



PO Box 63
Shoshone, CA 92384
760.852.4339
www.amargosaconservancy.org

For Immediate Release:

March 4, 2015

Contact:

Patrick Donnelly, *Executive Director*. 760.852.4339 or patrick@amargosaconservancy.org

INYO COUNTY HAS AN HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY TO PLAN FOR SMALL-SCALE SOLAR, KEEP LANDSCAPES INTACT

Independence, CA-

On Wednesday, the Inyo County Planning Commission voted 5-0 in favor of a recommendation on the Renewable Energy General Plan Amendment (REGPA) which would drastically reduce the footprint of utility-scale solar energy across the landscape. The Commission recommended limiting solar development in Inyo County to facilities of less than 20 MW, just a small fraction of the size of industrial-scale facilities currently in operation and under construction elsewhere in the California desert. The Commission also recommended reducing the Solar Energy Development Areas (SEDAs) dramatically, eliminating Charleston View SEDA and Chicago Valley SEDA completely, and reducing Rose Valley SEDA, Pearsonville SEDA, and Owens Lake SEDA significantly in size.

Inyo County received a \$700,000 planning grant from the California Energy Commission (CEC), which was intended for the County to plan for utility-scale solar development on private lands. County Planning Staff conducted an exemplary citizen participation process, staging numerous scoping and comment meetings all across the vast expanse of the county, involving the public in all facets of the planning process.

And the public responded by being heavily involved, with high turnout at meetings and over 500 comments received on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). Citizens from the Owens Valley and the Amargosa Basin were nearly unanimous: they do not want industrialized energy production zones marring their iconic landscapes. A coalition of Inyo County conservation groups such as Amargosa Conservancy, Friends of the Inyo, Owens Valley Committee, and many others submitted extensive comments on the Draft PEIR, citing numerous and significant biological, cultural, and social conflicts which existed within the proposed REGPA. According to Tecopa business owner Nancy Good, "Visitors come to Southern Inyo County to enjoy our scenic vistas, to soak in our healing waters, and to relax in a peaceful setting. We oppose industrial-scale solar development in Charleston View and Chicago Valley because it will negatively affect tourism in our area, which is the backbone of our local economy."

Dedicated to the future of the Amargosa Watershed



PO Box 63
Shoshone, CA 92384
760.852.4339
www.amargosaconservancy.org

The Inyo County Board of Supervisors now has an historic opportunity.

“We encourage the Board of Supervisors to follow through on the leadership shown by the Planning Commission,” said Amargosa Conservancy Executive Director Patrick Donnelly. “Inyo County can serve as a shining example of a fully participatory planning process which results in renewable energy policy that reflects community attitudes and values. Limiting facility size to 20MW and removing sensitive areas like Charleston View and Chicago Valley from consideration reflects a courageous departure from past planning efforts in the desert. These recommended policies put forward a vision of Inyo County as a place which can develop in harmony with its irreplaceable landscapes. This is a forward-looking action which will protect tourism, the economic engine of our area, while providing opportunity to develop clean energy at a community-scale.”

The Inyo County Board of Supervisors votes on the Planning Commission’s REGPA recommendations on March 24th in Independence, CA.

###

The Amargosa Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) organization located in Shoshone, California. We are dedicated to the future of the Amargosa Watershed, and the people, animals, and plants that call it home. We are committed to engaging the natural and human communities of the Amargosa in conservation, pursuing a vision of a desert with both vibrant ecological and hydrological resources and environmentally responsible economic development. For more information, please visit www.amargosaconservancy.org.

Dedicated to the future of the Amargosa Watershed