

California Energy
CommissionCalifornia Department
of Fish and WildlifeU.S. Bureau of
Land ManagementU.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service

For Immediate Release: January 3, 2013
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Meeting on Interim Document for Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan to be held January 9

What: State and federal agencies will hold a meeting on January 9 to discuss an interim document on a plan that will protect important desert habitat and identify low conflict lands for renewable energy development in the California desert.

The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) is an unprecedented collaboration among local, state and federal agencies to streamline renewable energy project and transmission line permitting while conserving biological and natural resources in the California desert.

The scope of the interim document, summary and highlights of the six draft alternatives and a no-action alternative, and an overview of the transmission technical group's transmission report are among the scheduled topics that the Renewable Energy Action Team (REAT) will discuss. An agenda will be posted before the meeting at: <http://www.drecp.org/meetings/index.html>

The interim document released is called the Description and Comparative Evaluation of Draft DRECP Alternatives. The interim document and a fact sheet about it can be found at: <http://www.drecp.org/documents/>

When: Wednesday, January 9, 2013, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Where: This is a WebEx only meeting. To participate by telephone or by computer, click the link and scroll to page 3: http://www.drecp.org/meetings/2013-01-09_meeting/2013-01-09_Notice_DRECP_Public_Meeting.pdf

Who: The interim document was released in response to calls from stakeholders for another opportunity to review the plan and provide input before the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report, due out this summer.

The DRECP is being prepared by REAT, a collaborative effort among the California Energy Commission, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

When completed, the DRECP will be an effective biological mitigation and conservation program and provide renewable project developers with more regulatory certainty for their solar, wind, or geothermal projects.

The DRECP is focused on the desert regions of seven California counties - Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego. Approximately 22.5 million acres of federal and non-federal California desert land are in the DRECP planning area.

The REAT agencies receive input from the DRECP stakeholder committee on the development of the DRECP. The committee includes local governments in the desert regions, renewable energy developers, environmental and nongovernmental organizations, recreation organizations, a Native American renewable energy organization, and electric utilities. State and federal agencies also participate in stakeholder committee meetings.

Why: Streamlined permitting of renewable energy projects is critical to meeting the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) established by state law. Senate Bill 2X (Simitian), signed into law by Governor Edmund Brown, Jr. on April 12, 2011, as Public Resources Code § 25740, requires California to meet the 33 percent renewable energy portfolio standard by 2020. The DRECP, when completed, is expected to further these objectives and provide binding, long-term endangered species permit assurances while facilitating the review and approval of compatible renewable energy projects in the Mojave and Colorado deserts in California.

As part of President Barack Obama's all-of-the-above strategy to expand domestic energy production and strengthen the economy, the U.S. Department of the Interior has been working to advance smart development of renewable energy on public lands. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar made renewable energy one of the highest priorities through his first Secretarial Order-3285A in 2009. The State of California and the Department of Interior have been working in partnership since 2009 under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate conservation efforts and renewable energy development in a cooperative and timely manner.

The U.S. Congress also provided incentives for renewable energy projects with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The DRECP allows local, state and federal agencies to plan for renewable energy development and long-term conservation of precious desert areas across jurisdictional boundaries and on a landscape and ecosystem-based scale.

More information on the DRECP can be found at www.drecp.org.

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