

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION HEARING
Imperial Valley Solar Project, Docket 08-AFC-5

August 16, 2010

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DATE	<u>AUG 16 2010</u>
RECD.	<u>AUG 13 2010</u>

My name is Ernest Garcia and I am a resident of Folsom, CA, and a 7th generation Californian. I'm a member, past Board Member and current Chair of the *Expedientes* (Land Grant Records) Committee for Spanish and Mexican land grant holdings of Los Californianos. This is a group of some 750 members who trace their roots back to the first Spanish colonists that came to California, starting in 1769. I'm also Vice President of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, Sacramento, CA Chapter, and a member of Spain's Society of the American Revolution (based in Madrid, Spain), 15,000 and 53 members strong, respectfully. The relevance of this background will soon be apparent.

The proposed location of the Imperial Valley Solar Project site near Coyote Wells and Plaster City, CA would cause irreparable damage to the interpretation and appreciation of California's unique history, specifically to the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. As my background illustrates, the history of the Anza trail has not only national, but also international implications.

The trail crosses territories once governed by American Indian peoples, by Spanish and Mexican citizens and, ultimately, by Americans. If approved as currently planned, the project would cut across the historic Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, established by acts of the U.S. Congress and administered by the National Park Service.

None of the documents on the CEC and BLM websites for the application describe adequate mitigation for the permanent destruction of the local habitat, the flora and fauna unique to the telling of the story of California's and America's immigrant past. It is my sincere concern that the project would forever destroy an important segment of this historic route and deprive generations of Americans from meaningful first-hand experiences that can bring them to a better understanding of our multiethnic culture and heritage. This concern is for the trail corridor itself and its nearby recreational components.

The Anza trail was first used by the indigenous peoples of California and Arizona. It was later used as an early and important line of communications between New Spain and Alta California, current day Mexico and California, respectively, during the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1776, Spanish Army Captain Juan Bautista Anza used the trail to bring over 240 Spanish soldiers and their families to establish the city of San Francisco, the Mission Dolores and the Presidio of San Francisco. In 1782, Captain Fernando de Rivera y Moncada used the same trail to guide Spanish soldiers and settlers to establish the cities we know today as Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara. Among the group that established Los Angeles and Ventura came my maternal, Sons of the American Revolution compatriot, and fourth great-grandfather, Josef Manuel Valenzuela, a soldier, who (like all Spanish Colonial citizens at the time) monetarily supported the Continental Congress and Army during the American Revolution. In 1780, King Carlos, III, asked every Spanish soldier in Spain's domain to contribute two pesos to the American Revolution, and this money was subsequently transmitted to the American Colonies, in part, by way of the Anza trail.

If approved, the project would set a dangerous precedent. This project is no more appropriate on this trail than it would be on the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge or the National Mall in Washington, D.C. I urge the commission to deny the application for the licensing and construction of the Imperial Valley Solar power plant in its current location. I do not believe that you have the right and authority to rescind or modify Public Law 90-543, and Public Law 101-365 that recognized the contributions and importance of this trail and my ancestors. The Federal government is tasked with the identification and protection of the historic route and its historic remnants and artifacts for public use and enjoyment.

Sincerely,

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