

Energy - Docket Optical System

From: Russell Betts [rbetts@cityofdhs.org]
Sent: Tuesday, August 07, 2012 1:43 PM
To: Energy - Docket Optical System
Subject: DRECP Alternative Scenarios of July 25, 2012 - Docket No. 09-RENEW EO-01

SUBJECT: DRECP Alternative Scenarios of July 25, 2012, Docket No. 09-RENEW EO-01

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the July 25, 2012, renewable energy development alternatives of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP). I am writing regarding the Morongo Basin and its surrounding communities that are of critical economic benefit to our city.

Threats to undo conservation of these important areas is a serious concern for me. Our city's economy is significantly based on tourists who come to see the desert and then find our city and its natural mineral water spas. Desert Hot Springs is frequently mentioned as a destination after a visit to the Morongo basin.

In recent years, the spotlight has been shone on the high desert as a place for development of renewable energy projects. I support renewable energy but believe we need smart siting of such development. Destroying the Morongo Basin and its surrounding area is not smart. It will be disastrous to both the local lifestyle and our city's tourism-based economy.

It is for that reason our city joined with many others across Southern California and in the Coachella Valley to oppose a project by Los Angeles Department of Water and Power called Green Path North that represented ill-sited transmission lines.

The July 25 published scenarios of the DRECP were surprising. I am very disturbed and oppose the scenarios siting solar and wind development in the Morongo Basin on BLM lands next to Joshua Tree National Park and in undeveloped backcountry surrounding Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, Pioneertown Mountains Preserve, and Bighorn Mountain Wilderness.

The DRECP process must involve some outreach to affected communities, including the city of Desert Hot Springs. There have been no workshops or meetings held in the Morongo Basin area. This region has received no communication of any kind even though we are severely impacted.

Further, the alternative maps have changed with little or no explanation. The changes have not allowed ample time for thoughtful public comment. Considering the long-term effect of the plan, the comment period must be extended beyond the August 8 deadline.

I urge you to consider a scenario that does not develop renewable energy in the high-desert, tourism-based communities. I encourage adoption of Alternative 1 after first deleting the variance lands or adoption of Alternative 2. I strongly encourage you to open the public process to involve those most affected.

Best Regards,

Russell Betts
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