

**Energy - Docket Optical System**

**From:** Zachary, Scott [SZachary@haleyaldrich.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 8:36 PM  
**To:** Energy - Docket Optical System  
**Cc:** Zachary, Scott  
**Subject:** Public Comment-Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan

TN # 69216  
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Subject: Public Comment on the potential CEQA Ramifications of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan

I am an environmental professional with over 25 years of experience working on balancing progress, development, and environmental stewardship. I am also an avid off-road enthusiast-one that cares deeply about finding a balance for desert land use. Over the past 20 years, most of the desert that that we responsibly called our playground has been carved up, shut down and closed. We have been "reservationized" into such small and disjointed tracts of land that they have become exceedingly dangerous for me and my children to ride on.

Just when I thought it could get no worse, the DRECP overlay was released. This plan overlays nearly all of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) areas in southern California. While this plan is written under the guise of conservation, it has the potential to preferentially use our last remaining OHV areas. I believe this is the case for one primary reason-minimized EIR impact and mitigation. CEQA considers already-disturbed land and sensitive species habitat as "lower environmental impact." The OHV areas, because already squeezed by previous EIR mitigation measures and sensitive habitat protection would likely be considered disturbed habitat. It is these areas that provide developers the best "return" on their investment, minimal impact and therefore minimal mitigation.

It should be noted that the off-roading community generates tens of millions is annual revenue in motor vehicle sales, motorhome sales, trailer and RV sales, motorcycle and ATV sales as well as food, lodging and other services.

While I am an advocate of green energy, I urge scientists, developers and politicians to listen to the large constituency in Southern California and have the courage to not further alienate and take advantage of the off-roading community. We are made up of more doctors, lawyers and scientists that you may think.

Leave the OHV areas as they were intended to be-areas where the beauty of the desert and fun of motorsports can be safely enjoyed for generations.

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