

## MEMORANDUM

To: Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative (RETI) Stakeholder Steering Committee  
From: Ashley Conrad-Saydah, California resident and renewable energy project manager  
Re: RETI Phase 1B comment  
Date: November 18, 2008

California is a state of exceptional diversity and natural wealth. One of only 34 Conservation International-designated biodiversity “hotspots” in the world, California is home to thousands of endemic flora and fauna. This environmental richness is under intense threat from rapid development, population pressure, climate change and other widespread changes. Why, then, does the environmental section of the RETI phase 1B report group all of the CREZs together under one ranking scheme, thereby failing to reference the amazing diversity in the state in the ranking scores? Environmental richness in each of these CREZs varies considerably depending on the setting of the CREZ. A linear equation based, in part, on arbitrary, biased weights does not aid the CREZ distinction process. As a California resident interested in preserving the breadth and depth of environmental richness in the state and making use of renewable energy resources for years to come, I believe more data analysis should be completed to best assess the CREZs on their environmental merits.

Each CREZ should be reevaluated in the specific ecoregion where it exists, with emphasis given to existing resource management and land use plans.

While the initial analysis performed by the environmental working group (EWG) is helpful, additional analysis should be performed on existing datasets used to derive the EWG environmental rankings, to produce a comprehensive environmental report. The below analysis would bolster the EWG report.

- First, perform a sensitivity analysis on each criterion used in the environmental rank equation and on the equation as a whole. This analysis will prove the significance of each criterion and highlight the robustness of the datasets used to generate each score. Regression analysis will help determine the overall significance of the valuation methodology and the relative significance of the EWG’s findings.
- Second, the sensitivity analysis methods and their results should be detailed in the report. A reference to the uncertainty of the results should also be included in the bubble diagram (Figure ES1).
- Finally, the Phase 1B report should include an unbiased qualitative assessment of the CREZs which includes a description of the cumulative (or exponential) error generated by the linear equation used and the effects that error has on environmental ranks.

A thorough assessment of the environmental quality of each CREZ relative to the area where it is situated, not relative to generalized data about the other CREZs, is imperative to prove the utility and reliability of the reported results.