

California Energy Commission
Dockets Office, MS-4
Docket No. 09-RENEW EO-01
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512
RE: Comments on the draft DRECP and EIR/EIS

California Energy Commission

DOCKETED

09-RENEW EO-1

TN # 75140

FEB 24 2015

To whom it may concern,

On February 20, Defenders of Wildlife asked our online community in the United States to write in support of stronger protections in the DRECP. Since then, we have collected 3,689 signees. The petition is as follows:

I am writing to comment on the draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP). I support the current state and federal goals to encourage the generation of clean renewable energy to address climate change, clean up air pollution and provide clean energy jobs. I also support the effort to create a DRECP that will balance the need to protect our desert lands and wildlife and the need to contribute to a clean energy future. While I support the concept of the DRECP, the current plan needs significant improvements before it will provide the necessary conservation for our declining and iconic desert wildlife and landscapes:

The DRECP must provide for the conservation of desert plants and wildlife such as desert tortoise, golden eagle and bighorn sheep. The plan must be revised to include specific and measurable biological goals and objectives.

The DRECP relies heavily on federal lands to provide the necessary conservation for wildlife such as the desert tortoise. However, this plan fails to show how federal lands will be protected and managed into the future to provide for the conservation for desert wildlife. A final plan must include clear commitments by the federal government that any lands or management actions used to mitigate or provide for the conservation of impacted wildlife are long-term and cannot be abandoned in the future. .

The draft DRECP, as written, does not extend protections to several critical areas. The DRECP must be changed to include the following areas as conservation lands: Silurian Valley, Soda Mountain, Pisgah Valley, Sacramento Mountains, Indian Wells Valley, Cadiz Valley, Harper Dry Lake Playa, and the proposed Mohave Ground Squirrel Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

The current development focus areas (DFAs) are too large and include important and sensitive areas that should not be developed, like the Desert Tortoise Natural Area and key areas in the Western Antelope Valley necessary for plants and wildlife to survive the effects of climate change. The DFAs must be refined and reduced to avoid impacts to desert wildlife and to address the concerns of local communities.

The Final DRECP must also clearly show how the counties are a part of this plan and will not make land use decisions inconsistent with the conservation strategy in the DRECP. The final plan must also show reliable sources of funding, a plan for addressing any future changes, including climate change, and a governing body that is transparent to the public so that we will be able to ensure that this plan is working into the future.

I urge you to make these important changes before the DRECP is finalized. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important planning effort.

Attached is a file containing the names of the signees.

Sincerely,

Defenders of Wildlife

P.S. Please direct any inquiries to Sarah Towle via email at stowle@defenders.org or phone at 202-772-3249.