# [***Defenders of Wildlife: Biden Administration Halts Trump's Last-Minute Attack to Undo Desert Conservation Plan***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:621V-7NY1-JC11-11V6-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

The ***Defenders of Wildlife issued*** the following news:

In the 11th hour of President Trump's term, the federal administration announced a rollback to upend key conservation protections afforded to public lands in the California Desert Conservation Area by the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) adopted by the federal government and the State of California in 2016. The DRECP made significant amendments to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) California Desert Conservation Area Plan of 1980, and the Bishop and Bakersfield Resource Management Plans. This week, President Biden announced that he would halt the DRECP rulemaking process proposed by the previous administration, leaving the original plan intact.

"Defenders of Wildlife applauds the Biden administration for terminating the Trump administration's 11th hour attack on the DRECP," said Pamela Flick, California program director, Defenders of Wildlife. "The 2016 plan amendments were supported by diverse groups dedicated to protecting our lands, wildlife and cultural resources while supporting our clean energy future. We are thrilled that the plans will remain intact so California can continue its leadership in tackling the biodiversity and climate crises through protection of habitat and 'smart from the start' renewable energy development to avoid high conflict areas."

The DRECP amendments resulted from a nearly decade-long collaborative effort between the State of California, federal and local governments, ***tribes***, renewable energy companies and conservation organizations.

The BLM's proposed rollback of the DRECP amendments was released on January 14, 2021 and would have significantly weakened the original plans by removing protections for lands, wildlife and cultural resources. The proposal would have stripped habitat protections for the threatened Agassiz's desert tortoise, lands within wilderness study areas, Pipes Canyon with its unusual assemblage of giant Joshua trees, crucial desert bighorn habitat at Cronese Basin, and historical areas like the petroglyphs of Black Mountain, to name a few areas vital for wildlife and people alike.

At the time of the announcement, Flick called the Trump administration's proposed plan amendments "ill-conceived" and stressed that the proposal would throw "a monkey wrench into the efforts of a diverse group of supporters" while causing a "strong backlash" from the military, local government, business industries, ***tribes***, conservationists and recreationists.

The State of California also came out strongly against the Trump administration's recent proposal. California Energy Commissioner Karen Douglas stated that the CEC was disappointed that the BLM unilaterally proposed amendments in the last days of the Trump administration, adding that the DRECP amendments approved in 2016 are "an important component of our state's efforts to meet its ambitious climate and renewable energy goals." Commissioner Douglas re-emphasized the long collaborative process underlying the DRECP process.

Flick pledged Defenders of Wildlife's continued commitment to defend the DRECP and underscored its importance to safeguarding California desert wildlife and habitats. "The DRECP is a crucial part of California's effort to transition to clean energy and protect its declining biodiversity. Now we will get back to work implementing the plan and ensuring that imperiled wildlife, like Agassiz's desert tortoise and desert bighorn, continue to have protected lands and waters to survive and thrive."

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