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November 16, 2009

California Energy Commission
Dockets Unit, MS-4
Re: Docket No. 09-Renew EO-01
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

**Re: Draft Planning Agreement for the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan
Docket No. 09-Renew EO-01**

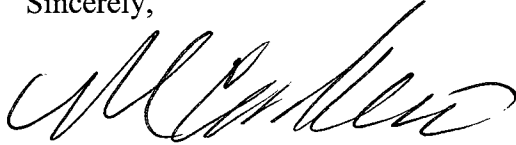
To Whom It May Concern:

The attachment to this letter provides the Inyo County Planning Department's comments regarding the draft Planning Agreement for the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP). As has previously been conveyed to the Commission, the Inyo County Board of Supervisors has expressed its hope and expectation that the Commission will coordinate with the 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. Unfortunately, the draft Planning Agreement appears to marginalize local participation, as demonstrated in the attached comments.

The Commission has not responded to the County's previous requests to provide review and input into the DRECP prior to public review. Since the County was not afforded any input into the draft Planning Agreement prior to its release, I can only assume that the Commission has elected to dismiss our request for the time being. Nevertheless, I wish to take this opportunity to remind the Commission that local governments should be integrally included in the DRECP, since they represent areas that will be most affected by renewable energy development. I continue to hope that the Commission will involve Inyo County and other local agencies to a greater extent in this and other planning processes in the future.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Conklin', written in a cursive style.

Mike Conklin
Planning Department Director

cc: Board of Supervisors; Kevin Carunchio, CAO; County Counsel; Doug Wilson, Willdan; Jim Abbott, Bureau of Land Management; Ren Lohefener, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Kevin Hunting, California Department of Fish and Game; Terrence O'Brien, California Energy Commission (CEC); Roger Johnson, CEC; Paul Richins, CEC; Mignon Marks, CEC; 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; file

Attachments

**Attachment – Specific Comments from Inyo County Planning Department Regarding the
Draft Planning Agreement for the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan**

Section 2.1 – 2.3 (pages 5 and 6) – local participation, collaboration, and coordination should be an integral component of the Agreement, and should be called out specifically in the Purposes and Goals.

Section 2.3 (page 7) – a goal should be inserted to utilize information from the Western Mojave Plan to the greatest extent possible to expedite the DRECP.

Section 2.4.4 (page 10) – although the Commission has authority to license thermal power plants of 50 MW or more, the Commission should involve local agencies to the greatest extent possible in its permitting review for such plants. If the Commission’s licensing authority is expanded to include other renewable energy facilities, it should likewise involve local agencies in its review procedures to the greatest extent feasible. Local agencies represent the communities that will be most impacted by renewable energy development, and if the Commission proactively works with local agencies to address any issues upfront, it will greatly expedite the permitting process.

Section 2.5.1 (page 10) – as the Bureau of Land Management is a party to the Plan, coordination pursuant to FLPMA should commence as soon as possible.

Section 2.5.2 and 2.5.3 (page 11) – references to local participation and coordination should be enhanced in these sections. Collaboration and coordination between the Parties and local government should be an active component of the planning process.

Section 2.7 (pages 11 and 12) – a joint CEQA/NEPA process should be considered to expedite permitting.

Section 5 (pages 13-15) – coordination and collaboration with local agencies should be added to the actions each Party will undertake in each subsection.

Section 8 (page 17) – coordination and collaboration with local agencies should be added to the Process.

Section 8.5 (page 19) – Inyo County and other interested local agencies should be members of the Executive Steering Committee.

Section 8.7.2 (page 20) – active collaboration and coordination with local agencies should be more vigorously pursued, rather than merely passive outreach.

Section 8.11 (page 23) – collaboration and coordination with local agencies should be included as a specific bullet point.

Exhibit A (page 28) – the DRECP boundary should include the entire County, as renewable energy resources are located throughout the County. The County’s proposed competitive

renewable energy zones (CREZ) should be included in the exhibit as well. The attached graphic illustrates the County's proposed CREZ.

Exhibit C (page 31) – drilling of exploratory wells and related activities (i.e., pipes, access roads, etc.) should be added to the covered activities for geothermal projects.

Exhibit C (page 32) – cleaning of photovoltaic solar panels should be included in the operations and maintenance actions.