

Energy - Docket Optical System

From: National Parks Conservation Association <nPCA@npca.org> on behalf of Wallace Elton <nPCA@npca.org>
Sent: Saturday, February 21, 2015 3:44 PM
To: Energy - Docket Optical System
Subject: DRECP NEPA/CEQA

California Energy Commission

DOCKETED

09-RENEW EO-1

TN # 74953

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Feb 21, 2015

Mr. Chris Beale

1516 Ninth Street, MS-46, Dockets Office, MS-4, Docket No. 09-RENEW
EO-01
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

Dear Mr. Beale,

I write as one who strongly supports the development of renewable and sustainable energy sources for the sake of our planet and its residents. In addition, for nearly all of my life I have explored and loved our country's national parks and other wild places, and have visited those in the California Desert. Therefore, I am very interested in and enthusiastic about the potential for the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan to both further the growth of clean energy and protect some of our most amazing, important and sensitive public lands over a wide area.

I believe that the DRECP, if finalized in a careful way, accomplish both of the above objectives while serving as an example of a thoughtful and balanced approach to energy development and conservation of wildlands and wildlife for other places that will serve our country and future generations well.

Therefore, I urge you to further improve this important plan from the conservation perspective in the following ways:

1. First and foremost, carefully analyze and review ways that this plan may impact viewsheds, dark and clear night skies, and wildlife movements to and from the nationally-important lands contained within units of our National Park System, "America's best idea." The absence of such a discussion is a major weakness of the current draft.
2. Maximize protection of Mojave National Preserve, adjacent Wilderness Study Areas, and vital desert bighorn sheep habitat by prohibiting the Soda Mountain Solar project from being located next to the Preserve and instead requiring it to relocate to one of many better sites.
3. Enhance protection for the Silurian Valley, adjacent to Death Valley National Park, by designating that area as National Conservation Lands.
4. Improve protection for spectacular Joshua Tree National Park by preventing development in the Eagle Mountain region so as to safeguard these public lands and protect important habitat for desert bighorn sheep, desert tortoise and golden eagles.
5. Prohibit the designation of renewable energy Development Focus Areas in sensitive lands, including the Lucerne region, the desert tortoise research natural area, Cadiz Dunes area, and the Mountain Pass area.

6. Ensure the continuation of critical wildlife travel routes and bird migration corridors by protecting the Sonoran Desert Thorn Woodlands, Sand Movement corridors, and important wetlands such as the Wild and Scenic Amargosa River, Salt Creek, and Bonanza Spring.

I believe that these changes can be made without unduly affecting renewable energy development prospects. With these changes, you will have produced a ground-breaking and exciting document of which you can be proud.

Thank you for protecting the California Desert and considering my views.

Sincerely,

Dr. Wallace Elton
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