

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 1, 2018

Jerome Perez  
California State Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
2800 Cottage Way, Rm. W-1623  
Sacramento, CA 95825

**Re: Notice of Intent to Amend the California Desert Conservation Area, Bakersfield, and Bishop Resource Management Plans and Prepare Associated Environmental Impact Statements or Environmental Assessments**

Dear Director Perez:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) and to urge your agency not reopen the DRECP and instead work in partnership with the state, local governments, tribal governments, and other stakeholders to implement the Plan collaboratively and effectively. California has led our nation in setting and achieving strong climate change goals necessary to shift our economy from fossil fuel dependency to clean, renewable energy sources. Effective implementation of the current DRECP will ensure the California desert continues to play a critical role in achieving these goals.

In 2008, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and State of California started developing the DRECP, a landmark effort that represented a fundamental shift in how renewable energy development is sited in California. Using science-based, landscape-scale conservation analysis, the Plan identified both lower-conflict areas suitable for renewable energy development as well as areas with significant conservation, recreation, and cultural values more suitable for conservation. The BLM collaborated with a broad array of stakeholders including: other federal agencies, the state of California, tribal governments, the Department of Defense, the seven impacted counties, and dozens of desert communities. The process involved hundreds of public meetings and tens of thousands of public comments from local communities, the renewable energy industry, conservation organizations, recreation groups, mining companies, and livestock grazing permittees. Eight years later, the BLM finalized a plan that balanced California's need to build renewable energy projects to meet its clean energy goals with the need to protect the significant natural, cultural, and recreation resources on 10.8 million acres of public land.

The DRECP was designed to make permitting for renewable energy projects and transmission on public land faster and more efficient, providing certainty for developers for projects within the Development Focus Areas. The Plan identified more than 388,000 acres of Development Focus Areas for renewable energy development, which is the most public land set aside for renewable energy development in any public land management plan to date. The Plan also designated more than 4.2 million acres of new conservation area and 3.6 million acres for recreation, such as hiking, camping, rockhounding, and off-road recreation.


We believe that reopening and amending the DRECP would undermine the careful balance between renewable energy development, conservation, and other multiple uses in the desert. Furthermore, it would create new uncertainty, increasing costs for renewable energy and transmission development and jeopardizing California's efforts to meet its clean energy goals. Additionally, no new information has been provided that justifies amending the Plan and rolling back the progress already made.


We urge the BLM to focus its limited resources on implementing the DRECP effectively, instead of reopening the Plan just eighteen months after adoption. The DRECP already contains mechanisms that allow the BLM, in collaboration with the State, to keep pace with changing science and technology to make any necessary modifications and course corrections through the implementation process. Therefore, we urge the BLM to continue to work with the State, developers, and other stakeholders to move forward with the implementation of the Plan and use these mechanisms to identify and address any issues that may arise.


Thank you for your consideration and attention to this important matter.


Sincerely,


  
Raul Ruiz, M.D.  
Member of Congress

  
Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress


  
Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

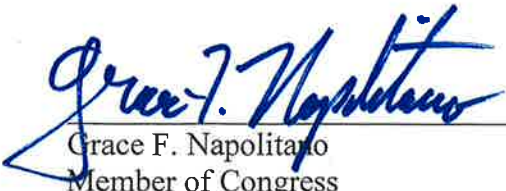
  
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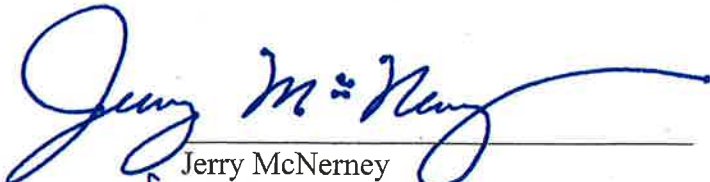
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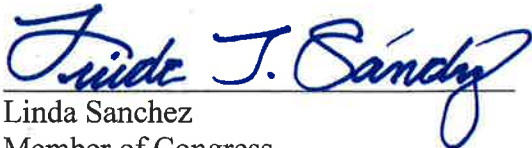
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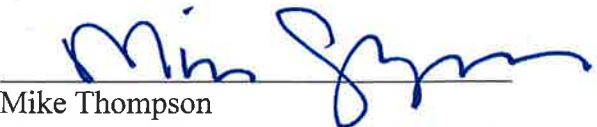
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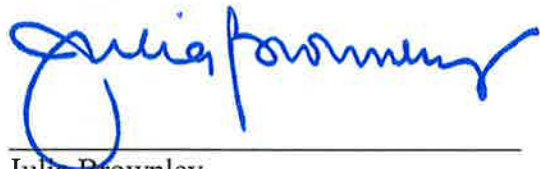
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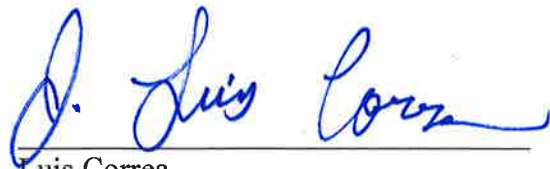
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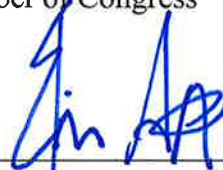
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