From:	National Parks Conservation Association on behalf of Dan Blair
To:	Energy - Docket Optical System
Subject:	DRECP NEPA/CEQA
Date:	Friday, February 20, 2015 5:42:08 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,

As retirees, my wife and I have traveled often into the beautiful California desert. Joshua Tree National Park is one of our most beloved destinations, which we began visiting when it was still a National Monument. On the other hand, we also feel strongly about ensuring a renewable energy future. That's why we feel it is essential that the 22.5 million-acre Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan is finalized in a thoughtful way. With the goal of protecting our national parks, wilderness areas, wildlife and wild places for future generations, Jan and I strongly encourage you to improve this important plan in order to better protect its public resources:

* Better protect Joshua Tree National Park by preventing development in the Eagle Mountain region. It is imperative to safeguard public lands in this region from further threats and protect important habitat for desert bighorn sheep, golden eagles, and desert tortoise.

* 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 members of the National Parks Conservation Association, we know that better locations are available for this solar project.

* Protect the Silurian Valley adjacent to Death Valley National Park by designating the landscape as National Conservation Lands.

* Do not allow for renewable energy Development Focus Areas (DFAs) 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. While we are grateful to note 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. These should be given their due importance in the overall draft.

We trust you will give our concerns your most serious and thoughtful consideration. We hope to learn that the final plan will stand up more powerfully for the beautiful California desert.

Sincerely,

Mr. Dan Blair
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