

Docket Optical System - RE: Farmland Mitigation Options for the CESF

From: "Bob Hill" <BobH@special-places.org>
To: "Negar Vahidi" <NVahidi@aspenerg.com>
Date: 9/3/2008 4:42 PM
Subject: RE: Farmland Mitigation Options for the CESF

Hi Negar,

Thanks for your follow up. Please accept my apologies for our slow response, as we are in the midst of moving our office this week.

I am not perfectly clear what information you will need from us.

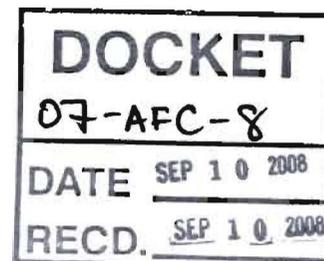
As I think I mentioned on the phone, we are working with a landowner that owns a ranch in another part of the county that is approximately 550 acres. Of those acres, approximately 200 acres are irrigated, prime farmland. The owner is interested in pursuing an agricultural conservation easement. I would need to know if CEC would consider this a suitable mitigation – it is less acreage and is a fair distance away (maybe 60 miles), but is much more capable and productive farmland than the CESF site. It is probably much more expensive land than the CESF site, as well.

Alternatively, we would be interested in exploring more about the in-lieu fee option, but we have limited experience with this. Would the payment be made directly to us? How long would we have until it would need to be spent? How would the dollar amount of the fee be determined?

Thanks for your continued assistance,

Bob

Robert A. Hill
 Conservation Director
 The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County
 743 Pacific Street
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
 phone: 805.544.9096 | fax: 805.544.5122



-----Original Message-----

From: Negar Vahidi [mailto:NVahidi@aspenerg.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 03, 2008 9:50 AM
To: Bob Hill
Subject: RE: Farmland Mitigation Options for the CESF

Hi Bob,

If you could provide information soon, that would be great. We are in the process of trying to finish up the draft analysis, and I want to make sure I get the appropriate verbiage incorporated for mitigation.

Thanks so much,

Negar

From: Bob Hill [mailto:BobH@special-places.org]
Sent: Friday, August 29, 2008 3:50 PM

To: Negar Vahidi
Subject: RE: Farmland Mitigation Options for the CESF

Hi Negar,

Thank you for your call and email. We will be in touch very soon.

Best regards,

Bob

Robert A. Hill
 Conservation Director
 The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County
 743 Pacific Street
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
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-----Original Message-----

From: Negar Vahidi [mailto:NVahidi@aspenerg.com]
Sent: Friday, August 29, 2008 3:27 PM
To: Bob Hill
Cc: Susanne Huerta; Amanda Stennick
Subject: Farmland Mitigation Options for the CESF

Dear Bob:

Thanks so much for taking the time to speak with me about the Carrizo Solar Energy Farm (CESF) Project that is currently being reviewed by the California Energy Commission for licensing. The CA Department of Conservation (DOC) has not yet officially mapped the Carrizo Plain area where the CESF is located. However, DOC has indicated that under the standard FMMP mapping criteria, the 640-acre project site would be considered Farmland of Local Importance. This is due to its land use (non-irrigated grain). Though the soil units qualify for Prime Farmland, the lack of irrigation precludes that designation. Therefore, the lands would be considered Farmlands of Local Importance by both DOC and SLO County.

We would like to coordinate the possibility of mitigation options for farmlands with the SLO County Land Conservancy. The mitigation should be for 640 acres of Farmlands of Local Importance (if lands with such a designation are available), or for lands with Prime soils (although not irrigated soils) in SLO County. Given that mitigation for these types of lands in the east county may be difficult, it may be best to establish an agricultural land trust wherein the project owner can provide mitigation fee payments into the trust. In the event that such a trust is established, the SLO County Land Conservancy would need to tell us the procedures and details for how the trust would be set up and specifics as to what would need to happen.

In order to familiarize you with the project and the farmland issues and per our conversation this afternoon, attached you will find the following information:

- A brief description of the project and a location map;
- The LESA Worksheets we've prepared for the CESF project based on information from the Project Applicant, NRCS, and SLO County;
- An aerial map of the CESF project site from the NRCS;
- The NRCS Map Legend and information regarding the soils;

- The Storie Index Ratings for the Carrizo Plains; and
- The Land Capability Classification information based on NRCS data from SLO County.

Hopefully, the information I've provided is sufficient to help facilitate your review of the potential mitigation options for the CESF project. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the number below, or via e-mail.

Again, I really appreciate your time and help in this matter.

Regards,

Negar Vahidi
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