



**SIERRA
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November 19, 2010

Jim Avery
Chair, Executive Committee
California Transmission Planning Group (CTPG)
8306 Century Park Court
San Diego, CA 92123

Dear Mr. Avery:

The Sierra Club joins other environmental voices in requesting that the California Transmission Planning Group (CTPG) include the Westlands Solar Park renewable energy zone in the CTPG phase 4 study plan.

The Central Valley is increasingly being looked to as a highly appropriate location for development of large-scale renewable energy zones (REZs). Commercial interests, including California utilities and leading solar companies, have expressed their strong interest in solar development in this region. The Westlands Solar Park is a leading potential site for large-scale commercial solar development, and it has already been identified by RETI as an official renewable energy zone with up to 5,000 megawatts of potential solar generation capacity.

The importance and urgency of evaluating the southern Central Valley, and the Westlands Solar Park in particular, arises because that location possesses strong insolation on large swaths of privately-held lands that, in contrast to other sun-rich parts of California, have relatively few wildlife or other ecologically important resources; this should create a pathway toward relatively rapid permitting compared to the experience in other areas of California. Moreover, solar development in the southern Central Valley would provide important job-creation and economic benefits to underserved communities there.

Together, these factors make the Westlands Solar Park particularly well-suited for consideration of large-scale solar development to meet California's renewable energy requirements. It is critical, then, that this area be evaluated closely by CTPG for potential transmission upgrades.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide further information regarding the Sierra Club's request. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alex Levinson

Alex Levinson