ON FEBRUARY 1, 2018, the The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced it will consider amending the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan Land Use Amendment Plan (DRECP) to seek greater opportunities for renewable energy generation. The next day, BLM posted a Federal Register notice which initiated a 45-day public comment period.

The review comes less than 18 months after the DRECP Record of Decision (ROD) was published and implementation was well under way. According to BLM, the review was prompted by “concerns voiced from multiple parties” during the comment period. It is no secret that commercial industry advocates have been lobbying hard to claw back land they lost in the ROD to conservation and recreation Stakeholders – including Rockhounds. Industry now has wind in its sails to get it all back, thanks to Executive Order 13783, “Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth” (March 27, 2017).

To ensure access to collecting areas is not lost to industrial projects Rockhounds must reiterate anew their concerns to BLM by the comment period deadline on March 19, 2018

www.federalregister.gov/d/2018-02098

2.) Docket Number 2018-02098, available online at: https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2018-02098
3.) Campbell’s comments were made on a conference call between DRECP administrators and Stakeholder representatives on September 13, 2016, the day before the ROD was published.
4.) SDMG’s comment letter was submitted on February 21, 2015. The letter included the results of a survey of nearly 190 rockhound respondents – the SDMG-sponsored survey was produced by Shirley Leeson and Lisbet Thoresen, see: www.drecp.org/draftdrecp/comments/San_Diego_Mineral_and_Gem_Society_comments_2015-02-21.pdf or short URL: https://goo.gl/meFshB.