



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF INYO

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October 20, 2009

California Energy Commission
Attn.: Terrence O'Brien, Deputy Director
Siting Division, Transmission and Environmental Protection
1516 Ninth Street, MS-16
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

RE: Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

On behalf of the Inyo County Board of Supervisors, I wish to convey the County's appreciation for the Commission's staff taking the time to meet with Supervisors Cervantes and Fortney, other County staff, and representatives of Kern County on August 24 in Ridgecrest to discuss the Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative (RETI) and the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP). The meeting was very informative and is a step in the right direction to involve local government in the State's decision-making process regarding renewable energy.

The Inyo County Board of Supervisors would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the County's desire to be included in all review and decision-making processes relating to the Commission's renewable energy initiatives, including the RETI and the DRECP. The Board recognizes the importance of renewable energy to the future of California and the nation, and supports the Energy Commission's efforts to more rapidly and effectively move toward renewable energy resources.

With this in mind, Inyo County submits the following comments and requests regarding the DRECP:

- Local governments should be integrally included in the DRECP, since they represent areas that will be most affected by renewable energy development. As was conveyed in the August 24 meeting, our concern about including local governments in the decision-making processes regarding renewable energy is shared by other local governments in the State. Our Board hopes and expects that the Energy Commission will coordinate with Inyo County to craft a thoughtful and useful DRECP to effectively expedite renewable energy projects while at the same time minimizing

impacts to the physical and socioeconomic environment and local land use policies in the County. Accordingly, we request that the Commission provide County representatives an opportunity for review and input into the preparation of the Plan prior to any release for public review. Additionally, we understand that several committees are being formed to guide decision-making for this process, and Inyo County should be included on the committees.

- Proposed wilderness areas, citizen wilderness areas, and other land use restrictions not enacted or defined by statute illustrated in the RETI maps must not be carried forward into the DRECP. To allow areas outside of officially designated wilderness to be referred to as such, and thereby limiting proposed applicant/project consideration in our County, misrepresents the current status of such areas as it exists within Inyo County under the law. Attached is a graphic accurately portraying existing wilderness areas in Inyo County.
- The attached graphic also illustrates potential areas for Competitive Renewable Energy Zones in the County. Please note that these are not exhaustive, and that many other locations throughout the County may be appropriate for renewable energy development. The DRECP should be crafted to facilitate renewable energy development as widely as possible, including in the areas illustrated in the map.

Per Commission staff's request on August 24, County staff will transmit lists of local stakeholders and renewable energy projects being considered in Inyo County. Please note that the County is considering a variety of alternative approaches to more effectively entitle renewable energy projects within its jurisdiction; the Commission will be apprised of any specific proposals being carried forward for consideration. If the Commission requires any additional information from the County regarding the RETI or the DRECP, County Planning Department staff may be able to assist and can be contacted at (760) 878-0263.

Inyo County values the many environmental resources that combine to make it such a unique place, while also valuing the abundant natural resources of the County, such as solar and geothermal. Such resources allow the County to play an important part in moving California toward renewables and greater energy self-sufficiency and, as a result, we look forward to being included as an active participant in the DRECP process.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Beverly A. Brown, Chairperson
Inyo County Board of Supervisors

Attachment

cc: Board of Supervisors

Kevin Carunchio, County CAO

Randy Keller, County Counsel

Doug Wilson, Willdan Associates

Roger Johnson, California Energy Commission

Mignon Marks, California Energy Commission

Andy Horne, California State Association of Counties, Member of RETI Stakeholder Steering Committee

Joe Bertotti, Regional Council of Rural Counties, Member of RETI Stakeholder Steering Committee

Jon McQuiston, Kern County Supervisor, Chairperson, First District

Don Maben, Kern County Supervisor, Second District

Craig Peterson, Chief of Staff, Kern County, First District

Lorelei Oviatt, Chief, Special Projects and Land Division, Kern County

California Department of Fish and Game

Bureau of Land Management