

Renewable Energy Development Projects Solar and Wind



Issue:

State and national energy policies mandate renewable energy development projects to meet the increasing demand for energy and to reduce consumption of carbon-based fuels. California's electric utility companies are required to begin using renewable energy to produce 20 percent of their power by 2010, and 33 percent by 2020. Major sources of renewable power include solar and wind energy.

Many large solar and wind energy projects are being proposed in California's desert area on public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM has authorized a total of 192 rights-of-ways for the use of public lands for wind energy production sites. They have also received right-of-way requests encompassing more than 300,000 acres for the development of approximately 34 large solar thermal power plants totaling approximately 24,000 megawatts.

Potential Impact:

The BLM manages 82 wilderness areas comprised of 3.7 million acres in the State of California; most in the southern California desert region. Between the BLM wilderness, National Parks and Monuments (4.3 million acres), and military reservations (4 million acres), the 25 million acre desert region has limited space for solar and wind energy development projects.

Solar and wind energy development projects require large land areas and close proximity to energy corridors and roads. Indiscriminate location of solar and wind development could block existing routes or severely restrict access to areas traditionally open to motorized recreation.

CA4WDC Position:

The California Association of 4 Wheel Drive Clubs (CA4WDC) recognizes the importance of a comprehensive energy policy and supports state and national efforts to develop renewable energy sources to meet the growing demand for energy.

CA4WDC is opposed to the development of solar and wind energy projects where those projects would adversely impact access to areas traditionally open to motorized recreation.

Where development of solar and wind energy projects would impact access to areas traditionally open to motorized recreation, CA4WDC recommends realignment of routes and other mitigating measures be applied to ensure that quality recreation opportunities are preserved.

Contacts / Additional information:

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