

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

GOVERNOR'S MILITARY COUNCIL

ASSEMBLYMEMBER ROCKY CHÁVEZ, CHAIR



EDMUND G. BROWN, JR.
GOVERNOR

August 7, 2018

Mr. Jerome E. Perez
California State BLM Director
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-1623
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Director Perez:

The California Governor's Military Council – comprised of retired flag and general officers, civic leaders, bipartisan state legislators and senior policymakers – identifies important policy issues and advises the Governor and State Legislature on national security and military affairs. We serve to protect and enhance U.S. military and national security operations in California, as well as support our service members, veterans and their families. We also coordinate the state's diverse advocacy efforts to underscore the unique national security value of California's military bases, national security activities, defense technology companies, and workforce to policymakers and the public, ensuring California speaks with a unified voice.

We write to you today to support previous scoping comments made by the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Energy Commission and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in opposing the reopening of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP). As the Natural Resources Agency indicated in their letter from March 21, 2018, the DRECP successfully “provides for renewable energy production on public lands while also protecting California's Mojave Desert for its biological, cultural, and recreational values.” In that same spirit, the Military Council is specifically concerned about the potential risk to critical military facilities and operational areas in the DRECP planning area.

The DRECP is the result of a multi-year collaborative effort between federal, state, local and tribal partners. The result of that effort is a plan that provides an acceptable balance of conservation and development, while providing a clear framework to protect the military's operating environment for testing and training and providing identified areas for the siting of renewable energy to further California's renewable energy and greenhouse gas reduction goals. Reopening the plan will likely impose new, redundant costs, and will require significant time and energy for all parties involved, including your regional Bureau of Land Management (BLM) office in California. Additionally, undergoing a lengthy revision process will create unnecessary uncertainty about how public lands in the desert will be managed, and cause delays for the siting of renewable energy on compatible public land.

The DRECP's established guidelines and framework ensures that conservation and development of renewable energy can co-exist. Changing the carefully negotiated agreement where renewable energy infrastructure should most appropriately be sited may result in encroachment risks on the military's testing and training activities in the Mojave Desert. The DRECP establishes a clear framework that mitigates the siting of incompatible renewable energy to areas that do not threaten military operations. Additionally, while the DRECP created habitat zones for endangered desert species, any set-aside habitat lands outside of military bases that become developed could push threatened species on to military installations, the exact opposite intent of the original plan. This will continue to make military bases refuges of last resort for such species, and could limit the activities that bases can perform as they work around species encroachment, threatening both the health of these important species and military testing and training.

Instead of a reopening of the DRECP, we offer that BLM should work collaboratively with the State of California, local governments, tribes, and the Department of Defense to address specific updates or edits to the implementation of the Plan, while retaining all existing provisions that are focused on protection of the military mission in the desert. We absolutely appreciate the desire to ensure responsible development of our public lands and would be more than willing to assist in this effort. The Council's staff contact for this issue is Gareth Smythe, who can be reached at Gareth.Smythe@OPR.CA.GOV or (916)322-6034.

Sincerely,



Colonel Rocky Chávez, USMC, Retired
Chair, Governor's Military Council
Assemblymember, CA-76



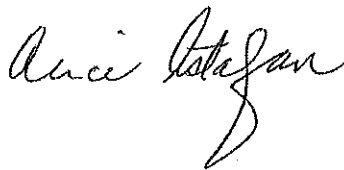
Vice Admiral Jody Breckenridge, USCG, Retired
Vice Chair, Governor's Military Council



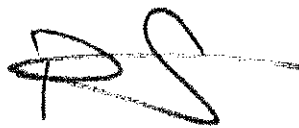
Scott Morgan
Deputy Director, Governor's Office of
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Colonel Deborah Aspling, USAF, Retired
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Major General Alice Astafan, USAF, Retired
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Panorea Avdis
Director, Governor's Office of Business and
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Member, Governor's Military Council



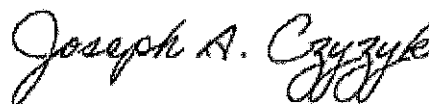
Major General David Baldwin
The Adjutant General, California Military
Department (CMD)
Member, Governor's Military Council



Thomas Berard, SES, USAF, Retired
Member, Governor's Military Council



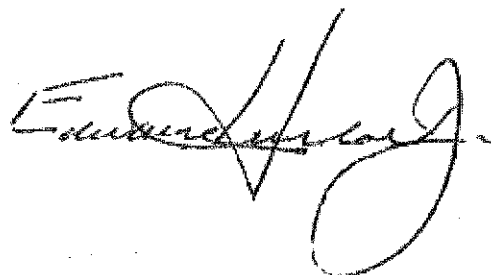
Phillip Coyle
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Joseph Czyzyk
Member, Governor's Military Council



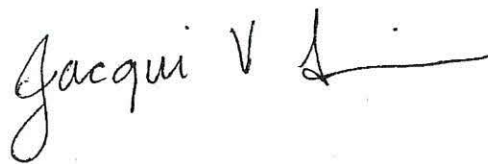
Charles Giacchi, SES, USN, Retired
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Lieutenant General Edward Hanlon, Jr.,
USMC, Retired
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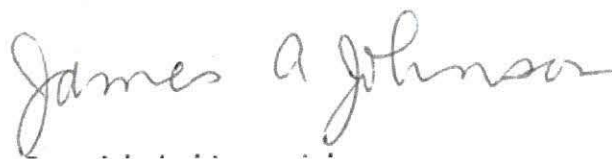
Dr. Vito Imbasciani, MD
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Affairs (CalVet)
Member, Governor's Military Council



Assemblymember Jacquie Irwin, (CA-44)
Member, Governor's Military Council



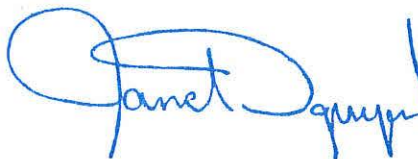
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CC: Ron Tickle, Executive Director, Department of Defense Siting Clearinghouse
Rear Admiral Yancy Lindsey, Commander, Navy Region Southwest
Brigadier General Kevin J. Killea, Commanding General, Marine Corps Installations, West
Brigadier General Roger Turner Jr., Commanding General, MCAGCC Twentynine Palms
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