

DOCKETED

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Land Use Screens

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

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California Energy Commission
Docket Unit, MS-4
Docket No. 22-IEPR-02
715 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814-5512

Oct 31, 2022

Re: docket No. 22-IEPR-02, Land Use Screens

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the “Land-Use Screens for Electrical System Planning” document released recently by the California Energy Commission (CEC). Mono County has not reviewed the staff report and corresponding maps in detail since we were just alerted to this document and planning process. We submit the following comments for your consideration and look forward to a response.

We would request that the CEC have direct outreach with Mono County about this topic as the screens released cover a significant amount of the county. Furthermore, the majority of the lands in Mono County are under federal ownership and play an important role in our tourism-based economy. Most of these lands are also undisturbed and have high conservation and recreation values. Mono County supports renewable energy development when done responsibly, with attention and to environmental and landscape impacts. The county has several policies related to renewable energy siting and development in our Conservation and Open Space Element of the Mono County General Plan (MCGP). Please see the attachment included with those policies.

We look forward to a direct conversation and more discussion about these land-use screens. Please contact Wendy Sugimura (wsugimura@mono.ca.gov) (760) 924-1814) Mono County Community Development Department (CDD) Director or staff planner April Sall (asall@mono.ca.gov, (760) 932-5423).

Sincerely,



April Sall, Planning Analyst

Cc: Wendy Sugimura, CDD Director

Policy 10.C.2. The County shall provide input to those federal and state decision-making bodies having the authority to grant permits for hydroelectric plants regarding criteria to be evaluated prior to issuing or denying permission to develop further the hydroelectric potential of already impacted streams and watersheds.

Objective 10.D.

Hydroelectric facilities shall be sited so that they are not easily visible from scenic highways or important visual areas.

Policy 10.D.1. Project conditions shall require compliance with all applicable provisions of the Conservation/Open Space Element.

GOAL 11. Encourage appropriately scaled renewable energy generation for use within the county.

Objective 11.A. Increase renewable energy generation that is consistent with the county's visual and aesthetic qualities and values.

Policy 11.A.1. Support and incentivize residential and nonresidential distributed renewable energy generation.

Action 11.A.1.a. Pursue installation of solar photovoltaic systems, power purchase agreements, or solar collective programs to meet all or part of the electrical energy requirements of County-owned or -leased buildings.

Action 11.A.1.b. Continue offering and promoting incentives (e.g., streamlined permitting, prescriptive designs, fee waivers/reductions) to encourage installation of photovoltaic systems on new or existing buildings.

Action 11.A.1.c. Continue offering workshops and information for residents and businesses to provide resources and permitting assistance for those interested in adding renewable energy systems to their properties.

Policy 11.A.2. Encourage community-scale (<3 MW) renewable energy development on suitable lands, such as a biomass co-generation facility if sufficient supply becomes available.

Action 11.A.2.a. Support the development of appropriately sited community-scale renewable energy systems that meet critical evaluation criteria, such as environmental standards, sensitive species, financial feasibility, and transmission capacity.

Action 11.A.2.b. Work with utility providers, regulatory agencies, and local stakeholders to develop technical, environmental, and social feasibility.

Policy 11.A.3. Oppose commercial-scale (e.g., >3MW) solar and wind energy projects in Mono County on non-county public lands to protect visual, recreational, and wildlife habitat and biological resources, and the noise environment, and ensure projects on private lands protect these resources.

Action 11.A.3.a. Where pre-empted by state law or other jurisdictional authority, work with applicable agencies to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to the environmental, visual, recreational, wildlife habitat and noise environment within the county.

Action 11.A.3.b. Ensure (or for non-county public lands advocate) for no adverse project impacts to the visual, recreational, and noise environment in Mono County.

Action 11.A.3.b. Ensure (or for non-county public lands advocate) for no adverse project impacts to biological resources and wildlife habitat in Mono County, including sage grouse habitat and wind energy development impacts to migratory birds.

GOAL 13. Regulate use of other energy resources for power generation to ensure that environmental impacts and impacts to public health and safety are minimal.

Objective 13.A.

During the course of evaluating any power generation project under the jurisdiction of Mono County, the California Energy Commission shall be consulted.

Policy 13.A.1. Mono County Community Development Department shall solicit assistance from the CEC for the purposes of reviewing proposed power generation facilities.

Objective 13.B.

Power generation facilities shall not adversely impact the visual resources, recreational resources, and noise environment in Mono County.

Policy 13.B.1. Project conditions shall require compliance with all applicable provisions of the Conservation/Open Space Element and the Noise Element.

Objective 13.C.

Emissions from the operation of power plants shall not adversely impact wildlife habitat, residents, or visitors and shall not constitute a hazard to public health and safety.

Policy 13.C.1. Project conditions shall require compliance with all applicable provisions of the Conservation/Open Space Element and the Safety Element.

GOAL 14. Minimize the visual, environmental, and public health and safety impacts of electrical transmission lines and fluid conveyance pipelines.

Objective 14.A.

Electrical transmission and distribution lines and fluid conveyance pipelines shall meet the utility needs of the public and be designed to minimize disruption of aesthetic quality. See also Chapter 11 of the Land Use Element.

Policy 14.A.1. New major steel-tower electrical transmission facilities shall be consolidated with existing steel-tower transmission facilities except where there are technical or overload constraints or where there are social, aesthetic, significant economic, or other overriding concerns.

Action 14.A.1.a. Require selection of rights of way to preserve the natural landscape and minimize conflict with present and planned uses of land on which they are to be located.

Action 14.A.1.b. Encourage the joint use of transmission and pipeline corridors to reduce the total number of corridors and service and access roads required.

Action 14.A.1.c. Require the coordination of siting efforts so that other comparable utility uses can share rights of way in a common corridor where feasible.

Action 14.A.1.d. The County shall adopt a proactive position in the future siting of transmission and pipeline corridors by working with utilities and project proponents to specify those locations where transmission corridors are acceptable.

Action 14.A.1.e. Cooperate with the USFS and BLM in planning the use of utility corridors.

Policy 14.A.2. At the expense of the project proponent, comprehensive and detailed planning studies, including review of all feasible alternatives, shall demonstrate a clear need for new transmission lines or fluid conveyance pipelines, prior to the siting of these facilities.

Policy 14.A.3. New transmission or distribution lines or fluid pipelines shall be buried when such burial does not create unacceptable environmental impacts or the potential to contaminate shallow groundwater resources.

Policy 14.A.4. Where burial is not possible, transmission facilities and fluid pipelines shall be located in relation to existing slopes such that topography and/or natural cover provide a background where possible.

Policy 14.A.5. Transmission line rights of way shall avoid crossing hills or other high points at the crests. To avoid placing a transmission tower at the crest of a ridge or hill, space towers below the crest or in a saddle to carry the line over the ridge or hill. The profiles of facilities should not be silhouetted against the sky.

Policy 14.A.6. Where transmission line rights of way cross major highways or rivers, the transmission line towers shall be carefully placed for minimum visibility.

Policy 14.A.7. Avoid diagonal alignments of transmission lines through agricultural fields to minimize their visibility.

Policy 14.A.8. Require location of access and construction roads so that natural features are preserved and erosion is minimized. Use existing roads to the extent possible.

Policy 14.A.9. Require that materials used to construct transmission towers harmonize with the natural surroundings. Self-protecting bare steel and other types of non-reflective surfaces are appropriate in many areas. Towers constructed of material other than steel, such as concrete, aluminum, or wood should be considered. Coloring of transmission line towers to blend with the landscape should be considered.

Policy 14.A.10. Above-ground transmission lines shall be non-specular wire construction.

Objective 15.B.

Transmission and distribution lines shall not adversely impact wildlife, fisheries, or public health and safety.

Policy 15.B.1. New transmission or distribution lines shall avoid open expanses of water, wetland, and sagebrush steppe, particularly those heavily used by birds. They shall also avoid nesting and rearing areas.

Policy 15.B.2. Avoid the placement of transmission or distribution lines through crucial wildlife habitats such as deer fawning and migration areas, and sage grouse lekking and brood-rearing habitat.

Policy 15.B.3. Design transmission lines to minimize hazards to raptors and other large birds, and require the installation of anti-perching devices when overhead placement in sensitive habitat is unavoidable.

Policy 15.B.4. Where burial is not possible, overhead transmission lines shall provide a maintenance and fire safety plan.

GOAL 15. Encourage the prudent use of energy and to allow substitution of alternative energy sources for conventional energy when such substitution would result in minimal environmental impacts.

Objective 15.A.

Promote the direct use of geothermal, biomass and other heat sources provided that such use does not conflict with recreational uses and does not create unmitigatable environmental impacts.

Policy 15.A.1. Support the use of direct alternative heat sources in Mammoth Lakes, Bridgeport, and other communities where such resources are available.

Action 15.A.1.a. Identify applications for the direct use of alternative heat sources, in addition to space heating, which could support environmentally compatible light industry (such as greenhouses, aquaculture, vegetable dehydration, etc.).