

Public Comment for the BLM DRECP Public Meeting Victorville, California October 29, 2014

To our San Bernardino County, CA State, and federal officials,

I have lived in the Mojave Desert since 2001 and my husband and I have owned property in Joshua Tree, CA since 2006. This community is our home and where we plan to retire. We chose the Mojave Desert for its beauty and quiet, and for the creative inspiration that it provides us. I am a writer and artist with a PhD in Mythology and my husband is a songwriter/musician and poet.

My most immediate concern about the current plan is that we've not been given adequate time to review it. This is an 8,000 page document! I request a 60-day extension so that community members have a reasonable amount of time to review and discuss it. I also request that additional meetings be held in the East Mojave, for example, Needles, Barstow, and Yucca Valley.

I am also very concerned about the Soda Mountain Solar and Silurian Valley Solar and Wind projects that are being allowed to proceed outside of the DRECP process. Why are these projects moving ahead? This undermines the integrity of this massive planning process and public trust. I think these projects should be placed on hold and folded into the DRECP.

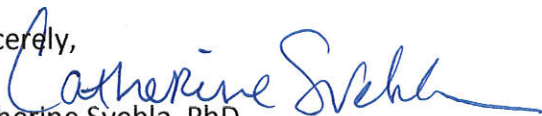
Finally, I notice that all of the proposed alternatives provide for 20,000 megawatts of renewable energy to be generated in the desert. These aren't really alternatives if the proposed outcome is ultimately the same. I think this reflects a common misperception about the desert: that it is so huge that we can take chunks out here and there and it won't matter. But that's not true.

As a mythologist, my expertise and study involves how people make and find meaning in life. The desert is an iconic landscape with a long history as a place of revelation and inspiration. Consider the roots of major world religions and the creative output of uncountable artists, poets, and musicians. Undertake a short investigation into the subject and confirm this for yourself. What makes the desert uniquely powerful is its vastness and seeming emptiness. Its unbroken vistas and harshness speak to the human heart and imagination of eternity and the divine.

The stakes surrounding our energy needs and use are very high. Global warming is real and I have children and grandchildren who represent my investment in a sustainable future. But we must be careful not to trade away the foundations of our culture. We should not sacrifice an irreplaceable source of nourishment for the human soul. If we do, then our ability to flip a light switch or drive the highways will mean very little.

If sufficient renewable energy is what we are all after, there are better ways to do it. Plenty of rooftops are sitting under the sunshine today. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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