

NEWS RELEASE



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Innovative Federal and State Agreement Will Aid Proposed Renewable Energy Projects in Southern California

The joint Federal and State Renewable Energy Action Team (REAT) announced today the signing of an agreement to enable renewable energy projects proposed in the California Desert to address mitigation requirements through the use of a deposit account rather than having to individually undertake mitigation for each project.

The necessary amount of funds to mitigate a project's impacts to wildlife and habitat will be determined project by project. This process will expedite the projects and ensure that a wider range of mitigation measures can be used to address environmental impacts.

The REAT is comprised of representatives of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, California Department of Fish and Game, and the California Energy Commission.

The REAT account will be managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). The NFWF is a non-profit organization established by the U.S. Congress in 1984, with the mission of sustaining, restoring, and enhancing the nation's fish, wildlife, plants, and habitats. Dispersal of the funds to implement mitigation will then be made by NFWF based on what specific mitigation actions a REAT agency determines is appropriate.

“This is another tool we can use to help renewable energy projects while ensuring mitigation of impacts is both efficient and effective,” said Jim Abbott, California State Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

Funds from individual energy projects that are deposited to the REAT account can be pooled in order to acquire contiguous blocks of quality wildlife habitat that will provide for wildlife connectivity and climate change adaptation. Funds can also be used to improve existing management programs or develop new beneficial management programs for existing conserved lands.

Although the REAT account is limited to the Mojave and Colorado Desert regions of southern California, this type of agreement could be established in other parts of the country where renewable energy projects are being proposed.

The REAT was created by a Governor's Executive Order and a Memorandum by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar. This effort supports both the Governor's and the Secretary's goals of creating green jobs, reducing dependence on foreign energy sources, and meeting aggressive greenhouse gas reduction goals.

For more information about renewable energy in California, including Questions and Answers about the REAT account, go to <http://www.energy.ca.gov/33by2020/>