Kern County Public Works location. If the excavated rock from the site is transported for disposal at the Holiday Rock site (7037 Trotter Avenue, Mojave), evidence of an approved permit from Kern County to receive the material shall be provided.

8. Prior to the commencement of construction, the applicant shall consult with the Kern County Public Works Department to determine the existing condition of Dawn Road from the entrance of the project site to the Highway 14 onramp and any necessary temporary treatments to provide an adequate paved surface to accommodate the safety and dust containment of the heavy truck traffic during the excavation of rock material, estimated to be continuous up to a maximum of four (4) years.
9. Prior to the commencement of operations, the applicant shall, under encroachment permit issued by the Kern County Public Works Department, pave to Type B Standards (60 feet wide w/ paved shoulders, including appropriate structural sections for heavy truck traffic) Dawn Road from the entrance of the project site westerly to the Caltrans boundary at Highway 14. These improvements shall include, but not be limited to, asphalt concrete and necessary tie-ins.
10. Prior to the commencement of any construction of the project, the applicant shall calculate a Traffic Index (T.I.) for:
 - a. Backus Road
 - b. Dawn Road
 - c. Any other Kern County roads used for disposal of excavated rock
11. Prior to the commencement of any construction of the project, the applicant shall execute an agreement with the Kern County Public Works Department for the review of structural sections of Dawn Road, Backus Road, and any other Kern County roads used for the route for disposal of excavated rock, as identified in the Traffic Control Plan. If required, the applicant shall rebuild the route to ensure the appropriate structural section for the heavy truck traffic of excavation rock material trucks estimated to be continuous up to a maximum of four (4) years. The agreement shall provide for the following:
 - a. If applicable, based on Traffic Index results, rebuild the excavated rock disposal route to an appropriate standard at the exclusive determination of the Kern County Public Works Department.
 - b. Under encroachment permit issued by the Kern County Public Works Department, video tape the entire length of the haul route prior to the start of site mobilization, and at the beginning of each year of construction, and provide a schedule for yearly repair of damaged sections to ensure the structural integrity of the haul route to Kern County standards during and after completion of full excavation.
 - c. Continuously maintain safe surface and conditions of road for traveling public.

12. Prior to the commencement of construction, the applicant shall submit the Traffic Control Plan to California Highway Patrol for consultation regarding required traffic control devices or improvements within their jurisdiction. If deemed necessary, such requirements shall be completed under encroachment permit.
13. Fire flows, access, and fire protection facilities shall be as required and approved by the Kern County Fire Department.
14. Provide funding for a fully equipped Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Unit, including necessary equipment for use in Eastern Kern County, and staffing costs during the construction phase and agreements to pay for emergency response if the USAR is not delivered before construction begins. The applicant shall provide the following to address the unique emergency service issues on the project:
 - a. The applicant shall, within 180 days after approval of the project by the California Energy Commission, provide a lump sum of \$1,900,000 (\$1.9 million) to the Kern County Fire Department for the USAR.
 - b. Within 60 days of Kern County Fire taking delivery of the USAR, the first lump sum payment for the first year of staffing shall be made to the Kern County Fire Department in the amount of \$2,400,000 (\$2.4 million) and made annually until the final Certificate of Occupancy for operations is issued by Kern County or as authorized by the CEC.
 - c. If construction begins and the new USAR has not been delivered, then the applicant shall sign an agreement with the Kern County Fire Department agreeing to the reimbursement of costs for responding to incidents at the site. Such an agreement will terminate once the USAR is delivered, and the staffing annual payment is made.
15. Encouragement of Local Hire – Prior to the issuance of any building permits on the project property, the project operator shall encourage all contractors for the project to hire at least 50 percent of their workers from the local Kern County communities. The project operator shall provide to the contractors a list of training programs that provide skilled workers and shall require the contractor to advertise locally for available jobs, notify the training programs of job availability, all in conjunction with normal hiring practices of the contractor. The project operator shall submit a letter detailing the hiring efforts, prior to commencement of construction.
16. Sales Tax Provision – The project proponent/operator shall work with the County to determine how the use of sales and use taxes from the construction of the project can be maximized. This process shall include, but is not necessarily limited to, the project proponent/operator obtaining a street address within the unincorporated portion of Kern County for acquisition, purchasing and billing purposes, and registering this address with the State Board of Equalization. As an alternative to the aforementioned process, the project proponent/operator may make arrangements with Kern County for a guaranteed single payment that is equivalent to the amount of sales and use taxes that would have otherwise been received (less any sales and use taxes actually paid); with the amount of the single payment to be determined via a formula approved by Kern County. The project

proponent/operator shall allow the County to use this sales tax information publicly for reporting purposes.

17. The Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department shall be provided cell phone and office numbers and e-mails for the Project Construction Manager, Senior Company Executives, and Lead contact for the California Energy Commission Environmental Compliance Consultant.
18. Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department, Kern County Fire Department and Kern County Public Works Department shall all be notified by e-mail for the following milestones:
 - a. Commencement of any road construction
 - b. Moving equipment for grading onto the site
 - c. Beginning of any blasting or excavation
 - d. Filling of the retention pond
 - e. Completion of excavation
 - f. Completion of facilities