

January 14, 1998

Mr. Andrew C. Welch
High Desert Power Project, LLC
3501 Jamboree Road, South Tower Suite 606
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Dear Mr. Welch:

As agreed at the January 8, 1998 Transmission System Engineering Workshop, the December 17, 1997 Transmission System Engineering discussion topics 1 through 11 will be treated as data requests, and should be numbered 78 through 88. Responses to these data requests are expected on January 16, 1998, as discussed at the workshop.

Attached is a January 7, letter from Ms. Rebecca Jones representing the Department of Fish and Game. Ms. Jones raises six questions regarding use of ground water and potential impacts on riparian habitat in the basin. We believe that these are important questions which should be addressed. Therefore, pursuant to Title 20, California Code of Regulations, section 1716, the California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) staff requests that the applicant supply the information specified in the attached January 7, 1998 letter from Ms. Jones. These should be numbered Data Requests 89 through 94.

Written responses to the attached data requests are due to the Energy Commission by February 13, 1998 or at such later date as may be agreed upon by the Energy Commission staff and the applicant. If you are unable to provide the information requested in the data requests or object to providing it, you must, within 15 days of receiving these requests, send a written notice of your inability or objection(s) to both Commissioner Jananne Sharpless, Presiding Member of the Committee for this proceeding, Ms. Jones, and me. The notification must also contain the reasons for not providing the information and the grounds for any objections. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 20, § 1716)

If you have any questions regarding the attached data requests or require clarification of the information being requested, please call Ms. Rebecca Jones at (562) 590-5137 or me at (916) 653-1614.

Sincerely,

Richard Buell
Siting Project Manager

Attachment

cc: Proof of Service
Rebecca Jones, Department of Fish and Game

RKB:rk
DATAREQ2.WPD

January 7, 1998

Mr. Richard Buell
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

Dear Mr. Buell:

The Department has reviewed the revised Application For Certification for the High Desert Power Project (HDPP). Some concerns still exist regarding the water need for the project. I have forwarded information regarding the placement of the wells to our consulting hydrologist, Tom Bilhorn, who deals with issues on the Mojave River. The following are concerns and questions posed by Tom after reviewing the proposed well placements.

HDPP may consumptively use eight million gallons of water per day, which is more than 10 percent of the average 66,000 acre foot runoff into the Mojave River (Mojave Water Agency (MWA) Second Annual Engineers Report on Water Supply) and more than half of the water needed by the riparian system needs of the Mojave River below the Forks dam (Lines, Bilhorn, USGS, 1996). The project plans to buy water from the MWA, but as a commercial activity they are priority restricted and subject to interruptions. When this interruption occurs, they propose to use well water from a location approximately 1.5 miles southwest of the Lower Narrows. At the Lower Narrows more than 100 acres of cottonwood-willow forest has been essentially lost due to overpumping. The riparian habitat is fed from riverbed seasonal surface flows and laterally percolating water in the riverbed and from the banks.

The following are questions we would like to see addition information on:

- 1) What is the expected time, duration, rate and quantity of water to be provided by the proposed well field?
- 2) Will imported water be purchased to replace the water pumped?
- 3) If proposed, how, when and where will imported water be provide to replace the water pumped from the wells?

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4) What are the transmissivity properties of the aquifer to be produced? What will be the extent and heights of the cone of depression produced under normal and worst case conditions?

5) What are the expected recharge properties for the aquifer to be produced? At what rate will water levels be returned to pre-pumping conditions? What are the recharge sources?

6) What impacts will well field production, presumably as much as 8 million gallons per day, have on adjacent property owners including drawdown, water quality, and subsidence?

The Department is concern about activities that may deplete water supplies from within the basin area which could further adversely impact the riparian habitat. If you have any further questions regarding this matter, please contact me (805) 285-5867.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Jones
Environmental Specialist
Region 5