



**Planning Department
168 North Edwards Street
Post Office Drawer L
Independence, California 93526**

**Phone: (760) 878-0263
FAX: (760) 878-0382
E-Mail: inyoplanning@inyocounty.us**

May 27, 2011

California Energy Commission
Dockets Office, MS-4
Docket No. 09-RENEW EO-01
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

**Re: Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan - Draft Framework Conservation
Strategy Report
Renewable Energy Executive Order (Docket No. 09-RENEW EO-01)**

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for continuing to include Inyo County in development of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP). I am encouraged that local governments are still being consulted in the decision-making process for this Plan. However, I am deeply concerned that conservation areas continue to be planned in Inyo County, despite the County's previous input regarding this issue, both in writing (attached), as well as during dialogue between Energy Commission representatives and the Inyo County Board of Supervisors on January 25, 2011. As has been conveyed to the Commission repeatedly in the past, less than two percent of the County remains in private ownership, and approximately 65 percent of the County has been designated Wilderness.

I am particularly concerned about the Draft Conservation Strategy that has been developed that appears to ignore the County's previous input. For example, Objective 3-11.1.1 regarding Mohave ground squirrel on page IV-13 of the Draft Conservation Strategy states that it is an objective to "site facilities outside of the four core areas identified by Leitner (2008) to the extent feasible and practicable, including the Coso Range-Olancha Core Area...". Some of the few remaining areas held in private ownership in Inyo County lie within the identified Coso Range-Olancha Core Area, as well as some of the most suitable areas for renewable energy development¹.

I am also concerned about Objective 3-11.2.1 on page IV-14 of the Draft Conservation Strategy, which states "acquire __ acres of modeled suitable habitat for Mohave ground squirrel through

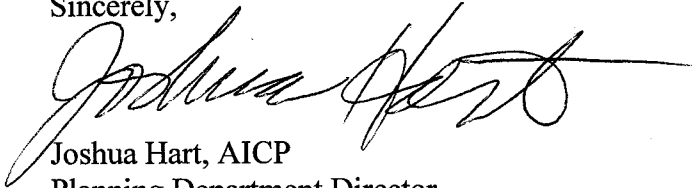
¹ Refer to <http://inyoplanning.org/RenewableNewPage.htm> regarding the County's renewable energy planning efforts.

*Letter from Inyo County Planning Department to CEC Regarding
DRECP Draft Conservation Strategy*

fee title of unprotected areas identified in the DRECP conservation strategy as high priority to contribute to the establishment of permanent core reserves or linkage areas for the species.” I would anticipate much opposition locally to establishing more preservation areas than have already been designated, particularly any that would eliminate more private lands.

I encourage the DRECP team to consider Inyo County’s input in this planning process. Please call me at (760) 878-0263 or email me at jhart@inyocounty.us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joshua Hart". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joshua Hart, AICP
Planning Department Director

Attachment

cc: Board of Supervisors; CAO; County Counsel; Governor Brown; DOI; BLM; USFWS;
CDFG; CSAC; RCRC; NACO; file



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March 31, 2010

Robert R. Copper, Director
California Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan
Conservation Area Starting Points**

Dear Mr. Copper:

Thank you for your efforts to facilitate the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) and convening the Stakeholder Committee. I am encouraged that the State is actively including local governments in its decision-making process for this Plan.

Despite these positive developments, I am deeply concerned about the proposed DRECP conservation area starting points in southeast Inyo County. The draft proposal designates areas in the Owens Valley, the Rose Valley, the Panamint Valley, and the Searles Valley as starting points to define conservation areas for the DRECP.

These starting points encompass private lands in the following Inyo County communities: Olancho, Cartago, Valley Wells, Homewood Canyon, Hawiee, Dunmovin, Coso Junction, Little Lake, and Pearsonville. If you are not aware, less than two percent of the County's land area is privately owned and almost 65 percent has been designated Wilderness.

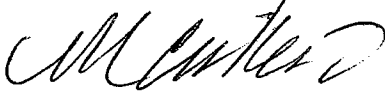
Any further restrictions on private land, reduced access to public lands, or taking of private land for public purposes are not only unjust, but contrary to the Inyo County General Plan. Furthermore, the proposed starting points encompass lands being actively studied for renewable energy development, including proposed wind energy development in the Rose Valley and near Pearsonville, and geothermal resources being studied by the Bureau of Land Management in its Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Leasing of Geothermal Resource Development in the Haiwee Geothermal Leasing Area.

*Letter from Inyo County Planning Department to Mr. Copper Regarding
Conservation Area Starting Points*

The proposed starting points should be revised to only include public lands not being studied for renewable energy development, especially in Inyo County. Any further restrictions to access to public lands will be vigorously opposed locally. Also, the County's proposed renewable energy zones (see attached), which have been shared with numerous participating agencies multiple times, should be considered in the DRECP.

Thank you for attention to these matters. Please call me at (760) 878-0263 or email me at mconklin@inyocounty.us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mike Conklin
Planning Department Director

Attachment

cc: Board of Supervisors; CAO; County Counsel; Doug Wilson, Willdan; Governor Schwarzenegger; DOI; BLM; USFWS; CDFG; CSAC; RCRC; NACO; file