

DOCKET

09-RENEW EO-01

DATE MAY 22 2012

RECD. MAY 22 2012



To: California Energy Commission Dockets Office, MS-4
Docket No. 09-RENEW EO-01
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512
docket@energy.state.ca.us

From: Save Our Desert

RE: Comments on Development Scenarios presented at April 25th and 26th stakeholder meeting

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the development focus area Scenarios and other materials presented at the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) stakeholder meeting on April 25th and 26th 2012. We are encouraged that the planning process is being conducted as a NCCP/HCP, putting conservation before development in the planning process. For too long, the process of renewable energy development has been driven by the companies applying for projects, who have no knowledge or respect for the land they are pursuing.

Save Our Desert is committed to preserving pristine desert lands for coming generations. Through education, outreach, and the power of the public voice, we seek to redirect inappropriate use of public lands and to achieve permanent protection for threatened desert areas. We are based in Pipes Canyon, California, and currently working to protect Black Lava and Flat Top Buttes from becoming industrially developed as a wind farm.

We believe that the underlying drivers of utility scale renewable energy must be questioned at every step of the way, and that all efforts need to be focused on energy

conservation practices, distributed generation in the built environment, and a full scale effort to democratize our energy production. All efforts should be made to keep industrial development away from wild desert landscapes.

Save Our Desert would like to voice the following concerns with the materials presented on April 25th and 26th:

Scenarios 5 and 6 include highly sensitive areas in the Pipes Canyon Area

The north side of the San Bernardino Mountains are host to a number of unique habitats that harbor endemic plant species, and could host many more. The Pipes Canyon Buttes are a unique landform with special soil types which lie in a transition zone between the Mojave Desert and the San Bernardino Mountains that represent special habitat. Parish's Daisy, Little San Bernardino Mountains Linanthus, and Robison's Monardella are special status plant species that are found locally.

The buttes are also recognized as important landscape linkages which are critical to the long term stability of local species. Given the nature of the habitat, the proximity to a number of special status plants, and the presence of special soil types, the Pipes Canyon area and the Buttes seem particularly important as species distributions shift due to climate change.

The Pipes Canyon Buttes are home to significant cultural resources, including village and ceremonial sites. While these resources have not been previously filed, they have been extensively catalogued and are well known locally.

We are asking that this special landscape is recognized in the reserve design as an area of high biological sensitivity and given special status as protected land.

Involve local communities by giving them a direct seat the table

Many of the communities which would be affected by the development proposed in the plan are rural communities. Industrial renewable energy development will fundamentally alter the nature of these communities. To date, much of the ire that has been raised by development projects has been due to misinformation or a lack of any communication with local communities about what planning efforts will mean to the way of life many people have worked extremely hard for.

Local communities need to be given a seat at the table for any development planning process that will affect their way of life. In the instance of Pipes Canyon, the San Bernardino County's general plan calls for the area to retain a rural character. And yet, an industrial wind farm project currently proposed on the buttes would threaten the community character of not just one small community, but tens of thousands of people

who can see the Buttes from many miles away. This is an unacceptable site for any industrial development.

The DRECP should create a process that will directly involve local communities so that existing land use planning and community character is respected.

Frazier Haney
May 22, 2012