

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**Energy Resources Conservation
and Development Commission**

Applications for Certification for the

Calico Solar (SES Solar One) Project,
Genesis Solar Energy Project,
Imperial Valley (SES Solar Two) Project,
Solar Millenium Blythe Project,
Solar Millenium Palen Project, and
Solar Millenium Ridgecrest Project.

Consolidated Hearing on Issues Concerning
US Bureau of Land Management Cultural
Resources Data

Docket Nos.

08-AFC-13,
09-AFC-8,
08-AFC-5,
09-AFC-6,
09-AFC-7,
09-AFC-9, and

10-CRD-1

DOCKET
09-AFC-8

DATE 05/28/10

RECD. 06/07/10

**TESTIMONY OF PATRICIA PIÑON ON ISSUES CONCERNING US BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT CULTURAL RESOURCES DATA**

May 28, 2010

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Protection Circle
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The following is the Declaration of:

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Submitted To:
California Energy Commission
Hearing Room B
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I, Patricia Piñon, born in Blythe, California, and Champion of the Blythe Giant Intaglios and Chairperson of the La Cuna de Aztlan Sacred Sites Protection Circle, hereby declare:

-That in 2003, representatives of The La Cuna de Aztlan Sacred Sites Protection Circle approached the Southern Low Desert Resource Conservation and Development Council requesting assistance with protecting the Blythe Intaglios and the hundreds of geoglyphs found in the Palo Verde and Parker Valleys. The La Cuna de Aztlan Sacred Sites Protection Circle is a nonprofit organization established by Native Americans from the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe and Colorado River Indian Tribes. Their mission is to conserve locations that are of traditional and religious importance to Native Americans. Together, the Council and the Sacred Sites Protection Circle invited the BLM into a partnership and worked together under a Memorandum of Understanding to plan and implement a protection project. Our common goal is to upgrade protection measures so that the geoglyphs can be viewed without destroying them and so that visitors can gain a complete understanding of the area's significance. Ultimately, the goal is to protect these archaeological sites and transform the entire area into a first-rate world heritage tourism destination. The following organizations are all jointly working together to protect these sacred sites:

La Cuna de Aztlan Sacred Sites Protection Circle
Chemehuevi Indian Tribe
Bureau of Land Management (Department of Interior)
Natural Resource Conservation Service (Department of Agriculture)
Southern Low Desert Resource Conservation & Development Council
Blythe Area Chamber of Commerce
National Park Service, RTCA Program (Department of Interior)

-That geoglyphs are a rare and valuable piece of America's cultural heritage. These geoglyphs are vital cultural resources that must be properly protected. A sustainable management plan is needed to ensure that the images and surrounding landscape are properly protected. They are at a critical point of change as their popularity continues to grow. Even without the tourism initiative, something needs to be done to enhance the preservation efforts at this site.

-That geoglyphs have survived for thousands of years lying as they were originally created, but they are surprisingly delicate features. One tire track from an off-highway vehicle or a scuff mark from a shoe will permanently scar the design. The Blythe Intaglios are the only geoglyphs currently protected by a management plan that was created in the 1970s and designed for a small visitor load. Only a minimal amount of fencing and interpretive information was erected, and no defined walkways were provided to guide foot traffic. Over 40 years have passed since these measures were put into place, and since then the popularity of the Blythe Intaglios has risen substantially. As a result, visitor capacity has been exceeded and irreparable damage is occurring.

-That studies show that the series of petroglyphs and sacred sites throughout the mountains surrounding the Palo Verde, Parker and Coachella Valleys are definite indicators that the lower Colorado River Valley between Laughlin and the Gulf of California is "La Cuna de Aztlan, the cradle of the Aztec people." Most importantly, these sacred sites include petroglyphs in the southeastern portion of Joshua Tree National Park, geoglyphs along the I-10 corridor, the Blythe Giant Intaglios off of Highway 95, and images on the mountains and on the desert mesas throughout the region that match the ancient Aztec codex or books.

-That I will fight to protect the desert cultural resources, the geoglyphs and sacred sites located on BLM land and most importantly, those in the surrounding areas of the Palo Verde and Coachella Valleys. I have joined in the fight against the destruction of the environment. I was involved in the fight against the Ward Valley Nuclear Dump Site and most recently, joined in the fight against the Eagle Mountain Dump. I was at the celebration held when a court ruled in favor of a federal lawsuit filed by environmental groups, stopping a proposed mega waste dump in Eagle Mountain. This fight has been going on for the past 18 years. The construction of the proposed mega waste dump would have encroached on a portion of the Joshua Tree National Park. Our organization helped achieve the impossible task of stopping this mega dump that would have destroyed precious desert habitats and ancient sacred sites. Eagle Mountain and Joshua Tree are filled with 100s of petroglyphs.

I hereby state:

That I oppose the certification by the California Energy Commission and the issuing of public land by the Bureau of Land Management to the following proposed solar power projects:

- 1) Genesis Solar Energy Project: 09-AFC-8
- 2) Solar Millennium Blythe Project: 09-AFC-6
- 3) Solar Millennium Palen Project: 09-AFC-7

-That I oppose the destruction of our cultural resources by solar plants. Our investigations concerning the above projects are centered in the Eastern Riverside County along the I-10 corridor and this area is the most sacred area of the North American Continent. It is the area the ancient sacred monolith, the Aztec Calendar, is based upon and this region geographically outlines the Aztec Calendar with sacred indicators and images. The area extends from the Kofa

Mountains in Arizona, west to the human head image (Copill-Quetzalli) on the crest of the San Jacinto Mountains above the city of Palm Springs, California.

-That the proposed Blythe Solar Power Project is overlaid on more than 25 large geoglyphs that we have found throughout the area. They include the world known image of Kokopilli, Cicimitl (The Great Spirit that takes human spirits to their final resting place in the Topock Maze, "Mictlan"). Included in the area is the image of Tosco, over 5 large windrow mazes, a 9-level pyramid and over 25 sacred images (that we have not yet deciphered).

-That the main East/West & North/South trails all lead to and from the Blythe Giant Intaglios. One trail leads to Kokopilli and Cicimitl which traverses west through the south end of the McCoy Mountains to the McCoy Springs. Here the "image" of Quetzalcoatl takes a bath then goes to the Palen Mountains "Hue-Hue-Tlapallan" (Reddish Earth), where he is lead to the underworld by Xolotl (The Dog), as shown in the petroglyphs at the Palen Mountain Mural Wash.

-That the trail comes down from the Palen Mountain Wash and meets with another trail from the McCoy Springs area that is in the Genesis project. The trail then runs west along the plains of the Palen Mountains then crossed southwest towards the Chuckawalla Mountains where it meets the main trail coming west from the Mule Mountains towards Desert Center, California. These two trails meet at the proposed Palen Mountain Project and the southwest trail leads towards Corn Springs (Tula) located in the center of the Chuckawalla Mountains.

-That on February 2009, the Sacred Sites Protection Circle took 2 archeologists hired by the BLM Yuma office, one of them named Jeffery Adams. They were contracted by the BLM to document all the geoglyphs along the Colorado River which included the sacred sites of Kokopilli and Cicimitl.

-That on March 2, 2010, the Sacred Sites Protection Circle took John Kalish, Bureau of Land Management Field Manager of the Palm Springs office and George Kline, archeologist of the Palm Springs office, to the Blythe Power Project area and took them on an onsite tour which included 5 large geoglyphs and the images of Kokopilli and Cicimitl. Unfortunately, we have not yet received a report of their findings and investigation.

Please join us in the fight to preserve our vital cultural resources!

Patricia Pinon