



## COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT & FIRE DEPARTMENT

May 28, 2013

Ms. Janice Rutherford, Chair  
San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors  
Second District Supervisor  
385 North Arrowhead Avenue, Fifth Floor  
San Bernardino, CA 92415

California Energy Commission

**DOCKETED  
09-RENEW EO-1**

TN 71050

MAY 30 2013

RE: Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP)

Dear Board Chair Rutherford and Honorable Members of the County Board of Supervisors:

Thank you for hosting the DRECP Workshop on April 16, 2013 which provided a valuable forum for stakeholders to share the importance of renewable energy resource development while protecting the California desert's special places, communities and economy.

The Morongo Valley Community Services District Board of Directors, as representatives of residents for the Morongo Valley we are appreciative of the attention presented by the Board of Supervisors to the concerns of our desert communities who at times feel disenfranchised. The Morongo Valley CSD was formed in 1958 to administer our fire department, Community Park, Children's library and community street lights as an independent district directly accountable to our constituents. Potential impacts on our frail socio-economic conditions are of concern.

Home to the Big Morongo Preserve and part of the Pacific Flyway, crafting a coordinated conservation plan that protects species and their habitat on public and private land is important to this community. With the County Board of Supervisors assistance as the planning process moves forward, we express concern that the California Energy Commission and DRECP staff make the plan accessible to county residents by hosting workshops enabling public input from the desert communities which may be most affected by this sweeping renewable energy plan. Only this way can the planning process move forward in a thoughtful, democratic manner that serves to protect our natural heritage, tourism based businesses and quality of life concerns.

As others have already mentioned with respect to the protection of tourism and the Morongo Basin environment; we respectfully ask that any alternatives endorsed by the Board of Supervisors consider the following:

- ✓ Scaling of renewable energy projects toward smaller acreages to increase the amount of undisturbed lands for habitat protection.
- ✓ Prioritization for the protection of springs, seeps, underground streams, listed aquatic species and riparian habitat; and presenting County stakeholders with up to date information regarding hydrologic basins, aquifers and potential impacts of DRECP alternatives on those features.
- ✓ Working in partnership with local community governments along with staff of desert management agencies such as the BLM and National Parks Service.
- ✓ Precluding development focus areas within the Morongo Basin due to Joshua Tree National Park's value as a national and international tourism destination which would affect the entire basin's local economy and the area's critical wildlife corridors.

- ✓ Consider exclusion of renewal energy development in areas with significant biological, cultural, visual or recreational resources, inclusive of those where wildlife corridors exist, as exemplified by the Soda Mountains Solar and Siluran Valley Wind project along the Old Spanish Trail.
- ✓ Includes a cumulative impacts analysis on a regional scale for public land projects, as land use planning decisions require such decisions to consider the protection of species while facilitating development. This is particularly important where proposed development is adjacent to public natural resources such as the Joshua Tree National Park and wildlife corridors within the desert basins of San Bernardino County.
- ✓ Consideration for the tourism economy and socio-economic impacts within San Bernardino County and the relative fiscal impacts for the Morongo Basin, Calico Ghost Town, Shoshone, Barstow, Baker, Needles and other such areas. As smaller local communities, the relative fiscal impacts from loss of tourism dollars are much greater due to extremely low revenues from property taxes in many impoverished county areas.

Thank you again for pursuing a thoughtful renewable energy policy on behalf of the Morongo Basin community and other county-wide areas. We are certain that stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide input on the DRECP with the continued interest, focus and support of the Board of Supervisors.

Sincerely,



Johnny Tolbert, President of the Board of Directors  
Morongo Valley Community Services District & Fire Department