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March 31, 2010

Robert R. Copper, Director
California Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan
Conservation Area Starting Points

Dear Mr. Copper:

Thank you for your efforts to facilitate the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) and convening the Stakeholder Committee. I am encouraged that the State is actively including local governments in its decision-making process for this Plan.

Despite these positive developments, I am deeply concerned about the proposed DRECP conservation area starting points in southeast Inyo County. The draft proposal designates areas in the Owens Valley, the Rose Valley, the Panamint Valley, and the Searles Valley as starting points to define conservation areas for the DRECP.

These starting points encompass private lands in the following Inyo County communities: Olancha, Cartago, Valley Wells, Homewood Canyon, Hawiee, Dunmovin, Coso Junction, Little Lake, and Pearsonville. If you are not aware, less than two percent of the County's land area is privately owned and almost 65 percent has been designated Wilderness.

Any further restrictions on private land, reduced access to public lands, or taking of private land for public purposes are not only unjust, but contrary to the Inyo County General Plan. Furthermore, the proposed starting points encompass lands being actively studied for renewable energy development, including proposed wind energy development in the Rose Valley and near Pearsonville, and geothermal resources being studied by the Bureau of Land Management in its Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Leasing of Geothermal Resource Development in the Haiwee Geothermal Leasing Area.

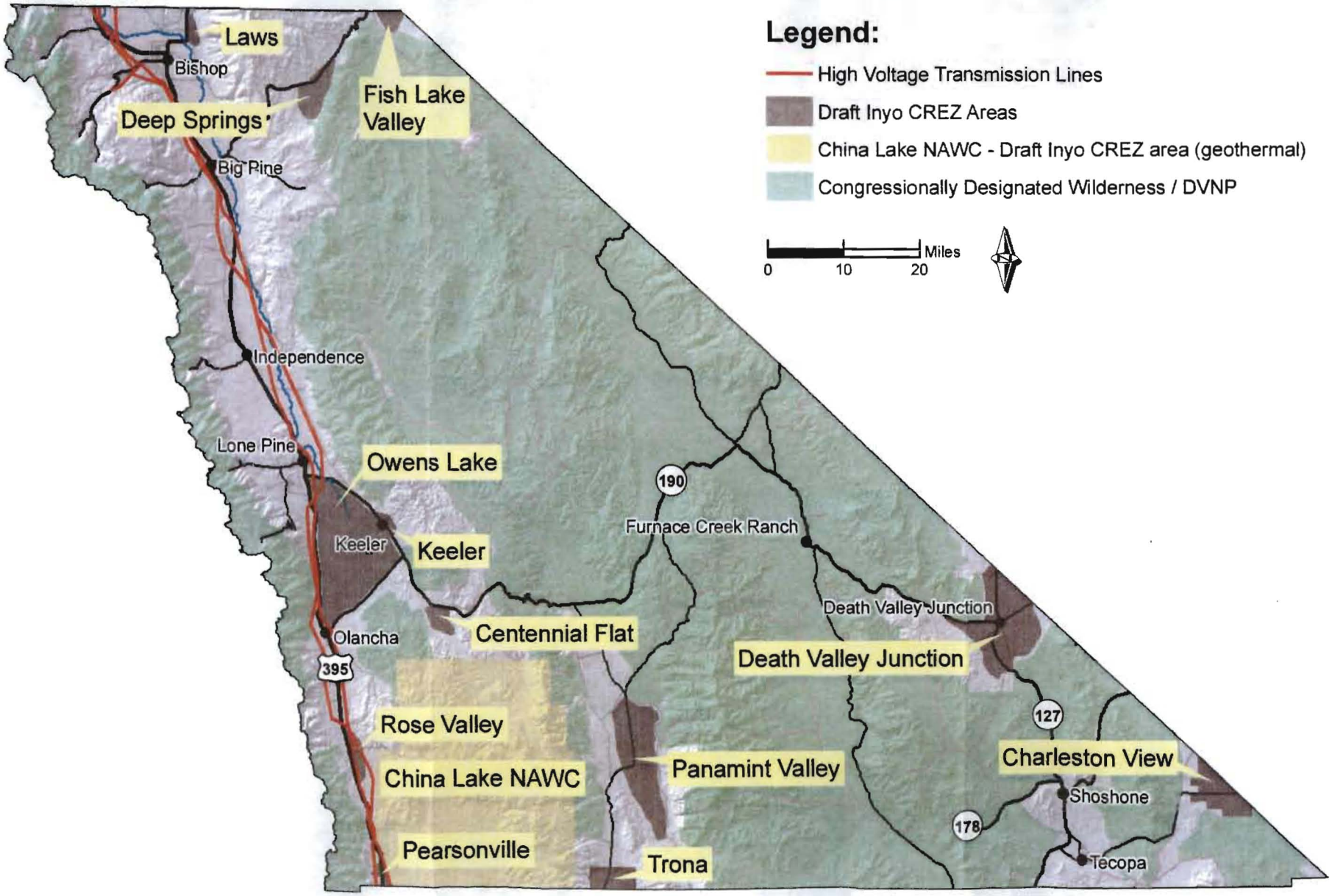
The proposed starting points should be revised to only include public lands not being studied for renewable energy development, especially in Inyo County. Any further restrictions to access to public lands will be vigorously opposed locally. Also, the County's proposed renewable energy zones (see attached), which have been shared with numerous participating agencies multiple times, should be considered in the DRECP.

Thank you for attention to these matters. Please call me at (760) 878-0263 or email me at mconklin@inyocounty.us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Mike Conklin
Planning Department Director

Attachment

cc: Board of Supervisors; CAO; County Counsel; Doug Wilson, Willdan; Governor Schwarzenegger; DOI; BLM; USFWS; CDFG; CSAC; RCRC; NACO; file

Inyo County Draft CREZ Areas