

Energy - Docket Optical System

From: National Parks Conservation Association <nPCA@npca.org> on behalf of Michael Mclaughlin <nPCA@npca.org>
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2015 12:11 PM
To: Energy - Docket Optical System
Subject: DRECP NEPA/CEQA

California Energy Commission

DOCKETED

09-RENEW EO-1

TN # 74725

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Feb 20, 2015

Mr. Chris Beale

1516 Ninth Street, MS-46, Dockets Office, MS-4, Docket No. 09-RENEW
EO-01
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

Dear Mr. Beale,

I am a California resident since 1965, and have spent much of my life visiting and even living in the California deserts.

Since it has become more endangered from introduced plants, overdevelopment, and especially through the heavily increased motorized incursion of ORVs for destructive "recreation", every further incursion and destruction of vital habitats, must be mitigated by cessation of ORV activity, private developments, and large-scale terrain modification.

Solar power arrays are inferior both because of energy loss due to power lines, and their effects on vital desert habitat. Solar power projects are most economically undertaken through siting on private or other buildings or their immediate private vicinity.

It is essential that the 22.5 million acre Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan is finalized in a thoughtful way.

With this in mind and with the goal of protecting our national parks, wilderness areas, wildlife and wild places for future generations, I strongly encourage you to improve this important plan in order to better protect California's public resources:

- * Protect Mojave National Preserve, adjacent Wilderness Study Areas, and key desert bighorn sheep habitat by not allowing the Soda Mountain Solar project to be sited next door to Mojave NP, as better locations for the project abound.
- * Protect the remarkable Silurian Valley adjacent to Death Valley National Park by designating the landscape as National Conservation Lands.
- * Better protect Joshua Tree National Park by preventing development in the Eagle Mountain region. We must safeguard public lands in this region from further threats and protect important habitat for desert bighorn sheep, golden eagles, and desert tortoise.
- * Do not allow for renewable energy Development Focus Areas (DFA) to be designated in sensitive lands. The Lucerne region, the desert tortoise research natural area, Cadiz dunes area, and the Mountain Pass area should not be considered for DFAs.

* Protect wildlife routes and bird migration areas by supporting the protection of Sonoran Desert Thorn Woodlands, Sand Movement corridors, and important wetlands like the Wild and Scenic Amargosa River, Salt Creek, and Bonanza Spring.

* Analyze how this plan impacts the National Park Service. Despite the significant acreage of our national parks in the plan area, the draft does not include discussion of how renewable energy projects will impact their viewsheds, clear night skies, and wildlife-rich neighboring lands.

Thank you for your work in creating a more economic and environmentally conserving Plan.

Sincerely,

Mr. Michael Mclaughlin
1011 H St
Eureka, CA 95501-1842