

DOCKETED	
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Project Title:	Willow Rock Energy Storage Center
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Document Title:	Notice of Preliminary Staff Assessment Technical and Mitigation Workshop Willow Rock Energy Storage Center
Description:	N/A
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CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

715 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814

energy.ca.gov

CEC-70 (Revised 7/22)



IN THE MATTER OF:

*Willow Rock Energy Storage Center
Application for Certification*

DOCKET NO. 21-AFC-02

NOTICE OF PRELIMINARY STAFF
ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP

**Notice of Preliminary Staff Assessment
Technical and Mitigation Workshop
Willow Rock Energy Storage Center**

Day 1: Hybrid In-Person and Zoom Meeting

June 5, 2025

2:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

In-Person and Remote via Zoom

Day 2: Zoom Only Meeting (if necessary)

June 10, 2025

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Remote via Zoom

The California Energy Commission (CEC) staff will conduct a hybrid public workshop for the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center (also called Willow Rock or project). All interested parties, government agencies, and members of the public are invited to participate in the workshop, which will be held both in person and via remote attendance. The June 10th meeting is scheduled depending on the need for additional time for public comments.

In-person Location (Day 1 only) at:

Mojave Air and Space Port
Stuart O. Witt Event Center
1247 Pool Street
Mojave, CA 93501

Remote Access via Zoom (both Day 1 and Day 2):

See Attendance Instructions below.

Spanish interpretation will be available for persons attending both in person and remotely via Zoom.

Habr  interpretation al espa ol para las personas que asistan en persona y de manera remota via Zoom.

The purpose of the Day 1 workshop is to allow the Parties¹ to discuss the Preliminary Staff Assessment (PSA) for Willow Rock, to identify and resolve areas of disagreement, and to modify or refine mitigation measures, as necessary, and to receive comments from interested government agencies, California Native American tribes, and the public. Day 2 will allow additional time for public comments, if necessary. The PSA contains the CEC staff's independent, objective evaluation of the proposed project (see below for instructions to access documents, including the PSA).

The information obtained from workshop discussions and public comments will become part of the record of the proceeding and may be used in the preparation of the Final Staff Assessment (FSA).

The public can participate in the PSA Workshop consistent with the attendance instructions below. The CEC aims to begin promptly at the start time posted. The end time is an estimate based on the proposed agenda. The workshop may end sooner or later than the posted end time. Breaks, including a meal break, as appropriate, will be announced at the beginning of the meeting.

Day 1: Proposed Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. CEC staff presentations of the Preliminary Staff Assessment
 - a. Application overview
 - b. Engineering Evaluation, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Conformance with Laws, Ordinances, Regulations, and Standards (LORS)
 - c. Status of AFC process and next steps
3. Government Comments: California Native American tribes, federal, state, and local government entities, and elected officials
4. Public Comments
5. Discussion, moderated by CEC staff, on the PSA concerning environmental issues of note by topic area. This discussion will focus on requested modifications of PSA contents, including potential refinements to mitigation measures and identification of topic areas potentially requiring the Committee to resolve through the hearing process. Public comment will be available regarding each topic area at the time the topic is discussed.

¹ The Parties include: Applicant Gem A-CAES, LLC; CEC Staff; and Intervenor California Unions for Reliable Energy (CURE) and the Center for Biological Diversity (The Center).

6. Adjourn

Day 2: Proposed Agenda (if necessary)

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Public Comment
3. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

Background

On March 8, 2024, the CEC received supplemental documentation for Willow Rock (TN 254951), completing the filing of a supplemental Application for Certification to construct and operate an energy storage and related facilities for the "Willow Rock Energy Storage Center." The documentation contained updated project description and elements of the AFC reflecting the updated project description for the "Willow Rock Energy Storage Center."

The proposed Willow Rock project would be on approximately 88.6 acres of private land immediately north of Dawn Road and between State Route (SR) 14 and Sierra Highway within unincorporated, southeastern Kern County, California. Willow Rock would be a nominal 520-megawatt (MW) gross (500 MW net) and 4,160 megawatt-hour (MWh) gross (4,000 MWh net) facility using Hydrostor, Inc.'s proprietary, advanced compressed air energy storage (A-CAES) technology, a type of mechanical battery. Main components of the proposed project include eight electric-motor-driven air compressors, four nominally 130 MW air-powered turbine generators with 100-foot-tall air vent stacks, heat extraction and recovery heat exchangers, cooling system, 100-foot tall water storage tanks, one approximately 21.5-acre, 600-acre-foot capacity hydrostatically compensating surface reservoir, aboveground piping pipe racks and filter houses, underground compressed air storage cavern (approximately 900,000 cubic yards capacity), and interconnecting conduits for moving compressed air, onsite 230 kV substation, potential for inclusion of architectural berm for reuse of excavated rock, and backup diesel generators.

Energy proposed to be stored at the project would be delivered to Southern California Edison's (SCE's) Whirlwind Substation southwest of the proposed project at the intersection of 170th Street W and Rosamond Boulevard, via a new approximately 19-mile long 230-kilovolt (kV) generation-tie (gen-tie) line, with approximately 186 transmission poles. The project would be capable of operating on a 24-hour basis, 365 days a year with an approximately 50-year lifespan. The energy storage project would not require the combustion of fossil fuel and would not produce combustion-related air emissions during normal operation.

The CEC maintains on the CEC website a webpage for the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center with information about the proposed project, a link to the docket, email subscription sign-up, and more at: <https://www.energy.ca.gov/powerplant/energy-storage-system/willow-rock-energy-storage-center>. From the main page, the docket is accessed by clicking on the link, "Docket Log 21-AFC-02", from the box in the right margin under the header "Original Proceeding." The PSA is listed in the lefthand column, TN 262850.

Attendance Instructions

Day 1 In-person participants may join the meeting at:

Mojave Air and Space Port
Stuart O. Witt Event Center
1247 Pool Street
Mojave, CA 93501

Day 1 June 5, 2025: Remote participants may join via Zoom by internet or phone.

To join via Zoom. Click on

<https://energy.zoom.us/j/85237034403?pwd=aWaPSbc85dC3dSXM1WbwodSAPCDWGZ.1>

- or login in at <https://zoom.us/> and enter the Webinar ID 852 3703 4403 and passcode 808801 and follow all prompts.
- **To join by telephone.** Call toll-free at 1-213-338-8477. When prompted, enter the Webinar ID 852 3703 4403 and passcode 808801.

Day 2 June 10, 2025 (if necessary): Zoom-only participants may join via Zoom by internet or phone.

To join via Zoom. Click on

<https://energy.zoom.us/j/84295651181?pwd=zC1SyVPSmC6A2S5FDftYqGO8leK4FA.RL0md6xIqLOCXQ2b>

- or login in at <https://zoom.us/> and enter the Webinar ID 842 9565 1181 and passcode 381012 and follow all prompts.
- **To join by telephone.** Call toll-free at 1-213-338-8477. When prompted, enter the Webinar ID 842 9565 1181 and passcode 381012.

Zoom Closed Captioning Service. At the bottom of the screen, click the Live Transcript CC icon and choose "Show Subtitle" or "View Full Transcript" from the pop-up menu. To stop closed captioning, close the "Live Transcript" or select "Hide Subtitle" from the pop-up menu. If joining by phone, closed captioning is automatic and cannot be turned off. While closed captioning is available in real-time, it can include errors. A more accurate transcript of the workshop will be docketed and posted as soon as possible after the meeting concludes.

Zoom Spanish language Interpreting Services. Open the Zoom meeting. In the "Navigation" panel, click "Settings," then click the "Meeting" tab. Under "In Meeting (Advanced)," click "Language Interpretation" toggle to enable/ disable. If a verification dialog displays, click "Enable" or "Disable" to verify the change. If the option is grayed out, it has been locked and you will need to contact your Zoom admin. Click "Mute Original Audio" to reduce background noise.

Zoom Difficulty. Contact Zoom at (888) 799-9666 ext. 2, or the CEC Public Advisor at publicadvisor@energy.ca.gov, or by phone at (916) 957-7910.

Public Comment

The CEC encourages the use of its electronic commenting system. Navigate to the “submit e-comment” pages (under Original Proceeding in the right margin) for the dockets as follows:

<https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Ecomment/Ecomment.aspx?docketnumber=21-AFC-02>

Enter your contact information and a subject title that describes your comment. Comments may be included in the “Comment Text” box or attached as a downloadable, searchable document in Microsoft® Word or Adobe® Acrobat®. The maximum file size allowed is 10 MB.

Oral comments will be accepted at the end of the workshop. Comments may be limited to three minutes or less per speaker and one person per organization. To comment via Zoom, use the “raise hand” feature so the administrator can announce your name and unmute you. To comment via telephone, press *9 to “raise your hand” and *6 to mute/unmute.

Written comments may be submitted on the project to the docket Unit by 5:00 p.m. on June 16, 2025.

Written and oral comments, attachments, and associated contact information (including address, phone number, and email address) will become part of the public record of this proceeding with access available via any internet search engine. Written comments may also be submitted by email. Include docket number 21-AFC-02 and “Willow Rock Energy Storage Center” in the subject line and email to docket@energy.ca.gov.

A paper copy may be mailed to:

California Energy Commission
Docket Unit, MS-4
Docket No. 21-AFC-02
715 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Public Advisor. The CEC’s Public Advisor assists the public with participation in CEC proceedings. To request assistance, interpreting services, or reasonable modifications and accommodations, call (916) 957-7910 or email publicadvisor@energy.ca.gov as soon as possible but at least five days in advance. The CEC will work diligently to meet all requests based on availability.

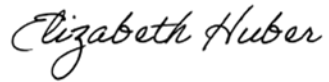
Media Inquiries: Email mediaoffice@energy.ca.gov or call (916) 654-4989.

General Inquiries: Email Eric Veerkamp at STEPsiting@energy.ca.gov or call (916) 661-8458

Availability of Documents: Documents and presentations for this meeting will be available at: <https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=21-AFC-02>.

When new information is posted an email will be sent to those subscribed to the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center subscription list. To sign up to receive these notices or notices of other email subscription topics, visit Subscriptions, "Power Plants Licensing and Projects" s, at <https://www.energy.ca.gov/subscriptions>.

Dated: May 23, 2025, at Sacramento, California.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Huber".

Elizabeth Huber
Director, Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division

Subscriptions:

21-AFC-02 Willow Rock Energy Storage Center

