

**General Plan Amendment No. 2010-03/Inyo County  
(Renewable Solar and Wind Energy)  
Comment Summary and Responses  
March 31, 2011 Planning Commission Hearing  
Inyo County Board of Supervisors' Chambers, Independence, CA, 10 a.m.**

On March 31, 2011, the Inyo County Planning Commission conducted a public hearing for General Plan Amendment No. 2010-03 (Renewable Solar and Wind Energy). The following numbered items summarize the comments provided by members of the public during the hearing. Following each numbered item, responses are provided in italics text.

1. The Board of Supervisors should consult directly with the Big Pine, Bishop, and Timbisha-Shoshone tribes.

*The County has consulted with local tribes as required by Senate Bill 18 and Government Code Section 65352.3. Refer also to Comment Letter Nos. 11 and 19 (Exhibit B, Attachment 5) and responses to those comments, and Exhibit D.*

2. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) should be prepared for the GPA.

*As discussed in the Mitigated Negative Declaration/Initial Study (MND/IS – Exhibit B, Attachment 3), the project will not result in potentially significant environmental impacts, and will work to preclude potentially significant impacts. No EIR is required. Refer to Response to Public Comment No. 1 (Exhibit B, Attachment 4) and Response No. 15-1 (Exhibit B, Attachment 5) for more detail.*

3. Southern Inyo County is overrepresented in the Overlay. Water issues are important in Darwin and Centennial Flat. Areas near Darwin may be contaminated, and should be considered for renewable energy development. Fiberoptics should be coupled with transmission. Distributed power should be utilized. Power outages are an issue in Darwin and Keeler.

*Through the criteria and public outreach process described in Exhibit B (Attachment 8), the Overlay areas were identified. Water issues are important throughout the County, and the proposed General Plan Amendment (GPA) works to minimize water use. The proposed GPA also encourages reutilization of disturbed lands, and the County supports distributed generation. Fiberoptics may be coupled with transmission. Renewable energy development may improve power supply reliability in Darwin, Keeler, and other areas in the County.*

5. New power lines should be illustrated. Will there be a need for environmental review for any future General Plan Amendments for renewable energy?

*No new transmission lines are currently proposed. For planning purposes, Section 368 Energy Corridors were considered in development of the Overlay, and are illustrated on the Bureau of Land Management’s website – refer to <http://corridoreis.anl.gov/>.*

*The County will evaluate any future GPA proposals pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act to determine if environmental review is required. The level of review, if any, will be determined based on the individual characteristics of any such projects. Although it cannot be determined at this time that all such proposals would require environmental review, it is anticipated that environmental review would be required for most proposals.*

6. Will environmental review be required for transmission?

*Appropriate environmental review will be required for any new transmission and/or upgrades. The level of review, if any, will be determined based on the individual characteristics of any such projects.*

7. Cultural resources will be impacted by renewable energy development.

*As indicated in the MND/IS (refer to Exhibit B, Attachment 3, pages 14 and 15), the proposed GPA will not directly impact any resource, as it is a policy document and does not permit development of renewable wind or solar energy. However, the County does include sensitive resources, which may be impacted by development of renewable wind or solar energy, if it occurs. The Inyo County General Plan includes goals, policies, and implementation measures to preserve and protect resources throughout the County. The proposed GPA works to further minimize impacts. As required by existing policies and regulations and the proposed GPA, site-specific studies will be required to address and mitigate potential indirect impacts. Mitigation measures based on these site-specific studies are anticipated to reduce impacts to less than significant levels. Compliance with Best Management Practices (BMP), the Inyo County General Plan, the Renewable Energy Ordinance, and other relevant local, State, and federal rules, regulations, policies, and procedures will work to ensure less than significant impacts. Overall, the GPA will work to avoid and minimize environmental impacts to the County, and will be beneficial.*

8. There are numerous plant species within the County. Previously disturbed lands should be considered for renewable energy.

*The County includes a diverse array of plant species. Potential impacts on biological resources are evaluated in the MND/IS (refer to Exhibit B, Attachment 3, pages 13 and 14). Compliance with BMPs, the Inyo County General Plan, the Renewable Energy Ordinance, and other relevant local, State, and federal rules, regulations, policies, and procedures will work to ensure less than significant impacts to biological resources. The proposed GPA encourages renewable energy development on disturbed lands.*

9. The County should support renewable energy. Renewable energy development has potential economic benefits.

*The proposed GPA encourages appropriate renewable energy development, which has potential economic and other benefits.*

10. Is the Overlay really needed? The Overlay directs renewable energy to areas, and could result in increased off-highway vehicle use, trespass, and trampling of vegetation. The County shouldn't continue to be a resource colony for other areas.

*As discussed in the Planning Commission staff report (refer to Exhibit B), it has become apparent that the General Plan does not adequately address the potential for commercial and utility scale renewable energy development, and should be updated accordingly. The Overlay is recommended as a tool to provide assurances to the community, potential developers, and interested parties about where renewable energy development might be appropriate, based on site-specific studies and appropriate environmental review and permitting. Alternatives to the Overlay are discussed in the Planning Commission staff report. Issues of OHV use, trespass, and other impacts may be addressed based on the required site-specific studies, and an extensive mitigation menu is available to select appropriate measures to work to ensure less than significant impacts.*

*As indicated in the extensive literature available, the County provides excellent renewable energy resources potential, especially in regards to solar. Development of these resources can provide benefits to the County's citizens and society at large.*

11. Vegetation exists in the County that may be impacted by renewable energy development. Section 368 Corridors provide guidance about future transmission, but transmission is not precluded elsewhere.

*Refer to Responses to Comment No. 8 previously regarding vegetation. It is acknowledged that transmission may be permitted outside of Section 368 Corridors. However, the Corridors were utilized for planning purposes for the GPA.*