

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 5, 2012

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

We would like to express our concerns over the Ocotillo Wind Energy Project, also known as the Ocotillo Express project. While we support improving our energy policies to meet the changing needs of our country and recognize the importance of renewable energy projects in meeting our national energy needs, we believe it should be done responsibly and take into consideration the needs of the community.

The Ocotillo Express project proposed area is within a historic landscape valued by the Kumeyaay, Quechan and Cocopah peoples and includes abundant proof of the use and occupation by those peoples for thousands of years. We understand that these tribes maintain a spiritual connection to that landscape, the surrounding view shed, and the diverse plants and animals that live there. In fact, since 2003, it has been listed as a tribal ceremonial location on the National Register of Historic Places.

After conversations with the impacted tribes, we are concerned that throughout the development process for this project, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has failed to engage the affected tribes in meaningful government-to-government consultation as required by federal law and trust responsibility. This is also evident from both a review of the record and the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement.

Renewable energy development is important, but it can and must be responsible and protect valuable historic resources. Additionally, when tribal interests are implicated, these projects must comply with the federal trust obligation to Indian tribes. Agencies, such as BLM should engage in meaningful consultation, as well as comprehensive review of potential impacts and consideration of a range of

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Page 2

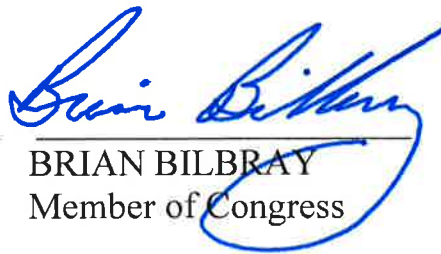
project alternatives, prior to federal consideration of project approval. This is even more important when there are a number of known tribal concerns or severe potential adverse affects on historic properties listed on or eligible for the National Register.

As a result, we respectfully request that your agency engage with the impacted tribes and find a solution that will allow this renewable project to go forward, but also respects the heritage of our native Americans. We look forward to working with you to identify a solution.

Sincerely,



BOB FILNER
Member of Congress



BRIAN BILBRAY
Member of Congress



DUNCAN HUNTER
Member of Congress