

Notice of Public Availability

From: Ron Unger
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
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Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Subject: Notice of Public Availability of Proposed Planning Agreement

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is considering entering into a Planning Agreement under the Natural Community Conservation Planning Act (NCCPA) with Aera Energy LLC (Aera), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the California Department of Conservation (DOC). This notice announces the availability of the proposed Planning Agreement for public review and comment, pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2810, subdivision (d).

The NCCPA encourages broad-based planning to protect and conserve the state's wildlife heritage while allowing appropriate development and growth. It authorizes CDFW to enter into agreements with other qualifying public agencies or private entities to prepare natural community conservation plans (NCCPs) that provide for the conservation of species and habitats, and ultimately to approve NCCPs if certain conditions are met.

Aera has proposed working with CDFW, USFWS, and DOC to prepare a regional conservation plan for an area encompassing approximately 1,950,891 acres in Kern, Kings, and Fresno Counties. Aera anticipates that the plan, if approved, will be both an NCCP and a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) pursuant Section 10 of the federal Endangered Species Act. It will specify measures to conserve biological resources and provide a take permit for future development and operations and maintenance activities in the plan area.

The primary purpose of the Planning Agreement is to define the process and goals for this NCCP/HCP. Among other things, it provides a preliminary list of the natural communities, and the endangered, threatened, candidate, or other species that are found, or may be found, in those communities and that will be the initial focus of the NCCP/HCP planning process. The execution of the Planning Agreement is not an approval of the NCCP/HCP, but rather an agreement among the parties to work together to develop an NCCP/HCP and provides an outline for the planning process.

CDFW invites the public to review and comment on the proposed Planning Agreement. The document can be viewed on the internet at CDFW's website at <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/NCCP/Plans/Aera-SW-San-Joaquin>. To receive a paper copy by mail, please contact Sara Kern at sara.kern@wildlife.ca.gov.

All comments should be sent to sara.kern@wildlife.ca.gov or to the address listed at the top of this Notice. Comments received on or before April 15, 2020 will be reviewed.

Original Posting Date:
February 20, 2020

Signature	<u>/S/ Ron Unger</u>
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