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Additional submitted attachment is included below.

Darden Clean Energy Project – Comments about Social and Economic Impact Assessment – ECONorthwest 11-7-23

Rural Communities Rising Reps: Felipe Perez (felizjesus28@gmail.com) and Jose Antonio Ramirez (president@communitydevelopment-inc.com) and **RCI Rep:** Keith Bergthold (keith@regenerateca.org)

- We are primarily concerned about long-term cumulative project impacts, resulting from the aggregate effect of massive land use changes being made to accommodate clean energy generation, that now and will increasingly affect quality of life and economic opportunities in the 30 unincorporated primarily farm worker communities and of farm worker families living in neighborhoods of the 6 cities in western Fresno County.
- While we generally support the purpose this project and appreciate the analyses of ECONorthwest, the assessments of social and economic impacts conducted have a focus and high-level analytical scale that obscure tangible cumulative long-term changes and impacts to the small rural communities in the western region of Fresno County when considered in the aggregate with other energy projects being proposed in and near the Westlands Water District.
- Through a cumulative and aggregated impact lens on small rural farm worker communities– there will likely be greater loss of farm worker employment, farm worker families leaving the region, and related long-term reductions in ADA for schools, business sales taxes, church membership and as well as other negative quality of life and economic opportunity trends - that are of great concern for those now living in these already disadvantaged and underserved western Fresno County rural communities.
- Engaging residents, businesses and institutions in all the 30 unincorporated primarily farm worker communities and of farm worker families living in neighborhoods of the 6 cities in western Fresno County - is imperative for gaining actionable understandings of the likely cumulative and aggregated impacts of the major energy, employment and land use transitions.
- This is the reason **Rural Communities Rising**, a 501c3 nonprofit, is conducting comprehensive community outreach and engagement and building a board of directors that is representative of all impacted rural communities in western Fresno County– with the goal of a united voice for working with energy developers and ‘community determined community benefits’ that meet the needs of participating impacted community members.