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Name: [REDACTED]

Title:

Organization:

Address: [REDACTED]

City/State/Zip: [REDACTED]

Country: USA

Phone Number: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Solar Power on Public lands

**Comment Number: 1**

**Cited Content:** Low Known Sensitivity: includes public lands that remain after the above categories have been removed (i.e., public lands with the lowest known conflict). Projects would still require site-specific NEPA analysis. No judgment has been made as to the suitability of these lands for any kind of renewable energy production. In its raw form, it has not been rearranged to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory solar production zones, wind production zones, geothermal production areas, Western Governors Association ?Western Renewable Energy Zones,? or any other dataset that would bias the outcome.

**Cited Section ID:** Appendix N Analysis for Renewable Energy Sensitivity

**Comment Title:** Solar Power on Public lands

**Issue:** 10754

**Comment:**

Many of the Solar companies are building solar plants then filing bankruptcy; this after getting a guaranteed loan from the energy department. I don't feel these companies should be able to build on public land. They should build on private land and use corridors on public land for transmission only.

Also, the corridors should be allowed as long distance OHV routes and even for competitive events. Liability is often used as a denying factor but liability can be on promoters and users.

Population growth

**Comment Number: 2**

**Cited Content:** Population Growth While the population of the United States has increased by 38 percent from 1970 to 2000, the population of Arizona increased by 190 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 2003d; Arizona Department of Economic Security 2006). In this period, Maricopa County increased by 217 percent, Pinal County increased by 165 percent, and Pima County increased by 140 percent. Based on the July 2008 American Community Survey, the population of the tri-county region was nearly 5.3 million, with nearly 4 million (75 percent) residing in Maricopa County, which represents nearly 60 percent of the total population of Arizona Between

2000 and 2009, the region's population grew by 1,290,172 people.

**Cited Section ID:** 3.5.3.1 Demographics

**Comment Title:** Population growth

**Issue:** 10761

**Comment:**

**Public Comment on the basis of the conservation project; population growth.**In the early 2000's, population growth spurred concerns of encroachment onto public lands. The population is declining now. The sales of off road recreational vehicles are on an up swing. So, closing public lands to motorized recreation at this point is not a good idea. Concentrating OHV's in any area will cause excessive damage. Closing any one area that has a trails system currently in use will lead to this concentration in other areas. Many of your concerns are based on population growth. Below is an article from 2009 regarding population in the valley. I realize this process started in 2003 and from then till 2008 the population was booming. Please pay close attention to the population numbers in the buckeye area. *For the first time in modern history, Phoenix's population could be shrinking. It's an idea that would have been unimaginable just a few years ago, when Phoenix was surging up the list of the nation's most populous cities. Now, a variety of indicators suggest that fewer people are living here than a year ago. No one knows for sure exactly how many people have moved in or out. But with the 2010 census about to get under way, some indicators suggest Phoenix's population may be smaller than the projected 1,636,170 people. City records show declining trends in several key areas. Among them:*

- Foreclosure numbers have skyrocketed, meaning fewer city homes are occupied.
- Water hookups are down, suggesting the same.
- Some aspects of trash collection have ebbed because fewer people are buying things that produce waste.
- Crime has declined across the city while police are getting fewer calls for services, a possible indicator of fewer people.
- Sales-tax revenues are likely to drop for the second year in a row, with this year's collections off almost 8 percent from last year.

*Experts say each trend can be explained in part by other factors, such as the national recession and the bursting of the housing bubble. When consumer spending decreases, so do tax revenues and the amount of trash that people throw away. Still, an Arizona Republic analysis of the trends suggests Phoenix has anywhere from a few hundred to several thousand people fewer than projected. "I think the number is minor, but with all these indicators moving down, I think it is real," said City Manager Frank Fairbanks, declining to speculate of the number of people the city may have lost. Several factors could be behind a population loss, Fairbanks and others say. The state law requiring employers to verify immigration status of their workers is believed to have driven many immigrants out of the state in 2008. The regional decline in construction jobs also could be behind an exodus. Statewide, growth has slowed to a crawl. A population report released in December showed Arizona grew by 1.6 percent, or about 100,000 residents, in the previous fiscal year - less than half the growth rate of two years prior. But the possibility that Phoenix has declined relative to other cities has leaders worried. Tax revenue at risk*

*Losing any fraction of the city's population could mean less revenue to Phoenix from the state. Arizona shares 15 percent of its income-tax collections with cities based on those cities' population. Phoenix's population now represents about 30 percent of Arizona's population. This year, Phoenix got \$435 million from the state. That made up 38.7 percent of the city's general fund. Assuming that the suburbs maintain or grow their current populations, Phoenix's share of revenue from the state could*

*shrink in coming years, compounding the city's budget crisis. Phoenix already is facing cuts of \$270 million, or more than 22 percent, from its budget this year. The city is weighing cuts from community centers, senior centers, libraries, police and fire protection, and other services. "It's an important, pressing issue for all of our cities here, but Phoenix probably most of all," said Rita Walton, who monitors population for the Maricopa Association of Governments. "They're the biggest and stand to lose the most." The evidence*

*Several indicators exist showing that the population could be declining. Among them:*

- *Water: The number of water-using accounts fell about 5,600 from fiscal 2007-08 to 2008-09. The number of accounts using no water almost doubled, on average, meaning those homes still have water connections but are probably empty. Tracking population by water hookups is "a good way of watching for population change," said Steve Doig, a journalism professor at Arizona State University who used a similar method to track the return of people to southern Florida after Hurricane Andrew. Evidence about the increasing number of water accounts using no water and the decreasing number of accounts generally indicates population decline.*
- *Trash: Trash collection dropped 2 percent overall from fiscal year 2006-07 to 2007-08. While the amount of recyclable material picked up increased slightly, bulk-trash pickup dropped almost 15 percent during the same period. Dennis Hoffman, professor of economics at the W. P. Carey School of Business at ASU, said trash collections, just like electrical and water hookups, frequently are used to gauge more precise population shifts than a census provides.*
- *Foreclosures: Bank repossessions of homes continue to increase. The key areas of decline are in the western part of the city. Phoenix overall had a staggering 534 percent increase in foreclosures in the first half of 2008, or an increase of about 5,000 additional homes in foreclosure compared with the first half of 2007. Figures for the last half of the year are not yet available.*
- *Taxes: Sales-tax collections have declined dramatically. Although not tied to growth as directly as water hookups, increases in sales-tax collections began slowing in 2006-07, then dropped in the next two years. Hoffman said that since the retail sector thrives on population growth, it is reasonable to conclude that with the retail sector in so much trouble, declining sales-tax revenue could correlate to declining population.*
- *Crime: Phoenix saw violent crime decrease 0.3 percent last year, along with a 0.3 percent decrease in total property crimes. Crime has continued to fall in 2008, records show. In addition, Phoenix police have had fewer calls for service this year than last year, Police Chief Jack Harris said. Growing populations almost always result in more calls to police.*

*So, my point is: The opportunity of using population growth as an excuse or a reason to close lands and trails, or designate wilderness areas has come and gone. We are no longer growing. We will need a growth of approximately 17% to fill the empty homes we have right now. Census data released in early March show Arizona's housing vacancy rate is more than 15 percent. Many cities in metro Phoenix have much higher vacancy rates, particularly newer suburbs on the fringe where homebuilders flocked to construct the least-expensive new houses. Buckeye has a housing vacancy rate of almost 21 percent, according to the Census Bureau. A study last year by a realty-studies group at Arizona State University showed similar housing vacancy rates for metro Phoenix and found nearly 140,000 total vacant houses and condominiums.*