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Soitec Solar, Inc. | 4250 Executive Square, Suite 770 | La Jolla, CA 92037 | USA

March 5, 2012

Chairman Ron Roberts and Members of the Board  
San Diego County Board of Supervisors  
1600 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92101

**RE: Request for Board Statement of Support with Direction to Staff**

Dear Chairman Roberts:

As you may know, Soitec, a publicly-traded, European semiconductor company, is building its first American solar equipment factory in Rancho Bernardo. San Diego will be the center for U.S. manufacturing of our proprietary concentrating photovoltaic technology, creating 450 permanent jobs, and many more with associated suppliers and vendors. The factory dedication was held in December 2011, construction began in January 2012 and we anticipate that module manufacturing will begin in late 2012.

The State of California has mandated that 33% of our state's energy production be from **renewable** sources by the year 2020. The ongoing instability in the Middle East proves the wisdom of a policy which seeks American energy independence, a goal being championed by the Pentagon and Navy Region Southwest.

San Diego County plays a pivotal role in the deployment of renewable energy in California. The region is uniquely poised, with literally no other county in the United States enjoying the confluence of geography, sun, wind and transmission resources adjacent to the second largest energy demand center in America.

State and federal government at the highest levels have made expediting the siting and approval of renewable energy production their agencies' top priority, which is a dramatic expression of support for an industry that could lead to an American resurgence in renewable manufacturing and energy production. Indeed, with the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan, the state and federal governments have collaborated to complete a strategy addressing habitat planning needs for wind and solar energy in a seven-county, 29,000,000-acre area of the state (including parts of eastern San Diego County).

San Diego County can play a national role in rebooting the American economy. There are few other regions that can compete with San Diego when it is operating in a concerted effort to achieve an objective. The active promotion of renewable energy to attain economic critical mass will result in the creation of high-paying, permanent jobs in the renewable energy sector. All levels of local government should recognize the importance of having a renewable manufacturing presence in San Diego; this presence helps other companies grow their businesses and *keep them in San Diego*.

The County's role is critical since County processes are the key to the siting of renewable energy projects. Soitec, along with every company in the renewable energy business, needs the Board of Supervisors' help in this area. There are several important, concrete steps that can be taken to reassure companies considering the investment of billions of dollars of energy infrastructure that local government is serious and committed to supporting job creation in the solar and wind industries:

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- 1) *The Board should take a clear position in favor of supporting the renewable industry and direct County staff to fast-track the processes of solar and wind projects. Staff has expressly stated they are "neutral", and are not willing to move projects through the approval process as quickly as can be legally done until the Board provides such a directive.*
- 2) *Appoint a senior County staffer as the renewable ombudsman, similar to what is now being done by the state and federal governments. This person's job would be to break logjams and solve problems, as time is critical. We need these projects to reach the Board for decisions as quickly as possible.*
- 3) *Direct County staff to prepare a programmatic CEQA document which would allow compliant projects to proceed under a tiered, streamlined environmental review process.*
- 4) *Support legislation which could help to keep a portion of new renewable energy property tax revenues in the area where they are generated. These new tax revenues would be used to help fund community improvements.*
- 5) *Prepare ordinances to regulate the development of renewable energy in a manner consistent with the County's support of the renewable industry.*

If San Diego takes the correct action, its future as a central figure in renewable energy jobs and innovation is unlimited.

Finally, to those expressing concern about a plethora of wind turbines and solar collectors over the rural landscape, it is important to note that there are only two areas in the entire County where the wind is powerful and sustained enough to be commercially utilized, and interconnection costs will require concentration of most production facilities near existing transmission. Those areas of the County which bear a disproportionate impact of siting facilities should also be the beneficiaries of community-serving improvements and programs.

Soitec hopes that you will consider these requests not just from one company, but from an industry that seeks the assurance that the County will do everything it can to speed the review process for our projects.

We respectfully request that this matter be docketed for Board consideration at the earliest opportunity.

Very truly yours,



**Mike Armstrong**

Business and Project Development Manager  
Soitec Energy Business Unit, North America

cc: Iberdrola  
Enel  
Eurus  
AES  
NRG  
San Diego Gas & Electric