I believe that renewable energy is a great thing. I have solar. I envision the day when all new construction is mandated to have solar. But developing large, renewable energy plants wherever a renewable energy developer wants could be critical to the wildlife and ecosystems in the sensitive desert areas. Without a solid conservation plan, the corridors could be cut off from the Big Horn sheep; tortoise could lose their grounds and birds could continue to be caught in the wind turbines. An estimated 37 species are living within the proposed areas. The wildlife linkages are crucial to their habitat. It is essential that an overall plan for renewable energy be implemented before any additional renewable energy is developed in the California deserts.

My suggestion would be to use already disturbed lands and to try to keep as much of the wilderness as is. I do think that having an overestimation of land needed to provide adequate renewable energy is preferable to an underestimation. This would keep unnecessary lands from being used arbitrarily and renewable energy plants from being developed where it’s not needed. Thus, in the long run, protecting more land and wildlife.

I would like to see DRECP and County staff working with local communities. The desert population would appreciate more meetings to learn about the projects projected for their areas and to have an opportunity to voice their concerns, ask questions and suggest ideas. We would also like to have information about the plan to be more accessible. There could be reports to our local newspapers, T.V. and radio.

Of great concern, at this time, is funding for the implementation of the plan. Without reliable sources of funding; the endurance of the management and monitoring of the plan is shaky. We have no evidence of adequate funding, yet.

These are my concerns.

Thank you,

Barry Michael Shaw

Yucca Valley
Response to Comment Letter F69

Barry Shaw
February 9, 2015

F69-1 Thank you for your comment. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has taken it into consideration in developing the BLM Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). See Volume II, which includes revised descriptions and mapping for the range of alternatives considered for the BLM LUPA, including substantial reductions in Development Focus Areas (DFAs), as compared to that proposed for the Plan-wide Draft DRECP alternatives and LUPA conservation designations developed to conserve important ecological and cultural resources and values across the California deserts on BLM-administered lands.

F69-2 Your suggestion to use disturbed lands is noted. Disturbed lands were included in each of the action alternatives in the EIS. You preference for an overestimation of lands needed to provide adequate renewable energy is noted. While it has not resulted in a change in the document, the BLM has taken it into consideration.

F69-3 BLM works and would continue to work with state and local officials. Appropriate public notice would be given of any proposed projects.

F69-4 Thank you for your comment. The BLM has taken your comment into consideration in developing the BLM Proposed LUPA and Final EIS. See Section II.3.7 for a description of LUPA implementation.
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