

Thank you for your comment, Sarah Cumber.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is SolarS50153.

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Solar Energy Development PEIS
Comment ID: SolarS50153

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Attachment: Solar PEIS.doc

Comment Submitted:

Please see attachment. [See Attachment.](#)

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of California State Parks, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division (OHMVR) Division; I am submitting comments on the Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Solar PEIS). Realizing that the Solar PEIS is to establish policy and not evaluate individual projects (programmatic), the OHMVR Division hopes that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and other cooperating agencies consider the impacts to Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreation when evaluating project sites.

The OHMVR Division has several comments with regards to this Solar PEIS that it would like addressed. These comments are itemized in no particular order of importance below.

- 1) According to the map titled "Draft RETI EWG Prohibited, Restricted, and Limited Lands", the six BLM field offices that have the potential to be impacted are the Barstow, El Centro, Needles, Ridgecrest, Palm Springs/South Coast, and Santa Rosa/San Jacinto field offices. Collectively, these field offices have received approximately \$15.6 million over the past three years from the OHMVR Division Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program for a variety of OHV related projects. This section of the OHMVR Division funds projects that support OHV opportunity, use and resource protection. Potential impacts to OHV opportunity could adversely affect the competitive grant process in future years.
- 2) The five counties that have the potential to be impacted are Imperial, San Bernardino, San Diego, Riverside, and Kern. Over the past three years, four of those counties have received a total of \$2.8 million from the OHMVR Division Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program. This funding could also be impacted by the loss of OHV opportunity within the local jurisdiction.
- 3) The field offices mentioned in bullet number one provide for approximately 6.7 million acres of OHV opportunity, (not including "closed" designations). In FY 2007, a rough count of 4.8 million visitors was noted encompassing a variety of OHV and other recreational uses such as camping. Recreational use continues to climb with the population growth. A loss of acreage will concentrate OHV use into already impacted areas rather than keeping the use dispersed.
- 4) Reduction of recreational opportunities could displace visitors to neighboring facilities such as Ocotillo Wells SVRA (~ 90 min from Palm Springs) and Heber Dunes SVRA (~ 2 hours from Palm Springs and to the west of El Centro) as well as to U.S. Forest Service lands and privately managed OHV areas. These areas are already heavily impacted and any addition of visitors will adversely affect existing resources. Ocotillo Wells SVRA (OWSVRA) is 85,000 acres and had 1.7 million visitors last year; Heber Dunes SVRA (HDSVRA) is 400 acres and had approximately 51,000 visitors last year. An increase in visitation due to reduction of acreage elsewhere could further impact these parks and their resources.
- 5) OWSVRA manages approximately 25,000 acres for BLM under an MOU that adds additional acreage to OWSVRA. Will this land be prohibited from solar development or included for consideration?

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. I appreciate the time and energy you have taken to complete this process. I look forward to your posted response to the OHMVR Division's comments.

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