

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 21, 2018

Secretary Ryan Zinke
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Acting Director Brian Steed
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C Street NW, Rm. 5665
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke and Acting Director Steed:

We write to strongly oppose re-opening the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) and to request an extension of the public comment period.

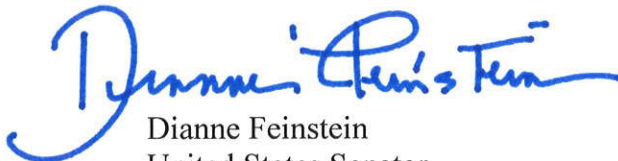
As you are aware, the DRECP was finalized in 2016 after more than eight years of extensive negotiations, careful scientific analysis, and robust community engagement. The final product is a balanced plan that supports new renewable energy development and recreational use while protecting California's fragile Mojave Desert ecosystem and achieving conservation goals. The plan was specifically crafted to accelerate permitting for renewable energy projects, providing certainty for developers.

Instead of focusing on implementation, which has only recently begun, the Bureau of Land Management is now utilizing valuable time and resources to reconsider this consensus-driven plan that is the result of a robust public stakeholder process. Opening the plan to amendment would not only delay its implementation, but is a significant waste of public resources and creates serious risk for further delays of renewable energy projects.

We are also concerned about the short window of time provided for public input on this major proposal that has such serious impacts on the California desert and its stakeholder community. In contrast to the thorough and deliberate nearly decade-long planning process to develop the DRECP, the public has only been given 45 days to review the Bureau of Land Management's current proposal on such a complex and critical issue. We ask that you allow sufficient time – no less than 90 days – for stakeholders and members of the public to be able to meaningfully participate in this process.

Once again, we strongly oppose the proposal to re-open DRECP for amendment and request an extension of the public comment period to allow for adequate engagement from stakeholders. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator