

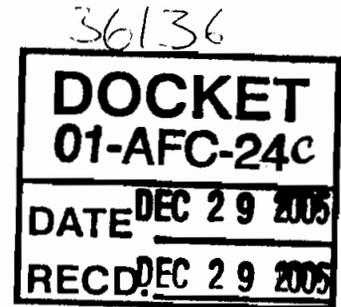
CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

1516 NINTH STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814-5512
www.energy.ca.gov



December 29, 2005

Mr. Jeff Switzer
1224 Via Privada
Escondido, CA 92029-7711



Dear Mr. Switzer:

Your letter of December 12, 2005, to B.B. Blevins has been forwarded to me for response. Your letter conveys your concerns regarding the proposed development of the Palomar Medical Center East adjacent to the Palomar Energy project in Escondido, California.

In his October 20, 2005 reply to your previous letter, Mr. Blevins stated that the City of Escondido (City) would need to update the Escondido Research and Technology Center (ERTC) Specific Plan and to complete a new Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the revised use. Subsequent to that, we were informed that the Palomar Pomerado Health District (District) had prepared and approved an addendum to the EIR. Energy Commission staff has not had the opportunity to review and comment on this document. Based on a recent e-mail to my staff from Jonathan Brindle, Escondido's Planning Director, the City will be required to formally adopt any changes to the ERTC Specific Plan. Approval of an addendum to the original ERTC Specific Plan EIR will not allow the District to construct the hospital absent approval of the specific plan changes by the Escondido City Council.

Your letter states that a new EIR must be prepared by the Energy Commission for the Palomar Energy project since the approval of a medical center at the ERTC represents a significant change. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that a decision for a project consider the existing conditions at the project site, along with any potential cumulative impacts with projects which are reasonably foreseeable when a project is approved.

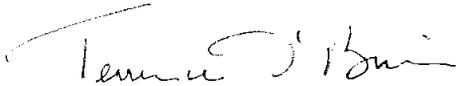
When the Energy Commission approved the Palomar Energy Center at the ERTC, the principal land uses at the business park were identified in the ERTC Specific Plan as light industrial and office use. The Energy Commission's decision and environmental analysis were based upon this set of conditions. If the ERTC changes, CEQA requires that the decision maker responsible for approval of the changes consider the potential impact on other projects already approved in the area. The responsibility for reviewing and mitigating any environmental impacts that may occur as the result of the approval of the hospital, including impacts which might impact the operation of the Palomar Energy

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project, would be the responsibility of the City of Escondido which, ultimately, must approve this use at the ERTC. The Energy Commission will not undertake a new environmental review of the Palomar Energy Project should the City approve a hospital facility at the ERTC, but will consider the new ERTC configuration in reviewing any modifications proposed for the power plant. On December 22, 2005, staff published its analysis, of an amendment to slightly increase operational noise emissions. As part of this analysis staff examined the potential noise impacts to a hospital located at the ERTC. Staff's analysis found that the power plant would not be expected to cause any adverse noise impacts if a hospital were to be located nearby.

If you need further assistance please contact Bob Eller of my staff at (916) 651-8835 or via e-mail at [beller@energy.state.ca.us].

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terrence O'Brien". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "O".

TERRENCE O'BRIEN, Deputy Director
Systems Assessment and Facilities Siting

cc: Jonathan Brindle, City of Escondido Planning Department
Ray Kelly, Sempra Energy