



P12-004- Public Review Comments- Anne Casey2.txt

From: anne.casey@cox.net
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2013 9:54 AM
To: mark@markvagee.com; tom.harrington@cox.net
Cc: Gungle, Ashley; kevin64k20@gmail.com; sirfirewalker1@gmail.com; COLson@emc.org; brian@bubalo.com; joe@joebradleyauctioneers.com; raspygr@yahoo.com; tvotaw@envoymortgage.com; cheryl.gillott@parks.ca.gov
Subject: Re: Gildred solar project

Categories: Red Category

Hi Mark and Tom,

Thanks for replying to me so quickly. Tom, I'll give Steve your greetings; he's always glad to talk with you.

R1

This project's impact upon our pristine desert with it's spectacular mountain views, sunrises, sunsets and places to witness meteor showers (one of my favorite desert activities) was well stated by others. Therefore, I felt it necessary to address the problems from another stance for those decision makers (like Gildred) not appreciating those finer human desires.

R2

First, to correct my letter, I misstated the date of my and my late husband's land purchase because the document I viewed was incorrect. We bought our property about 1994. However, we had been visiting the area with Janice Gleason since approximately 1984 when she and Billie Frank purchased the 160 acres from Ted Gildred. The parcel was landlocked and the easements from Split Mountain Road, past the then existing ranger station, were negotiated. Having an access road was a term of purchase that Gleason/Frank insisted upon at the time. Had they not purchased the land, Gildred would not have had the access road. Surely that right of way is also stated in the purchase agreements for the Slike and Hewitt properties also, but I have no personal knowledge of those purchase terms.

R3

The project property also abuts BLM land. I'm astonished that the BLM has not been contacted or actively involved in this current travesty.

R4

Borrego Springs enjoys the same sunshine scale as Ocotillo wells. Solar panels could be placed upon the rooftops of all the buildings there. But.

Hope you all enjoy this beautiful weather this long weekend in OUR desert. I'll be there in the fall when I can drive again.

R5

---- Mark Agee <mark@markvagee.com> wrote:

> Ann and Tom,

>
> well said, I never thought about Fire access, Earth Quake, and the
> water Shed great points. When I read about the construction method of
> grubbing the land this means the 100 year old Ocotillo and catus scraped
> the surface crust broken and on Easterly wind events such as Santa Anna's
> we will be inundated with dust. Please lets be real, This is NOT the place
> for a solar farm.

>

>

> Mark Agee

>

>

> Mark V. Agee Construction

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>
>
> On Thu, May 23, 2013 at 9:55 PM, tom harrington
<tom.harrington@cox.net>wrote:

>> Hello Anne, Say hi to your son Steve for me.

R6

>> If I read this right. The grant deed easements for access to Split Mtn.
>> road was agreed upon to support the homeowners GLEASON/FRANK and their 160
>> acre parcel of private land intended for simple recreational use. I'll bet
>> Dick Hewitt didn't comprehend the situation either. One cannot perceive
>> they were approved on the assumption that a huge corporation would buy up
>> surrounding parcels and balloon to over 400 7' high chain link fenced
>> acres. Afterwards piggybacking all those parcels onto a one lane dirt
>> trail. Surely these courteous land owners had no contemplation of a large
>> development company having intentions of creating a commercial mega
>> complex. One that is vigorously unwanted by every neighbor for 10 miles.

R7

Me
>> personally? I can't think of one person in the whole valley that supports
>> the Gildred project in this location except for Mr. Gildred himself.
>> Another couple of points to ponder. I believe grant deeds are intended to
>> be reciprocal in that Slike and Hewitt families should enjoy travelling on
>> and across Gildred's access road. Will they be issued keys to the gates?

R8

>> What are the feelings of Anza Borrego Park and the Imperial Valley county
>> institutions toward the proposed project being installed up against their
>> property lines and are they aware.
>> My best to you and yours, TH

>> Tom Harrington
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>> -----Original Message-----
>> From: anne.casey@cox.net [mailto:anne.casey@cox.net]
>> Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2013 6:48 PM
>> To: Ashley.Gungle@sdcounty.ca.gov
>> Cc: tom.harrington@cox.net; Colson@emc.org; rickli@dpr.com;
>> brian@bubalo.com; joe@joebradleyauctioneers.com; raspygr@yahoo.com;
>> tvotaw@envoymortgage.com; cheryl.gillott@parks.ca.gov
>> Subject: Gildred solar project

R9

>> Dear Ms. Gungel:
>> Following is my letter concerning the Gildred solar panel project. I have
>> also mailed a hard copy to you.

>> Anne M. Casey
>> Split Mountain Road
>> APN 253-390-40-00
>> Ashley Gungel
>> Land Use/Environmental Planner
>> County of San Diego
>> Planning and Development Services
>> 5510 Overlook Avenue, 3rde Floor
>> San Diego, CA 92123
>> May 23, 2013

R10 >> Dear Ms. Grungel,
>> Thank you for your letter and attachments describing the proposed changes
>> to the Ocotillo Wells area through the installation of a solar farm. I
>> have been a property owner in the Split Mountain area since 1983. These
>> are
>> my major concerns:
>> The wildlife, trees, and spring time flowers are unique to this area. This
>> is also host to endangered species whose natural habitats would be
>> destroyed by the incursion of the solar farm or any similar large scale
>> installation.

R11 >> Fossils of plants, animals and marine life provide a rich area of
>> discovery about the landscape formation of Anza Borrego as well as of the
>> habits of the indigenous peoples in the area. How will these be protected
>> in the face of the Gildred project?

R12 >> My well can provide potable water for my needs for many years. However,
>> the Gildred project would severely impact the Ocotillo aquifer, an
>> irreplaceable resource.

R13 >> This area is also subject to high winds, a potential threat to the security
>> of any large structures. How will these solar panels be secured to protect
>> them and the nearby buildings in a wind storm? In high wind situations,
>> much noise could be generated by passing around these panels. Such large
>> structures will also engender climate change by their existence. Thus,
>> again, impacting wildlife and adjacent properties.

R14 >> With only one narrow access road to the facility, how will Mr. Gildred
>> respond to a large scale disaster? This area is known for the large number
>> of earthquakes it sustains annually. Where will the panels travel in an
>> earthquake?

R15 >> What is the increased fire hazard created by this project? How will
>> emergency vehicles reach it and protect the surrounding properties?
>> Ocotillo wells has only a volunteer fire department. Relying upon Borrego
>> Springs to supply additional personnel is not adequate.

R16 >> The easement Ms. Slike granted to Mr. Gildred for this project is a moot
>> point. An access road to the property has existed for many years. The
>> additional easement merely gave him a wider passage. He could also have
>> contracted with the Department of Parks, the landholder on the opposite
>> side of the road.

>> Thank you for taking time to read this and the many other letters you have
>> received about this project.

>> Sincerely yours,

>> Anne M. Casey

>> /amc

Responses to Comments on the Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration for Ocotillo Wells Solar, MUP12-004

Responses to Letter R, Anne Casey, Mark Agee, Tom Harrington

R1	Please see responses to comments B3, J7, and K3, above, with respect to the Project's potential to impact aesthetic values.
R2	The County appreciates this information, which will be included in the final documents for consideration by the decision makers.
R3	Comment acknowledged. The BLM has been notified about the proposed Project.
R4	This comment does not raise a significant environmental issue for which a response is required.
R5	One access road is adequate for disaster planning purposes because very few people will be onsite at any given time for maintenance or other operations. The number of employees on site will vary depending on the type of operation and maintenance required and if panel washing is taking place. The project anticipates two people onsite most days with upwards of six people onsite during panel washings. Panels will not be installed near the property boundaries and therefore any equipment failure or destruction during an earthquake would be confined within the boundaries of the property.
R6	Comment acknowledged. This comment does not constitute an issue relative to CEQA; however, this information has been noted for the record.
R7	This comment does not raise a significant environmental issue for which a response is required.
R8	Comment acknowledged. Imperial County and Anza-Borrego State Park have been notified of the proposed Project.
R9	This introductory comment does not raise a significant environmental issue for which a response is required.
R10	The Biological Resources Report prepared by Dudek (January 2013), evaluated the potential impacts of the Project on the existing biological resources within the proposed development footprint. Mitigation measures are proposed to reduce Project effects on biological resources to less than significant. Refer also to responses to Letter A, above.
R11	Comment acknowledged. See responses E3, E4, E5 and P3, above.
R12	Refer to responses to comments B7 and K5, above.
R13	The solar panels will be installed consistent with County building and design standards and the California Building Code, as applicable. Additionally, the panels are manufactured to withstand high winds that may occur within a typical desert environment, and the potential for any panel to become loosened by high wind

Responses to Comments on the Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration for Ocotillo Wells Solar, MUP12-004

	<p>events is considered minimal to none. Any noise generated by wind moving around the solar panels would be similar to that experienced by other physical structures, and is not anticipated to adversely affect offsite noise-sensitive uses in the area (e.g. residential uses), particularly as the panels would be distanced from the property boundary. As the panels would generate electricity from clean energy, the Project would not contribute to climate change and would instead reduce dependence upon the use of non-renewable fossil fuels. See supplemental Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Review – Ocotillo Wells Solar Farm, dated July 24, 2013, available under separate cover.</p>
R14	<p>The Project would result in construction of a solar energy generating facility. The facility would be monitored remotely and would not include habitable structures. Therefore, emergency evacuation in the event of a large-scale disaster would not involve a public safety risk, even in the event of an earthquake. Like any other physical structure, the solar panels would not be expected to travel to offsite adjacent properties during an earthquake, and if subject to a substantial seismic event, would be likely fail and/or collapse in place. As the panels would be approximately 30 feet in height as measured from the ground surface (worst case scenario based on the four solar technologies considered), if the panels were to fall over in a seismic event, they would not travel offsite or interfere with existing access routes, or cause potential harm to any existing structures on adjacent parcels.</p>
R15	<p>Refer to the Fire Protection Plan (March 2013) prepared for the Project (available under separate cover). The MUP Plot Plan has been reviewed by the County Fire Marshal. All emergency access to/from the Project site, as well as onsite drives intended for emergency access purposes, have been designed in accordance with County design standards for emergency access and recommendations of the County Fire Marshal. Emergency access will be provided from Split Mountain Road via the proposed 24-foot wide driveway within the existing 40-foot wide easement. Access to surrounding properties would not be altered or interfered with as a result of Project implementation.</p> <p>The Ocotillo Wells Volunteer Fire Department (OWVFD) has indicated that it can adequately serve the Project as proposed without the expansion of existing facilities or addition of personnel. The OWVFD has provided a Fire Service Availability Form indicating that adequate fire protection services can be provided to the Project. Due to the operational nature of the Project facilities and the low potential for the occurrence of wildfire, combined with the lack of hazardous materials associated with the solar facilities, the Project does not represent a substantial increased risk relative to the occurrence of wildfire.</p>
R16	<p>The easement granted to Mr. Gildred by Ms. Slike for the proposed Project allowed for widening of the existing driveway to 24 feet in width within the 40-foot wide easement to ensure that safe and adequate emergency access could be provided to the site in the event of an emergency (e.g. wildfire). Other properties adjacent to the improved portion of the access drive will also benefit from the proposed improvements.</p>