

Teresa Pierce
Lake Tamarisk Solar Committee
26250 Parkview Drive
Desert Center, California 92239
208-831-7204 teresapierce52@gmail.com

February 26, 2023

Manuel Perez Riverside County Board of Supervisors District 4
73710 Fred Waring Drive #222
Palm Desert CA 92260

Dear Mr. Perez:

The Desert Center Area Plan (DCAP) was created about 20 years ago and updated September 28, 2021, by the County of Riverside as its General Plan. Very little has changed in that document over the years, except for the revision dates.

It is a long document, but I would like to point out a few areas of concern that we would appreciate the county planners to keep in mind as this Easley/Intersect scoping process moves forward. The DCAP shows that there was a definite concern for our desert ecosystem and Lake Tamarisk Oasis. This DCAP should naturally by all rights still stand as a testament of good faith in preserving what is left of the desert surrounding our community. Stopping the expansion/installation of more solar farms into this desert area around Lake Tamarisk Oasis is necessary to us as a community who choose to live here in tranquility within the majestic vistas of this desert environment. You'll find in the attached document about our community titled Lake Tamarisk Community Oasis, which shows we are a thriving community that helps the surrounding community in many ways.

The scoping document for the Easley project details our concerns including, visual aesthetics, water supply in our already over drafted aquifer, health concerns from silica dust and valley fever, property values and our quality of life.

As you can see in the attached Moratorium Petition, we are asking for a five-mile-buffer natural zone for all new permitting, right of ways, and other permissions of utility scale solar development, to allow our community to survive the already expansive solar fields within a half a mile to the South of us. Allowing solar fields in these 6000 acres that are still left around us is not going to make a dent in the green new deal of saving the

planet, when there are 130,000 acres within the development focus area still open for renewal energy to the East of 177. Additionally, the BLM's Western Solar Plan revision will open hundreds of thousands more acres for industrial scale utility solar. However, this buffer zone could save our human community changing from an Oasis in a living desert as defined by the DCAP into an Island in a Dead Solar Sea. The Easley Solar project and Next Era Sapphire solar project, can be moved to the East and still help with climate change. Our little 5 MILE natural buffer zone that we are requesting would go a long way to living up to THE DESERT CENTER AREA PLAN.

The things our committee picked out of the DCAP for you to consider are as follows:

Page 1 - Vision Summary of Desert Center Area Plan, specifically under Real dedication to a sense of community; fifth bullet, "Dedication to the preservation of the environmental features that frame our communities;"

Page 2 - Conservation and Open Space Resources specifically, "The effort to consider our environmental resources, recreational needs, habitat system, visual heritage as one comprehensive, multi-purpose open space system has resulted in an unprecedented commitment to their preservation. In addition, these spaces help to form distinctive edges to many of our communities or clusters of communities."

Page 4 – Introduction, third sentence of second paragraph - "At a very minimum, it is for many a welcome oasis as they cross the desert. For a much smaller number of residents and business operators, it is a small world of tranquil reality, with clean air, and little traffic and noise, that sets it apart from every other part of Riverside County. The Desert Center Area Plan contains policies that guide the physical development and land uses in this oasis in the unincorporated portion of eastern Riverside County."

Page 6 – Features, Setting specifically - "Much of eastern Riverside County lies within the vast Colorado Desert, characterized by undisturbed wilderness, distinctive flora such as the Joshua tree, sand dunes, mountainous terrain with large rock outcroppings, and high summertime temperatures. Urban and suburban development, common in western Riverside County and the Coachella Valley, is noticeably absent." Second to last sentence of Setting - "The third feature is the Lake Tamarisk Community which includes housing, a lake, and a golf course and is served by a long-established County Service Area."

Page 7 – Lake Tamarisk - "The community of Lake Tamarisk is located north of Interstate 10, easterly of Kaiser Road. This retirement community features single family homes, duplexes and mobile homes, situated around the lake and includes a 9-hole golf course."

Page 8 - Land Use Plan - “The Land Use Plan focuses on preserving the unique features found only in the Desert Center area and guiding the evolution of a very limited and highly specialized development area. To accomplish this, more detailed land use designations are applied than for the countywide General Plan.” Side quote - “We value the unusually rich and diverse natural environment with which we are blessed and are committed to maintaining sufficient areas of natural open space to afford the human experience of natural environments as well as sustaining the permanent viability of the unique landforms and ecosystems that define this environment”- RCIP Vision

Page 20 - Desert Center Policy Area - “The Desert Center Policy Area encompasses the area generally located between the existing Desert Center and Lake Tamarisk communities. This area has been identified as having the potential to accommodate limited future expansion of the communities of identified, provided that all potential environmental and community services and land use compatibility issues are satisfactorily addressed.” “DCAP 2.3 - Assure that the design of new land uses subject to discretionary review visually enhances, and does not degrade, the character of the Desert Center region.”

Page 23 - Land Use, specifically the last sentence of the first paragraph, “The intent is to enhance and/or preserve the identity, character and features of this unique area. The Local Land Use Policies section provides policies to address those land use issues relating to specifically to the Desert Center area.”

Page 24 – “Light Pollution - One of the attractions for residents in less developed areas of the County of Riverside is the brilliance of the nighttime sky on clear nights, unencumbered by lighting scattered over a large urban area. Wildlife habitat areas can also be negatively impacted by artificial lighting. As development continues to encroach into rural and open space areas, the effect of nighttime lighting on star-gazing and open space areas will become more pronounced. The following policy is intended to limit light leakage and spillage that may obstruct and hinder the night sky view.” “Policy: DCAP 4.1 - When outdoor lighting is used, require the use of fixtures that would minimize effects on the nighttime sky and wildlife habitat areas, except as necessary for security reasons.” There are security-light shades available that stop light leakage.

While you were appointed as our Supervisor by Governor Brown, after the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) defined the Renewable Energy Development Focus Area within 25 feet of our homes, you now have responsibility for the Lake Tamarisk Community. We are requesting that you protect this community as an Oasis in a natural desert environment as defined in the Desert Center Area Plan.

Every home in the Lake Tamarisk Community was purchased under the protection of this plan.

The community of lake Tamarisk was completely overlooked in the DRECP of 2016. The DRECP specifically states that project right of ways and permits can be denied if local planning and zoning conflicts with the proposed renewable energy project even if it is within the Renewal Energy Development Focus Area. This allows Riverside County to remove the five-mile natural desert buffer around our community from the Solar Energy Zone {SEZ} and stop new utility scale solar development in the BLM Focus Area within this radius.

These are the most important points for you to consider for us at Lake Tamarisk. There is nothing we can do about the solar fields that have already been installed, especially with Oberon, Arica, and Victory since construction during the summer of 2022 and continuing to be built. My big question is, HOW did this Desert Center Area Plan get overlooked? I realize they built on BLM or private land, but they should have adhered to this DCAP? This area is still under the jurisdiction of Riverside County.

Our committee would be happy to visit with you at any time to discuss our concerns. We would love for you, and anyone else who will make decision about any more industrial solar scale projects from being allowed to build here, to come and see what is happening around our community. You will be able to see, with your own eyes, how everything that is written in the DCAP has completely disregarded everything that is quoted or written in your own government document. Since the DCAP is not being adhered to and isn't protecting us as a community there are some serious issues of integrity, honor, and trust that need to be addressed. The DCAP should still stand as a testament of good faith in preserving what is left of the desert surrounding our community. We trust that you will honor the intent of this DCAP and help us in this situation. We realize that you were not originally responsible for putting us in this situation, but you could be instrumental in saving our community. We need transparency as this process goes forward. We will be publicly appreciative. As a heads up, we will be sending you the petition for a Moratorium to stop further solar developmental within five miles of our community and all accompanying documents. The signatures are currently being gathered and will be emailed to you soon.

Sincerely,

Teresa Pierce

Lake Tamarisk Committee

