



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
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Central Region
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June 25, 2026

Christine Roybal, Legal Analyst
California Department of Conservation, Geologic Energy Management Division
715 P Street, Mail Stop 19-06
Sacramento, California 95814
Christine.roybal@conservation.ca.gov

Subject: San Ardo 2024 Wells Project (Project) by Aera Energy, LLC
Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
State Clearinghouse No.: 2026010906

Dear Christine Roybal:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received a Draft Initial Study and proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) from your agency acting as lead agency for the above-referenced Project pursuant the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines.¹

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Project that may affect California fish and wildlife. Likewise, CDFW appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Project that CDFW, by law, may be required to carry out or approve through the exercise of its own regulatory authority under Fish and Game Code.

CDFW originally submitted comments to your agency for the draft IS/MND on February 27, 2026, and provided recommendations pertaining to habitat assessment and surveys for Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugea*), and Salinas pocket mouse (*Perognathus inornatus psammophilus*). On June 3, 2026, CDFW received the draft recirculated IS/MND containing the recommended changes. CDFW appreciates the inclusion of measures for the aforementioned special-status animal species and has no additional comments at this time.

¹ CEQA is codified in the California Public Resources Code in section 21000 et seq. The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

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ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

CEQA requires that information developed in environmental impact reports and negative declarations be incorporated into a database, which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations (Pub. Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e)). Accordingly, please report any special-status species and natural communities detected during surveys to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). The CNDDDB field survey form can be found at the following link: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>. The completed form can be mailed electronically to CNDDDB at the following email address: CNDDDB@wildlife.ca.gov. The types of information reported to CNDDDB can be found at the following link: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Plants-and-Animals>.

FILING FEES

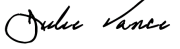
If it is determined that the Project has the potential to impact biological resources, an assessment of filing fees is necessary. Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Lead Agency and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW. Payment of the fee is required in order for the underlying project approval to be operative, vested, and final (Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, § 753.5; Fish & G. Code, § 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, § 21089).

CONCLUSION

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the IS/MND to assist your agency in identifying and mitigating the potential Project-related impacts on biological resources.

More information on survey and monitoring protocols for sensitive species can be found at CDFW's website (<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Survey-Protocols>). If you have any questions regarding this letter or need further coordination, please contact Steven Hulbert, Environmental Scientist, at the address provided on this letterhead, by telephone at (559) 575-6415, or by electronic mail at Steven.Hulbert@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

FA83F09FE08945A
Julie A. Vance
Regional Manager

cc: State Clearinghouse
Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
State.Clearinghouse@lci.ca.gov