



February 15, 2014

James G. Kenna  
State Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
California State Office  
2800 Cottage Way, Suite W-1623  
Sacramento, CA 95825-1886  
[jkenna@blm.gov](mailto:jkenna@blm.gov)

DRECP Director  
California Energy Commission  
Dockets Office, MS-4  
Docket No. 09-RENEW EO-01  
1516 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512  
[docket@energy.ca.gov](mailto:docket@energy.ca.gov)

RE: December, 2012 Draft DRECP & National Conservation  
Lands

Dear Mr. Kenna and DRECP Director

On behalf of the Amargosa Conservancy and Businesses in our area, I appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on the Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) and specifically on which areas in the desert will be designated as National Conservation Lands. The Amargosa Conservancy is a non-profit community-based organization whose mission is to protect the land, water and beauty of the Amargosa.

Under the ‘Description and Comparative Evaluation of Draft DRECP Alternatives,’ we support “Alternative 5 – Maximum National Conservation Lands” because this alternative is based on the premise that all lands in the California Desert have been determined by Congress to be nationally significant and lands not focused on development or other intensive uses should be included as National Conservation Lands.

We would especially like to see the following areas protected as National Conservation Lands:

The naturally, culturally, and historically rich Silurian Valley deserves protection to preserve its unique values and to protect the significant conservation investments that have been made in this remarkably beautiful region. The valley is part of a larger landscape that includes Death Valley National Park, the Wild and Scenic Amargosa River, the historic Old Spanish National Historic Trail, multiple Wilderness Areas, the Kingston Mountains, and the Dumont Dunes. This aggregate of scenic areas should not be compromised.

Moreover, many people in local communities of the California Mojave project strongly oppose it, as destination tourism dollars are a key part of their economic lifeblood. Many small businesses have been created to serve visitors—both American and from overseas—to this region, and there is deep concern that this project will harm those local economies.

We owe it to future generations to preserve these open areas to the greatest extent possible. This is also the gateway to Death Valley National Park and is a key part of the visitor experience if they approach from the south. Driving through a valley filled with solar panels or giant wind turbines as one enters Death Valley completely changes the experience. It is important to also note that Death Valley is a world-class tourist attraction and a major international tourist destination. We need to protect it and the areas surrounding it. The Silurian Valley should also be included in this protection designation.

In the areas around Shoshone and Tecopa there are springs, wetlands, fossil records, petroglyphs, early man sites and miners camps dug into the rock along the Old Spanish Trail which all weave a rich history. They have significant historic and cultural value. The region also has remarkable biological resources that are

vital to the health and welfare of the community, and have been protected in partnership with BLM. Ecotourism is the most important economic driver for these small disadvantaged desert communities and there is a potential to secure those resources for this area in California.

Economics for Inyo-Mono

This area of California is a prime place for further study and conservation. The region has had limited development but this is why we have such an opportunity to keep it protected, because it has not been degraded. It is providing us with a valuable opportunity to do significant scientific work and create precedents for future endeavors. I urge you to keep in mind that while solar developers want this land they have no investment like the people that visit and live here. Developers will cite jobs for the community as a benefit to development, however we all know that those jobs are very limited after construction is over, and on average there are less than 10 fulltime positions at a solar facility. This would irreversibly degrade the ecotourism for the communities that need it to survive, that is their sole economic driver.

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- BLM not designate this outstanding valley as a development focus area (DFA).
- BLM and the state of California should designate the roads connecting Joshua Tree National Park, Mojave National Preserve, and Death Valley National Park (Amboy, Kelbaker, and SR 127) as National Scenic By-ways as they connect millions of visitors annually to nationally significant resources.
- The BLM recognize that the Silurian Valley is a scenic and natural treasure for visitors to the desert. It is rich in the history of human transportation across the Mojave Desert, including the Old Spanish National Historic Trail, and Native American trade routes and cultural sites.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

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Signed [Signature] City Shoshone, CA  
Zip Code 92384

Shoshone Village

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Signed *Pastals* City *Tecopa*  
Zip Code *92389*  
*Pastals*

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Signed Peggy L. Linn City TECOPA

Zip Code 92389

Pastels

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Signed *Cynthia Medina* City TECOPA, CA

Zip Code 92389

*Cynthia's Guesthouse*

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Signed Gal City Teecopa

Zip Code 92389  
Teecopa Hot Springs Resort

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Signed Bernie Brown City TeopA CA 92389  
Zip Code 92389 China Ranch Date Farm

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*Pastals*

*Tecopa Calif*

*92389*

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*Karin Pine*

City

*Tecopa, CA*

Zip Code

*92389*

*Karin Pine  
Tecopa Massage*

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Signed *M. Good* City *Teocapa, CA*

Zip Code *92389*

*New Light Foto Design*