Rejected Alternative: Energy generation on industrial and residential rooftops, as well as in industrial disturbed Private lands.

The DRECP alternatives do not consider the impact of rooftop, industrial site, and other local solar generation which has the incredible advantages of zero loss from transmission, negates the need for additional transmission corridors, eliminates the need for any taking of Public lands for utility scale generation. Moreover rooftop and industrial site generation on already developed lands drastically reduces the need for large quantities of water that is required in desert utility scale renewable sites for dust control (e.g. at the solar One Chuckwalla site 1.3 AF of water PER DAY for dust control that is about 3.3 what a normal desert family uses in a YEAR).

The 20,000 MW target for renewable generation has already been met in some local areas via conservation, rooftop generation and conventional installation on disturbed lands. Comments from lead agency (e.g. Kern County) and professionals (e.g. Mr. Paul Douglas) indicate that the 20,000 MW target has been met in some areas, and further, that the 20,000 target does not consider the successful conservation efforts that have been undertaken by the California taxpayers who are essentially underwriting, along with the citizens of the US, the subsidies for these renewable operators on public lands.

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Testimony at a September Desert Advisory Meeting from a knowledgeable citizen highlighted the opinion by many knowledgeable renewable professionals that the Renewable Portfolio Standard is out of date. Paul Douglas, the originator of the RPS commented in August 2014 that the RPS Calculator, which was adapted in 2009, fails to address the reality of energy generation in this decade. The Desert Advisory Commission’s Subgroup on the DRECP, in concentrating on examining the purpose and need of the DRECP mandates, found that the data used for the RPS is out of date, and further that the 33% goal for renewable energy generation in CA has been met.

Comments from lead agency (e.g. Kern County) and professionals (e.g. Mr. Paul Douglas) indicate that the 20,000 MW target has been met in some areas, and further, that the 20,000 MW target does not consider the successful conservation efforts that have been undertaken by the California taxpayers who are essentially underwriting (along with the citizens of the US) the subsidies for these renewable operators on public lands.

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A. Under FLMPA how will the implementation of the DRECP affect existing mining claimants’ rights?

The designated areas will close those areas to mineral entry. It is critical to our society that mineral studies be continuously conducted in the light of evolving scientific knowledge and understanding of past environments, evolving tectonic events and the continuing evolution of technology and its need for mineral, some rare, resources. I am not confident that sufficient scientific studies have been conducted that will support the exclusion of mineral entry on the total of those lands.

The imposition of ACEC’s over areas in which existing mining claims seems to be in conflict with the mining claimants’ rights to explore for minerals on public lands. It seems illogical that any studies conducted to support the establishment of an ACEC could possibly be thorough enough to establish sufficient data that would legitimately underlie criteria to establish **150 new ACEC’s**. Each ACEC is assumed to be unique, or why would such a designation be proposed?

A. What would be time line to conduct such studies which would support ACEC’s? Where would public comment on the designation of the new ACEC’s would be allowed. Here in the DRECP process? Ninety days is nowhere near enough time to comment on ACEC’s that, in fact have not even been subjected to the time required for proper scientific scrutiny.

It sounds from the reading of the DRECP document that the lands so designated for the ACEC’s would be withdrawn from multiple use during the “scientific” studies of the ACEC’s. Each ACEC is assumed to be unique. Under the short time line for implementation of the DRECP, how would it be possible to conduct the necessary scientific studies to support such “unique designations” without incurring accusations of “shoddy science” practices?

Lands targeted as ACEC’s should be open to the establishment of mineral claims until and unless the ACEC has sufficient scientific conclusions to support the establishment of an ACEC. It is illogical to think that there is enough viable scientific data to support the establishment of the huge numbers (150) of ACEC’s at this time, considering the time used for the studies to establish ACEC’s in the recent past. This hurried and identical programmatic approach to the designated ACEC’s seems to NEGATE the claim that each ACEC is in fact, unique, and looks instead as an attempt to exclude or at least discourage any future mineral entry.
It is critical to our society that mineral studies be continuously conducted in the light of evolving scientific knowledge and understanding of past environments, evolving tectonic events and the continuing evolution of technology and its need for mineral, some rare, resources.

A. What happens to mining claims in designated areas when goals have been attained?

The text seems to indicate that designated areas will be withdrawn from mineral entry. But what if the 33% goal is reached in 5 yrs, or 10 years - or as has been indicated by the testimony of knowledgeable professionals - has already been attained? Will the designated lands then be released to multiple use? If not why not? If the goals for renewable energy are attained all lands designated should be UN-designated and released back to multiple use.

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Response to Comment Letter F145

Dinah Shumway
February 22, 2015

F145-1 and F145-2 Thank you for your comments. While they have not resulted in a change in the document, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has taken them into consideration. The distributed generation alternative does not meet BLM’s purpose and need. Distributed generation was considered but not carried forward as discussed in Volume II, Section II.8.2.1.

F145-3 As described in Chapter I.1, Phase I of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) is the BLM Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that addresses activities on BLM-administered lands only. See Section I.3.3 for a description of the renewable energy planning process used for the DRECP, which sets the renewable energy and transmission planning context for developing the BLM Proposed LUPA and Final EIS for BLM-administered lands.

F145-4 This comment has not resulted in a change to the document but the BLM has taken it into consideration.


F145-7 This comment has not resulted in a change to the document but the BLM has taken it into consideration.

F145-8 Site-specific management plans will be developed for each Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) unit to address protection of the specific values of those units. The BLM will follow national guidance for management of NLCS units, found in Manual MS-6100. All known rock hounding sites were reviewed prior to land use designation decisions to avoid and minimize potential impact to access and use. Conservation and Management Actions (CMAs) for recreation would also reduce impacts.


F145-10 The BLM used a combination of biological conservation planning processes (described in Section I.3.4), public input (described in Volume V), and local staff knowledge to identify areas that met the relevant and important criteria to consider for ACEC designation. The relevant and important criteria for each area is included in the Special Unit Management Plans in Appendix L. The BLM is using the LUPA process, including the necessary review and public participation through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA),
to consider these ACECs, and the Record of Decision will be the final agency action for their designation.

**F145-11** If designated through the Record of Decision, the ACECs will still be available for multiple use. CMAs have been developed to protect the relevant and important criteria for which the ACECs have been identified. This is found in Section II.3.4.2 of the Preferred Alternative, and the corresponding section of each action alternative, and in Appendix L. The Draft DRECP and Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/EIS and Final EIS present the rationale for the designation of the ACECs.

**F145-12** The DRECP LUPA does not propose mineral withdrawals. The BLM may consider mineral withdrawals on a case-by-case basis in the future as part of adaptive management and implementation. Any future withdrawal proposals will be subject to all applicable laws and regulations.

**F145-13** The BLM agrees and does conduct mineral potential reports and mineral reports as necessary to authorize various actions.

**F145-14** See response F25-2.

**F145-15** This comment has not resulted in a change to the document but the BLM has taken it into consideration.