

March 2, 2014

Jim Kenna, Director  
California State Bureau of Land Management Office

Terri Raml, Director  
California Desert District Bureau of Land Management

Katrina Symons, Field Manager  
Barstow Bureau of Land Management Field Office

Jeffrey Childers, Planning and Environmental Coordinator  
California Desert District Bureau of Land Management

**RE- Soda Mountains Solar Project**

Dear Mr. Kenna, Ms. Raml, Ms. Symons and Mr Childers:

We comprise some of the leadership of Mojave National Preserve, Joshua Tree National Park and Death Valley National Park since their creation with passage of the California Desert Protection Act of 1994. We are proud of our public service, maintaining the public trust and dedicating our lives to the stewardship and protection of the California desert national parks' spectacular natural and cultural resources. We have a life-long covenant with the American people to protect special places for present and future generations. We respectfully request that the Soda Mountains Solar Project be relocated and that a supplemental draft EIS be published that would identify and evaluate alternative project locations in a broader locale than was identified in the draft EIS, with a corresponding 60 day comment period.

The Soda Mountain Solar Project is proposed to be located in a high resource conflict area less than one mile from the boundary of the Mojave National Preserve, the third largest national park unit in the lower 48 states. It would be one of the closest, if not the closest, industrial scale renewable energy projects to a national park unit in the entire southwestern United States. The proposed project would be approximately 4000 acres with the solar field occupying approximately 2500 acres, and would straddle both north and south sides of Interstate 15 due west of Baker, California.

The project threatens bighorn sheep migration corridors, desert tortoise habitat, the integrity of adjacent wilderness study and the Mojave National Preserve. Moreover, its groundwater pumping could harm water quality and quantity at MC Spring in the Mojave National Preserve, the home of the federally endangered tui chub, one of our most unique and rare desert fish. Finally, the project impairs scenic vistas from the Mojave National Preserve, violating the recently passed San Bernardino County Renewable Energy Ordinance, which states that: "For proposed facilities within two (2) miles of the Mojave National Preserve boundaries, the location, design, and operation of the proposed commercial solar energy facility will not be a predominant visual feature of, nor substantially impair, views from hiking and backcountry camping area with the National Preserve."

In conclusion, we respectfully request a supplemental EIS that will identify and evaluate other low-resource-conflict locations for the Soda Mountains Solar Project, as well as a 60 day extension for

public comment because of the current proposal's harmful impacts to groundwater and federally endangered species; scenic vistas; bighorn sheep migration corridors and desert tortoise habitat.

Thank you for your time and Consideration.

Sincerely,

Dennis Schramm  
Superintendent, Mojave National Preserve (2006-2011)

Mary Martin  
Superintendent, Mojave National Preserve (1995-2005)

Curt Sauer  
Superintendent, Joshua Tree National Park (2002-2010)

Mark Butler  
Superintendent, Joshua Tree National Park (2010-2014)

J.T. Reynolds  
Superintendent, Death Valley National Park (2001-2009)