

Energy - Docket Optical System

From: BETTY MUNSON [ranchotaj@gmail.com]
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To: Energy - Docket Optical System
Subject: DRECP Alternative Scenarios of July 25, 2012, Docket No. 09-RENEW EO-01

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SUBJECT: DRECP Alternative Scenarios of July 25, 2012, Docket No. 09-RENEW EO-01

I am a resident in the high desert in the Morongo Basin. I have been a constant visitor to all parts of the desert since I moved to California in 1964.

I cringe at the sight of the proliferation of wind turbines that have ruined the wide valley below Mt. San Jacinto and Mt. San Gorgonio and made laughable the Scenic Highway designation of SR 62 as it descends toward this maze.

I grieve over the wind towers that ruined the poppy fields of Tehachapi. I remember when the first few towers were put up, how it never entered my mind this could be the future of open lands in the west.

I refuse to go see what the elemental beauty of Jawbone Canyon now looks like. I am appalled at the desecration of the Ivanpah Valley.

Most painful of all, the overwhelming need that erected these obscenities is artificial, their existence is futile, earnest people were duped into going along, and the damage done cannot be undone. No one has shown me any *independent* scientific study proving these projects will have any beneficial effects.

Now we see how more spaces on more maps are being colored in, deciding for us where to erect even more wind and solar towers; where to scar more of the scenery in an area that largely relies on sightseeing; where to string corridors of pylons to carry so-called renewable energy to urban centers to be sold at high prices back to the rural user who cannot bear the burden; where to override what land use planning has already been done.

I am sure that if the pink areas on the DRECP maps were to be studied for oil drilling, coal mining or even, heavens forbid, the use of visitors in off-highway vehicles, we would hear no end of the outcry. I can only hope there are enough desert dwellers and visitors to cry out as loudly, "Foul!" at the sight of the areas recommended for bulldozing and destruction in the name of saving the planet.

I have been to almost every single place targeted in all these scenarios. None, none, will be improved by the shift to this kind of major industrial development.

Whoever participates in this process is either fooling themselves they are somehow doing good, or has no understanding at all for the remaining open lands in the desert and the economic benefits they bestow on our citizens. I hope they can sleep at night. I hope they are not saying, well, I'm just doing my job.

As the push to build these things grows stronger from our elected officials—very few of whom got my vote, I might add—the negative news stories grow more frequent. They relate the oversell of benefits, the hazards to human health in design and installation. They document the dangers to wildlife, the protection of which used to carry so-called environmentalists to extreme lengths preventing other kinds of development or human activity. (Wanna build a mom-and-pop hot dog stand in a rural community? Spend a gazillion bucks assuring somebody there are no endangered species on that plot of land.)

Why waste time working on this if “variance lands” are to be included? Would development on variance lands be uncontrolled? A campaign to have SR247 between Yucca Valley and Barstow officially designated as a Scenic Highway is now under way. Would solar and wind development on all the variance lands, with its undeniable impact on viewshed, be ruled out?

Where is the common sense in all this? How much “management” and “planning” can fallible people inflict on other people, without somebody pointing out the Emperor has no clothes?

I suppose it is better to be invited to the table as a stakeholder in all this disruption, but somehow that feels like we’re dining with the devil even going along with the process. We are told public input is needed. Really? How far do we have to travel? Are they just going through the motions? Have we even got the right anymore to cry, “Foul!”

Here is a description of the purpose in all this: “ to help provide for effective protection and conservation of desert ecosystems while allowing for the appropriate development of renewable energy projects. It will provide long-term endangered species permit assurances to renewable energy developers and provide a process for conservation funding to implement the DRECP.”

Allow me to translate the way the desert dwellers read it: Go through the environmental protection dosey-do ASAP, then let developers kill the animals and birds for a good long time until they are ready to abandon their projects to the long-suffering desert.

Some of the mortals, who in their wisdom, can select the least important ecosystems for the trustworthy and honest developers do not have a good track record. Their judgements so far are undermining the Eagle Protection Act, the protection of the desert tortoises and other species, and, oh yes, the property values of rural citizens and businesses.

Now there is even talk of siting these projects on land set aside for military training. We’ll certainly have no say in that.

Where is the discussion about energy conservation?
Where is the discussion about distributed energy production?
Not in the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan.

Who said “renewable energy” and “conservation” in the same breath” It seems like this is on a par with mixing oil and water, or making pigs fly. Fast-tracked industrial scale development of renewable energy resources just is not appropriate with any goal of conservation or preservation. Period.

NO to all the scenarios. Period.

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