


**ALAMEDA COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**
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**Date:** June 6, 2014

**To:** Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area (APWRA) Scientific Review Committee (SRC)

**From:** Sandi Rivera, Assistant Deputy Director

**Subject:** 2014-2015 Special Study

In February 2014, your Committee discussed several studies or other scientific work that the Monitoring Team could conduct or subcontract during the 2014-2015 bird year that could best advance scientific understanding of avian mortality in the APWRA and which could be potentially beneficial for the repowered environment. The study selected will be constrained by a budget limit of \$250,000 and by the schedule for removal/construction of wind turbines.

The background mortality study was suggested by the Monitoring Team because the last four years of monitoring have demonstrated that over 44% of fatalities for kestrel and burrowing owl occur when the turbines are not operating. This is a factor as to why the 50% goal had limited achievement and does not provide clear answers on the effectiveness of the seasonal shutdown on reducing fatalities.

Based on your discussions, SRC members favored investigating background mortality and, if feasible, a burrowing owl study integrated into the primary study. The subcommittee and the Monitoring Team were directed to develop a straw proposal for the SRC to consider at its June meeting for implementation in October 2014.

Staff will be bringing the recommended 2014-2015 Special Study contract to the Board of Supervisors in September for consideration. Since the APWRA is rapidly transitioning to a repowered environment and the remaining management measures for Conditional Use Permits are limited, it is important to clearly describe the objectives, what the study can specifically achieve, what are the drawbacks, and how the proposed 2014-2015 study(ies) will benefit the APWRA in the future. Per the meeting summary, some benefits and drawbacks were identified but detailed rationale was not developed for the project(s) selected. Staff recommends that the SRC discuss these topics when finalizing the selection and design of the 2014-2015 Special Study.