



Desert Protection Society

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Mr. Oscar Biondi
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Sent Via Email: obiondi@waterboards.ca.gov

April 10, 2013

COMMENTS ON DRAFT FINAL WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION FOR THE EAGLE MOUNTAIN PUMPED STORAGE PROJECT, FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT NO. 13123

Dear Mr. Biondi,

The Desert Protection Society (“DPS”) is a 501(c) (3) organization (formerly known as Citizens for the Chuckwalla Valley [“CCV”]), made up of residents of Eagle Mountain/Desert Center, Native Americans, local environmental activists from San Bernardino, Imperial, San Diego, Riverside Counties, and Nevada. DPS was formed in 1990 to prevent the World’s largest garbage dump from being built across the street from the Eagle Mountain elementary school, and on the doorstep of Joshua Tree National Park. We have since expanded our mission to include other potentially damaging proposals and actively participate in the decision making process for proposals that include, but are not limited to water storage projects, power generating projects, questionable land use issues, and

other projects that have the potential to harm desert communities and the environment in and around Joshua Tree National Park.

DPS (CCV) has been involved with this questionable project since 1990 by attending public meetings/hearings, meeting with the projects proponents, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and the County of Riverside, providing written and verbal testimony/comments. We will not regurgitate the comments here, as this is an exercise in futility, but restate our comments as though they are fully contained herein.

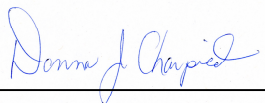
All of your responses to our comments were either woefully inadequate with speculative reasoning not based on science or, neglect examining certain areas because of lack of access. Many responses simply state, “The comment is noted, and does not pertain to the adequacy of the Draft EIR”. We suppose a Judge will decide what pertains to the adequacy of the DEIR. The purpose of these documents is to provide all information necessary to make an informed decision. Putting off biological surveys, downplaying impacts to Joshua Tree National Park, and water are but a few examples of an insufficient document.

The one issue we will restate is THE WATER, THE WATER, THE WATER ! You state that there will be a “slight overdraft”, but hey, don’t worry, there’s plenty of water there. Saying there will be “a slight overdraft condition”, is like saying you are “slightly pregnant”. Overdraft is a significant negative impact that cannot be mitigated! Then you go on to say that the tritium testing has not been done in the Chuckwalla Valley, and discuss in detail testing done in Joshua Tree in 2004. We find this very odd, because **this very Agency commissioned the USGS to do just that – study tritium in groundwater basins in Southern California** (Groundwater-Quality Data in the Borrego Valley, Central Desert, and Low-Use Basins of the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts Study Unit, 2008–2010). USGS conducted a study in the Chuckwalla Valley, Groundwater Ambient Monitoring Analyzing or “GAMA”, which provided age dating for the area. In a personal conversation with Mr. Michael Wright, USGS, we learned that they examined wells in Desert Center and determined the water is “very, very old”, thousands of years old. He explained if tritium is not detected there has been no recharge for the past 50 years, which is a commonly accepted hydrological fact. There was no tritium detected in the studies conducted in the Chuckwalla Valley. Why didn’t the DEIR do tritium analysis? Also, C14 will tell exactly how old the water is, but the EIR/S did no such analysis. <http://pubs.usgs.gov/ds/659/> is the link to the GAMA study.

Your response is a song and dance around the issue; not utilizing the most recent testing that has been conducted in the subject valley on the verge of being raped of all of its resources. Why, one may ask would a Board charged with protecting the waters of California not present and take heed of all of the *current* information available? One may conclude a predetermined decision, another fatal flaw with your environmental report(s).

DPS restates its’ position that the Water Certification for this project be denied outright!

You should all be ashamed of yourselves,



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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOwFa1tnpNc>
"DON'T WASTE OUR DESERT"