

## Energy - Docket Optical System

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**From:** National Parks Conservation Association <npca@npca.org> on behalf of Denise Halbe <npca@npca.org>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 21, 2015 1:14 PM  
**To:** Energy - Docket Optical System  
**Subject:** DRECP NEPA/CEQA

California Energy Commission

**DOCKETED**

**09-RENEW EO-1**

TN # 74949

FEB 23 2015

Feb 21, 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 deeply concerned about the exploitation of desert habitats. I also am passionate about expedient shifting to renewable energy. Thus the 22.5 million acre Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan is of utmost concern to me. I believe we should be putting industrial solar in already industrialized, developed areas-- shopping malls, airports, industrial and warehouse complexes-- where-ever possible in such a way as it will be closer to point of use and not detrimental to open habitat. California deserts are fragile, specialized ecosystems with ancient colonies of plants, endangered animals and magnificent vistas all of which are very much imperiled by human activity as is. The huge solar installations are horrific assaults on these areas, using precious water, destroying the beauty of our priceless vistas, and killing birds and other wildlife that only live in these special circumstances. We can adapt our renewable needs, locate our solar installations in such a way that it will not impact these environments. I am concerned that with government incentives and the "green-rush", honoring the obligation to protect the desert will fall short. 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.

Thank you for standing up for the California Desert!

Sincerely,

Ms. Denise Halbe  
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