

From: [Mary Hicklin](#)
To: [Harris, Susan](#)
Subject: JVR Energy Park (MUP-18-022)
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 9:19:23 PM

Dear Ms. Harris,

I would like to express my firm opposition to the JVR Energy “Park” project proposed for Jacumba. “Park” is a deceptive name for something so dreadful.

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I was born in San Diego, did a major and graduate work in biology and systems ecology, and have lived here all my life. As an avid back country hiker, I watched in horror as the dangerous Sunrise Powerlink towers marched across our precious, fragile desert. There was no excuse for that project. If all that money had been invested in helping homeowners install rooftop solar, making small solar projects on rooftops of public buildings, developing small local energy storage projects, etc., we showed that our energy needs could have been met without destroying our fragile desert, but were ignored.

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Then came the Ocotillo wind farm, a giant ugly, dangerous mess built right in the flyway of endangered hawks, right in the middle of the tiny community of Ocotillo, with deliberately deceptive language pretending the towers would be distant from residences when that was not true, all promises, e.g., for sonar-activated blinking red aviation warning lights, all promises ignored. Pattern Energy, a multinational, took advantage of tax credits to build this monstrosity. Residents spent months sending up weather balloons and demonstrating conclusively that there was no significant wind there (drive by sometime, you’ll rarely see more than a very few blades turning; and dear heaven: drive back to San Diego from El Centro some night and watch those hellish red lights go on and off during your entire drive... I can’t imagine how residents are able to tolerate it). Despite all this, taxpayers were forced to support this project which destroyed endangered species habitat, destroyed the hydrology of the area, illegally destroyed Native American burials, sacred sites, geoglyphs, etc. The Anza Borrego park staff were illegally silenced so that one brave whistleblower had to retire in order to sound the alarm about the endangered species habitat destruction. Dark rumors suggested that illegal “influence” caused the Imperial

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County supervisors to ignore the public outcry and approve the project. Whatever the cause, the project has only left a trail of devastation and misery.

Now this new proposed disaster, the JVR Energy “Park” project, would effectively destroy the marvelous little retreat of Jacumba and a huge natural area. Must powerful special interests destroy another tiny community like Ocotillo? Must we devastate every precious bit of open space? Must we ruin a small community and a retreat much loved by locals and visitors for generations? Please listen to the residents of Jacumba and to San Diegans! *East County Magazine* has outlined the objections residents have enumerated and with which I concur (<https://www.eastcountymagazine.org/jacumba-hot-springs-reacts-massive-proposed-energy-project-asks-locals-submit-concerns-writing-dec-7>). This project will cause:

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- depletion of their already diminishing water resources
- property values decreasing
- temperature increases up to 36 degrees in the area, known as ‘the heat island effect’ which already soars to over 100 degree ranges in summer
- heavy equipment noise and 24 hour daily transformer and panel noise
- fire hazards increased where fire is already a danger, from high voltage equipment and related installations
- loss of the natural spaces and rural character the town is famous for, replacing it with an industrialized character of extensive chain link fencing topped with barbed wire
- impact on local wildlife and plants which includes the scenic aspect of the area
- 12 foot panels over a 634 acre area adjoining Old Highway 80 contradicts the status the California Legislature bestowed in 2006 upon Historic U.S. Route 80 which ends at Tybee Island, Georgia.
- construction of 300,000 panels offers no employment benefits to locals and in fact jeopardizes its current reliance on tourism and the peaceful rural atmosphere which attracts visitors.

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This is yet another destructive project that will benefit no human person or the environment. Benefiting big corporation(s) at the expense of the people and the environment is unacceptable. There are better ways to meet our projected energy needs. Please protect the gorgeous high desert environment and the little settlement and resort at Jacumba. Please do not approve the JVR Energy "Park" project.

Thank you,
Mary Hicklin
San Diego, CA

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