

State of California
Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission

In the Matter of:)	Docket No. 09-AFC-9
)	
Application for Certification)	STAFF'S STATUS
<u>for the Ridgecrest Solar Energy Project</u>)	CONFERENCE STATEMENT

In a notice dated February 11, 2010, the California Energy Commission's (Energy Commission's) committee overseeing the Ridgecrest Solar Energy Project (Ridgecrest) directed parties to file status conference statements for the February 24, 2010, status conference. The Order stated that the status conference statements must be filed no later than February 18, 2010. This is staff's status conference statement.

I.

DISCUSS WHETHER, AND TO WHAT EXTENT, COMPLIANCE WITH THE CRITICAL DATES SPECIFIED IN THE SCHEDULING ORDER MIGHT BE IN QUESTION

The most immediate critical date would be for the publishing of the Staff Assessment. The Committee Schedule lists the Staff Assessment due on March 3, 2010. The Ridgecrest project has presented a number of challenges for multiple technical sections and, as a result, the Staff Assessment will not be published until March 26, 2010, at the latest. This publication date is predicated upon the assumption that technical staff will provide their draft assessments by February 26, 2010 for internal and US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) review. After a short review period, staff will then have three days to make appropriate changes to the Assessment. Following publication, staff anticipates holding at least two workshops, beginning in April, 2010, which would allow parties and the public adequate time to review the Staff Assessment and provide meaningful comments.

The next critical date listed on the Committee Schedule is April 30, 2010, the date a Staff Assessment Addendum is prepared. Staff anticipates preparing the addendum (Errata) between April 30 and July 15. Therefore staff plans to publish the Staff Assessment; Errata/ Final Environmental Impact Statement (SAE/FEIS), no later than July 30, 2010. Staff does not anticipate a July 30, 2010 publication date for the SAE/FEIS to cause the remainder of the schedule to significantly change from the dates provided in the Committee Schedule.

II.

RECOMMENDED REASONABLE SOLUTIONS TO ENSURING COMPLIANCE

Staff believes that although publishing no later than March 26, 2010 represents some schedule slippage, the work product will be more complete, saving time later in the schedule.

February 18, 2010

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Jared Babula
JARED BABULA
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