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April 27, 2010

Ms. Allison Shaffer
Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
1201 Bird Center Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Cc: Liana Reilly, John Kessler

RE: Rice Solar Energy Project

Dear Ms. Shaffer:

On behalf of Consumer Energy Alliance (CEA), I appreciate the opportunity to submit the following comments to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Western Area Power Administration (Western) and the California Energy Commission (CEC) regarding the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) published in March of 2010.

CEA is a non-profit, non-partisan organization committed to working with elected leaders, affected stakeholders and consumers to help create sound energy policy and maintain stable energy prices. We support improved domestic and global energy security and provide information on expanding the use of all energy resources, including oil, natural gas and alternative energy, and increasing energy efficiency. CEA has more than 135 affiliated organizations, including energy suppliers and providers, manufacturers, small businesses, and community organizations, as well as a nationwide network of more than 200,000 consumer-advocates.

Developing solar-powered electrical generation facilities will boost the national economy, stabilize energy prices and reduce our reliance on foreign energy imports while providing clean, safe and more affordable energy for consumers. In fact, the Rice Solar Energy Project is estimated to create a significant number of jobs during its construction and operations while helping the U.S. become a global leader in the growing field of solar power.

More importantly, the Rice Solar Energy Project's unique technology for storage capacity promises a stable electricity supply of up to 150 megawatts from a clean, renewable energy source. Up to seven hours of solar power is stored in molten salt, from which heat can be released whenever power is needed – even when there is no sunlight. As such, this particular solar project is able to make up for the potential impacts on the electricity grid from other intermittent and less reliable energy sources.

Upon completion, the Rice Solar energy facility will supply 450,000 megawatt hours, enough to power approximately 68,000 homes during peak electricity periods. Further, the power from this project will be generated without producing pollution or hazardous waste – which is highly beneficial for public health.

As solar power and other renewable energy resources become an important part of building a balanced energy portfolio that will support the economy by creating jobs, reduce our dependence on imported energy and increase energy efficiency, it is my hope that the federal government will continue to advance the Rice Solar Energy Project and encourage continued investment in renewable energy projects.

In conclusion, CEA believes that it is possible for the federal government to develop a balanced energy policy that encourages continued investment in renewable energy projects. We remain committed to working cooperatively with BLM, Western, CEC, the Administration, affected stakeholders and consumers to ensure U.S. energy policy accurately reflects our growing need to enhance U.S. energy security, properly protect our environment, expand our domestic resource base and work toward the thoughtful, utilization of all domestic energy resources.

If you have any questions, or if CEA can provide additional information, please feel free to contact me directly at 713-337-8800.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Holt', written over a horizontal line.

David E. Holt
President

Consumer Energy Alliance
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Houston, TX 77098