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California Energy Commission

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Chris Beale, DRECP Acting  
Executive Director  
California Energy Commission  
1516 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Supervisor James Ramos  
Chairman  
San Bernardino Bd of Supervisors  
385 North Arrowhead Avenue  
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0110

Gentlemen,

In the 45+ years since my move to Joshua Tree in 1969, I have seen many changes. But none of those changes has been as potentially destructive as the influx of industrial scale solar plants proposed in the current DRECP model.

While federal and state requirements are in place that should protect the native wildlife species and their pristine habitats, they seem relatively easy for big solar to circumvent.

Tourism is our major industry. The dessert's unspoiled beauty attracts visitors from around the world. Joshua Tree National Park estimates that their visitors alone spend over \$62 million dollars annually in the surrounding communities, many of which are disadvantaged. Ruining the view-sheds these visitors pass through on their way to the park to construct soon-to-be-outmoded, outdated solar arrays seems very shortsighted.

Then there are tax consequences. Solar installations produce virtually no additional property tax dollars. Since 80% of San Bernardino County is public land, allowing solar on private lands where building almost anything else would result in more tax dollars does not make economic sense. And putting solar installations on public lands breaks a trust with the American people to preserve these lands for future generations.

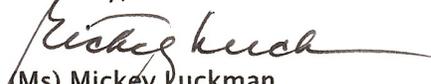
Also of concern are water and dust. The Cascade solar array used enough water during construction to supply 50 Joshua Tree families with water for a year. Once construction starts and the 'desert patina' that holds down the sand and dust is scraped away, you will always have blowing dust and sand so water for dust control will be needed forever.

The fact that the DRECP projects locating plants to generate an arbitrary 20,000 MW of power primarily in the Mojave Desert areas of San Bernardino County shows an appalling lack of appreciation for this vast unspoiled wilderness area. Only someone completely unfamiliar with the desert would presume that that's okay because "nobody lives there & there's nothing out there anyway."

But I live here and I join my voice with my neighbors and friends in requesting that the DRECP rethink it's assumptions. Please consider alternatives like rooftop solar that 1) won't destroy this beautiful desert and our quality of life, 2) won't require new infrastructure and mega-transmission lines and 3) will keep the generated power local.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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