

## Email: SCE Ivanpah Control

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**From:** B J Kovacs <thebeej@cox.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 12, 2026 10:34 PM  
**To:** Ivanpah-Control Project Team  
**Subject:** SCE Ivanpah-Control Project — Public Comment on Draft Environmental Impact Report

Dear Aspen Environmental Group,

My name is Brent Kovacs. I live in Santa Barbara, California. I am writing to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the SCE Ivanpah-Control Project, specifically on the Crater Mountain Realignment Alternative as it would affect the Birch Creek community in northern Inyo County.

I first visited the property at 945 Birch Creek Road around 1990, when I was still in Medical School. Since approximately 2005 I have returned every year, typically more than once annually. Over those decades I have come to know the place well — the property, the road, the people who live along it, and the broader area people come to the eastern Sierras for.

What makes the Birch Creek community specific is hard to put on paper but worth trying to describe. The creek itself runs across the property, fed by Sierra snowmelt, and the riparian corridor it creates is a working desert oasis. The views west to the Sierra escarpment are striking. It is always incredible to see the beautiful mountain peaks and the Palisades Glacier (which is still there for the time being as a testament to nature's resilience despite global warming). The place has a quality of quiet I have come to value over the many years I have visited. It is hard to come by the beauty and peacefulness in industrial times. The existing LADWP transmission lines are already a presence — I can hear them from the property under certain conditions, and the structures are visible — but they are far enough off that the place still feels like the place. A second high-voltage corridor sited even closer to the homes would change that.

Over thirty-five years of visits I have personally observed the wildlife along Birch Creek, including herons, deer, and the occasional bear (well I have not seen the bear itself, just the evidence they have been through the area); the cultural materials visible on the surface of the parcel, including the worked obsidian I have seen with my own eyes, as well as the stone circles on the property and the rock depressions from generations of native Americans preparing meals; the dark sky at night that is increasingly hard to find in California. In fact, in the warmer months, I have often climbed to the top of the property to lay out a tarp

and stare up at the stars. It is unfortunately at those times that I can hear the existing power lines interrupting the peace. The Draft EIR characterizes this area as “undeveloped open space.” That is not what I have experienced when I am there.

As a physician, I am aware that the noise environment of a residential community matters to the health and rest of the people who live there. When I visit Birch Creek, the noise from the existing lines is already noticeable. A second high-voltage corridor closer to the homes would compound what is already there. This kind of cumulative noise affects sleep, which affects the people who live there day in and day out, in ways that are easy for a transmission planning analysis to overlook.

I have spent significant time in the eastern Sierras over the years — fishing, hiking, and geocaching the broader region (including my personal geocaching hides Lauren's cache, Quarry Cache 2 and McMurray Meadow Road - NOT). I know the difference between the developed stretches along US-395 and the quieter places people seek out off the highway. Birch Creek is one of those quiet places. Routing a new high-voltage corridor through it would diminish what makes it worth coming to.

I respectfully ask that the Final EIR consider the impacts on the Birch Creek residents and on visitors like me who have known the place for decades. The community is small, but it is real, and the place is worth protecting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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