



**DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL**

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**Via email only**

6 July 2016

Carl Symons, BLM Ridgecrest Field Manager  
300 South Richmond Road  
Ridgecrest, CA 93555  
[BLM\\_ca\\_camino\\_solar@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_ca_camino_solar@blm.gov)

RE: Camino Solar Project

Dear Mr. Symons,

The Desert Tortoise Council (Council) is a non-profit organization comprised of hundreds of professionals and laypersons who share a common concern for wild desert tortoises and a commitment to advancing the public's understanding of this species. Established in 1975 to promote conservation of tortoises in the deserts of the southwestern United States and Mexico, the Council regularly provides information to individuals, organizations and regulatory agencies on matters potentially affecting the desert tortoise within its geographic range.

We understand that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is considering development of the Camino Solar Project on a 360-acre site located west of Rosamond, CA in Kern County, and that we may comment on this process until mid-July 2016. Although there have been only a few reports of tortoise signs west of Highway 14 in the region, we are nonetheless concerned that this would set the precedent of developing the first solar project on BLM lands in California under the variance process described in 2012 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Solar PEIS). If BLM decides to pursue the analysis of impacts of this project under the variance process, we ask that the Council be identified as an Interested Party and that we be given an opportunity to review the draft EIS when available.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ed LaRue, Jr.', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Edward L., LaRue, Jr., M.S.  
Desert Tortoise Council, Ecosystems Advisory Committee, Chairperson