

**DOCKET**

**07-AFC-8**

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October 27, 2009

Mr. John Kessler  
Project Manager  
Attn: Docket No. 07-AFC-8  
California Energy Commission  
1516 Ninth Street, MS-15  
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

Subject: Carrizo Energy Solar Farm (07-AFC-8)  
Impacts to Carrizo Plain National Monument

Dear Mr. Kessler:

Preservation of the natural resources of the Carrizo Plain is vital to the success of the Carrizo Plain National Monument. The attached letter speaks of these concerns and its message is relevant to all involved with permitting process of the Carrizo Energy Solar Farm.

The following letter is written by Peter Douglas, an environmentalist who, in his day job, serves as Executive Director of the California Coastal Commission. Mr. Douglas is a friend and ally in the battle to save the Carrizo Plain National Monument from the ravages of proposed nearby industrial solar development.

Sincerely,

Robin Bell  
Carrisa Alliance for Responsible Energy  
P.O. Box 4280  
Paso Robles, CA 93446

Peter Douglas  
Larkspur, CA 94939

October 24, 2009

## An Open Letter Plea to Save the Carrizo

I write as a frequent visitor to San Luis Obispo County and as a concerned resident of California. I also write from the heart to save a precious reach of landscape in the County and because of my love for this geography of raw, ineffable power and beauty. I speak of the Carrizo Plain – an oasis in time and home to the largest remaining native grasslands and highest concentration of threatened and endangered species in California.

In 2001 a portion of the Carrizo Plain, California's Serengeti, was designated a National Monument for many compelling reasons – its unique remote landscape and topographical features, ecological diversity, and its sacred cultural significance. Over time, it has become a place of evocative peace and tranquility, of haunting allure to visitors who eagerly seek its vast vistas, the myth and mystery of human presence long ago, and the draw of discovery offered by a ramble in the rolling Temblors and Calientes. As is the political reality of National Monuments, their limiting boundaries are confined within a larger setting of geography that is itself integral to the integrity and richness of the officially designated site. So while legalistic markings on a map are necessarily narrow, our thinking, appreciation and measure of its worth must not be. It is our responsibility as stewards of this unique reach of wild Nature to guard against human incursions that will inevitably cause its ruination. Like the idea of public parks, National Monuments are the people's places to be protected and preserved in perpetuity for the benefit of current and future generations. While industrial solar projects on the Carrizo are proposed on adjacent lands, they will inevitably have a permanent, cumulative and significant adverse effect on the integrity and viability of ecological, aesthetic, cultural and recreational resources within the Monument.

When special commons, essentially a democracy of place, set aside forever for all to experience and enjoy are threatened by new development, we who care about the values underlying their creation must rally to their defense. That is our obligation as patriotic protectors of ideals, values and virtues with which our remarkable multi-cultural nation evolved. Surely we are not so impoverished in vision and caring for precious, heritage places in our community that we would willingly destroy them in the name of progress. Surely we are not yet so desperate for energy that we would tear down our cathedrals for firewood?

I sense in pockets of our political, economic and civic world of leaders, a need to be seen as progressive facilitators and not as obstructionists in the way of new centralized industrial development of renewable energy. This is an alarming and, in the long view, a self-destructive, tragic trend because it is unnecessary and erosive of community

wellbeing. Cities and Counties are entirely capable of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and generating clean, renewable, affordable energy for their regions with existing technologies without destroying vast swaths of critical habitat and celebrated public lands. All that is needed is political will, courage and progressive vision.

In our headlong rush for renewables, I respectfully urge all those in positions of influence to hit pause, step back, take stock of our human and environmental condition, and envision what we will have saved for the seventh generation of our kin. It would be a travesty were we to destroy rare, irreplaceable public places in nature and deprive unborn generations the blessings of what should rightfully be their natural heritage. I have no doubt, that if the proposed industrial solar projects are built on the Carrizo Plain the essence of this National Monument will be destroyed. I am not saying don't build industrial scale solar complimented by distributed small scale energy production and distribution (e.g., solar on rooftops, other existing structures, and degraded lands coupled with robust fiscal incentives). I am saying there are alternative locations that won't destroy the Monument and that avoid major ecological damage. We must tell applicants to find better locations. Clearly, we can both save precious places and dramatically reduce green house gases: This is not an "either or" situation.

The argument that we must sacrifice fragile ecosystems for the common good (i.e., major impingement on the Carrizo to save the planet from climate change) is specious, relies on a false choice, and reflects a myopic view of the common good. Do we seriously believe a single coal-fired or nuclear plant will not be built or shut down if the Carrizo solar projects are constructed? Of course not. We must do our part to address climate change but not at the expense of an irreplaceable community jewel.

The Carrizo Plain National Monument is growing as destination for visitors from around the world. A core qualitative value of the Monument is its powerful sense of place evoked by beauty and the tranquility of its setting – the solace of silence and solitude, the democracy of open space not limited to a privileged few by expropriation, heredity, or arbitrary class distinction: A landscape uncluttered by crass human works (other than the passive presence of existing transmission lines not associated with lights, noise, habitat destruction, and traffic and which present a very different experiential impact than would eighteen square miles of industrial solar installations). It is imbued with an unquantifiable, immeasurable essence, which is precisely what makes natural national treasures like Grand and Bryce Canyons, Grand Tetons, Zion and Death Valley, all National Monuments at one time, the unique, legacy lands we all appreciate and understand them to be. We are talking about a natural wonderland that deserves and will one day achieve world heritage status if we don't destroy it first by negating its very essence and core values. It is a storied land steeped in cultural richness – an honored place in the memory of indigenous ancestors and their descendents. The imposition of a massive industrial complex on this sacred land and the human senses of those who travel there is surely a preventable desecration.

If we allow the destruction of the Carrizo Plain as a National Monument, it will be a regrettable addition to an infamous litany of environmental travesties characterized by misguided environmental pragmatism, joining Diablo Canyon, Hetch Hetchy and Glenn Canyon. I respectfully urge all who care to help save the Carrizo Plains National Monument by opposing industrial scale energy development there.

Sincerely,

Peter Douglas



BEFORE THE ENERGY RESOURCES CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
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 1516 NINTH STREET, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814  
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**APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION  
 FOR THE CARRIZO ENERGY  
 SOLAR FARM PROJECT**

**Docket No. 07-AFC-8**

**PROOF OF SERVICE  
 (Revised 10/23/2009)**

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## DECLARATION OF SERVICE

I, Robin Bell, declare that on October 27, 2009, I served and filed copies of the attached CARE-Peter Douglas CPNM Comments. The original document, filed with the Docket Unit, is accompanied by a copy of the most recent Proof of Service list, located on the web page for this project at: **[<http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/carrizo/index.html>]**. The document has been sent to both the other parties in this proceeding (as shown on the Proof of Service list) and to the Commission's Docket Unit, in the following manner:

### **(Check all that Apply)**

#### **For service to all other parties:**

sent electronically to all email addresses on the Proof of Service list;

by personal delivery or by depositing in the United States mail at Sacramento, California with first-class postage thereon fully prepaid and addressed as provided on the Proof of Service list above to those addresses **NOT** marked "email preferred."

### **AND**

#### **For filing with the Energy Commission:**

sending an original paper copy and one electronic copy, mailed and emailed respectively, to the address below **(preferred method)**;

### **OR**

depositing in the mail an original and 12 paper copies, as follows:

#### **CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION**

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I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Robin Bell

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