

**Center for Biological Diversity – Sierra Club – Western Watersheds Project –
Defenders of Wildlife – Desert Protective Council
San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society**

Chris Otahal
U.S. Department of the Interior , Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Field Office
2601 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311
caftirwin@blm.gov

RE: Deadline Extension Request for Draft Environmental Assessment for Desert Tortoise
Translocation DOI-BLM-CA-680-2009-0058


Dear Chris Otahal,

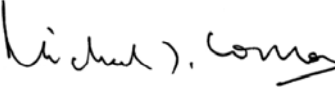
The undersigned groups respectfully request an extension to the comment period for the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Desert Tortoise Translocation DOI-BLM-CA-680-2009-0058. We request a 60-day extension of the comment period for this important proposal.

The EA is based in part on a new translocation plan prepared by the United States Geological Survey that is attached as an appendix, and also includes 2 maps that have not been previously released to the public. Translocation is a complex and controversial issue that is fraught with potentially deadly implications for the federally and state threatened desert tortoise. Allowing only a mere fifteen days for the public to review this EA and the associated scientific documents is entirely inadequate. We believe at least an additional 60 days are needed to allow for meaningful public review and comment on the new proposal.

We appreciate your agencies' serious consideration of our request and look forward to your response. Please consider this request especially in light of the significant public interest in the previous translocation effort and in the conservation of the beleaguered and declining desert tortoise.

Sincerely,



Heene Anderson
Biologist/Desert Program Director
Center for Biological Diversity


Michael J. Connor, PhD
California Director
Western Watersheds Project

/s/
Sidney Silliman, PhD
Conservation Committee
San Gorgonio Chapter – Sierra Club

/s/
Jeff Aardahl
California Representative
Defenders of Wildlife

/s/
Terry Weiner
Imperial County Projects and Conservation
Coordinator
Desert Protective Council


Drew Feldmann
Conservation Chair
San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society

/s/
Terry Frewin
Chair - Desert Committee
Sierra Club