

DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	24-OPT-03
Project Title:	Soda Mountain Solar
TN #:	266035
Document Title:	Presentation - Soda Mountain Solar Project Application Informational and Environmental Scoping Meeting
Description:	N/A
Filer:	Lorenzo Cano
Organization:	California Energy Commission
Submitter Role:	Commission Staff
Submission Date:	9/16/2025 5:09:41 PM
Docketed Date:	9/17/2025



Soda Mountain Solar Project Application

Informational and Environmental Scoping Meeting

Docket Number: 24-OPT-03

August 29, 2025



Pledge of Allegiance



**I pledge allegiance to
the flag of the United
States of America, and
to the Republic for
which it stands, one
Nation under God,
indivisible, with liberty
and justice for all.**



Meeting Logistics

- Meeting is hybrid and recorded.
- Instruction for Zoom closed captioning service:
 - **To Activate:** click on “live transcript” icon and then choose either “show subtitle” or “view full transcript”.
 - **To Stop:** click "exit" from “live transcript” or select “hide subtitle” icon.
- Please be mindful of the audio for those participating online; speak slowly and clearly.
- Agenda includes time for public comment and input.



Agenda

- **Welcome**
- **CEC Staff Presentation**
 - Opt-In Certification Program
- **Applicant Presentation**
 - Proposed project
- **CEC Staff Presentation**
 - Staff Assessment and Scope and Content of the Environmental Analysis
- **CEC Presentation**
 - Public participation and California Native American tribal consultation opportunities
- **Government Comments**
 - California Native American tribes
 - Government Agencies
 - Elected Officials
- **Public Comment**
- **Next Steps**
- **Closing Comments**
- **Adjourn**



Welcome

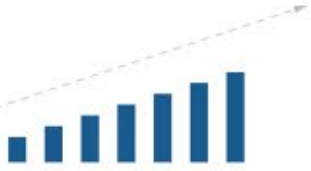


**The California Energy
Commission is leading the
state to a 100%
clean energy future for all.**



PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF THE

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION



**Advancing State
Energy Policy**



**Investing in
Energy Innovation**



**Developing
Renewable Energy**



**Preparing for
Energy Emergencies**



**Achieving
Energy Efficiency**



**Transforming
Transportation**



**Overseeing
Energy Infrastructure**



Opt-In Certification Process

**Presented by Kaycee Chang
Supervisor, CEQA Project Management Unit**



Opt-In Certification Quick Facts

- Certain clean energy development projects may choose a consolidated state permitting option
- CEC is the CEQA lead agency



Solar photovoltaic or terrestrial wind



Energy storage systems



Stationary power plant using thermal energy



Specific manufacturing or assembly facilities for clean energy



Hydrogen production



Opt-In Agency Coordination





CEC Findings Required to Approve Opt-In Projects

Provides an overall net positive economic benefit to the local government

Entered into one or more legally binding community benefits agreements

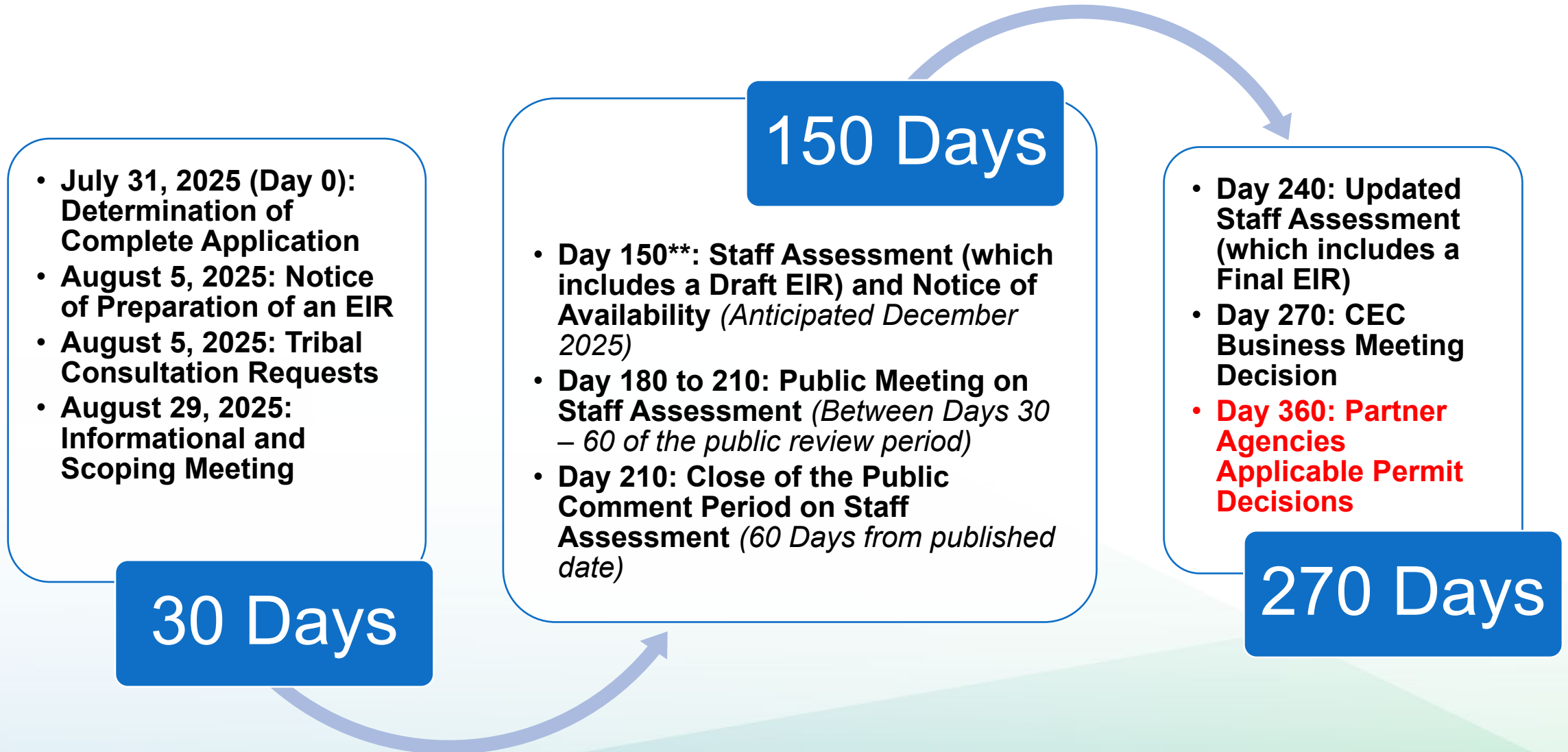
Commits to prevailing wage to skilled and trained workforce

Complies with applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards

Significant effects of the project will be avoided or substantially lessened



270 Day Process Milestones



^{**}These Deadlines are subject to any substantial changes made to the project or certain other events occurring after an application is deemed complete.



Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement



If a proposed project is certified by the CEC, then during the operational life of the facility, CEC staff will:

- Verify compliance with license
- Perform formal site inspections
- Require monthly and annual compliance reports
- Review monthly and annual compliance reports
- Investigate complaints
- Conduct unannounced inspections



CEC Opt-In Webpage

The screenshot shows the California Energy Commission's website. At the top is a blue navigation bar with the CEC logo, social media links, and a search bar. Below this is a white header with the CEC logo and a search bar. The main navigation menu includes links to HOME, PROCEEDINGS, RULES AND REGULATIONS, PROGRAMS AND TOPICS, FUNDING, and DATA AND REPORTS. The 'PROGRAMS AND TOPICS' link is highlighted. Below the navigation menu is a large image of solar panels with a blue banner overlay that reads 'Opt-In Certification Program'. To the left of the image is a paragraph of text. To the right is a green sidebar with a list of links.

Opt-In Certification Program

Permitting is crucial to deploy renewable energy power plants, which are essential to meet the state's climate goals. With half a century of permitting experience under the California Environmental Quality Act, Assembly Bill 205 (2022) has broadened the California Energy Commission's (CEC) authority. This expansion allows the CEC to oversee the permitting of clean and renewable energy facilities, including solar photovoltaic, onshore wind, and energy storage systems, and facilities that produce or assemble clean energy technologies or their components. Known as the Opt-In Certification Program, this permitting process offers developers an optional pathway to submit project applications, facilitating faster deployment of renewable technologies.

POWER PLANTS

- Alphabetical Power Plant Listing
- Power Plant Compliance and Siting
- Licensing and Compliance Fees for Facilities
- Opt-In Certification Program**

Opt-In Certification Program
<https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/topics/power-plants/opt-certification-program>

- Proposed projects under review
- Opt-In fact sheet
- Opt-In FAQ
- Opt-In process timeline



Applicant Presentation on the Proposed Project

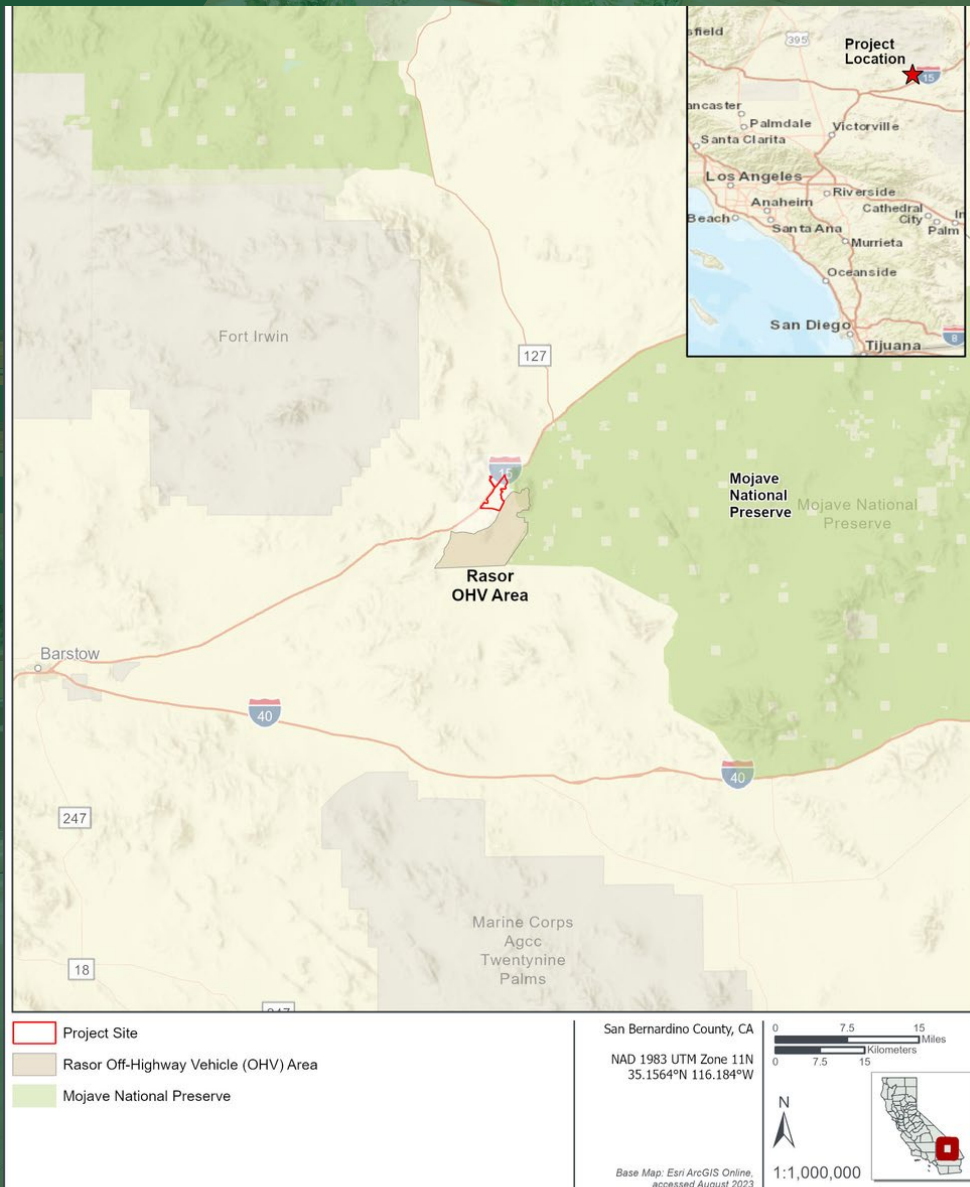
August 2025

SODA MOUNTAIN SOLAR PROJECT

- 300 megawatt photovoltaic solar
- 300 megawatt battery energy storage
- 2,670 acres of BLM land
- Unincorporated San Bernardino County



PROJECT LOCATION



- Approximately 2,670 acres of BLM land in unincorporated San Bernardino County, located 6 miles southwest of the town of Baker, California.
- Bounded directly to the east by the Mojave National Preserve (administered by the National Park Service) and BLM lands, including the Rasor Off-Highway Vehicle recreation area at the southeast corner.
- Interstate 15 (I-15), the former Arrowhead Trail Highway, runs along the western boundary of the project site, with Rasor Road Services Shell Oil gas station located off I-15 southwest of the project site, along the access road to the project site.

EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS



The project site is composed of rural desert land and is almost entirely undeveloped.

Razor Road, an unimproved BLM public access road, runs from the southwest corner of the site.



Infrastructure surrounding the site includes two high-voltage electric transmission lines, an electrical distribution line, wireless cellular telephone towers, two fiber-optic cables, and two fuel pipelines. The two high-voltage electrical transmission lines to the west of I-15 are a 115-kV sub-transmission line owned by Southern California Edison and the Marketplace-Adelanto 500-kV transmission line operated by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP).



The project site is located within the BLM's California Desert District, within the jurisdiction of the Barstow Field Office.

CDFW has an existing agreement to build a wildlife crossing in the area for the High Speed Rail Project.

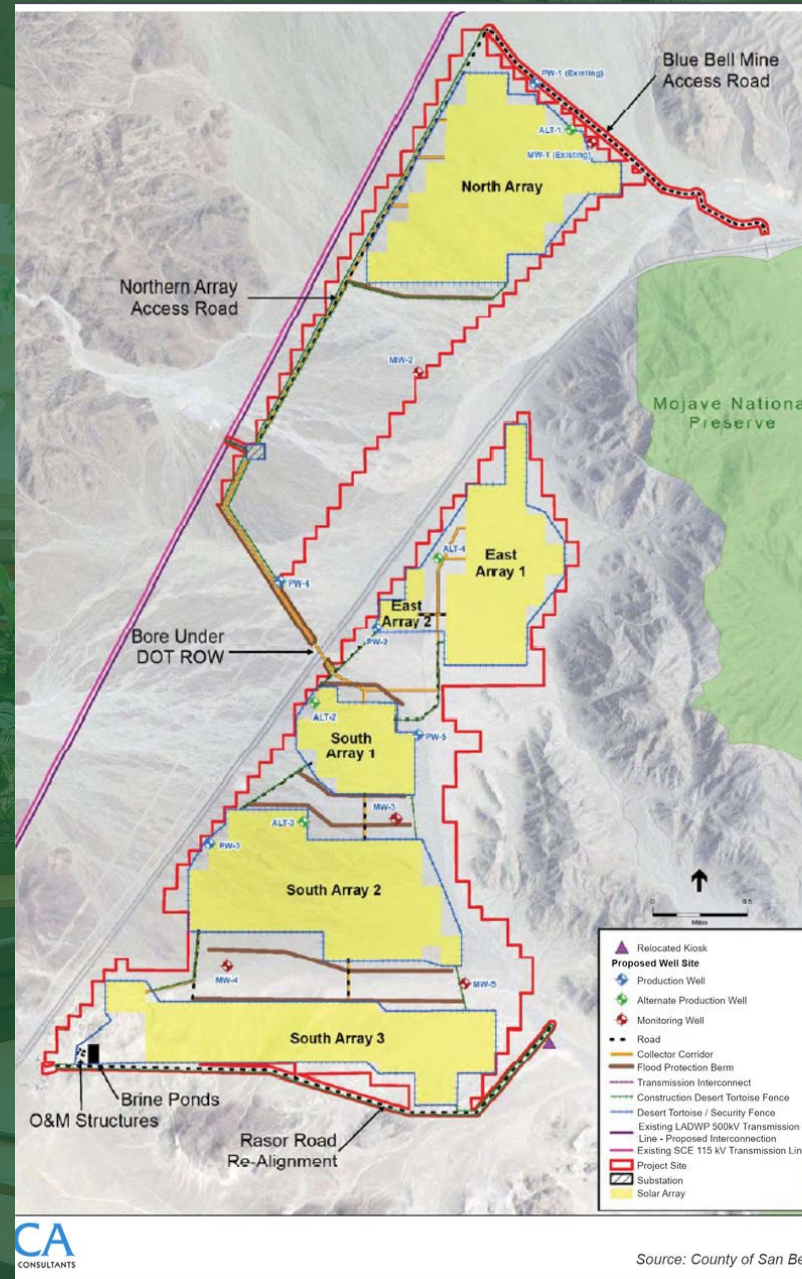
Project Overview

- Proposal to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission a 300 megawatt (MW) photovoltaic solar, and 300 MW battery energy storage facility.
- Construction and operation would result in the disturbance of approximately 2,059 acres of 2,670 acre site.
- The Project would generate and deliver renewable solar power to the regional electrical grid through an interconnection with the existing Mead-Adelanto 500-kV transmission line operated by the LADWP.
- 2015 EIR/EIS was prepared with a ROD issued by BLM. However, the County of San Bernardino declined to issue groundwater well permits or certify the Project's EIR.

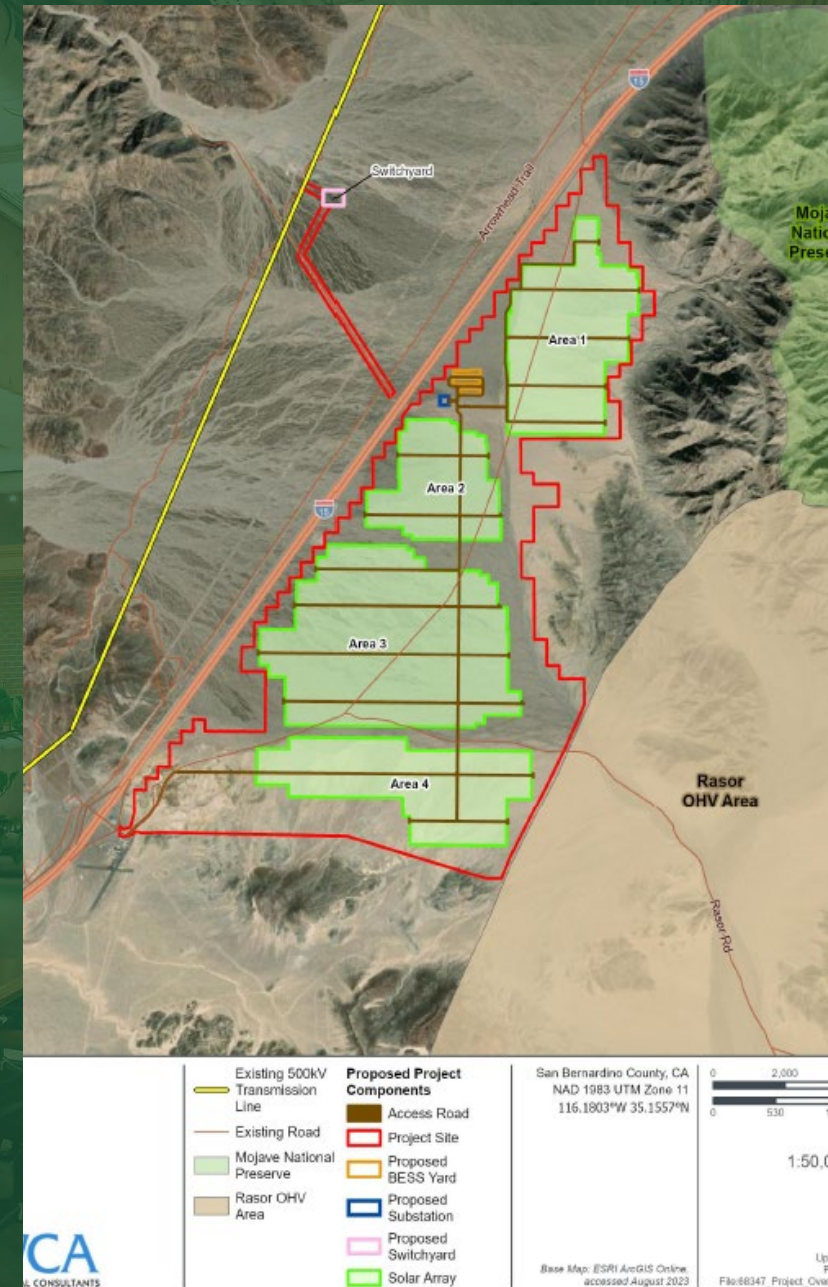


PROJECT HISTORY

The revised project configuration removes 571 acres from the original development footprint (the North Solar Array). This reduces impacts to visual resources, water resources, biological resources and desert bighorn sheep.



2015 Project



2025 Project

Project Components

The proposed project components are as follows:

1. The solar plant site (i.e., all facilities that create a footprint in and around the field of solar panels, including the solar field consisting of solar power arrays identified as Area 1, 2, 3 and 4, operation and maintenance (O&M) buildings and structures, stormwater infrastructure, and related infrastructure and improvements.
2. A substation and switchyard for interconnection to the existing transmission system.
3. Gen-tie line connecting project substation, switchyard, and 500-kV Mead-Adelanto line.
4. Approximately 300 MW/1,200 MWh of battery energy storage system (BESS) across 18 acres.

The project will connect to an existing transmission line with availability capacity.



PROJECT CONSTRUCTION



Construction is anticipated to begin in Q2 of 2026 and occur over an approximately 18-month period and consist of overlapping construction stages.



Stage 1 would include mobilization, site preparation, fencing, preparation of laydown areas, and trenching. Stage 2 would include installation of solar array structural components including cables, piles, racking systems, inverters, and modules. Stage 3 would include installation of solar panels, battery storage systems, commissioning, and testing.



An average of 200 construction workers would operate daily on-site, with an anticipated 300 construction workers during peak construction activities.

PROJECT OPERATION



The project substation would be uncrewed during operation. However, a workforce of approximately 25 to 40 personnel would visit the substation on an as needed basis for maintenance, equipment operation, and/or security.



Operational needs at the site include monitoring and optimizing the power generated by the solar arrays and interconnection with the transmission lines, operating the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system, troubleshooting the collector lines and repairing damaged cables, and conducting panel-washing activities periodically through the year.



The project would be remotely controlled, eliminating the need for permanent on-site employees. The facility would not be accessible to the public, and access will be infrequent and limited to authorized personnel.



PROJECT NEED



Supports long-term clean energy reliability by providing zero emitting power generation paired with battery energy storage.

Supports the State's GHG emissions reduction targets for 2030 and the State goal of 100 percent zero carbon electricity resources by 2045.

Would connect to the existing LADWP Mead – Adelanto 500-kV transmission line that has ample unused capacity therefore eliminating the need for new transmission lines.

Existing Interconnection Agreement.

Battery Storage increases grid and generation reliability, dispatchability and stability.

Provides the capacity needed to support decommissioning of existing thermal and nuclear power plants.



Staff Assessment and Scope and Content of the Environmental Analysis

**Presented by Kaycee Chang
Supervisor, CEQA Project Management Unit**



Staff Assessment Purpose

- Provide objective information regarding the project's potential effects on the environment
- Identify mitigation to reduce impacts
- Describe a range of reasonable alternatives which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project
- Assess the project's conformance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards
- Evaluate whether the application complies with additional licensing requirements
- Make a recommendation to the CEC Commissioners on whether to approve the project



What is a Staff Assessment?

- Comprehensive, independent, technical and environmental review prepared by the CEC
- Includes an EIR following the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act
- Key Staff Assessment information include:
 - Engineering Evaluation
 - Environmental Impact Assessment
 - Mandatory Opt-In Requirements
 - Environmental Justice Analysis
 - Compliance Conditions
 - Compliance Monitoring Requirements



Environmental and Engineering Impact Assessment

Environmental Evaluation	Environmental Evaluation	Engineering Evaluation
Air Quality	Land Use, Agriculture, and Forestry	Facility Design
Biological Resources	Noise and Vibration	Facility Reliability
Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Public Health	Transmission System Engineering
Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources	Socioeconomics	Worker Safety and Fire Protection
Efficiency and Energy Resources	Solid Waste Management	
Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals	Transmission Line Safety and Nuisance	
Hazards, Hazardous Materials/Waste, and Wildfire	Transportation	
	Visual Resources	
	Water Resources	
	Alternatives	



Mandatory Opt-In Requirements

Requirements for Covered Project
Under the Labor Code

Legally Binding and Enforceable
Community Benefits Agreement(s)

Net Positive Economic Benefit
to the Local Government



Preliminary Evaluation – Probable Environmental Effects

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals
- Hazards, Hazardous Materials and Wildfire
- Land Use
- Noise and Vibration
- Public Health
- Socioeconomics
- Transportation
- Visual Resources
- Water Resources
- Worker Safety and Fire Protection



Biological Resources

Probable Environmental Effects

Direct and Indirect Effects to Special Status Wildlife

- Desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) - State and Federal Threatened
- Burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) - State Candidate for Listing
- Nelson's bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) - State Fully Protected
- Desert kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis arsipus*) - Protected Fur-bearing Mammal (California Code of Regulations, title 14, § 460)
- American badger (*Taxidea taxus*) - State Species of Special Concern



Biological Resources

Probable Environmental Effects

- Disruption of nesting for common and special-status bird species
- Loss of habitat for common and listed species
- Disruption of wildlife movement corridors
- Adverse effects on ephemeral drainages
- Operational effects to Nelson's bighorn sheep, desert tortoise, burrowing owl, desert birds, and other sensitive wildlife



Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals

Probable Environmental Effects

- Project is sited on desert alluvial fans that drain adjacent mountains.
- Increased sediment and soil erosion through excavation, grading, and soil compaction.
- Staff will evaluate:
 - Sediment and soil erosion impacts.
 - Proposed mitigation.
- Staff have asked the applicant to complete a preliminary site-specific geotechnical investigation.



Water Resources

Probable Environmental Effects

- **Operational Stormwater Management** – Proposed berm along project perimeter to divert alluvial fan stormwater runoff around site, drainage channels between array fields, and temporary sediment basins.
 - CEC staff will evaluate the adequacy of this mitigation.
- **Water Supply** – Groundwater extraction from an undeveloped groundwater subbasin.
 - Groundwater characterization measures will be assessed.
- **At Grade Ephemeral Stream Crossings** – Proposed to maintain existing flow and sediment transport, in compliance with CWA Section 401 requirements established by the RWQCB.



Worker Safety/Fire Protection

Probable Environmental Effects

- CEC will review the history of battery energy storage system (BESS) fires and evolving strategies for BESS safety
- Applicant is proposing BESS in containers using lithium iron phosphate batteries
- Transportation impacts of BESS container movement will be analyzed (comments from California Highway Patrol)



Staff Assessment / Next Steps

CEC prepares Staff Assessment which includes a Draft EIR

CEC publishes Staff Assessment in 150 days (with certain exceptions)



CEC publishes Staff Assessment

60-day public review period

Public meeting for the Staff Assessment



CEC prepares Updated Staff Assessment after public review period closes

CEC publishes Updated Staff Assessment



Decision at noticed CEC Business Meeting



Office of the Public Advisor, Energy Equity, and Tribal Affairs



Office of the Public Advisor, Energy Equity and Tribal Affairs

Advise and support the CEC, stakeholders, California Native American tribes, and interested members of the public in meaningful engagement and participation in CEC programs, policies, and energy equity efforts.





Multiple Ways to Participate

1. Follow
2. Comment
3. Tribal Consultation





Follow Via Web, Email, and Events

Home > Programs and Topics > All Topics > Power Plants > Soda Mountain Solar Project

Soda Mountain Solar Project

PROJECT OWNER Soda Mountain Solar, LLC	TECHNOLOGY Solar Photovoltaic (PV) + Battery Energy Storage	ORIGINAL PROCEEDING Submit e-Comment
DOCKET NUMBER 24-OPT-03	PROJECT STATUS Under Review	Submit e-Filing
CAPACITY 300 megawatts (MW) PV / 300 MW, 1,200 MW-hours storage	PROJECT TYPE Opt-In	Docket Log (24-OPT-03)
LOCATION San Bernardino County		Exhibit List
		Proof of Service List
		Search All Power Plant Documents

Project Description

- Proposed project and event information
- Comment
- Sign up for email updates
- Link for project docket
- More

<https://www.energy.ca.gov/powerplant/solar-photovoltaic-pv-battery-energy-storage/soda-mountain-solar-project>



Proposed Project Docket

<div><div><div>CA.GOV</div><div><div>CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION</div></div></div><div>CA.gov Contact Us Accessibility Quick Links</div></div>					
<div>Home About Us Analysis & Stats Efficiency Funding Power Plants Renewables Research Transportation</div>					
<h2>Docket Log</h2> <p>Docket: 24-OPT-03 Project Title: Soda Mountain Solar Generated On: 8/19/2025 11:41:43 PM</p>					
Include: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Documents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transcripts <input type="text"/>					
↓ TN #	Docketed Date	Document Title	Exhibit #	To	From
265699	8/19/2025	Aviso de información y reunión para determinar el alcance ambiental para el Proyecto de Energía Solar de Soda Mountain Solar 29 de agosto de 2025 1 pm - 5 pm Zoom y Holiday Inn Express - Sala de conferencias, 2700 Lenwood Road, Barstow, CA 92311 6 page(s)			California Energy Commission
265698	8/19/2025	Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting for the Proposed Soda Mountain Solar Project August 29, 2025 1pm to 5 pm Hybrid- Zoom and Holiday Inn Express- Conference Room, 2700 Lenwood Road, Barstow, CA 92311 6 page(s)			California Energy Commission
265697	8/19/2025	NOP Comment from Native American Heritage Commission Submitted to the State Clearinghouse on August 12, 2025 5 page(s)			California Energy Commission
265690	8/19/2025	Responses to CEC Data Requests WS-1 through WS-4 Responses to CEC Data Requests WS-1 through WS-4 Worker Safety and Fire Protection 10 page(s)		CEC/ Docket Unit	Resolution Environmental



Visit Docket 24-OPT-03 for free 24/7 access to project documents

<https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-03>



Verbal and Written Comments





CALIFORNIA
ENERGY COMMISSION


CA.gov | Contact Us | Accessibility | Quick Links

Home | About Us | Analysis & Stats | Efficiency | Funding | Power Plants | Renewables | Research | Transportation

Add Comment

Fields denoted by an asterisk (*) are required.

Select a Proceeding *



[or View All Projects](#)

You will need to select a proceeding before continuing

For any questions regarding e-commenting, please send an e-mail to e-CommentingHelp@energy.ca.gov or call 800-822-6228 or 916-654-4489.

Accessibility | Conditions of Use | Privacy Policy
Copyright © 2016 State of California

<https://www.energy.ca.gov/events>

<https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/EComment/ECommentSelectProceeding.aspx>



Tribal Consultation

The CEC invites consultation in this and other opt-in proceedings with California Native American tribes.

Contact: Gabriel Roark, Assistant Tribal Liaison
Gabriel.Roark@energy.ca.gov (916) 237-2544



Thank You

Email

publicadvisor@energy.ca.gov

Phone

(916) 269-9595

Online

<https://www.energy.ca.gov/about/divisions-and-offices/office-public-advisor>



Government Comment

California Native American tribes

Government Agencies

Elected Officials



Public Comment



Public Comment

Instruction

- 2 minutes or less per person
- 1 representative per organization

Zoom App/Online

- Click “raise hand”

Telephone

- Press *9 to raise hand
- Press *6 to mute and unmute

When called upon

- CEC staff will open your line
- Unmute, spell name and state affiliation, if any

2-MINUTE TIMER



Timer

BREAK

Please return at

AGENDA

- **Welcome**
- **CEC Staff Presentation**
- **Applicant Presentation**
- **CEC Staff Presentation**
- **Lunch Break**
- **CEC Presentation**
 - Public participation and California Native American tribal consultation opportunities
- **Government Comments**
 - California Native American tribes
 - Government Agencies
 - Elected Officials
- **Break**
- **Public Comment**
- **Next Steps**
- **Closing Comments**
- **Adjourn**



Comments Due

September 3, 2025, on the Notice of Preparation and Scope and Content of the EIR

Methods to Submit

1. Submit e-comments to project's docket, accessible at:
<https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Ecomment/Ecomment.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-03>
2. Email comments to: docket@energy.ca.gov*
**Please include "24-OPT-03 and Soda Mountain Solar Project NOP Comments" in subject line*
3. Send via U.S. mail, postmarked by September 3, 2025, to:
Re: Soda Mountain Solar Project
California Energy Commission
715 P Street, MS 40
Sacramento, CA 95814

The screenshot shows the California Energy Commission's e-filing portal. At the top is the CA.GOV logo and the California Energy Commission logo. Below the logos is a navigation bar with links: Home, About Us, Analysis & Stats, Efficiency, Funding, and P. The main heading is "Docket Log". Below this, it specifies "Docket: 24-OPT-03", "Project Title: Soda Mountain Solar", and "Generated On: 8/11/2025 3:12:28 PM". There is a search bar and a filter section labeled "Include:" with checkboxes for "Documents", "Comments", and "Transcripts", all of which are checked. Below the filter section is a table with the following headers: "↓ TN #", "Docketed Date", and "Document Title".

↓ TN #	Docketed Date	Document Title
--------	---------------	----------------



Next Steps

Activity	Timeframe
Close Public Comment Period on the Notice of Preparation	September 3, 2025
Publish Staff Assessment**	December 2025

**These Deadlines are subject to any substantial changes made to the proposed project or certain other events occurring after an application is deemed complete.



Thank You!

Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division

STEPSiting@energy.ca.gov