From:	National Parks Conservation Association on behalf of Bonnie Clarfield-Bylin
To:	Energy - Docket Optical System
Subject:	DRECP NEPA/CEQA
Date:	Friday, February 20, 2015 6:42:21 PM

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,

This past weekend was memorable. While hiking on public land near Joshua Tree National Park in the Copper Mountain Area of Joshua Tree and Landers, CA, I saw only my second wild desert tortoise. It was an amazing day! During my visit to BLM property, I participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count, while I admired the living desert landscape. The Mojave Desert is a very special place, and deserves protection from habitat fragmentation, excessive development, and excessive wind and solar farms that harm birds, reptiles, and other animals that get caught in the turbines, burned by the heat, or run over by service vehicles.

As someone who cares deeply about our California desert and our renewable energy future, 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 its 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.

*Consider abandoning the idea of large solar farms being built on our desert lands, and encouraging our politicians to pass laws that require California developers to build new houses, warehouses, and parking structures with mandatory solar panels, capable of selling solar energy back to the power companies. Solar farms would not be needed in our sensitive desert habitats, if we looked at alternative options. Additionally, homeowners, commercial building owners, and public agencies with existing structures should also be encouraged to convert from traditional energy to solar, by adding panels added to their structures. This is the direction we should be looking rather than developing new solar farms near sensitive desert habitats.

Thank you for standing up for the California Desert!

Sincerely,

Ms. Bonnie Clarfield-Bylin
3044 Frontier Ave
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360-1007
(805) 492-1912