DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	24-OPT-03
Project Title:	Soda Mountain Solar
TN #:	269352-2
Document Title:	Staff Memorandum on Record of Proceedings_Attachment 1
Description:	Admin Record - Part 1 of 5
Filer:	Ngoc Tran
Organization:	California Energy Commission
Submitter Role:	Commission Staff
Submission Date:	3/27/2026 3:25:46 PM
Docketed Date:	3/27/2026

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Sent: 12/19/2024 12:00:03 AM
To: Rozzell, Lara R [Lara_R_Rozzell@nps.gov]
CC: Watson, Carol@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=84e32d50c7dc47d89812b468a50090ed-Watson, Car]; Angulo, Armand@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c8689c4b941c4f26b280dd50cc25188d-Angulo, Arm]
Subject: RE: Info on Soda Mountain participation

Hi Lara,
The CEC welcomes public participation in its proceedings, including the proposed Soda Mountain Solar Project.

On the CEC project webpage for the project (https://www.energy.ca.gov/powerplant/solar-photovoltaic-pv/soda-mountain-solar-project) you can find more info on the project and a link on the upper right portion of the page to submit an e-comment (https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Ecomment/Ecomment.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-03). The e-commenting page allows you to type in your comment or attach a letter. Comments will be posted to the CEC docket for this proceeding (https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-03). We also recommend subscribing to the free Soda Mountain email notification listserv. You can find the link to subscribe on the bottom right side of the project webpage linked above.

If you have any questions about the commenting process, please reach out to Armand Angulo (cc'd). Our office is a free resource available to members of the public who want to participate in CEC proceedings.

Mona

Mona Badie (she/her)
Public Advisor
Office of the Public Advisor, Energy Equity, and Tribal Affairs
1-916-628-1376

California Energy Commission
Website: www.energy.ca.gov

From: Watson, Carol@Energy <Carol.Watson@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 3:40 PM
To: Rozzell, Lara R <Lara_R_Rozzell@nps.gov>
Cc: Badie, Mona@Energy <Mona.Badie@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Info on Soda Mountain participation

Hi, Mona,

Lara is interested in filing a letter to the Soda Mountain docket and learning more info, can you help with that?

Best,
Carol

Carol Watson
Staff Biologist
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Cell: #702.370.1019

From: Watson, Carol@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=84E32D50C7DC47D89812B468A50090ED-WATSON, CAR]
Sent: 12/20/2024 2:04:24 PM
To: Rozzell, Lara R [Lara_R_Rozzell@nps.gov]
CC: Badie, Mona@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=4230574616834c8a8b023cf986dc310c-Badie, Mona]; Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]
Subject: RE: Info on Soda Mountain participation

Hi Lara!
Kaycee (cc'd here) is the project manager for Soda Mountain, and she can assist you.

As always, let me know how I can help,
Carol

Carol Watson
Staff Biologist
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Watson, Carol@Energy
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 3:40 PM
To: Rozzell, Lara R <Lara_R_Rozzell@nps.gov>
Cc: Badie, Mona@Energy <Mona.Badie@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Info on Soda Mountain participation

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Carol Watson
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Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Cell: #702.370.1019

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=DD3D2FC8670840BDA4ACDC455903E787-CHANG, KAYC]
Sent: 12/26/2024 6:42:00 PM
To: Watson, Carol@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=84e32d50c7dc47d89812b468a50090ed-Watson, Car]; Rozzell, Lara R [Lara_R_Rozzell@nps.gov]
CC: Badie, Mona@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=4230574616834c8a8b023cf986dc310c-Badie, Mona]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Angulo, Armand@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c8689c4b941c4f26b280dd50cc25188d-Angulo, Arm]
Subject: Re: Info on Soda Mountain participation

Hi Lara,

Nice to e-meet you. I'm filling in for Lisa Worrall, who will likely be your main point of contact when she is back in the office early January.

The CEC welcomes public participation in its proceedings. Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 25519(k), the CEC invites the comments and recommendations of your agency, and requests that you send us any relevant laws, ordinances, or regulations that your agency has promulgated or administered that are applicable to the proposed project. This is the notice of Opt-In application receipt for Soda Mountain: https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=258374&DocumentContentId=94394.

On the CEC project webpage for the project (https://www.energy.ca.gov/powerplant/solar-photovoltaic-pv/soda-mountain-solar-project), you can find more info on the project and a link on the upper right portion of the page to submit an e-comment (https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Ecomment/Ecomment.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-03). The e-commenting page allows you to type in your comment or attach a letter. Comments will be posted to the CEC docket for this proceeding (https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-03). We also recommend subscribing to the free Soda Mountain email notification listserv. You can find the link to subscribe on the bottom right side of the project webpage linked above.

If you have any questions about the commenting process, please reach out to Armand Angulo (cc'd). Our Office of the Public Advisor, Energy Equity, and Tribal Affairs is a free resource available to everyone who wants to participate in CEC proceedings.

Thank you for your engagement, and happy new year!
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Book time to meet with me

From: Watson, Carol@Energy <Carol.Watson@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, December 20, 2024 6:04 AM
To: Rozzell, Lara R <Lara_R_Rozzell@nps.gov>
Cc: Badie, Mona@Energy <Mona.Badie@energy.ca.gov>; Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Info on Soda Mountain participation

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Kaycee (cc'd here) is the project manager for Soda Mountain, and she can assist you.

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Carol Watson
Staff Biologist
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Carol

Carol Watson
Staff Biologist
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Cell: #702.370.1019

From: Kara Laurenson-Wright [Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com]
Sent: 1/4/2025 12:24:26 AM
To: Chris Huntley [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=018948a34a3149c4a3833144594ae8b3-ff2eee5c-df]
CC: Hannah Gbeh [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]; Jamison Miner [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e9a371186e0e402a994145a67d6e7684-546eb26e-f8]; Justin Wood [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=86ee559cfc814439b69a025b0961d2a2-536cef40-79]; Dustin Thaler [dut@vcrenewables.com]; Bill Henry [bhenry@swca.com]; Bonnie Rogers [bonnie.rogers@swca.com]; Shirley Innecken [Shirley.Innecken@swca.com]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon Chris,

Happy New Year! Did you have any questions upon review of the geodatabase for Soda Mountain Solar's Aquatic Resources Delineation Report? Our team is available to discuss next week as needed.

Thank you,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP
CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

SWCA Environmental Consultants
Cell 415.599.6464
kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2024 12:05 PM
To: Chuntley@aspeneg.com <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Pauline Roberts <PKRoberts@swca.com>; Bonnie Rogers <bonnie.rogers@swca.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Good morning Chris,

Thank you for meeting with our team last week to discuss biological/aquatic resources for the Soda Mountain Solar Project. Our geodatabase for the JD is available for download here: Aquatic Resources. We are happy to have a follow-up meeting once you've been able to review.

Best,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP
CEQA/NEPA Project Manager
SWCA Environmental Consultants
Cell 415.599.6464
kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 6:03 PM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>; Pauline Roberts <PKRoberts@swca.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>
Subject: Fw: Soda Mountain Bio Observations

Hi Kara and Pauline,

Please see the email below from CEC. If you could please let me know when you have some time this week to discuss these issues, I would appreciate it.

- Hannah

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 6:00:31 PM
To: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain Bio Observations

Hannah,

I am supporting the CEC on the Soda Mountain project and wanted to send this email out for Lisa who will be out of the office until November 25th.

My colleague Justin and I conducted a site visit to get familiar the project site and found a few items we would like to discuss with your team. We were hoping to get this data in front of your team prior to submitting any associated responses (e.g., DR BIO-10 and DR BIO-13).

Here are some of our initial questions, observations, and notes:

- Is there data on waters and bio associated with the proposed use of the existing DWP/SCE access road north of the site? I do not see any data in the BRTR.
    - There should be data on bio, waters etc. along this route especially if you need to do any maintenance or other improvements.
- The waters appear to be under mapped on the project site, t-line, and there is no data for the access roads which will likely have to be improved to support construction.
    - Can we get access to GIS data to verify. There appears to be some very large drainages missed along with many that would be considered CDFW jurisdictional.
    - An LSA was issued for the old project, but I would consider this not valid any longer and more importantly we should update to reflect conditions we found in the field.
- There appears to be a very sparse paloverde woodland in the primary wash and a few other veg mapping questions we are investigating.
- The fringe toed lizard habitat on the project site in the southern array looks poor and we will likely concur with your team that there is a low potential to occur.

Also, during the site visit we observed that the DWP access road to access the switchyard does not appear to be able to handle the construction equipment needed to construct the switchyard. On further review of the project description, I saw that in Project Description- Section 2.4.4.3 p. 2-15, it states that north of I-15, the existing LADWP/SCE transmission maintenance road would be upgraded for access to the LADWP switchyard. A Caltrans access road may also be used for construction of the gen-tie line." We will need to know what the upgrades will be so we can analyze potential impacts from that upgrade. Depending upon the nature of the upgrade, that could affect air quality, socioeconomics (labor), cultural/tribal resources, to name a few technical areas, in addition to transportation. We need to know the following:

- Vegetation mapping along any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. This should be mapped to the Manual of California Vegetation Alliance Level and include a 50-foot buffer.
- Information for all drainages that cross any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. This should include maps and drainage types.
- Biological survey data for any special-status plant or wildlife species (including, but not limited to, desert tortoise, burrowing owl, etc.) along any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. Again, this should include any mapped resources within a 250-foot buffer to account for the recent candidacy status of burrowing owl.

I realize this is a lot to digest. We wanted to bring this to your attention before you file any responses that could be affected by these observations and data needs. We certainly don't want to hold up your filing responses that would not be affected. We would like to set up a call and perhaps a site visit to go over our findings and seek resolution on these topics.

If you have questions about this, please contact me or Eric Knight.

Best,

Chris

Aspen environmental group

Chris Huntley
Executive Vice President
Biological Resources Director
www.aspeneg.com

5020 Chesebro Road, Suite 200
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
Cell: 818-292-2327

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From: Chris Huntley [Chuntley@aspeneg.com]
Sent: 1/10/2025 4:24:27 PM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright [Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com]
CC: Hannah Gbeh [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]; Jamison Miner [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e9a371186e0e402a994145a67d6e7684-546eb26e-f8]; Justin Wood [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=86ee559cfc814439b69a025b0961d2a2-536cef40-79]; Dustin Thaler [dut@vcrenewables.com]; Bill Henry [bhenry@swca.com]; Bonnie Rogers [bonnie.rogers@swca.com]; Shirley Innecken [Shirley.Innecken@swca.com]; Crisp, Ann@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b89c4de7ece742679d19e1e3ee713dc2-Crisp, Ann@]; Justin Wood [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=86ee559cfc814439b69a025b0961d2a2-536cef40-79]
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

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Kara,

Yes the delineation files were helpful to compare against our field inspection. Based on the comparison there are some areas we should discuss. I understand there is a proposed site visit with the agencies evolving.

Please let me know if we need to speak before then and I can show you some of our concerns versus with the existing data.

Best regards and thank you,

Chris

From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Friday, January 3, 2025 4:24 PM
To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Bonnie Rogers <bonnie.rogers@swca.com>; Shirley Innecken <Shirley.Innecken@swca.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Good afternoon Chris,

Happy New Year! Did you have any questions upon review of the geodatabase for Soda Mountain Solar's Aquatic Resources Delineation Report? Our team is available to discuss next week as needed.

Thank you,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

SWCA Environmental Consultants

Cell 415.599.6464

kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2024 12:05 PM
To: Chuntley@aspeneg.com <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Pauline Roberts <PKRoberts@swca.com>; Bonnie Rogers <bonnie.rogers@swca.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Good morning Chris,

Thank you for meeting with our team last week to discuss biological/aquatic resources for the Soda Mountain Solar Project. Our geodatabase for the JD is available for download here: Aquatic Resources. We are happy to have a follow-up meeting once you've been able to review.

Best,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager
SWCA Environmental Consultants
Cell 415.599.6464
kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 6:03 PM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>; Pauline Roberts <PKRoberts@swca.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>
Subject: Fw: Soda Mountain Bio Observations

Hi Kara and Pauline,

Please see the email below from CEC. If you could please let me know when you have some time this week to discuss these issues, I would appreciate it.

- Hannah

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 6:00:31 PM
To: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain Bio Observations

Hannah,

I am supporting the CEC on the Soda Mountain project and wanted to send this email out for Lisa who will be out of the office until November 25th.

My colleague Justin and I conducted a site visit to get familiar the project site and found a few items we would like to discuss with your team. We were hoping to get this data in front of your team prior to submitting any associated responses (e.g., DR BIO-10 and DR BIO-13).

Here are some of our initial questions, observations, and notes:

- Is there data on waters and bio associated with the proposed use of the existing DWP/SCE access road north of the site? I do not see any data in the BRTR.
    - There should be data on bio, waters etc. along this route especially if you need to do any maintenance or other improvements.

- The waters appear to be under mapped on the project site, t-line, and there is no data for the access roads which will likely have to be improved to support construction.
    - Can we get access to GIS data to verify. There appears to be some very large drainages missed along with many that would be considered CDFW jurisdictional.
    - An LSA was issued for the old project, but I would consider this not valid any longer and more importantly we should update to reflect conditions we found in the field.
- There appears to be a very sparse paloverde woodland in the primary wash and a few other veg mapping questions we are investigating.
- The fringe toed lizard habitat on the project site in the southern array looks poor and we will likely concur with your team that there is a low potential to occur.

Also, during the site visit we observed that the DWP access road to access the switchyard does not appear to be able to handle the construction equipment needed to construct the switchyard. On further review of the project description, I saw that in Project Description- Section 2.4.4.3 p. 2-15, it states that north of I-15, the existing LADWP/SCE transmission maintenance road would be upgraded for access to the LADWP switchyard. A Caltrans access road may also be used for construction of the gen-tie line." We will need to know what the upgrades will be so we can analyze potential impacts from that upgrade. Depending upon the nature of the upgrade, that could affect air quality, socioeconomics (labor), cultural/tribal resources, to name a few technical areas, in addition to transportation. We need to know the following:

- Vegetation mapping along any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. This should be mapped to the Manual of California Vegetation Alliance Level and include a 50-foot buffer.
- Information for all drainages that cross any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. This should include maps and drainage types.
- Biological survey data for any special-status plant or wildlife species (including, but not limited to, desert tortoise, burrowing owl, etc.) along any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. Again, this should include any mapped resources within a 250-foot buffer to account for the recent candidacy status of burrowing owl.

I realize this is a lot to digest. We wanted to bring this to your attention before you file any responses that could be affected by these observations and data needs. We certainly don't want to hold up your filing responses that would not be affected. We would like to set up a call and perhaps a site visit to go over our findings and seek resolution on these topics.

If you have questions about this, please contact me or Eric Knight.

Best,

Chris

Aspen environmental group

Chris Huntley

Executive Vice President

5020 Chesebro Road, Suite 200

Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Biological Resources Director

www.aspeneg.com

Cell: 818-292-2327

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From: Bubbico, Joseph@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=F6169627BC00479D8AEC9DD4C344F112-BUBBICO, JO]
Sent: 1/10/2025 8:39:03 PM
To: iecnlegals@gmail.com
CC: Tanaka, Drew@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=7cd970e4b77348a2b6e4e5f685894906-5093c67a-ec]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Emigh, Kyle@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ae4d86b0cb6a4f318c4e9e6fb5e82008-Emigh, Kyle]
Subject: El Chicano - Soda Mountain Ad
Attachments: SodaMtn_NOR_Newspaper - Spanish.docx

Hello,
I am writing you from the California Energy Commission in Sacramento. We would like to publish in Spanish the attached legal notice for Soda Mountain Solar Project for one weekday (1/17/25) in El Chicano. Please provide us with an invoice/quote so that we may make payment. I have included Drew Tanaka (PR #7615) our purchasing agent in this email as well as the project manager Lisa Worrall who may be able to answer any questions that arise and approve the proof.

Thank you,
Joe Bubbico

California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Data Analytics and Integration Branch
Joseph.Bubbico@energy.ca.gov

AVISO DE RECIBO DE UNA SOLICITUD DE CERTIFICACIÓN DE INCLUSIÓN VOLUNTARIA
PARA
EL PROYECTO DE SODA MOUNTAIN SOLAR

El 1 de agosto de 2024, el personal de la Comisión de Energía de California (CEC) confirmó la recepción de una solicitud de Soda Mountain Solar, LLC (solicitante) para la certificación de la CEC a través del proceso de inclusión para el Proyecto de Energía Solar de Soda Mountain Solar (24-OPT-03). El proyecto se encuentra en aproximadamente 2,670 acres de tierra administrada por la Oficina de Administración de Tierras de Estados Unidos en el condado de San Bernardino. Este aviso de recepción de la solicitud se publica de conformidad con el Código de Recursos Públicos, secciones 25519, subdivisión (g) y 25545.8.

Descripción del proyecto

El Proyecto de Energía Solar de Soda Mountain Solar generaría hasta 300 megavatios (MW) de energía renovable e incluiría hasta 300 MW de almacenamiento en baterías. El proyecto también incluye el desmantelamiento, que se prevé que ocurra después de 30 años de operación.

Los componentes del proyecto son los siguientes:

- Un sitio de planta solar fotovoltaica (PV) que incluye todas las instalaciones que crean una huella en el campo de los paneles solares y alrededor, incluido el campo solar que consiste en matrices de energía solar, edificios y estructuras de operación y mantenimiento, infraestructura de aguas pluviales e infraestructura relacionada.
- Una subestación, un patio de maniobras y una línea de interconexión de generación de 500 kilovoltios (kV) (gen-tie) para la interconexión a la línea de transmisión existente Marketplace-Adelanto de 500 kV operada por el Departamento de Agua y Energía de Los Ángeles. La interconexión de generación de 500 kV se ubicaría dentro de una alcantarilla Caltrans existente y requeriría perforación bajo la Interestatal 15.
- Un sistema de almacenamiento de energía de batería de iones de litio de hasta 300 MW de capacidad de almacenamiento en 18 acres.

Se puede acceder directamente a la sección descripción del proyecto (TN 257912) de la solicitud en el siguiente enlace: https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=257912&DocumentContentId=93845.

Competencia de la CEC y Programa de Certificación de Inclusión Voluntaria

De conformidad con la ley estatal, la CEC estableció un programa de certificación para plantas de energía no fósiles elegibles, instalaciones de almacenamiento de energía e instalaciones relacionadas para buscar opcionalmente la certificación de la CEC. (Consulte el Código de Recursos Públicos, secciones 25545-25545.13; Código de

Reglamentos de California, título 20, secciones 1875-1882). Bajo este nuevo Programa de Certificación de Inclusión Voluntaria, entre los tipos de instalaciones que la CEC puede certificar se encuentran las plantas de energía solar fotovoltaica de 50 MW o más, las instalaciones de almacenamiento de energía de 200 megavatios-hora (MWh) o más y las líneas de transmisión eléctrica desde estas instalaciones hasta el primer punto de interconexión con cualquier sistema de transmisión eléctrica. La CEC es la agencia principal en virtud de la Ley de Calidad Ambiental de California y está obligada a elaborar un estudio de impacto ambiental (EIR) para cualquier instalación que elija incluirse de manera voluntaria dentro de la jurisdicción de la CEC.

Salvo excepciones, la expedición de un certificado por parte de la CEC para una instalación elegible sustituye a cualquier permiso, certificado o documento similar exigido por cualquier agencia estatal, local o regional, o agencia federal en la medida permitida por la legislación federal, para el uso del sitio y las instalaciones relacionadas, y sustituye a cualquier estatuto, ordenanza o reglamento aplicable de cualquier agencia estatal, local o regional, o agencia federal en la medida permitida por la legislación federal. La CEC debe tomar su decisión sobre si certificar el proyecto dentro de los 270 días posteriores a la recepción de una solicitud *completa*, excepto lo dispuesto en la sección 25545.4 del Código de Recursos Públicos. La CEC está obligada a consultar a todas las agencias responsables y fiduciarias sobre el alcance y el contenido del EIR. El personal de la CEC ha iniciado la revisión de la solicitud y la ha transmitido a las agencias responsables y fiduciarias.

La solicitud no se consideró completa en este momento. Una vez que la solicitud se considere completa, el personal de la CEC evaluará el proyecto propuesto, consultará con las tribus nativas americanas de California y organizará reuniones públicas en el área del proyecto. Esto incluirá una reunión informativa y pública para determinar el alcance durante el desarrollo del EIR, así como una reunión pública durante el período de comentarios de 60 días sobre el borrador del EIR, que se incluirá como parte de la evaluación del personal de la CEC de la aplicación. Una vez concluido el período de comentarios públicos, el personal de la CEC publicará una evaluación actualizada del personal (que incluirá un EIR final), y la recomendación del director ejecutivo de la CEC sobre si la CEC debe certificar el EIR y expedir un certificado para la construcción y operación del proyecto propuesto. La evaluación actualizada del personal y la recomendación del director ejecutivo se publicarán al menos 30 días antes de que la CEC las examine en una reunión pública.

En la reunión pública final, la CEC decidirá formalmente si certifica el EIR y concede una certificación para la construcción y operación del proyecto propuesto. En caso de que se conceda la certificación, las demás agencias que conserven sus competencias en materia de permisos deberán adoptar medidas definitivas sobre cualquier permiso adicional en un plazo de 90 días a partir de la expedición del certificado por parte de la CEC. Puede encontrar información general sobre el Programa de Certificación de Inclusión Voluntaria en el sitio web de la CEC en https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/topics/power-plants/opt-certification-program.

Participación del público

La CEC permite la participación del público en el proceso de revisión de la inclusión voluntaria. En el sitio web de la CEC (https://www.energy.ca.gov/powerplant/solar-photovoltaic-pv/soda-mountain-solar-project) puede encontrar una copia de la solicitud de inclusión voluntaria, así como otra información sobre el proyecto. Para mantenerse informado sobre este proyecto y recibir avisos de las próximas reuniones y talleres, puede registrarse en la lista de suscripción por correo electrónico del proyecto, a la que puede acceder en la misma página web del proyecto. Una vez que se haya suscripto, se envían notificaciones automáticas por correo electrónico cuando se publican documentos y avisos en la página web del proyecto. Este aviso será la única notificación pública general de este proyecto que aparecerá en esta publicación. Si desea participar en el proceso de revisión de proyectos y toma de decisiones sobre el proyecto, visite la página web enlazada más arriba para suscribirse a las notificaciones gratuitas por correo electrónico de la CEC o comuníquese con la Oficina de Asesoría al Público (encontrará la información de contacto a continuación).

Si tiene preguntas sobre el proyecto, comuníquese con Lisa Worrall, gerente del proyecto, por correo electrónico a lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov.

La Oficina de Asesoría al Público, Equidad en Materia de Energía y Asuntos Tribales de la CEC está a su disposición para proporcionar información y asistencia sobre la participación pública en los procesos de la CEC. Puede comunicarse con la Oficina de Asesoría al Público por teléfono al (916) 957-7910 y por correo electrónico a publicadvisor@energy.ca.gov.

Las preguntas sobre los medios deben ser dirigidas a la Oficina de Medios de la CEC por teléfono al (916) 654--4989 o por correo electrónico a mediaoffice@energy.ca.gov.

From: IE Community News - Denise [iecnlegals@gmail.com]
Sent: 1/13/2025 10:50:46 PM
To: Bubbico, Joseph@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=f6169627bc00479d8aec9dd4c344f112-Bubbico, Jo]
CC: Tanaka, Drew@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=7cd970e4b77348a2b6e4e5f685894906-5093c67a-ec]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Emigh, Kyle@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ae4d86b0cb6a4f318c4e9e6fb5e82008-Emigh, Kyle]
Subject: Re: El Chicano - Soda Mountain Ad
Attachments: E-854.pdf

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Denise Berver
D & M Media/ Inland Empire Community News
Colton Courier • El Chicano • Rialto Record
(909) 381-9898

On Fri, Jan 10, 2025 at 12:39 PM Bubbico, Joseph@Energy <Joseph.Bubbico@energy.ca.gov> wrote:

> Hello,
>
> I am writing you from the California Energy Commission in Sacramento. We would like to publish in Spanish the attached legal notice for Soda Mountain Solar Project for one weekday (1/17/25) in El Chicano. Please provide us with an invoice/quote so that we may make payment. I have included Drew Tanaka (PR #7615) our purchasing agent in this email as well as the project manager Lisa Worrall who may be able to answer any questions that arise and approve the proof.
>
> Thank you,
>
> Joe Bubbico

California Energy Commission

Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division

Data Analytics and Integration Branch

Joseph.Bubbico@energy.ca.gov

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comentarios de 60 días sobre el borrador del EIR, que se incluirá como parte de la evaluación del personal de la CEC de la aplicación. Una vez concluido el período de comentarios públicos, el personal de la CEC publicará una evaluación actualizada del personal (que incluirá un EIR final), y la recomendación del director ejecutivo de la CEC sobre si la CEC debe certificar el EIR y expedir un certificado para la construcción y operación del proyecto propuesto. La evaluación actualizada del personal y la recomendación del director ejecutivo se publicarán al menos 30 días antes de que la CEC las examine en una reunión pública.

En la reunión pública final, la CEC decidirá formalmente si certifica el EIR y concede una certificación para la construcción y operación del proyecto propuesto. En caso de que se conceda la certificación, las demás agencias que conserven sus competencias en materia de permisos deberán adoptar medidas definitivas sobre cualquier permiso adicional en un plazo de 90 días a partir de la expedición del certificado por parte de la CEC. Puede encontrar información general sobre el Programa de Certificación de Inclusión Voluntaria en el sitio web de la CEC en https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/topics/power-plants/opt-certification-program.

Participación del público

La CEC permite la participación del público en el proceso de revisión de la inclusión voluntaria. En el sitio web de la CEC (https://www.energy.ca.gov/powerplant/solar-photovoltaic-pv/soda-mountain-solar-project) puede encontrar una copia de la solicitud de inclusión voluntaria, así como otra información sobre el proyecto. Para mantenerse informado sobre este proyecto y recibir avisos de las próximas reuniones y talleres, puede registrarse en la lista de suscripción por correo electrónico del proyecto, a la que puede acceder en la misma página web del proyecto. Una vez que se haya suscripto, se envían notificaciones automáticas por correo electrónico cuando se publican documentos y avisos en la página web del proyecto. Este aviso será la única notificación pública general de este proyecto que aparecerá en esta publicación. Si desea participar en el proceso de revisión de proyectos y toma de decisiones sobre el proyecto, visite la página web enlazada más arriba para suscribirse a las notificaciones gratuitas por correo electrónico de la CEC o comuníquese con la Oficina de Asesoría al Público (encontrará la información de contacto a continuación).

Si tiene preguntas sobre el proyecto, comuníquese con Lisa Worrall, gerente del proyecto, por correo electrónico a lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov.

La Oficina de Asesoría al Público, Equidad en Materia de Energía y Asuntos Tribales de la CEC está a su disposición para proporcionar información y asistencia sobre la participación pública en los procesos de la CEC. Puede comunicarse con la Oficina de Asesoría al Público por teléfono al (916) 957-7910 y por correo electrónico a publicadvisor@energy.ca.gov.

Las preguntas sobre los medios deben ser dirigidas a la Oficina de Medios de la CEC por teléfono al (916) 654--4989 o por correo electrónico a mediaoffice@energy.ca.gov.

Published El Chicano
January 16, 2025 E-854

From: Chris Huntley [Chuntley@aspeneg.com]
Sent: 1/24/2025 11:09:30 PM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright [Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com]
CC: Hannah Gbeh [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]; Jamison Miner [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e9a371186e0e402a994145a67d6e7684-546eb26e-f8]; Justin Wood [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=86ee559cfc814439b69a025b0961d2a2-536cef40-79]; Bill Henry [bhenry@swca.com]; Luis Aguilar [Luis.Aguilar@swca.com]; Crisp, Ann@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b89c4de7ece742679d19e1e3ee713dc2-Crisp, Ann@]; Justin Wood [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=86ee559cfc814439b69a025b0961d2a2-536cef40-79]
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

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Kara,

I have asked my GIS team for a link to the data. Hopefully have either over the weekend or by Monday.

Best,

Chris

From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2025 2:00 PM
To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Luis Aguilar <Luis.Aguilar@swca.com>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Good afternoon Chris,

Thank you for meeting with the Soda Mt project team on Tuesday. As discussed, are you able to pass along your data points marked in the field to our team? It would be very helpful when updating the delineation. If you'd like, you can upload the files here: Aquatic Resources Delineation Report.

Best,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

SWCA Environmental Consultants

Cell 415.599.6464

kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Sent: Friday, January 17, 2025 9:44 AM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Luis Aguilar <Luis.Aguilar@swca.com>; Shirley Innecken <Shirley.Innecken@swca.com>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Kara,

Yes, that works for me.

Best,

Chris

From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Friday, January 17, 2025 9:07 AM
To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Luis Aguilar <Luis.Aguilar@swca.com>; Shirley Innecken <Shirley.Innecken@swca.com>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Chris - Tuesday at 1:30 pm? I can send out the calendar invite and then please forward it to whomever on your team should attend.

Best,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

SWCA Environmental Consultants

Cell 415.599.6464

kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 16, 2025 1:54 PM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Luis Aguilar <Luis.Aguilar@swca.com>; Shirley Innecken <Shirley.Innecken@swca.com>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Hi Kara,

Tuesday works best if that is ok.

Regards,

Chris

From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 16, 2025 10:38 AM
To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Luis Aguilar <Luis.Aguilar@swca.com>; Shirley Innecken <Shirley.Innecken@swca.com>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Hi Chris,

It would be very helpful to discuss, thank you. Our team is available next week at the following times:

Tuesday Jan 21: 12-2:30
Wednesday Jan 22: 9-11, 12:30 - 2:30, 3-5

Please let us know what might work best for you.

Best,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

SWCA Environmental Consultants

Cell 415.599.6464

kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 8:24 AM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Bonnie Rogers <bonnie.rogers@swca.com>; Shirley Innecken <Shirley.Innecken@swca.com>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Kara,

Yes the delineation files were helpful to compare against our field inspection. Based on the comparison there are some areas we should discuss. I understand there is a proposed site visit with the agencies evolving.

Please let me know if we need to speak before then and I can show you some of our concerns versus with the existing data.

Best regards and thank you,

Chris

From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Friday, January 3, 2025 4:24 PM
To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Bonnie Rogers <bonnie.rogers@swca.com>; Shirley Innecken <Shirley.Innecken@swca.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Good afternoon Chris,

Happy New Year! Did you have any questions upon review of the geodatabase for Soda Mountain Solar's Aquatic Resources Delineation Report? Our team is available to discuss next week as needed.

Thank you,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

SWCA Environmental Consultants

Cell 415.599.6464

kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2024 12:05 PM
To: Chuntley@aspeneg.com <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Pauline Roberts <PKRoberts@swca.com>; Bonnie Rogers <bonnie.rogers@swca.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Good morning Chris,

Thank you for meeting with our team last week to discuss biological/aquatic resources for the Soda Mountain Solar Project. Our geodatabase for the JD is available for download here: Aquatic Resources. We are happy to have a follow-up meeting once you've been able to review.

Best,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager
SWCA Environmental Consultants
Cell 415.599.6464
kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 6:03 PM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>; Pauline Roberts <PKRoberts@swca.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>
Subject: Fw: Soda Mountain Bio Observations

Hi Kara and Pauline,

Please see the email below from CEC. If you could please let me know when you have some time this week to discuss these issues, I would appreciate it.

- Hannah

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 6:00:31 PM
To: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain Bio Observations

Hannah,

I am supporting the CEC on the Soda Mountain project and wanted to send this email out for Lisa who will be out of the office until November 25th.

My colleague Justin and I conducted a site visit to get familiar the project site and found a few items we would like to discuss with your team. We were hoping to get this data in front of your team prior to submitting any associated responses (e.g., DR BIO-10 and DR BIO-13).

Here are some of our initial questions, observations, and notes:

- Is there data on waters and bio associated with the proposed use of the existing DWP/SCE access road north of the site? I do not see any data in the BRTR.
    - There should be data on bio, waters etc. along this route especially if you need to do any maintenance or other improvements.
- The waters appear to be under mapped on the project site, t-line, and there is no data for the access roads which will likely have to be improved to support construction.
    - Can we get access to GIS data to verify. There appears to be some very large drainages missed along with many that would be considered CDFW jurisdictional.
    - An LSA was issued for the old project, but I would consider this not valid any longer and more importantly we should update to reflect conditions we found in the field.
- There appears to be a very sparse paloverde woodland in the primary wash and a few other veg mapping questions we are investigating.
- The fringe toed lizard habitat on the project site in the southern array looks poor and we will likely concur with your team that there is a low potential to occur.

Also, during the site visit we observed that the DWP access road to access the switchyard does not appear to be able to handle the construction equipment needed to construct the switchyard. On further review of the project description, I saw that in Project Description- Section 2.4.4.3 p. 2-15, it states that north of I-15, the existing LADWP/SCE transmission maintenance road would be upgraded for access to the LADWP switchyard. A Caltrans access road may also be used for construction of the gen-tie line." We will need to know what the upgrades will be so we can analyze potential impacts from that upgrade. Depending upon the nature of the upgrade, that could affect air quality, socioeconomics (labor), cultural/tribal resources, to name a few technical areas, in addition to transportation. We need to know the following:

- Vegetation mapping along any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. This should be mapped to the Manual of California Vegetation Alliance Level and include a 50-foot buffer.
- Information for all drainages that cross any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. This should include maps and drainage types.
- Biological survey data for any special-status plant or wildlife species (including, but not limited to, desert tortoise, burrowing owl, etc.) along any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. Again, this should include any mapped resources within a 250-foot buffer to account for the recent candidacy status of burrowing owl.

I realize this is a lot to digest. We wanted to bring this to your attention before you file any responses that could be affected by these observations and data needs. We certainly don't want to hold up your filing responses that would not be affected. We would like to set up a call and perhaps a site visit to go over our findings and seek resolution on these topics.

If you have questions about this, please contact me or Eric Knight.

Best,

Chris

Chris Huntley

Executive Vice President

Biological Resources Director

www.aspeneg.com

5020 Chesebro Road, Suite 200

Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Cell: 818-292-2327

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From: Neal Desai [ndesai@npca.org]
Sent: 1/29/2025 8:14:40 PM
To: Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]
CC: Vorters, Dian@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=2c5604e712a74c029e412542e0db72ac-Vorters, Di]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

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Hi Lisa,
Do you happen to know the status of application? Also, for this type of opt-in process, is commenting publicly during the noticed comment periods the only way for organizations/individuals to participate in this process, or are there other levels of engagement like requesting to be a "party" in the proceeding etc.?
Thank you,
Neal

From: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2024 4:00 PM
To: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Cc: Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

Hi Neal –

The applicant told us this week of their intention to file supplemental application materials in mid-October in response to the CEC's incompleteness determination here https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=258896&DocumentContentId=94970. The CEC has 30 days to review the supplemental information so I would agree, a determination of completeness would be issued no earlier than mid-November. This webpage here has the general timeframes for the Opt-in process Opt-in Certification Program

I've copied CEC's project manager for the Soda Mountain Solar Project, Lisa Worrall.

Regards,
Eric

Eric Knight
Manager
Siting & Environmental Branch
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
(916) 591-9931

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2024 12:40 PM
To: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

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Hi Eric,
The project proponent informed us last month that they don't expect the CEC to determine the application as being complete until November 2024 at the earliest. Is that the current timeframe from CEC's perspective?
Thank you,
Neal

From: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2024 3:37 PM
To: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Cc: Luke Basulto <lbasulto@npca.org>; Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>
Subject: FW: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

Hi Neal,

That is correct, the applicant intends on filing an opt-in application with the CEC by July 22nd. Those signed up for the CEC subscription "Siting Division General List" California Natural Resources Agency (govdelivery.com) – see 4th subscription under Power Plant Licensing Projects – will receive an email alert that the docket has been opened for this proceeding. That alert will recommend signing up for the Soda Mountain Solar subscription to continue to receive email alerts about the project. That subscription will appear in the list under "Project Under Review Topics".

Similar to the other 4 projects filed under the Opt-in program Power Plant Listing (ca.gov), Soda Mountain Solar will have its own webpage on the CEC's website where you can access its docket log, sign up for the subscription, access the e-comment and e-filing feature, etc. The docket is where the applicant will upload their application materials. Once CEC has confirmed that we've received all files associated with their application, we'll initiate our 30-day completeness review – there will be an announcement of that in the docket.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Eric

Eric Knight
Manager
Siting & Environmental Branch
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
(916) 591-9931

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2024 8:36 AM
To: Energy - STEP Siting <STEPsiting@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Luke Basulto <lbasulto@npca.org>
Subject: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

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Hi Eric,
Writing to check-in on a project called Soda Mountain Solar that we heard has abandoned its review process under CDFW and is seeking approval via CEC, I believe through the opt-in process under AB 205. Is this correct and if yes, could you share with us where things are at (eg pre application stage?, application submitted?, etc). If any materials have been submitted by the applicant, would you be able to please share them with us?
Thank you,
Neal

Neal Desai
Senior Program Director, Pacific Region | National Parks Conservation Association
Mobile: 510.368.0845 |ndesai@npca.org
(Pronouns: he/him/his)

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From: Chris Huntley [Chuntley@aspeneg.com]
Sent: 1/28/2025 12:53:02 AM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright [Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com]
CC: Hannah Gbeh [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]; Jamison Miner [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e9a371186e0e402a994145a67d6e7684-546eb26e-f8]; Justin Wood [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=86ee559cfc814439b69a025b0961d2a2-536cef40-79]; Bill Henry [bhenry@swca.com]; Luis Aguilar [Luis.Aguilar@swca.com]; Crisp, Ann@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b89c4de7ece742679d19e1e3ee713dc2-Crisp, Ann@]; Justin Wood [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=86ee559cfc814439b69a025b0961d2a2-536cef40-79]; Dustin Thaler [dut@vcrenewables.com]; Matthew DeFreese [Matthew.DeFreese@swca.com]
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

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Thank you,

Looping in my GIS person on this topic.

Best,

Chris

From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 4:42 PM
To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Luis Aguilar <Luis.Aguilar@swca.com>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Matthew DeFreese <Matthew.DeFreese@swca.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Great, thank you. Our GIS lead is Matt DeFreese (matthew.defreese@swca.com).

Best,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

SWCA Environmental Consultants

Cell 415.599.6464

kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 3:26 PM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Luis Aguilar <Luis.Aguilar@swca.com>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Kara,

Please send me the GIS specialists' username and we will add them to the system so they can download the data.

Best,

Chris

From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 3:23 PM
To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Luis Aguilar <Luis.Aguilar@swca.com>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Thank you Chris, we look forward to receiving your team's feedback and data.

Best,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

SWCA Environmental Consultants

Cell 415.599.6464

kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

SWCA | 100% Employee OWNED

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CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

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Chris - Tuesday at 1:30 pm? I can send out the calendar invite and then please forward it to whomever on your team should attend.

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Tuesday works best if that is ok.

Regards,

Chris

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To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Luis Aguilar <Luis.Aguilar@swca.com>; Shirley Innecken <Shirley.Innecken@swca.com>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Hi Chris,

It would be very helpful to discuss, thank you. Our team is available next week at the following times:

Tuesday Jan 21: 12-2:30
Wednesday Jan 22: 9-11, 12:30 - 2:30, 3-5

Please let us know what might work best for you.

Best,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

SWCA Environmental Consultants

Cell 415.599.6464

kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 8:24 AM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Bonnie Rogers <bonnie.rogers@swca.com>; Shirley Innecken <Shirley.Innecken@swca.com>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Kara,

Yes the delineation files were helpful to compare against our field inspection. Based on the comparison there are some areas we should discuss. I understand there is a proposed site visit with the agencies evolving.

Please let me know if we need to speak before then and I can show you some of our concerns versus with the existing data.

Best regards and thank you,

Chris

From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Friday, January 3, 2025 4:24 PM
To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Bonnie Rogers <bonnie.rogers@swca.com>; Shirley Innecken <Shirley.Innecken@swca.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Good afternoon Chris,

Happy New Year! Did you have any questions upon review of the geodatabase for Soda Mountain Solar's Aquatic Resources Delineation Report? Our team is available to discuss next week as needed.

Thank you,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

SWCA Environmental Consultants

Cell 415.599.6464

kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2024 12:05 PM
To: Chuntley@aspeneg.com <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Pauline Roberts <PKRoberts@swca.com>; Bonnie Rogers <bonnie.rogers@swca.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Good morning Chris,

Thank you for meeting with our team last week to discuss biological/aquatic resources for the Soda Mountain Solar Project. Our geodatabase for the JD is available for download here: Aquatic Resources. We are happy to have a follow-up meeting once you've been able to review.

Best,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager
SWCA Environmental Consultants
Cell 415.599.6464
kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 6:03 PM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>; Pauline Roberts <PKRoberts@swca.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>
Subject: Fw: Soda Mountain Bio Observations

Hi Kara and Pauline,

Please see the email below from CEC. If you could please let me know when you have some time this week to discuss these issues, I would appreciate it.

- Hannah

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 6:00:31 PM
To: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain Bio Observations

Hannah,

I am supporting the CEC on the Soda Mountain project and wanted to send this email out for Lisa who will be out of the office until November 25th.

My colleague Justin and I conducted a site visit to get familiar the project site and found a few items we would like to discuss with your team. We were hoping to get this data in front of your team prior to submitting any associated responses (e.g., DR BIO-10 and DR BIO-13).

Here are some of our initial questions, observations, and notes:

- Is there data on waters and bio associated with the proposed use of the existing DWP/SCE access road north of the site? I do not see any data in the BRTR.
    - There should be data on bio, waters etc. along this route especially if you need to do any maintenance or other improvements.
- The waters appear to be under mapped on the project site, t-line, and there is no data for the access roads which will likely have to be improved to support construction.
    - Can we get access to GIS data to verify. There appears to be some very large drainages missed along with many that would be considered CDFW jurisdictional.
    - An LSA was issued for the old project, but I would consider this not valid any longer and more importantly we should update to reflect conditions we found in the field.
- There appears to be a very sparse paloverde woodland in the primary wash and a few other veg mapping questions we are investigating.
- The fringe toed lizard habitat on the project site in the southern array looks poor and we will likely concur with your team that there is a low potential to occur.

Also, during the site visit we observed that the DWP access road to access the switchyard does not appear to be able to handle the construction equipment needed to construct the switchyard. On further review of the project description, I saw that in Project Description- Section 2.4.4.3 p. 2-15, it states that north of I-15, the existing LADWP/SCE transmission maintenance road would be upgraded for access to the LADWP switchyard. A Caltrans access road may also be used for construction of the gen-tie line." We will need to know what the upgrades will be so we can analyze potential impacts from that upgrade. Depending upon the nature of the upgrade, that could affect air quality, socioeconomics (labor), cultural/tribal resources, to name a few technical areas, in addition to transportation. We need to know the following:

- Vegetation mapping along any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. This should be mapped to the Manual of California Vegetation Alliance Level and include a 50-foot buffer.
- Information for all drainages that cross any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. This should include maps and drainage types.
- Biological survey data for any special-status plant or wildlife species (including, but not limited to, desert tortoise, burrowing owl, etc.) along any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. Again, this should include any mapped resources within a 250-foot buffer to account for the recent candidacy status of burrowing owl.

I realize this is a lot to digest. We wanted to bring this to your attention before you file any responses that could be affected by these observations and data needs. We certainly don't want to hold up your filing responses that would not be affected. We would like to set up a call and perhaps a site visit to go over our findings and seek resolution on these topics.

If you have questions about this, please contact me or Eric Knight.

Best,

Chris

Chris Huntley

Executive Vice President

Biological Resources Director

www.aspeneg.com

5020 Chesebro Road, Suite 200

Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Cell: 818-292-2327

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From: Chris Huntley [Chuntley@aspeneg.com]
Sent: 1/28/2025 5:38:24 PM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright [Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com]
CC: Hannah Gbeh [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]; Jamison Miner [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e9a371186e0e402a994145a67d6e7684-546eb26e-f8]; Justin Wood [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=86ee559cfc814439b69a025b0961d2a2-536cef40-79]; Bill Henry [bhenry@swca.com]; Luis Aguilar [Luis.Aguilar@swca.com]; Crisp, Ann@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b89c4de7ece742679d19e1e3ee713dc2-Crisp, Ann@]; Justin Wood [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=86ee559cfc814439b69a025b0961d2a2-536cef40-79]; Dustin Thaler [dut@vcrenewables.com]; Matthew DeFreese [Matthew.DeFreese@swca.com]
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Kara,

Please find the link below. Please remember these points are only examples of places we walked and are not intended to identify the only gaps in the mapping. I believe it would benefit your team to look closely at the models output and compare those results to the aerial imagery. There appears to areas where the model did not map features and a few areas where it appears to map features that are not there. I noticed this in a few locations.

Best regards and thank you for revisiting this delineation.

Chris
818-292-2327

Soda Mtns Preliminary Site Visit

From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 4:42 PM
To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Luis Aguilar <Luis.Aguilar@swca.com>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Matthew DeFreese <Matthew.DeFreese@swca.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Great, thank you. Our GIS lead is Matt DeFreese (matthew.defreese@swca.com).

Best,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

SWCA Environmental Consultants

Cell 415.599.6464

kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Luis Aguilar <Luis.Aguilar@swca.com>; Shirley Innecken <Shirley.Innecken@swca.com>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Hi Chris,

It would be very helpful to discuss, thank you. Our team is available next week at the following times:

Tuesday Jan 21: 12-2:30
Wednesday Jan 22: 9-11, 12:30 - 2:30, 3-5

Please let us know what might work best for you.

Best,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

SWCA Environmental Consultants

Cell 415.599.6464

kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

The contents of this email and any associated emails, information, and attachments are CONFIDENTIAL. Use or disclosure without sender's authorization is prohibited. If you are not an authorized recipient, please notify the sender and then immediately delete the email and any attachments.

From: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 8:24 AM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Bonnie Rogers <bonnie.rogers@swca.com>; Shirley Innecken <Shirley.Innecken@swca.com>; Crisp, Ann@Energy

<Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Kara,

Yes the delineation files were helpful to compare against our field inspection. Based on the comparison there are some areas we should discuss. I understand there is a proposed site visit with the agencies evolving.

Please let me know if we need to speak before then and I can show you some of our concerns versus with the existing data.

Best regards and thank you,

Chris

From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Friday, January 3, 2025 4:24 PM
To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Bill Henry <bhenry@swca.com>; Bonnie Rogers <bonnie.rogers@swca.com>; Shirley Innecken <Shirley.Innecken@swca.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Good afternoon Chris,

Happy New Year! Did you have any questions upon review of the geodatabase for Soda Mountain Solar's Aquatic Resources Delineation Report? Our team is available to discuss next week as needed.

Thank you,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

SWCA Environmental Consultants

Cell 415.599.6464

kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2024 12:05 PM
To: Chuntley@aspeneg.com <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Pauline Roberts <PKRoberts@swca.com>; Bonnie Rogers <bonnie.rogers@swca.com>; Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain Aquatic Resources Data

Good morning Chris,

Thank you for meeting with our team last week to discuss biological/aquatic resources for the Soda Mountain Solar Project. Our geodatabase for the JD is available for download here: Aquatic Resources. We are happy to have a follow-up meeting once you've been able to review.

Best,

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP

CEQA/NEPA Project Manager
SWCA Environmental Consultants
Cell 415.599.6464
kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

SWCA | 100% Employee OWNED

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From: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 6:03 PM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>; Pauline Roberts <PKRoberts@swca.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>
Subject: Fw: Soda Mountain Bio Observations

Hi Kara and Pauline,

Please see the email below from CEC. If you could please let me know when you have some time this week to discuss these issues, I would appreciate it.

- Hannah

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 6:00:31 PM
To: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: eric.knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Jamison Miner <JMiner@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain Bio Observations

Hannah,

I am supporting the CEC on the Soda Mountain project and wanted to send this email out for Lisa who will be out of the office until November 25th.

My colleague Justin and I conducted a site visit to get familiar the project site and found a few items we would like to discuss with your team. We were hoping to get this data in front of your team prior to submitting any associated responses (e.g., DR BIO-10 and DR BIO-13).

Here are some of our initial questions, observations, and notes:

- Is there data on waters and bio associated with the proposed use of the existing DWP/SCE access road north of the site? I do not see any data in the BRTR.
    - There should be data on bio, waters etc. along this route especially if you need to do any maintenance or other improvements.
- The waters appear to be under mapped on the project site, t-line, and there is no data for the access roads which will likely have to be improved to support construction.
    - Can we get access to GIS data to verify. There appears to be some very large drainages missed along with many that would be considered CDFW jurisdictional.
    - An LSA was issued for the old project, but I would consider this not valid any longer and more importantly we should update to reflect conditions we found in the field.
- There appears to be a very sparse paloverde woodland in the primary wash and a few other veg mapping questions we are investigating.
- The fringe toed lizard habitat on the project site in the southern array looks poor and we will likely concur with your team that there is a low potential to occur.

Also, during the site visit we observed that the DWP access road to access the switchyard does not appear to be able to handle the construction equipment needed to construct the switchyard. On further review of the project description, I saw that in Project Description- Section 2.4.4.3 p. 2-15, it states that north of I-15, the existing LADWP/SCE transmission maintenance road would be upgraded for access to the LADWP switchyard. A Caltrans access road may also be used for construction of the gen-tie line." We will need to know what the upgrades will be so we can analyze potential impacts from that upgrade. Depending upon the nature of the upgrade, that could affect air quality, socioeconomics (labor), cultural/tribal resources, to name a few technical areas, in addition to transportation. We need to know the following:

- Vegetation mapping along any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. This should be mapped to the Manual of California Vegetation Alliance Level and include a 50-foot buffer.

- Information for all drainages that cross any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. This should include maps and drainage types.
- Biological survey data for any special-status plant or wildlife species (including, but not limited to, desert tortoise, burrowing owl, etc.) along any proposed access roads (whether or not upgrades are required) north of I-15. Again, this should include any mapped resources within a 250-foot buffer to account for the recent candidacy status of burrowing owl.

I realize this is a lot to digest. We wanted to bring this to your attention before you file any responses that could be affected by these observations and data needs. We certainly don't want to hold up your filing responses that would not be affected. We would like to set up a call and perhaps a site visit to go over our findings and seek resolution on these topics.

If you have questions about this, please contact me or Eric Knight.

Best,

Chris

Aspen environmental group

Chris Huntley

Executive Vice President

Biological Resources Director

www.aspeneg.com

5020 Chesebro Road, Suite 200

Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Cell: 818-292-2327

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From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=DD3D2FC8670840BDA4ACDC455903E787-CHANG, KAYC]
Sent: 1/28/2025 12:40:34 AM
To: Rozzell, Lara R [Lara_R_Rozzell@nps.gov]
CC: Lee, Lena FS [Lena_Lee@nps.gov]; Andeski, Annasofia S [sofia_andeskie@nps.gov]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain timeline question

Hi Lara, (*moving Carol to bcc to help w/ inbox traffic; thanks for connecting us, Carol!)*

Yes, you're correct that we filed the Determination of Incomplete Application and Request for Information on September 3, 2024. On October 25, 2024, they filed a number of responses with this cover letter indicating they will be submitting an additional batch of information in November 2024: https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=259695&DocumentContentId=95843. On November 4, 2024, we received Data Request Response Set #1, where they indicated Supplemental Data Request Responses Sets will be filed: https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=259876&DocumentContentId=96065. We have not received anything yet, but estimate receiving this information within Q1 2025, so we are still waiting for applicant responses.

While you should be notified when anything is filed to the docket if you're subscribed to our email subscription for Soda Mountain, we can also keep you in the loop as we are progressing through our process - looking forward to keeping our lines of communication open.

Lisa Worrall, cc'd here, was out of the office when I originally emailed you, but is back and is the current project manager for the Soda Mountain application.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Book time to meet with me

From: Rozzell, Lara R <Lara_R_Rozzell@nps.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 4:04 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>; Watson, Carol@Energy <Carol.Watson@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Lee, Lena FS <Lena_Lee@nps.gov>; Andeski, Annasofia S <sofia_andeskie@nps.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain timeline question

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Hi Kaycee,

Thank you for the information and contacts below!

One other question...would you help us understand the timeline? We saw the September 3rd CEC Determination of Incomplete Application and data requests. We can see that the applicant has submitted a few dozen responses.

Is CEC in a new determination of application completeness? Or still waiting for applicant responses? Has the applicant indicated when they expect to finish addressing the requests from September 3rd document?

An updated timeline is very helpful for our work planning. Let me know if we can answer any questions.

Thanks,
Lara

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 26, 2024 10:42
To: Watson, Carol@Energy <Carol.Watson@energy.ca.gov>; Rozzell, Lara R <Lara_R_Rozzell@nps.gov>
Cc: Badie, Mona@Energy <Mona.Badie@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Angulo, Armand@Energy <armand.angulo@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Info on Soda Mountain participation

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi Lara,

Nice to e-meet you. I'm filling in for Lisa Worrall, who will likely be your main point of contact when she is back in the office early January.

The CEC welcomes public participation in its proceedings. Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 25519(k), the CEC invites the comments and recommendations of your agency, and requests that you send us any relevant laws, ordinances, or regulations that your agency has promulgated or administered that are applicable to the proposed project. This is the notice of Opt-In application receipt for Soda Mountain: https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=258374&DocumentContentId=94394.

On the CEC project webpage for the project (https://www.energy.ca.gov/powerplant/solar-photovoltaic-pv/soda-mountain-solar-project), you can find more info on the project and a link on the upper right portion of the page to submit an e-comment (https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Ecomment/Ecomment.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-03). The e-commenting page allows you to type in your comment or attach a letter. Comments will be posted to the CEC docket for this proceeding (https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-03). We also recommend subscribing to the free Soda Mountain email notification listserv. You can find the link to subscribe on the bottom right side of the project webpage linked above.

If you have any questions about the commenting process, please reach out to Armand Angulo (cc'd). Our Office of the Public Advisor, Energy Equity, and Tribal Affairs is a free resource available to everyone who wants to participate in CEC proceedings.

Thank you for your engagement, and happy new year!
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)

Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division

Book time to meet with me

From: Watson, Carol@Energy <Carol.Watson@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, December 20, 2024 6:04 AM
To: Rozzell, Lara R <Lara_R_Rozzell@nps.gov>
Cc: Badie, Mona@Energy <Mona.Badie@energy.ca.gov>; Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Info on Soda Mountain participation

Hi Lara!
Kaycee (cc'd here) is the project manager for Soda Mountain, and she can assist you.

As always, let me know how I can help,
Carol

Carol Watson
Staff Biologist
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Watson, Carol@Energy
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 3:40 PM
To: Rozzell, Lara R <Lara_R_Rozzell@nps.gov>
Cc: Badie, Mona@Energy <Mona.Badie@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Info on Soda Mountain participation

Hi, Mona,

Lara is interested in filing a letter to the Soda Mountain docket and learning more info, can you help with that?

Best,
Carol

Carol Watson
Staff Biologist
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Cell: #702.370.1019

From: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Sent: 2/7/2025 10:04:25 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Subject: Re: Applicant having difficult submitting documents to the docket for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)
Attachments: Outlook-cid_image0

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Lisa,

Thanks for all your help with this! Pam was able to assist me. I have 2 more documents to upload, which will be completed by Monday before CEC re-opens for business. That will complete our full submittal for this response cycle and we look forward to receiving comments back from your team. I'll send you another note to confirm when our submittal is fully complete.

I hope you have a wonderful weekend!

Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 12:26 PM
To: Fredieu, Pamela@Energy <Pamela.Fredieu@energy.ca.gov>; Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Subject: Re: Applicant having difficult submitting documents to the docket for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)

Hi Pamela,

Hannah said the file was under 30 MB. Can you work directly with Hannah?

Thanks so much.

Lisa

From: Fredieu, Pamela@Energy <Pamela.Fredieu@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 12:24 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Applicant having difficult submitting documents to the docket for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)

Error: might be because of size of document.

Let me know if you have any more issues.

Thank you,
Docket Staff,

Pamela Fredieu (she/her)
Legal Secretary
Chief Counsel's Office
California Energy Commission
1-916-645-3951

California Energy Commission
Website: www.energy.ca.gov

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 11:57 AM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Energy - e-filinghelp <e-filinghelp@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Applicant having difficult submitting documents to the docket for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi,

I keep receiving the error message on the attached screenshot. I have gone back and removed items and tried again, in addition to completely starting the upload over and the message keeps occurring. Is it possible to help me get these reports docketed?

Thanks,
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 11:41 AM
To: Energy - e-filinghelp <e-filinghelp@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Subject: Applicant having difficult submitting documents to the docket for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)

Hi,

Our applicant for the Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) has been having difficulties with the docket system when she tries to submit her documents to the project's docket.

Are you aware of any system problems. Can you help her (copied in email) so she can file her documents successfully.

Thanks kindly,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

From: Fredieu, Pamela@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=3539CC476C1F4597AF4EBB6024EB875E-FREDIEU, PA]
Sent: 2/7/2025 8:15:04 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Energy - e-filinghelp [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=53377ea022d8403eac964d504a3b4b2a-Energy - e-]
CC: Hannah Gbeh [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Subject: Re: Applicant having difficult submitting documents to the docket for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)
Attachments: Documents_E-Filing_Process_Guide_Oct2024.pdf

Here is the process guide for filing a document.

Ma

Pamela Fredieu (she/her)
Legal Secretary
Chief Counsel's Office
California Energy Commission
1-916-645-3951

California Energy Commission
Website: www.energy.ca.gov

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 11:41 AM
To: Energy - e-filinghelp <e-filinghelp@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Subject: Applicant having difficult submitting documents to the docket for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)

Hi,

Our applicant for the Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) has been having difficulties with the docket system when she tries to submit her documents to the project's docket.

Are you aware of any system problems. Can you help her (copied in email) so she can file her documents successfully.

Thanks kindly,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner

California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=E4BBC7048B38485084BDB03FB494B25B-WORRALL, LI]
Sent: 2/10/2025 6:23:29 PM
To: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
CC: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]; Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]
Subject: Re: Soda Mt. Submittal

Hi Hannah,

Thank you for your filings and track changes versions. I haven't had a chance to survey staff on whether they believe they might have follow up/clarification data requests. After Feb 18th, I can turn my attention to Soda Mountain. I am working day and night to publish a Staff Assessment on the 18th.

Thanks for your understanding and patience.

Lisa

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2025 10:17 AM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>; Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Soda Mt. Submittal

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Lisa,

We have uploaded all our final data request documents to the docket for the Soda Mountain Solar Project. I have also shared some redlines and data files via a filesharing link. If you have any issues accessing any of this information, please let me know.

I also understand there is no 30-day review timeline for this review cycle. If possible, we would appreciate any updates available related to when this review might be completed.

Thanks!
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 4, 2025 2:14 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>; Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Soda Mt. Submittal

Thanks Hannah. By the way, I misspoke about the 30-day review. There is not a requirement in the statute that notes a 30 day review, beyond the initial review. We will, of course, review your submittals in a timely manner and do the best we can do.

I will let you know if I have any questions. Thanks.

Lisa

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 4, 2025 2:07 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mt. Submittal

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Hi Lisa,

I hope you are having a nice week! I wanted to let you know that I am planning to submit our final data request responses to the Soda Mt. Solar Project incomplete letter this Friday. If you would like to chat in advance, please let me know. Otherwise, we look forward to getting our 30 day review started.

Thanks!
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Sent: 2/18/2025 6:55:02 PM
To: Huber, Elizabeth@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=93f40660c3d446578d63390926fd5e5a-Huber, Eliz]
Subject: Soda Mt. Solar
Attachments: TN261667_20250209T201032_Appendix AA_Determination of Infeasibility for DR BIO-20.pdf

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Elizabeth,

Thank you for your time today. Attached is the Soda Mt. Solar Project determination of infeasibility for CEC Data Request BIO-20.

Best,
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	24-OPT-03
Project Title:	Soda Mountain Solar
TN #:	261667
Document Title:	Appendix AA_Determination of Infeasibility for DR BIO-20
Description:	Appendix AA provides a determination of infeasibility for CEC Data Request BIO-20, which requested an assessment of the feasibility of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope.
Filer:	Hannah Arkin
Organization:	Resolution Environmental
Submitter Role:	Applicant Consultant
Submission Date:	2/9/2025 8:10:48 PM
Docketed Date:	2/10/2025

February 9, 2025

Mr. Drew Bohan

Executive Director

California Energy Commission

715 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: DETERMINATION OF INFEASIBILITY FOR CEC DATA REQUEST BIO-20, SODA MOUNTAIN SOLAR PROJECT (24-OPT-03)

Dear Mr. Bohan,

Thank you for your letter titled "*Determination of Incomplete Application and Request for Information for the Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)",* issued on September 3, 2024. The following letter provides a detailed analysis and response regarding Data Request (DR) BIO-20, which requested an assessment of the feasibility of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope. This has been determined infeasible to implement as both a project alternative or mitigation measure. Implementing a 0.25-mile buffer as an alternative or mitigation measure would prevent the project from attaining most of the basic project objectives. Additionally, there are specific economic, legal, environmental, social, and technological factors that make implementing a 0.25-mile buffer infeasible as a project alternative or mitigation measure. This letter describes these conflicts with the basic project objectives and outlines the specific factors that result in a determination of infeasibility. All other data requests within the September 3, 2024 letter have been deemed feasible to implement.

1. INTRODUCTION

DR BIO-20 requests an assessment of feasibility of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope to address potential impacts to desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*). This request is based upon information contained within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03) Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948), which was completed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer would result in a project footprint reduction of 236 acres, or approximately 12% of the project footprint, when compared to the proposed project submitted in the Opt-In Application for the Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03). Please see Table 1 and Figure 1.

This letter also addresses information provided by Christina Aiello and Clinton Epps within a report titled "Potential impacts of the proposed Soda Mountain Solar development on desert bighorn sheep" (TN 261255), herein referred to as Aiello Report. The recommendations contained within the Aiello Report request the project implement a 1.24-mile buffer between the project components and bighorn sheep habitat. Implementation of this recommendation results in a buffer covering the entire project site and would effectively prohibit any project components from being constructed. See Figure 2. As discussed below in Section 4, there is insufficient evidence to support the determination that the implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer, or any larger buffer, would substantially lessen any of the project's impacts to desert bighorn sheep, beyond the measures the project is currently proposing to implement to reduce such impacts. Further, since the project's already-applied measures are sufficient to reduce the impacts to desert bighorn sheep to less than significant, consideration of additional measures – whether as mitigation or alternatives – is not warranted or proper.

It is also important to note that the Applicant's preferred project would construct a 2,558-acre renewable energy development, not the 2058.97-acre project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03). The Applicant's preferred project was presented to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in 2015. The project footprint was subsequently reduced by 500 acres, or 20%, by BLM, in consultation with other regulatory agencies, during the BLM's approval process in order to address impacts to desert bighorn sheep. Therefore, the project presented within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03) already provides a significant reduction in the original project footprint, specifically made to reduce impacts to desert bighorn sheep. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction of 736 acres, or a 33% total reduction in project footprint.

Table 1. Project Footprint Reduction with Implementation of a 0.25-Mile Buffer

Project Component	**2015 Applicant Preferred Project Footprint**	**Opt-In Application 24-OPT-03 Project Footprint**	**Project Footprint Reduction from Implementation of 0.25-Mile Buffer**	**Remaining Project Footprint after Implementation of 0.25-Mile Buffer**
		(in acres)		
North Array	500	0	--	--
East Array	341.67	341.67	151.7	189.97
South Array 1	205.58	205.58	2.23	203.35
South Array 2	632.04	632.04	8.69	623.35
South Array 3	326.64	326.64	8.32	318.32
Total Impact Area	2558.97	2058.97	236.01	1822.96
Source: SWCA Environmental Consultants 2025				

Implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would reduce the project's 300 MW solar energy generation capacity and 300 MW battery energy storage capacity by at least 12%. It is important to note that the reduction in project footprint size due to implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer may not result in a linear reduction in the project's energy generation and storage capacity. In other words, a 12% reduction in the project footprint could result in a reduction in the project's energy generation and storage capacity of much greater than 12%. This is because the project contains civil design features such as roads, fences, and basins, and moving these project components would lead to an even greater reduction to the solar field and BESS size than the 236-acre reduction from buffer implementation.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03) is to contribute to the achievement of California's renewable energy goals and create a vital new point of interconnection for renewable energy in San Bernardino County to connect to California's electric transmission infrastructure. There are 7 specific project objectives for the project. The discussion below identifies how implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer would be in direct conflict with the proposed project's objectives and would impede the project from attaining the project's objectives.

Project Objective 1: Assist the State of California in achieving or exceeding its Renewables Portfolio Standard and greenhouse gas emissions reduction objectives by developing and constructing new California Renewables Portfolio Standard–qualified solar power generation facilities producing approximately 300 MW.

The Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) is one of California's key programs for advancing renewable energy. The program sets continuously escalating renewable energy procurement requirements for the

State's load-serving entities. The RPS requires all load-serving entities in California to procure an increasing portion of their electricity sales from eligible renewable resources. Senate Bill (SB) 1078, passed in September 2002, set the RPS of 20% total renewables generation by 2020.

- SB 107, passed in September 2006, accelerated achievement of the 20% RPS to 2010.
- SB X1-2, signed in April 2011, raised the RPS goal to 33% in 2020.
- SB 350, signed in 2015, increased the RPS goal to 50% in 2030.
- SB 100, signed into law in September 2018, revised the RPS goal to 60% by 2030 and set a long-term target of 100% carbon-free energy by December 31, 2045.

Electricity generated by the project would be used to serve the needs of California customers and would facilitate compliance with California's RPS. The project would assist the State in achieving its energy objectives under SB 100 and SB 350 and greenhouse gas emissions–reduction goals under Assembly Bill 32. The project would advance the goals of the State to reduce use of fossil fuels and increase the availability of electricity from solar energy, which is eligible for compliance with the RPS.

Implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as an alternative or mitigation measure would result in a significant direct loss of renewable energy generation. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy and would directly conflict with the project objective to transition the State to renewable energy and meeting RPS targets by providing 300 MW of RPS-qualified solar energy generation facilities. This loss of solar energy generation would also impact the State's ability to maintain electrical system reliability under this transition and during extreme climate change driven events. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #1.

Project Objective 2: Produce and transmit electricity at a competitive cost.

Economies of scale allow for cost advantages when building large-scale renewable energy developments. It is more cost effective to construct one large project to produce 300 MW of renewable energy, than constructing multiple smaller projects to cumulatively produce 300 MW of renewable energy. Solar panels, inverters and other components are more cost competitive when bought in large quantities, lowering the overall project cost. Fixed cost distribution such as interconnection facilities, permitting, design, land acquisition and project management are spread across a larger number of watts generated in a large-scale project, lowering the cost per watt. Energy capture is also subject to economies of scale and cost savings for rate payers can be maximized by utilizing an optimal land layout and panel orientation. Large utility-scale solar projects can be better integrated into the electrical grid, potentially reducing transmission losses and providing more predictable power output. The most significant fixed cost is associated with the new high-voltage interconnection facilities required by LADWP. Which are currently estimated to cost over $60 million dollars. These costs remain the same even if the project size and energy generation are greatly reduced, thus making a significant reduction in project size particularly harmful to the project's ability to sell power cheaply.

Last, a reduction in footprint due to implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope may not result in a linear reduction in project size, and ensuing energy generation loss could be far greater than 12% or 236 acres. This is because the project area being reduced by implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer contains civil design features such as roads, fences and basins, and re-arranging these project components would lead to an even greater reduction to the solar field and BESS size than the 236-acre reduction from buffer implementation.

For the reasons above, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would cause a significantly more expensive project and impair the Applicant's ability to sell power more cheaply on the wholesale market or to LADWP directly. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer as a project alternative or mitigation measure would directly impact the project's ability to save California ratepayers money and would impede the project from attaining project objective #2.

Project Objective 3: Provide a new source of energy storage that assists the State in achieving its energy storage mandates.

Implementation of the proposed project supports a significant number of energy storage mandates. The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) is a landscape-scale renewable energy and conservation planning effort covering more than 22 million acres in the California desert. The project site is within the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA), which is amended by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) DRECP Land Use Plan Amendment (BLM 2016). The project site is within an area designated as a Development Focus Area (DFA). DFAs are locations where renewable energy generation is an allowable use, incentivized, and could be streamlined for approval under the DRECP.

The project site is within the BLM's California Desert District (within the jurisdiction of the Barstow Field Office), the planning boundary of the CDCA Plan, and the DRECP. The project would be consistent with federal goals for the construction of renewable energy infrastructure and generation of renewable energy and would make the best use of public lands to generate, store, and transmit affordable renewable solar electricity for distribution to the State.

Within the State of California, implementation of the project supports the Energy Action Plan and Loading Order, which established a high-level, coherent approach to meeting California's electricity and natural gas needs and set forth the "loading order" to address California's future energy needs. The "loading order" established that the State, in meeting its energy needs, would invest first in energy efficiency and demand-side resources, followed by renewable resources, and only then in clean conventional electricity supply. Since that time, the California Public Utilities Commission and California Energy Commission have overseen the plans, policies, and programs for prioritizing the preferred resources, including energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Electricity from the project would be used to serve the needs of California customers and would facilitate compliance with California's RPS. The project would assist the State in achieving its energy objectives under SBs 100 and 350 and greenhouse gas emissions–reduction goals under Assembly Bill 32. The project would advance the goals of the State to reduce use of fossil fuels and increase the availability of electricity from solar energy, which is eligible for compliance with the RPS.

When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy and would directly conflict with the project objective of advancing the energy storage mandates. The reduction in energy generation would reduce the amount of solar energy that would flow into the BESS and would require the BESS facility to be downsized in the same proportion as the solar field. A downsized solar energy system would not generate sufficient energy to charge a BESS of 300 MW, and the implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer would result in a direct reduction in energy storage capacity. This loss of energy storage would negatively impact the State's ability to accelerate a transition to renewable energy and would negatively impact the State's ability to maintain electrical system reliability under this transition and during extreme climate change driven events. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #3.

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Project Objective 4: Use the existing transmission unused capacity that provides approximately 300 MW of capacity.

The power produced by the project would be conveyed to the regional electrical grid through an interconnection with the existing Marketplace-Adelanto 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line operated by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). Transmission is critical to ensuring grid reliability and resilience, particularly as the state faces extreme weather events caused by climate change. According to the California ISO Transmission Plan, the need for new energy generation over the next 10 years has escalated rapidly, driving an accelerated pace for new transmission development. The combination of dramatically increasing the pace of renewable generation and load forecast growth are driving an increase in transmission requirements. To meet the State's renewable energy goals, an expanded, upgraded and reinforced transmission system is required.

The proposed project does not require the construction of new off-site transmission infrastructure and instead maximizes the use of existing infrastructure that is currently underutilized and directly adjacent to the project site. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction in project footprint would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy and 300 MW of energy storage, and would directly conflict with the project objective of maximizing the utilization of the existing transmission line's unused capacity of 300 MW. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #4.

Project Objective 5: Utilize existing energy infrastructure to the extent possible by locating solar power generation facilities near existing infrastructure, such as electrical transmission facilities.

The project proposes a large-scale solar and battery storage facility within an area that contains existing infrastructure, including the existing Marketplace-Adelanto 500 kV transmission line operated by the LADWP. Although reducing the project footprint would still allow for the remaining project components to connect to the existing energy infrastructure, reducing the project's energy generation capabilities would not maximize the existing energy infrastructure in the project area. The existing Marketplace-Adelanto 500 kV transmission line has the capacity to handle an additional 300 MW of energy, which would be generated by the project.

The project has an existing executed Interconnection Agreement for 300 MW of capacity with LADWP. A significant reduction in size caused by implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope is prohibited under the current interconnection agreement and would trigger a "material modification process" with LADWP, further causing re-study and amendment of the Agreement. Such a process causes significant unknowns related to study timing, future costs and project schedule, and until resolved would impede the financial investment necessary to advance the project development and construction. Every action for this project that is not consistent with the existing LADWP Agreement requires 11 approvals from all members of the Mead-Adelanto Project leading to significant additional time beyond normal interconnection processes. Implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in an anticipated freeze on the project advancement of a minimum of 18 months. This potential delay would prevent the project from being capable of being accomplished within a reasonable period of time and is therefore infeasible.

When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project

footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy and the reduced production of energy at this project site would have to be made up by installing solar panels at another site. Thus, the effect of implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would be to preclude the utilization, to the extent possible, of the existing infrastructure adjacent to the project site. This consequence would directly conflict with the project objective of utilizing existing transmission infrastructure. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #5.

Project Objective 6: Site solar power generation facilities in areas of San Bernardino County that have the best solar resource to maximize energy production and the efficient use of land.

The project site is located within a designated federal Section 368 Energy Corridor adjacent to I-15 (Corridor number 27-225). Additionally, an existing Southern California Edison (SCE)-owned 115 kV sub transmission line and an LADWP-operated 500 kV transmission line run parallel to and adjacent to the western perimeter of the project site. The project site is located immediately adjacent to existing roadways that provide readily available access for construction and operations. The project site was selected to maximize energy production and the most efficient use of land, considering existing infrastructure, site geology, environmental impacts, water, waste and fuel constraints and electric transmission constraints.

The State has prepared the DRECP, a multi-agency effort to develop a comprehensive habitat conservation plan with streamlined federal permitting for renewable energy projects on 22 million acres of State and federally owned public land. The DRECP is a collaborative effort between the California Energy Commission, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, also known as the Renewable Energy Action Team. San Bernardino County is one of seven counties participating in this effort. The DRECP establishes mitigation and conservation measures that renewable energy projects could implement for desert habitat and species impacts. The DRECP focuses on renewable energy projects on State and federally owned land, as well as on projects that require federal permitting as a result of impacts to certain species and habitat. Although the project is located entirely within BLM lands that are not under the jurisdiction of the County of San Bernardino, the project has been developed in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of the County and has involved the County in its review.

The proposed project is located within the DRECP area of the County of San Bernardino and was sited in this area in an effort maximize energy production while efficiently using land. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy. A reduction in the project footprint could result in a separate project being proposed elsewhere within the County to fully meet energy production goals. This would directly conflict with the project objective of siting solar power generation facilities in areas of San Bernardino County that have the best solar resource to maximize energy production while efficiently using of land. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #6.

Project Objective 7: Develop a solar power generation facility in San Bernardino County that would support the economy by investing in the local community, creating local construction jobs, and increasing tax and fee revenue to the County.

A Socioeconomic study was completed for the project and is included as Appendix P (TN #259903) within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03). As stated in this study, construction of the project would provide a

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temporary increase in employment of approximately 200 direct and another 420 indirect and induced jobs. Long-term (30-years or longer) employment growth derived from the operation of the project is estimated at up to 49 jobs per year. The project would provide economic benefits to the County of San Bernardino and to its residents and businesses by increasing spending in the community as a result of construction and development-related work. It would provide opportunities for local tradespeople to develop their skills and gain experience installing solar and battery storage facilities and would reduce the amount of time that many of these people spend commuting by offering a local job opportunity. It also would provide increased sales and use taxes, personal property tax, and possessory interest property tax revenues to the County over many years.

When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. The reduction in project footprint would reduce construction and operational jobs, project taxes, and associated local economic benefits to the County and local businesses. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #7.

3. ECONOMIC AND LEGAL FACTORS

Reduction of the project footprint would result in a financial burden that would significantly hinder the project's viability and the economic benefits to the community. Practical limitations, such as direct conflicts with legal agreements contained within the LADWP Interconnection Agreement and Facilities Studies, create an infeasible scenario for reducing the project footprint.

The project has an existing executed Interconnection Agreement for 300 MW of capacity with LADWP. A significant reduction in size caused by implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would be prohibited under the current agreement and would result in the triggering of a "material modification process" with LADWP, further causing re-study and amendment of the Agreement. Such a process causes significant unknowns related to study timing, future costs and project schedule, and until resolved would impede the financial investment necessary to advance the project development and construction. Every action for this project that is not consistent with the existing LADWP Interconnection Agreement requires 11 approvals from all members of the Mead-Adelanto Project leading to significant additional time beyond normal interconnection processes. Implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in an anticipated freeze on the project advancement of a minimum of 18 months. This potential delay would prevent the project from being capable of being accomplished within a reasonable period of time and is therefore infeasible.

Implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope may also result in a breach of the LADWP Agreement that could result in a termination of this agreement, which has significant economic consequences and creates a situation that makes implementing a 0.25-mile buffer infeasible. It is also expected that implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a higher cost per watt for the project by not maximizing economies of scale. Economically, a reduction in the project footprint would also significantly reduce the living wage jobs that would be provided during project construction and operation. This would result in a direct reduction in the economic benefits of the project to the County and its residents by decreasing spending in the community as a result of construction and development-related work. The reduction in project footprint would reduce the direct and indirect economic benefits of the project, including reducing labor costs, contractor's profit and overhead, sales and use taxes, personal property tax, and possessory interest tax revenues to the State of California and County of San Bernardino. The total fiscal benefit to the County and State from implementation of the project would be substantially reduced with implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

There is insufficient evidence to support the determination that the implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would substantially lessen any of the project's impacts to desert bighorn sheep, beyond the measures the project is currently proposing to implement to reduce such impacts. Further, since those already-applied measures are sufficient to reduce the impacts to desert bighorn sheep to less than significant, consideration of additional measures – whether as mitigation or alternatives – is not warranted.

The project currently proposes to implement a significant number of project design features, applicant proposed measures and mitigation measures to sufficiently reduce any potential direct, indirect, cumulative, short-term or long-term project impacts to desert bighorn sheep. These measures are identified in Attachment A. The Applicant has considered and agreed to all of these mitigation measures, which are considered feasible and will be adopted as part of the project's environmental commitment through the mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP). With implementation of the currently proposed avoidance and minimization measures, the project's direct, indirect, cumulative short-term and long-term project impacts to desert bighorn sheep movement would be less than significant.

DR BIO-20 is a request to implement a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope that was based upon a recommendation within Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948). This recommendation was based upon an analysis of a total of 261,868 desert bighorn sheep data tracking points. Of the 261,868 data points analyzed, 30 points were determined as located within the proposed project site. The analysis within the Desert Bighorn Sheep Study identified that only 0.01% of the total desert bighorn sheep movement in the region utilize the project site. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. A 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope to reduce the proposed project footprint by 236 acres to address movement of 0.01% of desert bighorn sheep appears to be out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

Further, the proposed project site does not contain high quality habitat for the desert bighorn sheep. As stated within Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948), desert bighorn sheep spend most of their time in mountain habitat, as it is visually open, allowing for early predator detection, and it provides escape terrain in the form of steep, generally rocky, slopes. Mountain habitat is defined as a slope of 15% or greater. The project site is primarily flat and contains a large desert wash habitat. It is not considered mountain habitat and does not contain the highest quality habitat for desert bighorn sheep. As stated in Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948), it is unlikely the onsite habitat would experience frequent and heavy use by desert bighorn sheep. A 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope to reduce the proposed project footprint by 236 acres in an area that does not contain high quality habitat appears to be out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

Further, Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948), performed wildlife linkage and connectivity modeling and identified that the project site is not within a designated area of importance. The Study states that while there are four existing underpasses and bridges near the Soda Mountain Solar study area, there have been few documented observations of desert bighorn sheep using these structures. The wildlife crossings of importance to the species are off-site to the north and south. A 0 a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope to reduce the proposed project footprint by 236 acres in an area that does not contain data supporting that the site is used as a critical wildlife corridor for desert bighorn sheep appears to be out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

Lastly, Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948) states that desert bighorn sheep are highly influenced by the location of, and distance to, reliable water sources, particularly during the hot, summer

months. There are no reliable water sources for desert bighorn sheep on the project site. Aquatic resources include prominent and non-prominent drainages that encompass a desert wash system. The request to reduce the proposed project footprint by 236 acres, in an area that does not contain any significant water sources for desert bighorn sheep, appears to be out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

The recommendations contained within the Aiello Report request the project implement a 1.24-mile buffer between the project components and bighorn sheep habitat. Implementation of this recommendation results in a buffer covering the entire project site and would effectively prohibit any project components from being constructed. See Figure 2. The buffer requests within the Aiello Report are disproportionally large and there is insufficient evidence to support the determination that the implementation of any buffer would substantially lessen any of the project's impacts to desert bighorn sheep. The Aiello Report fails to account for the significant number of applicant proposed measures and mitigation measures (Attachment A) that are required to be implemented by the project to sufficiently reduce any potential direct, indirect, cumulative, short-term or long-term project impacts to desert bighorn sheep. The Aiello Report also fails to account for the 500-acre reduction in project footprint that has already occurred to reduce project impacts related to bighorn sheep. The data presented within the Aiello Report specifically states that the project site is considered irregularly used habitat by the bighorn sheep. It also discloses that there is limited data to draw on regarding impacts of the project related to bighorn sheep, and the recommendations within the report appear to be based upon a project-specific modeling simulation that has not undergone peer review. There is insufficient data provided to support the concept that this model provides an unbiased, accurate and reliable analysis of the project site. Instead, it appears the information presented within the Aiello Report supports the determination that the project site does not support bighorn sheep movement, nor does it contain high quality bighorn sheep habitat. For example, Table 1 within the Aiello Report identifies that the simulation (performed by the non-peer reviewed model and based on unknown assumptions that are higher than documented collaring data) results in only 126 acres of the total 2,435 acres of the project site being considered "frequently" used by bighorn sheep. This represents 5% of the total project site being "frequently" used by bighorn sheep. This 5% is based upon assumptions that are not clearly outlined and contradicts the actual data tracking results which identified that only 0.01% of the total desert bighorn sheep in the region utilize the project site. The Aiello Report requests the CEC requires the project implement a 1.24 mile buffer for bighorn sheep, which would effectively prohibit any project components from being constructed. The request for a buffer covering the entire project site when only 5% of the project site was modeled as "frequently" used, is out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

5. Social Factors

Reducing the project footprint would also reduce the socioeconomic benefits of the project, including employment for local residences and sources of income through the direct and indirect employment opportunities identified within the project's Socioeconomic Study (Appendix P TN #259903). A reduction in the project footprint would substantially reduce the project's ability to help provide a reliable local source of renewable power that would minimize power outages and disruptions by reducing rolling blackouts during peak demand periods.

6. Technological Factors

The proposed project is a large-scale infrastructure project that utilizes state-of-the-art solar energy generation and battery energy storage technology. The project site was selected because it is located directly adjacent to existing large scale infrastructure projects – including the I-15, Brightline West high speed rail project and existing transmission lines. The project offers a model for safely locating solar and battery energy storage facilities far away from residential areas, clustered adjacent to dense infrastructure projects, and connecting to underutilized transmission lines, which prevents the need for new transmission lines to be constructed in wilderness or populated areas. Reducing the project footprint reduces the project's

capability for maximizing technology in an effort to build environmentally friendly solar and battery storage developments.

7. CONCLUSION

Implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as an alternative or mitigation measure would prevent the project from attaining most of the basic project objectives. Additionally, there are specific economic, legal, environmental, social, and technological factors that make implementing a buffer infeasible as a project alternatives or mitigation measure. Further, there does not appear to be sufficient evidence to support the determination that implementation of a buffer would substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project related to desert bighorn sheep, beyond what the project is currently proposing to implement to reduce such impacts. Finally, implementing a buffer, whether as a mitigation measure or project alternative, is not warranted since the already-identified set of measures reduces the project's impacts on desert bighorn sheep to a less than significant level.

Although it is infeasible to implement a 0.25-mile buffer, if the CEC believes that the information and analysis provided by the Applicant is insufficient to reduce impacts to less than significant, there are other feasible mitigation measures that would be equivalent to or more effective than a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope in avoiding and reducing significant effects to the desert bighorn sheep. These measures would require approval from BLM and CEC but would further reduce any potential direct and indirect impacts to desert bighorn sheep movement to at least the same degree, or to a greater degree, than a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope, and could include:

- Providing onsite habitat enhancement north of I-15 on BLM lands not currently proposed for development
- Providing offsite habitat enhancement
- Paying in-lieu fees or establishing an in-lieu fee program for desert bighorn sheep research and monitoring
- Removing legacy fencing on nearby BLM or State lands to increase regional wildlife connectivity

It is requested that the CEC certify the Soda Mountain Solar Project with the project footprint as described within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03). Implementation of a buffer is not a feasible alternative or feasible mitigation measure due to its direct conflicts with project objectives and other specific environmental, economic, legal, social, technological and other conditions. We thank you for your consideration in our request.

Sincerely,

Hannah Arkin

CEO, Resolution Environmental

REFERENCES

1. Aiello and Epps. Potential impacts of the proposed Soda Mountain Solar development on desert bighorn sheep. A report prepared for the National Park Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Soda Mountain Solar CEC Docket TN 261255.
2. California Natural Gas Vehicle Coalition v. State Air Resources Board. Fifth Appellate District Decision (F084229). 8/27/24.
3. California Environmental Quality Act Statute and Guidelines. Public Resources Code 21000–21189 and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000–15387

4. California ISP 2021-2022 Transmission Plan March 17, 2022.
5. County of San Bernardino. General Plan. Renewable Energy and Conservation Element. February 2019.
6. Dudek. Desert Bighorn Sheep Study. Soda Mountain Solar Project. June 2024.
7. SWCA Environmental Consultants. Soda Mountain Solar Project Opt-In Application Section 3-6 Energy. 2024
8. SWCA Environmental Consultants. Soda Mountain Solar Project Opt-In Application Section 3-4 Biological Resources. 2024
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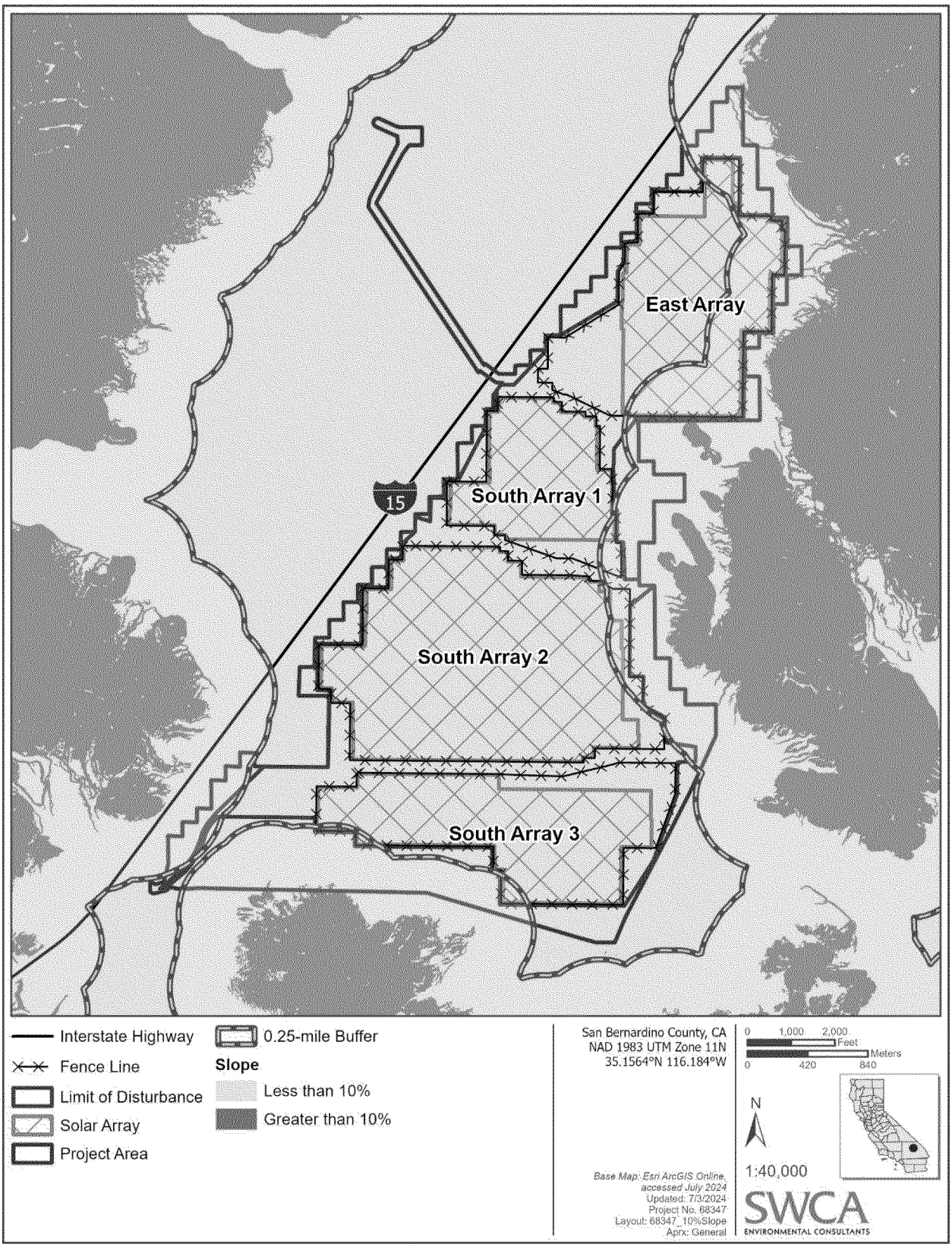
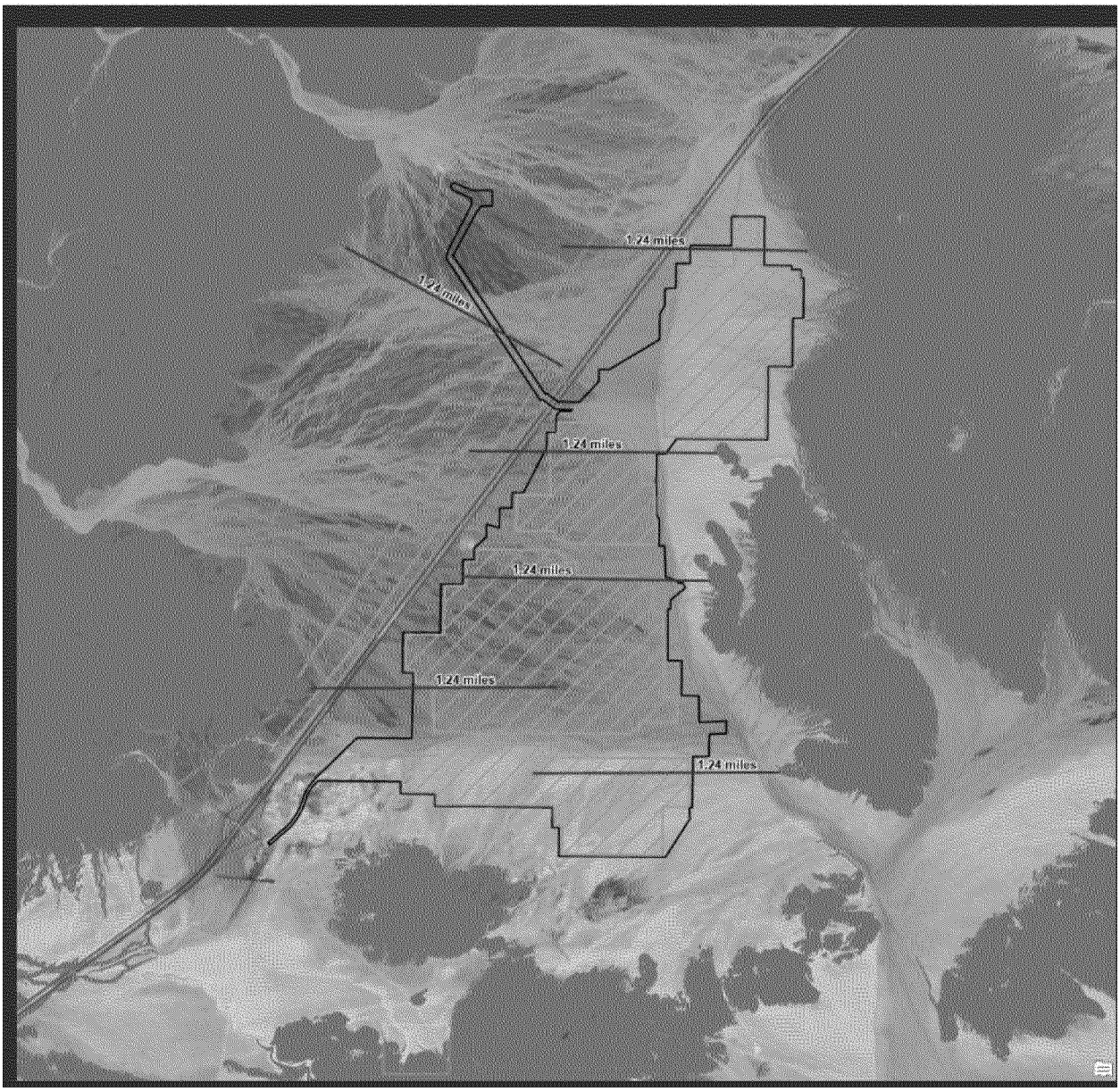


Figure 1. 0.25 mile buffer from 10% slope

Figure 2. 1.24 buffer from 10% slope



SMSP00771

Attachment A

3.4.4.3 Applicant-Proposed Measures

The Applicant has identified and committed to implement the following APMs as part of the proposed Projects to avoid or substantially lessen potentially significant impacts to biological resources, to the extent feasible. The APMs, where applicable, are discussed in the impact analysis section below.

VEGETATION

APM BIO-1: The site shall be revegetated after decommissioning according to the Final Closure Plan described in MM BIO-29 and prepared in conformance with BLM requirements at the time of decommissioning.

APM BIO-2: The applicant shall prepare and implement a Vegetation Resources Management Plan that contains the following components:

- Vegetation Salvage Plans that discuss the methods that will be used to transplant cacti present within the proposed disturbance areas. Salvage and transplant methods used will be approved by the CEC. In addition, the Vegetation Salvage Plans will also include methods that will be used to transplant special-status plant species that occur within proposed disturbance areas.

- Restoration Plans discussing the methods that will be used to restore any of the four native plant community types (creosote bush-white bursage scrub, cheesebush scrub, and creosote bush scrub,) present within the project area that may be temporarily disturbed by construction activities. The applicant will obtain CEC approval for any seed mixtures used for restoration.
- Vegetation Salvage and Restoration Plans that will specify success criteria and performance standards. The applicant will be responsible for implementing the Vegetation Salvage and Restoration Plan according to CEC requirements.

APM BIO-3: Herbicides shall not be applied systemically over the entire project area. Herbicides shall be applied in focused treatments in areas where invasive weed infestations have been identified, such as where there is a clump or monotypic stand of invasive weeds. Herbicides shall not be applied within 100 feet of a special-status plant.

APM BIO-4: Only a State of California and federally certified contractor (i.e., Qualified Applicator), who is also approved by CDFW, and holds and maintains a Qualified Applicator License from California Department of Pesticide Regulation, shall be permitted to perform herbicide applications. Herbicides shall be applied in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and permit stipulations. All herbicide applications must follow U.S. Environmental Protection Agency label instructions.

APM BIO-5: Herbicides shall not be applied during rain events, within 48 hours of a forecasted rain event with a 50% or greater chance of precipitation, or when wind velocity exceeds 10 mph (for liquids) and 15 mph for granular herbicides.

APM BIO-6: The applicant shall implement an Integrated Weed Management Plan (IWMP) to control weed infestations and the spread of noxious weeds in the study area.

APM BIO-7: After project construction, areas of temporary disturbance shall be closed and the restoration measures in the Vegetation Resource Management Plan shall be implemented.

APM BIO-8: Foundations shall be removed to a minimum of 3 feet below surrounding grade during decommissioning and covered with soil to allow adequate root penetration for native plants. Petroleum product leaks and chemical releases shall be remediated prior to completion of decommissioning.

APM BIO-9: Decommissioning methods shall minimize new site disturbance and removal of native vegetation.

SPECIAL-STATUS PLANTS

APM BIO-10: All special-status and rare plant (CRPR 1, 2, 3, and 4) occurrences within the project area will be documented during preconstruction surveys. The applicant will also provide a 100-foot buffer area surrounding each avoided occurrence in which no construction activities will take place, if feasible. If avoidance is not feasible, the applicant shall provide on-site mitigation (e.g., vegetation salvage) for impacts to special-status and rare plants.

APM BIO-11: Before construction of a given phase begins, the applicant shall stake and flag the construction area boundaries, including the construction areas for the solar arrays and associated infrastructure; construction laydown, parking, and work areas; and the boundaries of all temporary and permanent access roads. A CEC-approved biologist shall then survey all areas of proposed ground disturbance for rare or special-status plant species and cacti during the appropriate period (blooming or otherwise identifiable) for those species having the potential to occur in the construction areas. All rare or special-status plant species and cacti observed shall be flagged for transplantation.

SPECIAL-STATUS WILDLIFE

APM BIO-12: The applicant shall implement a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) to educate workers about the environmental issues associated with the project and the MMs that will be implemented at the site, including nest awareness and non-disturbance exclusion zones.

APM BIO-13: Preconstruction clearance surveys to identify active bird nests shall be conducted within 2 weeks of ground disturbance or vegetation removal in all active work areas during the breeding season (February 1–August 31). The work area will need to be resurveyed following periods of inactivity of 2 weeks or more. Active nests shall be avoided using non-disturbance buffer zones as shown below.

- Avian Awareness and Baseline Non-Disturbance Buffer Zones
- Starting Distance of Awareness or Type Non-Disturbance Exclusion Zones Passerines 300 feet from active nest Raptors 500 feet from active nest Golden Eagles 1 mile and line of sight from active nest Burrowing 250 feet from active burrows during nesting Owls1 season (February 1–August 31) 160 feet from active burrows during the wintering period (September 1–January 31)
- Implementation Notes: A qualified biologist may reduce or increase the buffer distance if there is sufficient evidence based on species, habitat, and other factors, that applicant activity would not impact nesting activity. Buffers would be maintained until a qualified biologist has determined that the nest is no longer active.

APM BIO-14: Monitoring of any active nests within or adjacent to the work areas shall be conducted until nestlings have fledged and dispersed. Ongoing breeding-season monitoring of work areas shall be conducted throughout the duration of construction. Nest monitoring results shall be recorded in a Nest Check Form. Typically, a nest check will have a minimum duration of 30 minutes, but it may be longer or shorter, or more frequent than one check per day, as determined by the Designated Biologist (see MM BIO-7 for Designated Biologist) based on the type of construction activity (duration, equipment being used, potential for construction-related disturbance) and other factors related to assessment of nest disturbance (weather variations, pair behavior, nest stage, nest type, species, etc.). The Designated Biologist shall record the construction activity occurring at the time of the nest check and note any work exclusion buffer in effect at the time of the nest check. Non-project activities in the area should also be recorded (e.g., adjacent construction sites, roads, commercial/industrial activities, recreational use, etc.). The Designated Biologist shall record any sign of disturbance to the active nest, including but not limited to parental alarm calls, agitated behavior, distraction displays, nest fleeing and returning, chicks falling out of the nest or chicks or eggs being predated as a result of parental abandonment of the nest. Should the Designated Biologist determine project activities are causing or contributing to nest disturbance that might lead to nest failure, the Designated Biologist shall coordinate with the Construction Manager to limit the duration or location of work, and/or set other limits related to use of project vehicles and/or heavy equipment. Nest locations, project activities in the vicinity of nests, and any adjustments to buffer areas shall be described and reported in regular monitoring and compliance reports.

APM BIO-15: Preconstruction surveys for burrows containing suitable bat roosting habitat that could be used as individual bat roosts shall be conducted in all project work areas.

APM BIO-16: The connection from the substation to the transmission line shall be designed to meet the most recent Avian Power Line Interaction Committee guidelines to the extent practicable.

APM BIO-17: Roads, power lines, fences, and other infrastructure associated with the project shall be minimized to reduce habitat loss. Fencing will use wildlife compatible design standards.

APM BIO-18: Collector lines shall be placed underground to reduce avian collisions.

APM BIO-19: Federal and state measures for handling toxic substances shall be followed to minimize danger from spills to water and wildlife resources. Facility operators shall maintain Hazardous Materials Spill Kits on-site. Personnel shall be trained to use the Hazardous Materials Spill Kits.

APM BIO-20: The applicant shall clear vegetation outside of the bird breeding season to the maximum extent practicable. Preconstruction avian clearance surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist for vegetation clearing during the bird breeding season (February 1–August 31). If a nest(s) is identified in the preconstruction avian clearance surveys, a qualified monitor shall be on-site during vegetation removal in order to enforce non-disturbance buffers and stop activities as necessary should construction disturb nesting activity.

APM BIO-21: Trash shall be disposed of in covered containers and regularly removed from the site.

APM BIO-22: Surveys for burrowing owl shall be conducted in suitable burrowing owl habitat prior to construction and if construction is suspended for 2 weeks or more. Surveys shall be performed pursuant to the CDFW *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFW 2012). If active burrows are found, they shall be avoided using non-disturbance buffer zones. Passive relocation shall be used as described above once the burrow is determined to be inactive.

APM BIO-23: A qualified biologist shall conduct a ground-based golden eagle clearance survey for active golden eagle nests in a 2-mile area surrounding the project, as accessible. Golden eagle clearance surveys shall be conducted annually for each year of construction during the golden eagle nesting season. If active nests are found in the study area, the applicant shall coordinate with CEC, BLM, USFWS, and CDFW to ensure that construction does not result in disturbance of the golden eagles.

APM BIO-24: Project personnel shall remove and dispose of roadkill near the study area to avoid attracting raptors and other scavengers to the site and shall regularly remove vegetation around larger facilities (such as the substation) to reduce raptor foraging.

APM BIO-25: The project shall minimize the use of lighting that could attract migrating birds and bats (that could feed on concentrations of insects at lights). Lighting will be kept to the minimum level necessary for safety and security. High-intensity, steady burning, bright lights such as sodium vapor or spotlights will not be used on project facilities.

APM BIO-26: Project personnel and visitors shall be instructed to drive at low speeds (<15 mph) and be alert for wildlife, especially in low-visibility conditions.

APM BIO-27: Fencing shall be removed at the completion of decommissioning.

APM BIO-28: Desert tortoise exclusion fencing shall be installed at the perimeter of project construction areas (i.e., solar array areas, project buildings, substation/switchyard, earthen berms, and along the edge of access roads and collector line corridors). The fence locations will be determined during final design and will enclose areas of project activity. The fence line and a 30-foot-wide buffer shall be surveyed for desert tortoise before construction of the fence and according to USFWS protocol. Desert tortoise translocation will adhere to guidelines of the desert tortoise translocation plan for the project (see MM BIO-12). Tortoises found in the fence line study area or spotted within 50 m of the fence line study area shall be:

- Assigned a USFWS identification number.
- Given a health assessment.

- Fitted with a transmitter. Tortoises that are too small to accept a transmitter (i.e., no transmitter is available that is 10% or less of the tortoise's body weight) shall be treated as a translocatee and held in situ.
- Moved into habitat adjacent outside the fence line. The tortoise shall be moved into an empty burrow if clearance of the fence area takes place outside the tortoise active season (i.e., November–March and June–August).
- Any of the moved tortoises that return to the project area before completion of fence construction shall be treated as translocatees. Desert tortoises remaining outside the fence line prior to completion of the fence shall be deemed residents. The transmitter shall be removed from the resident tortoise, and no further action shall be taken for the resident tortoises. USFWS procedures shall be followed to clear and handle the desert tortoise.

APM BIO-29: The project area desert tortoise preconstruction clearance survey shall be conducted during the desert tortoise active season (April–May and September–October) unless otherwise agreed to by CEC, USFWS, and CDFW. The survey shall be conducted according to USFWS protocol and preferably during early morning hours to increase the chance juvenile tortoises are found, per the Guidelines. Any tortoise scat shall be collected on each pass of a transect, per the Guidelines. USFWS procedures shall be followed to clear and handle the desert tortoise.

APM BIO-30: The linear facilities desert tortoise preconstruction clearance survey(s) can be conducted at any time throughout the year. Linear facilities for this project include the buried collector lines between arrays and connecting to the substation. Located desert tortoises shall be undisturbed and allowed to clear the site without assistance or interference. Tortoises shall be moved if necessary to reduce the potential for harm from construction activities but shall not be moved more than 500 m in such a scenario. USFWS procedures shall be followed to clear and handle the desert tortoise.

APM BIO-31: Data shall be collected during desert tortoise clearance surveys as described in this section. The same data shall be collected again on tortoises held in the interim in situ on the day that the tortoise is translocated from the study area. The data include:

- Date
- Time
- Temperature (°C)
- Project name
- Site type (project/recipient/control)
- Landowner (BLM)
- Permit/BO #
- Coverage #
- Field crew vendor
- Surveyor (first and last name)
- ID#
- Midline carapace length (MCL) (millimeters)
- Sex

- Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) (Easting)
- UTM (Northing)
- Location (e.g., burrow)
- Transmitter manufacturer
- Transmitter serial #
- Transmitter frequency
- Transmitter install date
- Battery life (months)
- Status (alive/dead/lost)

APM BIO-32: Following installation of the desert tortoise exclusion fencing, the fencing shall be regularly inspected. Permanent fencing shall be inspected monthly and during and within 24 hours following all major rainfall events. A major rainfall event is defined as one for which flow is detectable within the fenced drainage. Any damage to the fencing shall be temporarily repaired immediately to keep tortoises out of the site, and permanently repaired within 72 hours between March 15 and October 31 and within 7 days between November 1 and March 14 of observing damage. Inspections of permanent site fencing shall occur while desert tortoise fencing is in place.

APM BIO-33: No construction, operation, or decommissioning activities shall occur in unfenced areas without a USFWS-approved desert tortoise biologist present. These activities include the construction phase (construction, revegetation), decommissioning phase, and maintenance activities during the operations phase that require new surface disturbance. An adequate number of trained and experienced monitors must be present during all construction and decommissioning activities in unfenced areas, depending on the various construction tasks, locations, and season. A biologist shall be on-site from March 15 through October 31 (active season) during ground-disturbing activities in areas outside the exclusion fencing, and shall be on-call from November 1 through March 14 (inactive season).
The biologist shall check all construction areas immediately before construction activities begin.
The biologist shall inspect construction pipes, culverts, or similar structures 1) with a diameter greater than 3 inches, 2) stored for one or more nights, 3) less than 8 inches aboveground, and 4) within desert tortoise habitat (i.e., outside the permanently fenced area), before the materials are moved, buried, or capped. Alternatively, such materials may be capped before storing outside the fenced area or placing on pipe racks.

APM BIO-34: A Raven Monitoring and Control Plan shall be prepared consistent with the most current USFWS-approved raven management guidelines. The purpose of the plan is to avoid any project-related increases in raven numbers during construction, operation, and decommissioning. The Raven Monitoring and Control Plan shall be submitted to CEC, BLM, CDFW, and USFWS for approval at least 30 days prior to the start of construction.

APM BIO-35: A Burrowing Owl Relocation Plan shall be prepared and submitted to CDFW for approval. Burrowing owls occupying burrows on-site shall be passively relocated outside the nesting season (February 1–August 31) or after a qualified biologist determines that the burrow does not contain eggs or chicks and after consultation with CEC. Prior to construction and passive relocation, artificial burrows shall be installed in areas that would not be disturbed during construction at a ratio of 5:1 for each burrow that will be destroyed by project construction. Passive relocation shall be conducted prior to construction and according to guidelines from the California Burrowing Owl Consortium (1993).

APM BIO-36: Compensatory habitat mitigation shall be provided at a 1:1 ratio for impacts to suitable desert tortoise habitat during construction. A Habitat Compensation Plan shall be prepared to the approval of CEC, CDFW, USFWS, and BLM.

APM BIO-37: No pets or domestic animals shall be allowed on-site prior to or during construction, except kit fox scat detection dogs (with CEC approval) used for preconstruction surveys or postconstruction kit fox mortality monitoring. The project will not authorize the housing or grazing of domestic animals on the project site. Feeding of animals will be prohibited to discourage the spread of non-native birds, to discourage the spread of disease and pathogens, etc.

APM BIO-38: A preconstruction survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist to identify sign of recent mountain lion use of the area (e.g. tracks; scat). The survey will be conducted no more than three days prior to initiation of construction activities. If mountain lion are observed in the study area, the applicant shall coordinate with CEC to ensure that construction does not result in disturbance of mountain lion.

APM BIO-39: A preconstruction survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist to identify sign of recent ringtail use of the area. The survey will be conducted no more than three days prior to initiation of construction activities. If ringtail activity is observed in the study area, the applicant shall coordinate with CEC to ensure that construction activities do not result in disturbance of local ringtail populations.

3.4.5 Mitigation Measures

APMs specific to the proposed project are provided in Section 3.4.4.3. Additional mitigation measures with the potential to decrease the project's impact to biological resources are provided below:

MM BIO-1: Best Management Practices. To reduce indirect impacts to special-status plants and wildlife that may occur in the study area, BMPs shall be implemented prior to and during construction to control dust pollution, prevent discharge of potentially harmful chemicals, and prevent changes in hydrology. BMPs may include the installation of erosion and sedimentation control devices, applying water to control dust, placing drip pans under equipment when not in use, refueling in designated areas, and containing concrete washout properly, among other practices.

MM BIO-2: Worker Environmental Awareness Program. Prior to project initiation, the Designated Biologist shall develop and implement the WEAP (APM BIO-12), which will be available in English and Spanish. Wallet-sized cards summarizing the information shall be provided to all construction and operation and maintenance personnel. The WEAP shall include the following:

- An explanation of the sensitivity of the vegetation communities and special-status plant and wildlife species within and adjacent to work areas, and proper identification of these resources.
- Biology and status of the desert tortoise, golden eagle, burrowing owl, other nesting birds, desert bighorn sheep, kit fox, and American badger and measures to reduce potential effects on these species.
- Actions and reporting procedures to be used if desert tortoise, burrowing owl, other nesting birds, desert bighorn sheep, kit fox, or American badger are encountered.
- An explanation of the function of flagging that designates authorized work areas.
- Driving procedures and techniques to reduce mortality of wildlife on roads.
- Discussion of the federal ESA and CESA, BGEPA, and MBTA and the consequences of non-compliance with these acts.
- The importance of avoiding the introduction of invasive weeds onto the project area and surrounding areas.
- A discussion of general safety protocols such as hazardous substance spill prevention and containment measures and fire prevention and protection measures.
- A review of mitigation requirements that are applicable to their work.

MM BIO-3: Construction Impact Minimization. The project shall implement an advanced technology terrain-following solar tracker system (such as the Nextracker NX Horizon-XTR-0.75 10-inch tracker system, Nevados All Terrain Tracker system, or other system resulting in a similar reduction) that reduces grading under the solar field, consisting of solar power arrays identified as East Array and South Arrays 1, 2 and 3. Quarterly construction monitoring reports shall be provided to the CEC during the

construction period for the project. The quarterly construction monitoring reports shall quantify and document all remaining permanent and temporary grading acreage from project construction with the terrain-following tracker system. All temporary grading impact areas shall be revegetated onsite as described in the project-specific Temporary Disturbance Revegetation Plan (APM BIO-7 and MM-BIO-24). All permanent grading impact areas shall be mitigated at the required compensatory mitigation standards of the resource agencies (APM BIO-36, MM BIO-14, MM BIO-24).

MM BIO-4: Special-Status Plant Species and Cacti Impact Avoidance and Minimization. This measure will provide guidance on how project personnel can avoid unintended impacts to special-status plants on the project area (e.g., Utah vine milkweed) and provide for the salvage of protected cacti prior to construction. This measure includes the following requirements:

- The applicant shall establish Environmentally Sensitive Areas around Utah vine milkweed that have been identified on the project area and/or may be identified in project disturbance areas during site preparation. A minimum 100-foot exclusion area shall be established around the plants, which shall be clearly identified and maintained throughout construction to ensure that avoided plants are not inadvertently harmed. ESAs shall be clearly delineated in the field with temporary construction fencing and signs prohibiting movement of the fencing or sediment controls under penalty of work stoppages or compensatory mitigation.
- *Worker Environmental Awareness Program*. The WEAP (APM BIO-12; MM BIO-2) shall include training components specific to protection of special-status plants that occur on the project area.
- *Herbicide and Soil Stabilizer Drift Control Measures*. Special-status plant occurrences within 100 feet of the project disturbance area, including Utah vine milkweed shall be protected from herbicide and soil stabilizer drift. The IWMP includes measures to avoid chemical drift or residual toxicity to special-status plants consistent with guidelines such as those provided by the Nature Conservancy's Global Invasive Species Team, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Pesticide Action Network Database.
- *Erosion and Sediment Control Measures*. Erosion and sediment control measures shall not inadvertently impact special-status plants (e.g., by using invasive or non–Mojave Desert native plants in seed mixtures, introducing pest plants through contaminated seed or straw, etc.). These measures shall be incorporated in the Comprehensive Drainage, Stormwater, and Sedimentation Control Plan.
- *Preconstruction Vegetation Salvage*. The applicant shall provide a draft Vegetation Resources Management Plan detailing the methods for the salvage and transplantation of target succulent species covered under the CDNPA. The plan shall be submitted to CDFW for review and approval at least 30 days prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities and shall include, at a minimum, the following elements:
    a. **Soil baseline characterization**. The characterization shall be presented to CDFW prior to ground disturbance and shall include:
        i. Profile description of three representative pedons. (A pedon is the smallest three-dimensional sampling unit displaying the full range of characteristics of a particular soil and typically occupies an area ranging from about 1 to 10 square yards.)
        ii. Characterization of surface application (desert pavement or biological soil crust present). Description of biological soil crust shall include major groups of organisms identified at the site (filamentous cyanobacteria, other cyanobacteria, mosses, lichens, liverworts) and the characteristics by which they were identified (see item b, below).
        iii. Documentation of soil macro-invertebrates (that is, presence of ants, termites, and other

significant macro-invertebrates).

- Bulk density, along with a reference to a generally accepted method for making the determination.
- Fertility (nutrient status, electrical conductivity, sodium adsorption ratio), along with methods by which composite samples were collected and the laboratory methods used to determine these properties. Composite samples will contain equal contributions from at least six randomly located collection points within the soil donor area.
- Organic matter content and total carbon and nitrogen content, along with a reference to generally accepted methods for making the determinations.

a. Soil compaction shall be determined by measurement of bulk density in grams per cubic centimeter (or numerically equivalent units). Bulk density may be determined by any of several standard measurements, but the method used must be referenced to a widely accepted soil methodology publication. In no case shall soil be compacted to a bulk density that exceeds 1.6 grams per cubic centimeter except where no planting is to take place. Penetrometer measurements are not a substitute for bulk density measurements.

Once characterized, the top 3 inches of topsoil shall be salvaged from the areas where traditional grading will be used per the following protocol, and stored within the project area. The upper 0.25 inch may be collected separately to preserve biological crust organisms. Topsoil may not be distinguishable from subsoils by color or organic content at the time of salvage but is characterized as the layer that contains fine roots during the active growing season. Soil shall be collected, transported, and formed into stockpiles only while the soil is dry. The vegetation in place at or immediately before topsoil collection shall be healthy native vegetation with less than 15% absolute cover of exotic weed growth. Soil occupied by vegetation of high plant diversity shall be given priority over soil occupied by low-diversity native vegetation. Soil may be collected with a front loader, bulldozer, or scraper and transported to storage areas by front loader, dump truck, or scraper. The equipment transporting the soil may not travel across the stockpile more than the minimum number of times required to build the soil to its intended depth. The depth of the stockpiles shall not exceed 4 feet in the case of sandy loam or loamy sand soils. Topsoil stockpiles shall be kept dry and covered if no vegetation is introduced. If native vegetation is grown on the stockpiles to increase seeds and soil organisms, no cover is required. Artificial watering may be provided at the applicant's option.

Stockpiled topsoil shall be used to grow native plant species for the purpose of producing native seeds and building beneficial microorganisms in the soil volume. All native plant species encountered in the vegetation surveys shall be included in the growing rotation on the stockpiles. Most growing space needs to be dedicated to the species for which the most seeds shall be required. At least half by area of the growing area during each growing cycle shall be dedicated to plant species known to be good mycorrhizal host plants. Members of the families Chenopodiaceae and Amaranthaceae should be limited to less than half the area of the soil stockpiles, with the other half occupied by known mycorrhizal host plant species.

b. **Biological Soil Crust Characterization and Preservation.** Biological soil crust is defined here as a mixture of organisms that occupy and protect the surface of the soil in most desert ecosystems. The organisms often include filamentous and non-filamentous cyanobacteria, mosses, lichens, liverworts, and fungi. Biological soil crust shall be preserved by collecting the upper 0.25 inch of topsoil from areas to be graded. The applicant and/or its contractor(s) shall collect from specific areas known to contain biological crust organisms or collect upper soil from the entire area to be graded. Collections shall emphasize filamentous cyanobacteria, but other cyanobacteria, mosses, lichens, and liverworts are also considered valuable

contributors to biological soil crust and important in protecting against erosion and reducing weed invasion and shall be collected as a secondary priority. Soil surface crust shall be air dried and stored dry in a shaded location in containers that allow air movement, such as loose-weave fabric bags. In no case may the stored crust be subject to wetting or direct sunlight during storage. All containers shall be clearly labeled with date and location of original collection; name and contact information of persons responsible for identifying suitable material to collect; and the persons who collected, stored, and maintained collections. Biological soil crust shall be re-applied at the time of replanting by crumbling the stored material and broadcasting it on the surface of the soil. Approximately 10% of the stored material shall be broadcast on topsoil storage areas among plants being grown for seed and soil microorganisms. When the growing cycle progresses to new planting, the soil supporting biological crust shall be collected and stored by the same methods prescribed for collections from the original soil, in clearly labeled bags or other suitable containers.

c. **Succulent Transplant**. The majority of the succulent plants located in areas to be dragged, rolled, or spot graded, or above mowing height, shall be salvaged and transplanted into a nursery area. The Succulent Transplant portion of the Vegetation Resources Management Plan shall include, at a minimum:

   i. The location of target plants on the project area;

   ii. Criteria for determining which individual plants are appropriate for salvage;

   iii. The proposed methods for salvage, propagation, transport, and planting;

   iv. Procedures for identifying target species during preconstruction clearance surveys;

   v. Considerations for storing salvaged plants or pre-planting requirements; and

   vi. Suggested transplantation sites.

   Succulents to be transplanted into the nursery area shall be placed in their same compass orientation as they were in their original location. The salvaged plants also shall be kept in long-term soil stockpiles, along with natives grown on the stockpiles, to keep the soil biota fresh.

   Succulent transplants done during preparation of the project area shall be fully documented and serve as trials of methods to be used during plant salvage on the project area. Records shall be maintained for each transplanted specimen including species; height; number of branches or pads as appropriate; donor location by UTM coordinates; methods used to remove, transport, and store the plant; period of temporary storage; location; facility description; planting medium used for storage; and frequency of watering during storage. Records shall be kept at the time of planting at the storage area, and quarterly thereafter during storage until such time as each plant is placed in the field or dies. Transplanted individuals shall be maintained for 3 years, including removal of invasive species and irrigation (if necessary), as well as monitored for 3 years to determine the percentage of surviving plants each year and to adjust maintenance activities using an adaptive management approach.

d. **Seed Collection**. Seed collection shall be carried out within the ROW grant area and within 10 miles of the boundaries of the project area on similar terrain, soil, exposure, slope and elevation to the project area. Seed collection guidelines shall conform to all laws and regulations in effect at the time of collection. Seed collection shall include all plant species known to be removed from the facility. If insufficient seeds are provided by "seed farming" and collection within 10 miles of the site, CEC may approve collection from a greater distance provided other environmental factors at the collection site are good matches to the project area. Collected seed may be used to seed salvaged topsoil piles during the construction phase

and after decommissioning related to restoring the project area.

e. If the palo verde trees on-site meet the CDFW size criterion for replacement (i.e., at least one stem greater than 2 inches in diameter) and cannot be salvaged based on the professional opinion of a qualified biologist/horticulturalist, three replacement plants shall be planted in or near the project area for each affected tree and monitored following the above guidance.

MM BIO-5: Biological Monitoring. Biological Monitor(s) shall be employed to assist the Designated Biologist in conducting preconstruction surveys and monitoring ground disturbance, grading, construction, decommissioning, and restoration activities. Additionally, biological monitoring shall be performed during any ground disturbance or grading activities that occur during operation and maintenance. The Biological Monitor(s) shall have sufficient education and field experience to understand resident wildlife species biology; have experience conducting desert tortoise, burrowing owl, kit fox, and badger field monitoring; and be able to identify these species and their sign (including active burrows). The Designated Biologist shall submit a resume, at least three references, and contact information for each prospective Biological Monitor to CEC, CDFW, and USFWS for approval. To avoid and minimize effects on biological resources, the Biological Monitor(s) shall assist the Designated Biologist with the following:

- Be present during construction activities that take place in suitable habitat for desert tortoise, burrowing owl, kit fox, badger, or other protected species to prevent or minimize harm or injury to these species. This also includes unfenced construction activities for desert bighorn sheep.
- Activities of the Biological Monitor(s) include, but are not limited to, ensuring compliance with all avoidance and minimization measures; monitoring for desert tortoise, burrowing owl, kit fox, badger, and other protected species; halting construction activity in the area if an individual is found; and checking the staking/flagging of all disturbance areas to be sure that they are intact and that all construction activities are being kept within the staked/flagged limits. If a desert tortoise, burrowing owl, desert bighorn sheep, kit fox, badger, or other protected species is found within a work area, the Biological Monitor(s) shall immediately notify the Designated Biologist, who shall determine measures to be taken to ensure that the individual is not harmed.
- Inspect the study area for any special-status wildlife species.
- Ensure that potential habitats within the construction zone are not occupied by special-status species (e.g., potential burrows or nests are inspected).
- In the event of the discovery of a non-listed, special-status ground-dwelling animal, recover and relocate the animal to adjacent suitable habitat at least 200 feet from the limits of construction activities.
- At the end of each work day, inspect all potential wildlife pitfalls (e.g., trenches, bores, other excavations) for wildlife and remove wildlife as necessary. If the potential pitfalls will not be immediately backfilled following inspection, the Biological Monitor(s) will ensure that the construction crew slopes the ends of the excavation (3:1 slope), provides wildlife escape ramps, or completely and securely covers the excavation to prevent wildlife entry.
- Inspect the site to ensure trash and food-related waste is placed in closed-lid containers and that workers do not feed wildlife. Also inspect the work area each day to ensure that no microtrash (e.g., bolts, screws, etc.) is left behind.

MM BIO-6: Crotch's Bumble Bee Impact Avoidance and Minimization. The below mitigation measures shall only be required if Crotch's bumble bee remains as a candidate state endangered species or is listed as a state endangered species at the time of project construction, operations and maintenance, or

decommissioning. These avoidance measures will be implemented to avoid take of the species if vegetation clearance and ground disturbance activities are proposed to occur during the following periods:

- Queen Flight Season (February through March), when queens emerge in the spring searching for nest sites.
- Colony Active Period (April through August), the most active flight period and highest detection probability for the species.
- Gyne Flight Season (September through October), the fall flight period when gynes mate and search for overwintering habitat.

If it is determined that "take" or adverse impacts to Crotch's bumble bee cannot be avoided during project activities, the applicant must consult the CEC to determine if a CESA incidental take permit is required.

1. ***Pre-construction Surveys.*** Pre-construction surveys for the Crotch's bumble bee shall be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to vegetation clearance and ground disturbance activities that are proposed to occur during the following periods:

    a. *Nesting Season.* Prior to vegetation removal and ground disturbing activities occurring during the Queen Flight Season and Colony Active Period (February 1 through August 31), a qualified biologist shall perform two (2) visual surveys consisting of meandering transects no more than 10 days prior to the commencement of vegetation removal and ground disturbance in that area. A qualified biologist shall conduct surveys at least four (4) days apart, with the second survey occurring within two (2) days prior to the onset of vegetation removal and ground disturbance in that area. The biologist shall focus attention on areas with blooming native and non-native nectar and pollen resources. The survey duration shall be appropriate to the size of the area planned for vegetation removal and ground disturbance plus 50 feet, based on the metric of a minimum of one (1) person-hour of searching per three (3) acres of suitable habitat as outlined within CDFW's Survey Considerations for CESA Candidate Bumble Bee Species (CDFW 2023). To the maximum extent possible, surveys shall be conducted between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM on sunny days between 55- and 90-degrees Fahrenheit, with sustained wind speeds measuring less than 10 miles per hour.

    If Crotch's bumble bee is detected or suspected during pre-construction surveys, the biologist shall flag the area where the observation was made and closely monitor the flagged areas during vegetation removal and ground disturbing activities. Additionally, if Crotch's bumble bee is suspected or confirmed within the project area, a qualified biologist shall make every effort to locate active nests. The biologist shall observe any burrow entrances for signs of Crotch's bumble bee. To confirm a suspected nest, a qualified biologist may block/cover any burrow entrance with a jar of appropriate size for no more than 30 minutes or until a bumble bee is detected. If a Crotch's bumble bee nest is detected or suspected, the applicant shall immediately halt all project activities within 50 feet of the nest. A qualified biologist shall delineate the 50-foot buffer and notify all workers not to enter the environmentally sensitive area. The applicant shall contact the CEC within 24 hours for further consultation. The biologist shall record the nest location with a GPS unit (including datum and horizontal accuracy in feet) and include photographs and a map of the nest location as part of notification to the CEC. The no disturbance buffer shall be maintained until the nest(s) senesce. Starting in July, nest activity shall be observed for a minimum of 1 hour per day for 3 consecutive days to determine if activity has

ceased and if the nest has senesced. The applicant shall increase the size and/or modify the nest buffer dependent upon notice from CEC.

b. *Overwintering Season.* If vegetation removal and ground disturbing activities occur during the overwintering season (November 1 through January 31), a qualified biologist shall walk ahead of grading and vegetation removal equipment and look for potential hibernacula such as leaf litter, logs, and rodent burrows. If any overwintering Crotch's bumble bees are found, the applicant shall immediately stop and prohibit all project activities within 50 feet of the overwintering queen and hibernaculum. A qualified biologist shall delineate a 50-foot buffer and notify all workers not to enter the environmentally sensitive area. If an overwintering queen is exposed, a qualified biologist shall cover and protect the queen using the substrate it was found within/under and return any removed materials (e.g., grass, vegetation, bark, and debris) to re-create pre-disturbed conditions. The applicant shall contact the CEC within 24 hours for further consultation. The biologist shall record the queen's location with a GPS unit (including datum and horizontal accuracy in feet) and include photographs and a map of the queen's location as part of notification to the CEC. The applicant shall increase the size and/or modify the nest buffer dependent upon notice from CDFW. Overwintering buffers shall be maintained until further instructions are received from the CEC.

If Crotch's bumble bee individuals are identified during pre-construction surveys, then the following additional avoidance measures should be implemented:

1. ***Initiate Consultation with the CEC.*** The applicant will consult with the CEC to determine if incidental take at the project will be likely, and if an incidental take permit is required.
2. ***Biological Monitoring During Construction.*** A qualified biologist(s) will be present each day during initial ground disturbance activities if Crotch's bumble bees are identified during pre-construction surveys.
3. ***Seasonal Restrictions and Vegetation Management.*** Vegetation and ground disturbance within suitable Crotch's bumble bee habitat shall be avoided during the Queen Flight Season (February through March) and the Gyne Flight Season (September through October), to the greatest extent feasible. If feasible, native and non-native flowering vegetation removal shall occur prior to the blooming period of potential floral resources and before the Queen/Gyne Flight Seasons and Colony Active Period (February through October). If vegetation removal cannot be avoided during this period, or if vegetation needs to be removed during the bloom period for potential floral resources: flowering vegetation should be removed in a patched manner so as to leave areas of floral resources as refugia for foragers or wait until bloom has ceased. Additionally, removal of non-native plants should be prioritized over native plants. If mowing activities are to occur, vegetation shall be mowed to a height no lower than 4 inches to prevent disturbance of established nests or overwintering queen hibernacula.
4. ***Provide Compensatory Mitigation for Impacts on Crotch's Bumble Bee.*** Direct impacts to suitable Crotch's bumble bee habitat shall be offset through compensatory mitigation, which may include, but is not necessarily limited to, on-site or off-site habitat preservation, enhancement, restoration, and/or creation at a ratio of no less than 1:1.

MM BIO-7: Designated Biologist. The applicant shall assign at least one Designated Biologist to the project. The applicant shall submit the resume of the proposed Designated Biologist(s), with at least three

references and contact information, to the BLM Authorized Officer for approval in consultation with the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS.

The Designated Biologist must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Have a bachelor's degree in biological sciences, zoology, botany, ecology, or a closely related field;
- Have 3 years of experience in field biology or current certification of a nationally recognized biological society, such as The Ecological Society of America or The Wildlife Society;
- Have at least 1 year of field experience with biological resources found in or near the study area;
- Meet the current USFWS Authorized Biologist qualifications criteria, demonstrate familiarity with protocols and guidelines for the desert tortoise, and be approved by the USFWS;
- Possess a CESA Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to Section 2081(a) for desert tortoise.

In lieu of the above requirements, the resume shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the BLM Authorized Officer, in consultation with the CEC, CDFW and USFWS, that the proposed Designated Biologist or alternate has the appropriate training and background to effectively implement the MMs.

MM BIO-8: Fence Design and Site Permeability. Permanent site fencing installed around the project—including perimeter security fencing desert tortoise exclusionary fencing—should be designed to direct wildlife toward the wildlife undercrossing to provide safe passage under the freeway and shall be regularly inspected and maintained for the life of the project. Alternate designs may also be constructed with prior written approval from the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS. Regardless, the project shall ensure that any such fence meets existing specifications that have been developed to preclude accidental entanglement of desert bighorn sheep, deer, and other animals.

Fencing should be sufficient to prevent desert bighorn sheep passage (e.g., 2m-2.5m tall chain-link) – should be installed at the corridor entrances between (a) the East Array and South Array 1, (b) South Array 1 and South Array 2, and (c) South Array 2 and South Array 3 on the east side (Figure 2, Project Design). Additionally, the project shall extend a line of project fencing to the north to connect with the wildlife exclusion fencing associated with the I-15 overcrossing structure (Figure 13; Dudek 2024). Approximately 1,640 linear feet of this can be accomplished within the existing project boundary, but the additional approximately 300 linear feet will need to be coordinated with BLM and possibly Caltrans. The project will secure the necessary encroachment permits or other mechanism to continue fencing between the project boundary and the wildlife exclusion fencing associated with the I-15 overcrossing structure. Care should be taken when connecting the fences to make sure that they are physically connected or directly abut one another such that wildlife can't pass through or get stuck between them. The ultimate fencing plans should be reviewed by the CEC for final approval prior to site disturbance activities.

MM BIO-9: Compliance Monitoring by the Designated Biologist. Prior to ground-disturbing activities, an individual shall be designated and approved by the CEC and CDFW as a Designated Biologist (i.e., field contact representative). Designated Biologist qualifications are presented below.

The Designated Biologist shall be employed for the period during which ongoing construction and postconstruction monitoring and reporting by an approved biologist is required. Each successive Designated Biologist shall be approved by the CEC. The Designated Biologist shall have the authority to ensure compliance with all measures set forth in the BO and CESA Section 2081 take authorization and with all MMs included herein, and shall be the primary agency contact for the implementation of these measures. The Designated Biologist shall have the authority and responsibility to halt any project

activities that are in violation of the terms of the BO, Section 2081 take authorization, or project MMs. A list of responsibilities of the Designated Biologist is summarized below.

To avoid and minimize effects to biological resources, the Designated Biologist shall:

- Notify the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS at least 14 calendar days before initiation of ground-disturbing activities.
- Immediately notify the CEC in writing if the applicant/owner does not comply with any of the MMs or terms of the BO and/or the Section 2081 take authorization including, but not limited to, any actual or anticipated failure to implement such measures within the periods specified.
- Ensure performance of daily compliance inspections during ongoing construction as clearing, grubbing, and grading are completed, and submit a monthly compliance report to the CEC until construction is complete.

MM BIO-10: Speed Limits. Speed limits along all access roads outside of permanent desert tortoise fencing shall not exceed 15 mph to minimize dust during construction activities. Speed limits within permanent desert tortoise fencing shall not exceed 25 mph to minimize impacts during operation and maintenance. Nighttime vehicle traffic associated with project activities shall be kept to a minimum volume and speed (maximum of 15 mph) to prevent mortality of nocturnal wildlife species.

MM BIO-11: Desert Tortoise Protection. The applicant/owner shall undertake appropriate measures to manage the construction site and related facilities in a manner to avoid or minimize impacts to desert tortoise. Methods for clearance surveys, fence specification and installation, tortoise handling, artificial burrow construction, egg handling, and other procedures shall be consistent with those described in the USFWS's *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (USFWS 2009) or more current guidance provided by CDFW and USFWS. The applicant/owner shall also implement all terms and conditions described in the BO to be prepared by USFWS and CESA ITP. These measures include, but are not limited to, the following, subject to modification by the terms of incidental take authorizations issued by the USFWS and CEC:

- ***Desert Tortoise Fencing along I-15.*** If required by the CEC, to avoid increases in vehicle-related mortality from disruption of local movement patterns along the existing ephemeral wash systems, desert tortoise-proof fencing shall be installed along the existing freeway ROW fencing on both sides of I-15 for the entire east-west dimension of the project area. The tortoise fencing shall be designed to direct tortoises to existing undercrossing to provide safe passage under the freeway and shall be regularly inspected and maintained for the life of the project.
- ***Desert Tortoise Exclusion Fence Installation.*** To avoid impacts to desert tortoise, permanent desert tortoise exclusion fencing shall be installed along the permanent perimeter security fence and temporarily installed along road corridors during construction. The proposed alignments for the permanent perimeter fence and temporary fencing shall be flagged and surveyed within 24 hours prior to the initiation of fence construction. Clearance surveys of the perimeter fence and temporary fencing areas shall be conducted by the Designated Biologist(s) using techniques outlined in the USFWS's *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* and may be conducted in any season with the CEC, USFWS, and CDFW approval. Biological Monitors may assist the Designated Biologist under his or her supervision. These fence clearance surveys shall provide 100% coverage of all areas to be disturbed and an additional transect along both sides of the fence line covering an area approximately 90 feet wide centered on the fence alignment. Transects shall be no greater than 15 feet apart. All desert tortoise burrows and burrows constructed by other species that might be used by desert tortoise shall be examined to assess occupancy of each burrow by desert tortoise and handled in accordance with the USFWS's

Desert Tortoise Field Manual. Any desert tortoise located during fence clearance surveys shall be handled by the Designated Biologist in accordance with the USFWS's 2009 *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (USFWS 2009).

a. *Timing, Supervision of Fence Installation*. The exclusion fencing shall be installed prior to the onset of site clearing and grubbing. The fence installation shall be supervised by the Designated Biologist and monitored by the Biological Monitors to ensure the safety of any tortoise present.

b. *Fence Material and Installation*. The permanent tortoise exclusionary fencing shall be constructed in accordance with the USFWS's *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (Chapter 8 – Desert Tortoise Exclusion Fence) (USFWS 2009).

c. *Security Gates*. Security gates shall be designed with minimal ground clearance to deter ingress by tortoises. The gates may be electronically activated to open and close immediately after the vehicle(s) have entered or exited to prevent the gates from being kept open for long periods of time. Cattle grating designed to safely exclude desert tortoise shall be installed at the gated entries to discourage tortoises from gaining entry.

d. *Fence Inspections*. Following installation of the desert tortoise exclusion fencing for both the permanent site fencing and temporary fencing, the fencing shall be regularly inspected. If tortoises were moved out of harm's way during fence construction, permanent and temporary fencing shall be inspected at least two times per day for the first 7 days to ensure a recently moved tortoise has not been trapped within the fence. Thereafter, permanent fencing shall be inspected monthly and during or within 24 hours following all major rainfall events. Exceptions to inspections during major rainfall events may be made as needed to maintain crew safety. A major rainfall event is defined as one for which flow is detectable within the fenced drainage. Any damage to the fencing shall be temporarily repaired immediately to keep tortoises out of the site, and permanently repaired within 48 hours of observing damage. Inspections of permanent site fencing shall occur for the life of the project. Temporary fencing shall be inspected weekly and, where drainages intersect the fencing, during and within 24 hours following major rainfall events. All damaged temporary fencing shall be repaired immediately upon discovery and, if the fence may have permitted tortoise entry while damaged, the Designated Biologist shall inspect the area for tortoise.

- ***Desert Tortoise Clearance Surveys within Solar Arrays and Gen-tie.*** Clearance surveys shall be conducted in accordance with the USFWS *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (USFWS 2009) (Chapter 6 – Clearance Survey Protocol for the Desert Tortoise – Mojave Population) and shall consist of two surveys covering 100% of the study area by walking transects no more than 15 feet apart. If a desert tortoise is located during the second survey, a third survey shall be conducted. Each separate survey shall be walked in a different direction to allow opposing angles of observation. Clearance surveys of the project area may only be conducted when tortoises are most active (April–May or September–October) unless the project receives approval from the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS. Clearance surveys of linear features may be conducted during any time of the year. Any tortoise located during clearance surveys of solar arrays shall be translocated or relocated and monitored in accordance with the DTTP (MM 3.4-2b). The Designated Biologist, who may be assisted by the Biological Monitors, shall assess occupancy of each burrow by desert tortoise in accordance with the USFWS *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (USFWS 2009). All potential desert tortoise burrows located during clearance surveys shall be excavated by hand, tortoises removed, and burrows collapsed or blocked to prevent occupation by desert tortoise in accordance with the DTTP.

- ***Monitoring Following Clearing.*** Following the desert tortoise clearance and removal from the project area, workers and heavy equipment shall be allowed to enter the project area to perform

clearing, grubbing, leveling, and trenching activities. A Designated Biologist or Biological Monitor shall be on-site for clearing and grading activities to move tortoises missed during the initial tortoise clearance survey. Should a tortoise be discovered, it shall be relocated or translocated as described in the DTTP.

- ***Reporting.*** The Designated Biologist shall record the following information for any desert tortoise handled: a) the locations (narrative and maps) and dates of observation; b) general condition and health, including injuries, state of healing and whether desert tortoise voided their bladders; c) location moved from and location moved to (using GPS); d) gender, carapace length, and diagnostic markings (i.e., identification numbers or marked lateral scutes); e) ambient temperature when handled and released; and f) digital photograph of each handled tortoise. Desert tortoise moved from within the project area shall be marked and monitored in accordance with the DTTP. All collected data related to tortoise relocation shall be provided to the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS.

MM BIO-12: Desert Tortoise Translocation Plan. The applicant/owner shall develop and implement a USFWS- and CEC-approved DTTP. The DTTP, which shall be approved prior to any ground disturbance or tortoise relocation, shall include measures to minimize the potential for repeated translocations of individual desert tortoise. The goals of the DTTP shall be to relocate all desert tortoise from the project area to nearby suitable habitat; minimize impacts on resident desert tortoise outside the project area; minimize stress, disturbance, and injuries to relocated/translocated tortoises; and assess the success of the translocation effort through monitoring. The DTTP shall follow the *Translocation of Mojave Desert Tortoises from Project Sites: Plan Development Guidance* (USFWS 2020) and shall clearly define how it addresses the 11 steps outlined in the guidance. The final DTTP shall be based on the draft DTTP prepared by the applicant/owner and shall include all revisions deemed necessary by CEC, CDFW, and USFWS. The final plan will be subject to modification for consistency with the CESA ITP, USFWS take authorization and/or BO conservation requirements.

MM BIO-13: Desert Tortoise Compliance Verification. The applicant/owner shall provide CDFW and USFWS staff with unfettered access to the project area and compensation lands under the control of the project owner and shall otherwise fully cooperate with the CEC's efforts to verify the project owner's compliance with, or the effectiveness of, adopted MMs. The Designated Biologist shall do all of the following:

- ***Notification.*** Notify the CEC at least 14 calendar days before initiating construction-related ground disturbance activities; immediately notify the CEC in writing if the project owner is not in compliance with any conditions of certification, including but not limited to any actual or anticipated failure to implement MMs within the time periods specified in the conditions of certification;
- ***Monitoring During Grubbing and Grading.*** Remain on-site daily while vegetation salvage, grubbing, grading, and other ground-disturbing construction activities are taking place to avoid or minimize take of listed species, and verify personally or have Biological Monitor(s) verify compliance with all impact avoidance and minimization measures, including checking all exclusion zones to ensure that signs, stakes, and fencing are intact and that human activities are restricted in these protective zones.
- ***Monthly Compliance Inspections.*** Conduct compliance inspections at a minimum of once per month after clearing, grubbing, and grading are completed and submit a monthly compliance report to the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS during construction.
- ***Notification of Injured or Dead Listed Species.*** If an injured or dead federally or state-listed species is detected on or near the project area the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS shall be notified

immediately by phone. Notification shall occur no later than noon on the business day following the event if it occurs outside normal business hours so that the agencies can determine whether further actions are required to protect listed species. Written follow-up notification via facsimile or electronic communication shall be submitted to these agencies within 2 calendar days of the incident and include the following information as relevant:

a. *Injured Desert Tortoise.* If a desert tortoise is injured as a result of project-related activities during construction, the Designated Biologist or Biological Monitor(s) shall immediately take it to a CDFW-approved wildlife rehabilitation and/or veterinarian clinic. Any veterinarian bills for such injured animals shall be paid by the applicant/owner. Following phone notification as required above, CDFW and USFWS shall determine the final disposition of the injured animal, if it recovers. Written notification shall include, at a minimum, the date, time, location, and circumstances of the incident and the name of the facility where the animal was taken.

b. *Desert Tortoise Fatality.* If a desert tortoise is killed by project-related activities during construction, operation and maintenance, or decommissioning, a written report with the same information as an injury report shall be submitted the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS. These desert tortoises shall be salvaged according to federally established guidelines. The applicant/owner shall pay to have the desert tortoises transported and necropsied. The report shall include the date and time of the finding or incident.

    1. ***Final Listed Species Mitigation Report.*** The Designated Biologist shall provide the CEC and CDFW a Final Listed Species Mitigation Report that includes, at a minimum, 1) all available information about project-related incidental take of listed species; 2) information about other project impacts to the listed species; 3) construction dates; 4) an assessment of the effectiveness of conditions of certification in minimizing and compensating for project impacts; 5) recommendations on how MMs might be changed to more effectively minimize and mitigate the impacts of future projects on the listed species; and 6) any other pertinent information, including the level of take of the listed species associated with the project.

    2. ***Stop Work Order.*** CEC may issue the project owner a written stop work order to suspend any activity related to the construction or operation of the project to prevent or remedy a violation of one or more conditions of certification (including but not limited to failure to comply with reporting, monitoring, or habitat acquisition obligations) or to prevent the illegal take of an endangered, threatened, or protected species. The project owner shall comply with the stop work order immediately upon receipt thereof.

MM BIO-14: Desert Tortoise Compensatory Mitigation: To fully mitigate for habitat loss and potential take of desert tortoise, the project owner shall provide compensatory mitigation consistent with federal requirements, adjusted to reflect the final project footprint. The acreage for mitigation of desert tortoise habitat will be at a 1:1 ratio. For the purposes of this condition, the project footprint means all lands disturbed in the construction and operation of the project, including all project linears, as well as undeveloped areas inside the project's boundaries that will no longer provide viable long-term habitat for the desert tortoise. To satisfy this condition, the project owner shall acquire, protect, and transfer 1 acre of desert tortoise habitat for every acre of habitat within the final project footprint, and provide associated funding for the acquired lands, as specified below. In lieu of acquiring land itself, the project owner may satisfy the requirements of this condition by depositing funds into the Renewable Energy Action Team (REAT) Account established with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), as provided below in Section 3.i. of this measure.

If compensation lands are acquired in fee title or in easement, the requirements for acquisition, initial improvement, and long-term management of compensation lands include all of the following, subject to modification by the terms of incidental take authorizations issued by USFWS and CEC:

- ***Selection Criteria for Compensation Lands.*** The compensation lands selected for acquisition in fee title or in easement shall:
  a. be within the Western Mojave Recovery Unit, or, with prior CEC, USFWS, and CDFW approval, within the Eastern Mojave Recovery Unit as defined in the 2011 Revised Recovery Plan (USFWS 2011b), with potential to contribute to desert tortoise habitat connectivity and build linkages between desert tortoise designated critical habitat, known populations of desert tortoise, and/or other preserve lands;
  b. provide habitat for desert tortoise with capacity to regenerate naturally when disturbances are removed;
  c. be prioritized near larger blocks of land that are either already protected or planned for protection, such as Desert Wildlife Management Areas within the Western Mojave Recovery Unit (or nearby portions of the Eastern Mojave Recovery Unit with prior USFWS and CDFW approval) or which could feasibly be protected long term by a public resource agency or a non-governmental organization dedicated to habitat preservation;
  d. be connected to lands with desert tortoise habitat equal to or better quality than the project area, ideally with populations that are stable, recovering, or likely to recover;
  e. not have a history of intensive recreational use or other disturbance that does not have the capacity to regenerate naturally when disturbances are removed or might make habitat recovery and restoration infeasible;
  f. not be characterized by high densities of invasive species, either on or immediately adjacent to the parcels under consideration, that might jeopardize habitat recovery and restoration;
  g. not contain hazardous wastes that cannot be removed to the extent that the site could not provide suitable habitat; and
  h. have water and mineral rights included as part of the acquisition, unless BLM and CEC, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS, agree in writing to the acceptability of the land.
- ***Review and Approval of Compensation Lands Prior to Acquisition.*** The project owner shall submit a formal acquisition proposal to the CEC, BLM, CDFW, and USFWS describing the parcel(s) intended for purchase. This acquisition proposal shall discuss the suitability of the proposed parcel(s) as compensation lands for desert tortoise in relation to the criteria listed above. Approval from the CEC and BLM, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS shall be required for acquisition of all compensatory mitigation parcels.
- ***Compensation Lands Acquisition Requirements.*** The project owner shall comply with the following requirements relating to acquisition of the compensation lands after the CEC and BLM, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS, have approved the proposed compensation lands:
  a. *Preliminary Report*. The project owner, or approved third party, shall provide a recent preliminary title report, initial hazardous materials survey report, biological analysis, and other necessary or requested documents for the proposed compensation land to the BLM. All documents conveying or conserving compensation lands and all conditions of title are subject to review and approval by the CEC and BLM, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS. For conveyances to the State, approval may also be required from the California Department of General Services, the Fish and Game Commission, and the Wildlife Conservation Board.

b. *Title/Conveyance.* The project owner shall transfer fee title to the compensation lands, a conservation easement over the lands, or both fee title and conservation easement as required by the BLM and CEC. Transfer of either fee title or an approved conservation easement will usually be sufficient, but some situations, e.g., the donation of lands burdened by a conservation easement to BLM, will require that both types of transfers be completed. Any transfer of a conservation easement or fee title must be to CEC, a non-profit organization qualified to hold title to and manage compensation lands (pursuant to California Government Code section 65965), or BLM under terms approved by the BLM. If an approved non-profit organization holds title to the compensation lands, a conservation easement shall be recorded in favor of the CEC in a form approved by the CEC. If an approved non-profit holds a conservation easement, the CEC shall be named a third-party beneficiary.

c. *Initial Habitat Improvement Fund.* The project owner shall fund the initial protection and habitat improvement of the compensation lands. Alternatively, a non-profit organization may hold the habitat improvement funds if it is qualified to manage the compensation lands (pursuant to California Government Code Section 65965) and if it meets the approval of CEC and BLM. If CEC takes fee title to the compensation lands, the habitat improvement fund must be paid to CEC or its designee.

d. *Property Analysis Record.* Upon identification of the compensation lands, the project owner shall conduct a Property Analysis Record (PAR) or PAR-like analysis to establish the appropriate long-term maintenance and management fee to fund the in-perpetuity management of the acquired mitigation lands.

e. *Long-term Maintenance and Management Fund.* The project owner shall deposit in NFWF's REAT Account a capital long-term maintenance and management fee in the amount determined through the PAR or PAR-like analysis conducted for the compensation lands. BLM, in consultation with CDFW, may designate another non-profit organization to hold the long-term maintenance and management fee if the organization is qualified to manage the compensation lands in perpetuity. If the CEC takes fee title to the compensation lands, the CEC shall determine whether it will hold the long-term management fee in the special deposit fund, leave the money in the REAT Account, or designate another entity to manage the long-term maintenance and management fee for the CEC and with CEC supervision.

f. *Interest, Principal, and Pooling of Funds.* The project owner, BLM, and the CEC shall ensure that an agreement is in place with the long-term maintenance and management fee holder/manager to ensure the following conditions:

    i. Interest. Interest generated from the initial capital long-term maintenance and management fee shall be available for reinvestment into the principal and for the long-term operation, management, and protection of the approved compensation lands, including reasonable administrative overhead, biological monitoring, improvements to carrying capacity, law enforcement measures, and any other action approved by the CEC designed to protect or improve the habitat values of the compensation lands.

    ii. Withdrawal of Principal. The long-term maintenance and management fee principal shall not be drawn upon unless such withdrawal is deemed necessary by the CEC or the approved third-party long-term maintenance and management fee manager to ensure the continued viability of the species on the compensation lands. If the CEC takes fee title to the compensation lands, monies received by the CEC pursuant to this provision shall be deposited in a special deposit fund established solely for the purpose to manage lands in perpetuity unless the CEC designates NFWF or another entity to manage the long-term maintenance and management fee for the CEC.

iii. Pooling Long-Term Maintenance and Management Fee Funds. The CEC, or a BLM- and CDFW-approved non-profit organization qualified to hold long-term maintenance and management fees solely for the purpose to manage lands in perpetuity, may pool the endowment with other endowments for the operation, management, and protection of the compensation lands for local populations of desert tortoise. However, for reporting purposes, the long-term maintenance and management fee fund must be tracked and reported individually to the CEC.

g. *Other expenses*. In addition to the costs listed above, the project owner shall be responsible for all other costs related to acquisition of compensation lands and conservation easements, including but not limited to title and document review costs; expenses incurred from other state agency reviews; overhead related to providing compensation lands to the CEC or an approved third party; escrow fees or costs; environmental contaminants clearance; and other site cleanup measures.

h. *Mitigation Securit*y. The project owner shall provide financial assurances to the BLM and the CEC with copies of the document(s) to the CDFW and USFWS, to guarantee that an adequate level of funding is available to implement the MMs described in this condition. These funds shall be used solely for implementation of the measures associated with the project in the event the project owner fails to comply with the requirements specified in this condition, or shall be returned to the project owner upon successful compliance with the requirements in this condition. The BLM's or CEC's use of the security to implement measures in this condition may not fully satisfy the project owner's obligations under this condition. Financial assurance can be provided to the BLM and CEC in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit, a pledged savings account, or another form of security ("Security"). Prior to submitting the Security to the BLM and CEC, the project owner shall obtain the BLM's approval in consultation with CDFW and the USFWS of the form of the Security. The actual costs to comply with this condition will vary depending on the final footprint of the project and the actual costs of acquiring, improving, and managing the compensation lands.

i. *NFWF REAT Account*. The project owner may elect to fund the acquisition and initial improvement of compensation lands through NFWF by depositing funds for that purpose into NFWF's REAT Account. Initial deposits for this purpose must be made in the same amounts as the security required above and may be provided in lieu of security. If this option is used for the acquisition and initial improvement, the project owner shall make an additional deposit into the REAT Account if necessary to cover the actual acquisition costs and administrative costs and fees of the compensation land purchase once land is identified and the actual costs are known. If the actual costs for acquisition and administrative costs and fees are less than anticipated in the PAR analysis, the excess money deposited in the REAT Account shall be returned to the project owner. Money deposited for the initial protection and improvement of the compensation lands shall not be returned to the project owner.

The responsibility for acquisition of compensation lands may be delegated to a third party other than NFWF, such as a non-governmental organization supportive of desert habitat conservation, by written agreement of the BLM and CDFW. Such delegation shall be subject to approval by the BLM and the CEC, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS, prior to land acquisition, initial protection, or maintenance and management activities. Agreements to delegate land acquisition to an approved third party, or to manage compensation lands, shall be implemented with 18 months of BLM's approval.

MM BIO-15: Minimize Vehicle and Equipment Impacts during Operation and Maintenance.
The applicant/owner shall implement measures to minimize the potential for desert tortoise and other wildlife species mortality along access and maintenance roads. These measures shall include:

- Speed limits identified in MM BIO-10 shall continue to be applied during operation and maintenance.
- Pedestrian access outside the limits of the designated access/maintenance roads is permitted year-round as long as no ground-disturbing activities take place.
- Vehicle traffic and parking shall be confined to designated access roads, and equipment and materials staging areas shall be clearly defined to avoid impacting habitat during the operation phase.

MM BIO-16: Mojave Fringe-toed Lizard Protection Measures. A qualified biologist will conduct a focused survey for Mojave fringe-toed lizard prior to ground disturbance in suitable habitat (aeolian sand deposits) within all active work areas. Two survey replicates will be performed during the Mojave fringe-toed lizard active season (March–October) during appropriate weather conditions. Qualified biologists will walk transects spaced 10m apart throughout areas with suitable habitat within the study area. Detections of Mojave fringe-toed lizard will be recorded using a GPS unit. If Mojave fringe-toed lizards are not detected, then no further action is needed. If Mojave fringe-toed lizards are found, then a pre-construction survey should be conducted no more than one week before ground disturbance begins, and any Mojave fringe-toed lizards should be moved to suitable habitat south of the Project area where the species was confirmed to be present.

MM BIO-17: Avian Monitoring and Mitigation Program. An Avian Monitoring and Mitigation Program (AMMP) shall be initiated and approved by the CEC and BLM in consultation with CDFW and USFWS prior to construction and continue for at least 5 years following commercial operation (and longer if determined necessary and appropriate by the Designated Biologist). The AMMP shall prevent substantial adverse effects to special-status species through implementation of the approach outlined in the postconstruction monitoring and adaptive management provisions of Region 8 Interim Guidelines for the Development of a Project-specific Avian and Bat Protection Plan for Solar Energy Plants and Related Transmission Facilities (USFWS 2010), in conjunction with any measures required after consultation with USFWS and/or CDFW under the ESA, CESA, or BGEPA, if applicable. The Program shall use surveys and monitoring of on-site avian and bat use and behavior to document species composition and changes in avian and bat use over time. The purpose of the AMMP is to provide an adaptive management and decision-making framework for reviewing, characterizing, and responding to avian and bat monitoring results, and reducing long-term impacts on these taxa. The AMMP shall include the following components:

- A description of the baseline and ongoing avian and bat survey methods, including identification of onsite survey locations and seasonal survey considerations, and a description of acoustic bat monitoring methods.
- Avian and bat mortality and injury monitoring that includes:
    a. Onsite monitoring of representative locations in the facility, at a level of effort that accounts for potential spatial bias and allows for the extrapolation of survey results to non-surveyed areas. The AMMP will provide a rationale justifying the proposed schedule of carcass searches.
    b. Low-visibility and high-wind weather event monitoring to document potential weather-related collision risks that may be associated increased risk of avian or bat collisions with project features, including foggy, highly overcast, or rainy night-time weather typically associated with an advancing frontal system, and high wind events (40-mph winds) are sustained for period of greater than 4 hours. The monitoring report shall include survey frequency, locations, and methods.

c. Scavenger and searcher efficiency trials to document the extent to which avian or bat fatalities remain visible over time and can be detected, and to adjust the survey timing and survey results to reflect scavenger and searcher efficiency rates.

d. A description of statistical methods used to generate facility estimates of potential avian and bat impacts based on the number of detections during standardized searches during the monitoring season for which the cause of death can be determined.

e. Field detection and mortality or injury identification, cause attribution, handling and reporting requirements. The AMMP shall include detailed specifications on data collection and provide a carcass collection protocol.

- All postconstruction mortality monitoring studies included in the AMMP shall be performed by a -third party contractor for 5 years following commercial operation and approval of the AMMP by the BLM. At the end of the 5-year period, the BLM shall determine whether the survey program shall be continued.
- An adaptive management program shall be developed to identify and implement reasonable and feasible measures that would reduce levels of avian or bat mortality or injury attributable to project operations and facilities. Such measures could potentially include efforts to make panels more visible to birds (e.g., white borders around panel edges or the use of noise deterrents).

The adaptive management program shall include (i) reasonable measures for characterizing the extent and importance of detected mortality and injuries clearly attributable to the project; (ii) potential measures that the project owner could implement to adaptively respond to detected mortality and injuries attributable to the project. Adaptive actions undertaken will be discussed and evaluated in survey reports. Any impact reduction measures must be commensurate (in terms of factors that include geographic scope, costs, and scale of effort) with the level of avian or bat mortality or injury that is specifically and clearly attributable to the project facilities; and (iii) Appropriate performance standards for mitigation of impacts to any species regulated by BGEPA, ESA, and CESA as well as MMs that reduce or offset mortalities caused by the project to a level that avoids a substantial, long-term reduction in the demographic viability of the local population of the species in question.

MM BIO-18. Avoid Disturbance to Nesting Birds. Vegetation clearing shall take place outside of the general avian breeding season (February 15–September 1), when feasible. If vegetation clearing cannot occur outside the avian breeding season, the Designated Biologist/Biological Monitor(s) shall conduct a preconstruction survey for nesting birds no more than 3 days prior to vegetation clearing. If no active nests are found, clearing can proceed. If active nests are found, no clearing shall be allowed within 150 feet (for passerines) to 250 feet (for raptors) of the active nests until the Designated Biologist/Biological Monitor(s) determines the nest is no longer active or the nest fails. Based on observation of the individual birds' tolerance to human activity, this buffer may be reduced by a qualified biologist. Encroachment into the buffer may occur at the discretion of a qualified biologist.

The Designated Biologist/Biological Monitor(s) shall submit the results of the preconstruction nesting bird surveys to the CEC, BLM, USFWS, and CDFW. Following agency coordination, the size of the next buffer may be adjusted based upon the magnitude of proposed activities and observed sensitivity of the bird to disturbance.

MM BIO-19: Lighting Specifications to Minimize Bird and Bat Impacts. The applicant/owner shall minimize night lighting during construction by using shielded directional lighting that is pointed downward, thereby avoiding illumination to adjacent natural areas and the night sky.

MM BIO-20: Bird and Bat Conservation Strategy (BBCS). The applicant/owner shall develop a BBCS to address project impacts to special-status avian and bat species that shall be consistent with the Region 8 *Interim Guidelines for the Development of a Project-specific Avian and Bat Protection Plan for Solar Energy Plants and Related Transmission Facilities* (USFWS 2010). The applicant/owner shall submit the BBCS to the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS for review and approval prior to initiation of project construction. The BBCS shall include an assessment of potential avian and bat impacts from lighting, noise, collision, electrocution, and attraction of ravens, as applicable; measures to mitigate for the effects to birds; a description of general avoidance and minimization measures applicable during construction, operation and maintenance, and postconstruction to include nest management and postconstruction monitoring; a description of the reporting requirements and reporting schedule and duration; and the adaptive management strategy. A raven management element shall be included in the BBCS or provided separately that includes measures such as storage of garbage in raven-proof containers and installation of anti-nesting devices on structures where raven nests could be built.

MM BIO-21: Burrowing Owl Protection Measures. To fully mitigate for habitat loss and potential take of burrowing owl, the project owner shall provide compensatory mitigation consistent with CDFW requirements, adjusted to reflect the final project footprint. The acreage for mitigation of burrowing owl habitat will be at a 1:1 ratio. For the purposes of this condition, the project footprint means all lands disturbed in the construction and operation of the project, including all project linears, as well as undeveloped areas inside the project's boundaries that will no longer provide viable long-term habitat for burrowing owl.

If compensation lands are acquired in fee title or in easement, the requirements for acquisition, initial improvement, and long-term management of compensation lands must comply with the terms of incidental take authorizations issued by the CEC. The compensation lands selected for acquisition in fee title or in easement shall comply with the terms of incidental take authorizations issued by the CEC.

No more than 14 days prior to the start of ground disturbance, a preconstruction survey for burrowing owls in conformance with the CDFW *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFW 2012) shall be completed within suitable habitat at every work area and within a 150-m buffer zone of each work area. Work areas will be resurveyed following periods of inactivity of 2 weeks or more. The applicant/owner shall submit the results of the preconstruction survey to BLM's Authorized Officer and the CEC. The applicant/owner shall also submit evidence of conformance with federal and state regulations regarding the protection of the burrowing owl by demonstrating compliance with the following:

- Impacts to active burrowing owl territories shall be mitigated at a minimum of a 1:1 ratio through a combination of off-site habitat compensation and/or off-site restoration of disturbed habitat capable of supporting this species. The acquisition of occupied habitat off-site shall be in an area where energy facilities would not pose a mortality risk. Acquisition of habitat shall be consistent with the CDFW's *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFW 2012). The preserved habitat shall be occupied by burrowing owl and shall be of superior or similar habitat quality to the impacted areas in terms of soil features, extent of disturbance, habitat structure, and dominant species composition, as determined by a qualified ornithologist. The site shall be approved by the BLM and CEC. Land shall be purchased and/or placed in a conservation easement in perpetuity and managed to maintain suitable habitat. The off-site area to be preserved can coincide with other off-site mitigation lands, with the approval of the CEC.
- The approved biologist shall remain on-site until all vegetation is cleared and, at a minimum, conduct site and fence inspections on a regular (monthly) schedule throughout construction to ensure that the project is in compliance with the MMs.
- Employees and contractors shall look under vehicles and equipment for the presence of wildlife prior to moving vehicles and equipment. If present, the animal shall be left to move on its own.

No listed species shall be handled without concurrence from USFWS and/or CDFW, as applicable.

MM BIO-22: American Badger and Desert Kit Fox Protection. To avoid direct impacts to American badger and desert kit fox, preconstruction surveys shall be conducted for these species concurrently with the desert tortoise surveys. Surveys shall be conducted as described below:

- Biological Monitors shall perform preconstruction surveys for badger and kit fox dens in the project disturbance area, including a 20-foot swath beyond the disturbed area, utility corridors, and access roads. If dens are detected, each den shall be classified as inactive, potentially active, or definitely active.
- Inactive dens that would be directly impacted by construction activities shall be excavated by hand and backfilled to prevent reuse by badgers or kit fox.
- Potentially and definitely active dens that would be directly impacted by construction activities shall be monitored by the Biological Monitor for 3 consecutive nights using a tracking medium (such as diatomaceous earth or fire clay) and/or infrared camera stations at the entrance.
- If no tracks are observed in the tracking medium or no photos of the target species are captured after 3 consecutive nights, the den shall be excavated and backfilled by hand.
- If tracks are observed, the den shall be progressively blocked with natural materials (rocks, dirt, sticks, and vegetation piled in front of the entrance) for the next three to five nights to discourage the badger or kit fox from continued use. After verification that the den is unoccupied it shall then be excavated and backfilled by hand to ensure that no badgers or kit fox are trapped in the den.
- If an active natal den is detected on the site, the BLM Authorized Officer and CDFW shall be contacted within 24 hours to determine the appropriate course of action to minimize the potential for harm or mortality. The course of action would depend on the age of the pups, location of the den on the site (e.g., is the den in a central area or in a perimeter location), status of the perimeter site fence (completed or not), and the pending construction activities proposed near the den. A 500-foot no-disturbance buffer shall be maintained around active natal dens.
- The following measures are required to reduce the likelihood of distemper transmission:
    a. No pets shall be allowed on the site prior to or during construction, with the possible exception of kit fox scat detection dogs during preconstruction surveys, and then only with prior CDFW approval;
    b. Any kit fox hazing activities that include the use of animal repellents such as coyote urine must be cleared through CDFW prior to use; and
    c. Any documented kit fox mortality shall be reported to CDFW and the BLM Authorized Officer within 24 hours of identification. If a dead kit fox is observed, it shall be retained and protected from scavengers until CDFW determines whether the collection of necropsy samples is justified.

MM-BIO-23. Mitigation and Monitoring Plan: Prior to site disturbance, the project will prepare a desert bighorn sheep mitigation and monitoring plan. The plan will be approved by CDFW and BLM. This plan will require monitoring of wildlife crossings, fencing effectiveness, water sources, and all other implemented mitigation measures for a minimum of 8 years with an annual monitoring report provided to CDFW by January 31, and a final report covering the entire monitoring period (i.e., at least 8 years) by January 31st of the final year. Components of this requirement may be modified if already covered by other monitoring efforts (e.g., Brightline, Caltrans). The plan will include the methods for monitoring, identify what is being monitored, identify the goals of the measures, methods for determining the

effectiveness of the measures, and remedial triggers and measures if the mitigation does not meet the goals.

MM-BIO-24. Limited Operating Period: Noises greater than 85 A-weighted decibels (dBA) maximum sound level (Lmax) will not be allowed within 500 meters of the hinge point (10% slope line) between December 1 and June 30. If loud work must occur, even briefly, then the project must get CDFW concurrence that the desert bighorn sheep lambing period is done or verify, in coordination with CDFW, that there are no desert bighorn sheep on the facing slope within a distance that would be expected to be subject to an 85 dBA Lmax sound level. If the project believes that they may need to ultimately perform loud work during the lambing period, then they shall coordinate with CDFW early (i.e., ideally as soon as possible, but minimally before the lambing period) to determine how much additional desert bighorn sheep-specific monitoring will be needed for CDFW to evaluate whether the request is feasible. Simply monitoring a week or two in advance will not provide enough data to perform the evaluation.

MM-BIO-25. Work Boot Decontamination: All construction personnel will be trained on the importance of and procedures for decontaminating boots to prevent transmission of disease from domesticated sheep and goats to desert bighorn sheep. In addition, all quarry workers who have potential contact with domesticated sheep and/or goats (for example at farms, fairs, etc.) will be identified and shall decontaminate work boots prior to entering the project area. Decontamination shall involve scrubbing the soles of work boots with a 10% bleach solution to remove all organic matter and kill pathogens. Alternatively, footwear may be changed to ensure that potentially contaminated footwear does not enter any quarry area.

MM-BIO-26. Artificial Water Sources: The project will design and install at least five new artificial water sources for desert bighorn sheep to use. The location, design, and method of installations will be determined in cooperation with CEC, CDFW, and BLM and the ultimate plan will be approved by CEC, CDFW, and BLM. The locations may be on private or public lands but must be located within 5 miles of the project boundary to mitigate this metapopulation. Because the I-15 wildlife overcrossing will be installed adjacent to the site, water structure installations should occur on both sides on I-15 with a possible preference for one proximate to the overcrossing structure. The project shall establish a non-wasting endowment to monitor and maintain the water features in perpetuity.

MM-BIO-27. Compensatory Mitigation: If MM-BIO-14 (Desert Tortoise Compensatory Mitigation) is adhered to and occurs within approximately 1 kilometer of desert bighorn sheep-occupied or CDFW-identified/modeled desert bighorn sheep habitat, then no additional compensatory habitat mitigation would be required as the acquired habitat would also satisfy the foraging needs of desert bighorn sheep. However, if the mitigation lands acquired for MM-BIO-12 do not satisfy this requirement, then separate compensatory mitigation for loss of desert bighorn sheep foraging habitat (i.e., all lands east of I-15 that are fenced in) at a 1:1 ratio meeting all of the other requirements (i.e., requirements for acquisition, initial improvement, and long-term management of compensation lands) and protections afforded under MM-BIO-14 will be required.

MM BIO-28: Vegetation Best Management Practices. The applicant shall undertake the following measures to manage the construction site and related facilities in a manner to avoid or minimize impacts to vegetation resources:

- Limit Area of Disturbance. The boundaries of all areas to be disturbed (including staging areas, access roads, and sites for temporary placement of spoils) shall be delineated with stakes and flagging prior to construction activities in consultation with the Designated Biologist. Spoils and topsoil shall be stockpiled in disturbed areas within the project area. Parking areas and staging and disposal site locations shall similarly be located in areas without native vegetation or special-

status species habitat. All disturbances, project vehicles, and equipment shall be confined to the flagged areas.

- Minimize Road Impacts. New and existing roads that are planned for construction, widening, or other improvements shall not extend beyond the flagged impact area as described above. All vehicles passing or turning around would do so within the planned impact area or in previously disturbed areas. Where new access is required outside of existing roads or the construction zone, the route shall be clearly marked (i.e., flagged and/or staked) prior to the onset of construction.
- Minimize Traffic Impacts. Vehicular traffic during project construction and operation shall be confined to existing routes of travel to and from the project area, and cross-country vehicle and equipment use outside designated work areas shall be prohibited.
- Monitor During Construction. In areas that have not been fenced with desert tortoise exclusion fencing and cleared, a Designated Biologist shall be present at the construction site during all project construction activities that have potential to disturb soil, vegetation, and wildlife. The Designated Biologist or Biological Monitor shall review areas immediately ahead of equipment during brushing and grading activities.
- Minimize Impacts of Staging Areas. Staging areas for construction on the project area shall be within the area that has been fenced with desert tortoise exclusion fencing. For construction activities outside of the solar project area, access roads, pulling sites, and storage and parking areas shall be designed, utilized, and maintained with the goal of avoiding or minimizing impacts to native plant communities and sensitive biological resources. Staging areas outside of the project area shall maintain a minimal disturbance footprint, avoid jurisdictional wetlands, and avoid disturbance to native plant communities whenever possible.
- Avoid Use of Toxic Substances. Soil bonding and weighting agents used on unpaved surfaces (per MM 3.2-1) shall be non-toxic to plants and wildlife.
- Implement Erosion Control Measures. All erosion control measures promoted by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) in its Project Guidelines for Erosion Control (Board Order No R6T-2003-0-04 Attachment G) (Lahontan RWQCB 2003) shall be implemented for all phases of construction and operation where sediment run-off from exposed slopes threatens to enter "waters of the State." Sediment and other flow-restricting materials shall be moved to a location where they shall not be washed back into drainages. All disturbed soils and roads within the project area shall be stabilized to reduce erosion potential, both during and following construction. Areas of disturbed soils (access and staging areas) with slopes toward a drainage shall be stabilized to reduce erosion potential. To avoid impacts associated with generation of fugitive dust, surface application of water would be employed during construction and operation and maintenance activities.
- Monitor Ground-Disturbing Activities Prior to Preconstruction Site Mobilization. If preconstruction site mobilization requires ground-disturbing activities such as for geotechnical borings or hazardous waste evaluations, a Designated Biologist or Biological Monitor shall be present to monitor any actions that could disturb soil, vegetation, or wildlife.
- Revegetation of Temporarily Disturbed Areas. The applicant shall prepare and implement a Temporary Disturbance Revegetation Plan to restore all areas subject to temporary disturbance to pre-project grade and conditions. The plan shall be submitted to the BLM and CEC for review and approval at least 30 days prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities. Temporarily disturbed areas within the project area include, but are not limited to, all proposed locations for linear facilities, temporary access roads, berms, areas surrounding the drainage diffusers,

construction work temporary lay-down areas not converted to part of the solar field, and construction equipment staging areas. The Temporary Disturbance Revegetation Plan shall include a description of topsoil salvage and seeding techniques and a monitoring and reporting plan, and plan to achieve the following performance standards by the end of monitoring year 2:

a. At least 80% of the species observed within the temporarily disturbed areas shall be native species that naturally occur in desert scrub habitats; and

b. Relative cover and density of plant species within the temporarily disturbed areas shall equal at least 60% relative to pre-disturbance conditions.

- Integrated Weed Management Plan. This measure provides further detail and clarifies requirements for the applicant's draft IWMP. Prior to beginning construction on the project, the applicant shall prepare, circulate to BLM for comment and approval, and then implement an IWMP that meets the approval of BLM's Authorized Officer and conforms to the CDCA Plan to prevent the spread of existing invasive species and the introduction of new invasive species to the project area. The plan shall be consistent with BLM's *Record of Decision for Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in 17 Western States* (BLM 2007) and the *2008-2012 National Invasive Species Management Plan* (National Invasive Species Council 2008). The IWMP shall include, at a minimum, specific management objectives and measures for each target invasive species, baseline conditions, weed risk assessment, measures (both preventative and containment/control) to prevent/limit the introduction and spread of invasive species, monitoring and surveying methods, and reporting requirements. The BLM-approved IWMP shall include:

  a. Preventative measures to prevent the spread of weeds into new habitats, such as equipment inspections, use of weed-free erosion control materials and soils, and a mandatory site training element that includes weed management;

  b. Weed containment and control measures such as the removal of invasive species primarily via mechanical means, with the use of herbicides restricted to BLM-policies and approved usage (e.g., BLM's Herbicide Use Standard Operating Procedures provided in Appendix B of the *Record of Decision for the Final Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (BLM 2007);

  c. Monitoring and reporting standards annually during construction and for 3 years following the completion of construction to describe trends in weed distribution and direct weed management measures, and;

  d. Reporting of monitoring and management efforts in annual reports and a final monitoring report completed at the end of 3 years of postconstruction monitoring. Copies of these reports will be provided to BLM for review and comment. BLM will use the results of these reports to determine whether any additional monitoring or control measures are necessary. Weed control will be ongoing on the project area for the life of the project, but plan success will be determined by BLM after the 3 years of operations monitoring through the reporting and review process. Success criteria will be defined as having no more than a 10% increase in a weed species or in overall weed cover in any part of the project area.

MM BIO-29: Final Closure Plan. At least 12 months prior to project closure, the applicant shall prepare a Final Closure Plan to restore the site's topography and hydrology to a relatively natural condition and to establish native vegetation communities within the project area. The Final Closure Plan shall include a cost estimate for implementing the proposed decommissioning and reclamation activities, and shall cover the estimated cost as though BLM were to contract with a third party to decommission the project and

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=DD3D2FC8670840BDA4ACDC455903E787-CHANG, KAYC]
Sent: 2/18/2025 8:09:29 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3c08929c117e4da5bfb45f48fa749c0a-Waterboards]
CC: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=fdbc9163bf404f4d84f0a53c6ed84ab0-Waterboards]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Solar

Hi Christina,

Yes! Thank you for the follow-up. The project manager is Lisa Worrall, cc'd here.

The applicant just submitted additional information via the docket and our team is reviewing now. We have not deemed this application complete yet.

Thank you,
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Book time to meet with me

From: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 12:07 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain Solar

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Hi Kaycee,

We chatted a couple of weeks ago about the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center and briefly mentioned another project we're aware of Soda Mountain Solar in our region. We're not certain who the CEC primary contact is, and you mentioned you would find out and provide me with that information. Were you able to identify who we should be communicating with at CEC regarding Soda Mountain Solar? Any information would be appreciated.

Thank you.

Christina Guerra, P.G. 9475
Senior Engineering Geologist (Supervisor)

Land Disposal/401/Stormwater Unit
15095 Amargosa Road Bldg. 2, Ste 210
Victorville, CA 92394
Direct - (760) 241-7333, Cell - (760) 713-1380
christina.guerra@waterboards.ca.gov

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=E4BBC7048B38485084BDB03FB494B25B-WORRALL, LI]
Sent: 2/18/2025 8:48:52 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=fdbc9163bf404f4d84f0a53c6ed84ab0-Waterboards]
CC: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3c08929c117e4da5bfb45f48fa749c0a-Waterboards]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Solar - Applicant Contact Information

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From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 12:16 PM
To: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Solar - Applicant Contact Information

Hi Tiffany,

Thanks for letting us know. Adding Lisa here.

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Book time to meet with me

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 12:13 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: FW: Soda Mountain Solar - Applicant Contact Information

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Hi Kaycee,

I just wanted to get you caught up on some issues I'm having. I was verifying some of the Applicants information and they are claiming something different than what was uploaded to the docket. I have asked them to upload a new Application to the docket if the information is incorrect.

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

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- 760-241-7305

- 760-241-6583 Front Desk

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Home Page | Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (ca.gov)

***Please submit all 401 Certification/Dredge & Fill documentation to the Lahontan email box at lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov. If your Project has been assigned to a staff person please include their name ***

a corrected Application to the docket.

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 12:02 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Ziad Alaywan <ziad@zglobal.biz>
Cc: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>; dut@vcrenewables.com; Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar - Applicant Contact Information

Hi Hannah,

Not according to the Application that was uploaded to the CEC docket. Take a look at TN# 261592. If this Application is incorrect then you will need to upload a new application to the CEC docket.

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road
Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

- 760-241-7305
- 760-241-6583 Front Desk

tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov
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From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 11:07 AM
To: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>; Ziad Alaywan <ziad@zglobal.biz>
Cc: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>; dut@vcrenewables.com
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Solar - Applicant Contact Information

Hi Tiffany,

The legally responsible person will be VC Renewables, not Z Global. Please see draft SWPPP attached to this email for the proper entities. I am happy to provide you with any additional contact information you may need for any of these parties.

Thanks,
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 10:58 AM
To: Ziad Alaywan <ziad@zglobal.biz>
Cc: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>; Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; dut@vcrenewables.com <dut@vcrenewables.com>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar - Applicant Contact Information

Hi Ziad,

Thank you for that information, but we must have your contact information as well as the permit is being issued to Solar Mountain Solar, LLC and you are the Chief Executive Officer, which makes you the Legally Responsible Person.

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road
Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

- 760-241-7305
- 760-241-6583 Front Desk

tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov
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***Please submit all 401 Certification/Dredge & Fill documentation to the Lahontan email box at lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov. If your Project has been assigned to a staff person please include their name ***

From: Ziad Alaywan <ziad@zglobal.biz>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 10:31 AM
To: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>; hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com; dut@vcrenewables.com
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar - Applicant Contact Information

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Tiffany, thank you for reaching out.

Hannah Arkin is our project manager.
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

Hannah, pls reach out to Tiffany. Thank you, Z

ZG Profile Flipbook:
https://online.fliphtml5.com/pevsq/jfpv/#p=1
Recent Projects:
https://youtu.be/ErBt0U_MOxI

Statement Of Qualification_

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 8:17 AM
To: Ziad Alaywan <ziad@zglobal.biz>
Cc: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: [External Email] Soda Mountain Solar - Applicant Contact Information

Hi Ziad,

We received your application from the CEC, however, it did not include a telephone number for you. Can you give me a contact number where you can be reached so we can request a WDID No. for this Project please. Thanks!

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road
Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

- 760-241-7305
- 760-241-6583 Front Desk

tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov
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***Please submit all 401 Certification/Dredge & Fill documentation to the Lahontan email box at lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov. If your Project has been assigned to a staff person please include their name ***

This email has been scanned for spam and viruses by Proofpoint Essentials. Click here to report this email as spam.

From: Patrovsky, Joan E [jpatrovs@blm.gov]
Sent: 3/14/2025 7:14:53 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
CC: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) [zkaufman@blm.gov]
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Set up regular BLM/CEC meetings for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)
Attachments: Outlook-cid_image0
Flag: Flag for follow up

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Hello Lisa,

The BLM is open to scheduling routine monthly coordination meetings with the California Energy Commision.
For these meetings is CEC expecting full team attendance or specific leads?

We may as needed have our lead biologist and archaeologist attend IF required, they are extremely busy with workloads. Advance agenda items are helpful when planning for these conversations.

Currently, the BLM is working with the holder to refine their Plan of Development and address facility layout changes. The applicable NEPA compliant document has not yet been confirmed. However, there is potential for an environmental assessment being selected based upon changes to the Rasor SRMA access road and the BESS additions.

Based upon calendars, April 2 or 9 are available after 1:00pm.
Kindly send invitations to the following team members:

BLM Soda Mtn. Solar Team
Portia Samples, Realty Specialist psamples@blm.gov
Zoey (Caroline) Kaufman, NEPA and Deputy PM zkaufman@blm.gov
Joan Patrovsky, Project Manager jpatrovs@blm.gov

Best,
Joan Patrovsky, PMP
Project Manager
U.S. Department of the Interior - Region 8 and 10
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office

"What you do today can improve all your tomorrows."- Ralph Marston

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From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 3:11 PM
To: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>
Cc: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Set up regular BLM/CEC meetings for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi Joan,

I would like to set up regular meetings with BLM so we can coordinate our efforts. We can change the frequency as needed.

The applicant has filed their last batch of responses to our data requests and staff are reviewing them. I would like to know where things stand for the BLM.

I don't anticipate calling the project data complete for a few months yet.

We are really busy the rest of this month, but I am hoping we can meet in early April. For now, we can do monthly check ups. Mondays are not very good for us. Tuesdays through Thursdays are better.

Thanks,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

From: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Sent: 3/10/2025 8:48:50 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Subject: Fw: Request for Soda Mountain updated word version of Project Description and Executive Summary
Attachments: Outlook-cid_image0; 2_Project Description_redline.docx; 1_Executive Summary_redline.docx

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Hi Lisa,

Here you go!

PS - any updates on a potential date we might receive CEC comments back?

Thanks for your help with this project!

Best,
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2025 1:46 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Subject: Re: Request for Soda Mountain updated word version of Project Description and Executive Summary

Attached are the word versions of the two documents!

Kara Laurenson-Wright, AICP
CEQA/NEPA Project Manager

SWCA Environmental Consultants
Cell 415.599.6464
kara.laurensonwright@swca.com

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From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2025 1:09 PM
To: Kara Laurenson-Wright <Kara.LaurensonWright@swca.com>
Subject: Fw: Request for Soda Mountain updated word version of Project Description and Executive Summary

Hi! Please see below from CEC. Can you please send these to me in word? Pretty sure we only gave them redlines in PDF.

Thanks!

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2025 1:08 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Subject: Request for Soda Mountain updated word version of Project Description and Executive Summary

Hi Hannah,

Can you send me an updated word version of the Project Description section and Executive Summary.

Thanks,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

CHAPTER 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Introduction

Soda Mountain Solar, LLC (applicant), proposes to construct, operate, and maintain a utility-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) electrical generating and storage facility and associated infrastructure to generate and deliver renewable electricity to the statewide electricity transmission grid. The project also includes future decommissioning, which is anticipated to occur after ~~30~~40 years of operation. This project is known as the Soda Mountain Solar Project (proposed project or project).
The project is located on approximately 2,670 acres of land administered by the U.S. Department of

Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California Desert District, within the jurisdiction of the Barstow Field Office in San Bernardino County. As described in Section 2.1, the BLM performed a separate review of the project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The project would disturb approximately 2,~~081~~059 acres overall. The project would generate up to 300 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy and include up to 300 MW/1,200 MW-hours (MWh) of battery storage. The power produced by the project would be conveyed to the regional electrical grid through an interconnection with the existing Mead-Adelanto 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line operated by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP).

~~2.2 2.2 Description of the Proposed Project 2.3~~

2.3 Project Location

The project is located entirely on federally owned land managed by the BLM. The 2,670-acre project site is located approximately 7 miles southwest of the community of Baker in unincorporated San Bernardino County, California (~~Figures 2-3,~~Figure 2-1, 2-42, and 2-53), approximately 50 miles northeast of Barstow. The project site is ~~located~~ in portions of Sections 1 and 11–14, Township 12 North, Range 7 East; Sections 25 ~~and 36~~, Township 13 North, Range 7 East; Sections 6, 7, ~~8,~~ and 18, Township 12 North, Range 8 East; Sections 17 – 21, 29-32, Township 13 North, Range 8 East, San Bernardino Meridian, California.

The project is 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 (OHV) Recreation Area at the southeast corner. Interstate 15 (I-15), the former Arrowhead Trail Highway, runs along the western boundary of the project site. The Rasor Road Services Shell Oil gas station is located off I-15 southwest of the project site, along the access road to the project site. A residence is next to the gas station, roughly 260 feet southwest of the proposed boundary. There are no other sensitive receptors within 1,500 feet of the project site. Approximately four storm drain culverts run under I-15 adjacent to the project site. Primary access to the project site is from ~~a north-bound~~the Rasor Road northbound exit off I-15.
~~There are no other sensitive receptors within 1,500 feet of the project site, and actual construction occurs more than 3,500 feet from this standalone home.~~

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Style Definition: Heading 1: Font: Font color: Auto, All caps, Ligatures: None, Space After: 0 pt, Line spacing: single, Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: 1, 2, 3, … + Start at: 2 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 0" + Tab after: 1.5" + Indent at: 1.5"

Style Definition: Heading 2: Font: 16 pt, Bold, Font color: Auto, Ligatures: None, Space Before: 15 pt, After: 0 pt, Line spacing: single, Outline numbered + Level: 2 + Numbering Style: 1, 2, 3, … + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 0" + Tab after: 0.63" + Indent at: 0.63"

Style Definition: Heading 3: Font: Bold, Font color: Auto, Ligatures: None, Space Before: 12 pt, After: 0 pt, Line spacing: single, Outline numbered + Level: 3 + Numbering Style: 1, 2, 3, … + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 0" + Tab after: 0.81" + Indent at: 0.81"

Style Definition: footnote description

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~~*2.3.1.1*~~ ~~EXISTING CONDITIONS~~

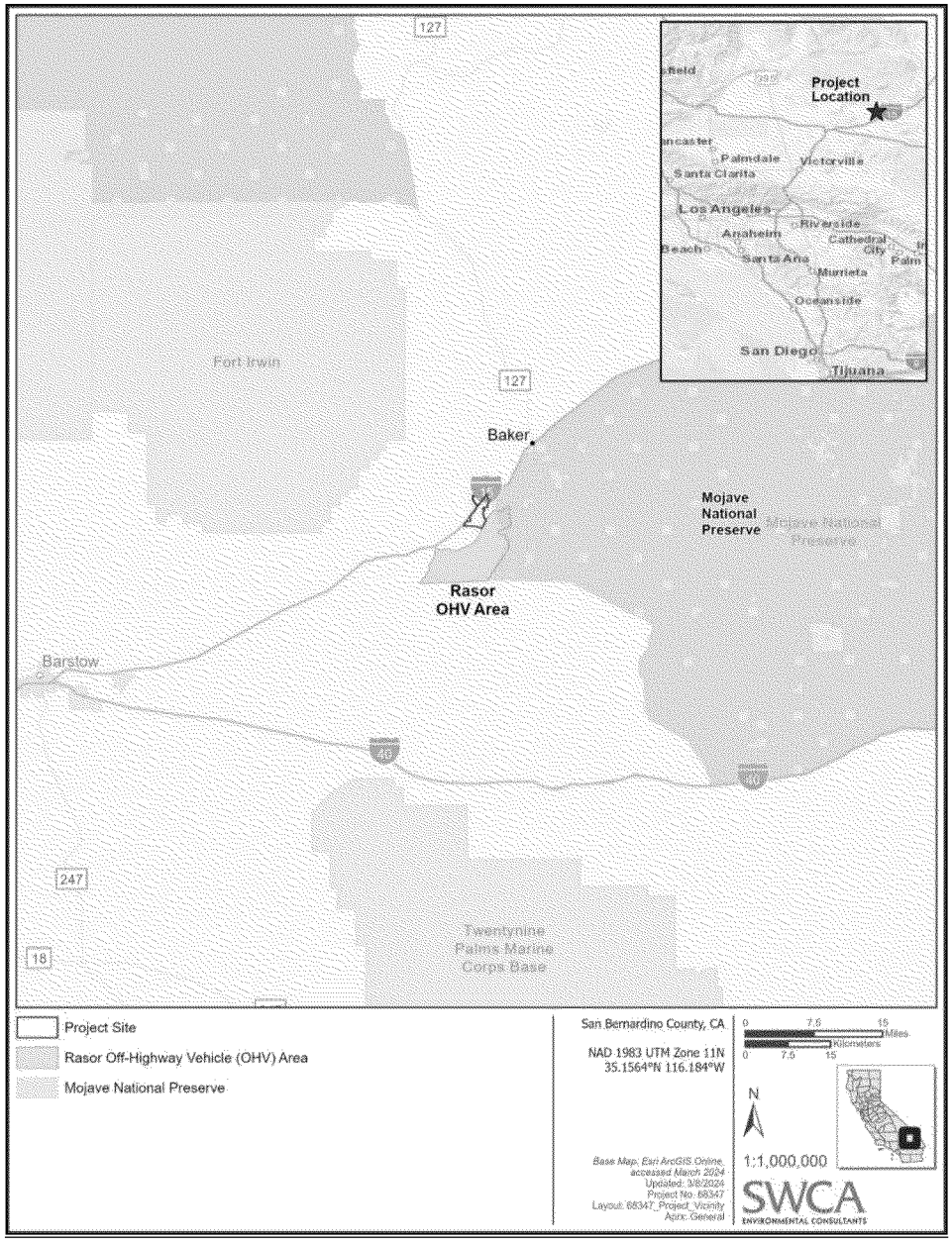

Figure 2-1. Project site vicinity.

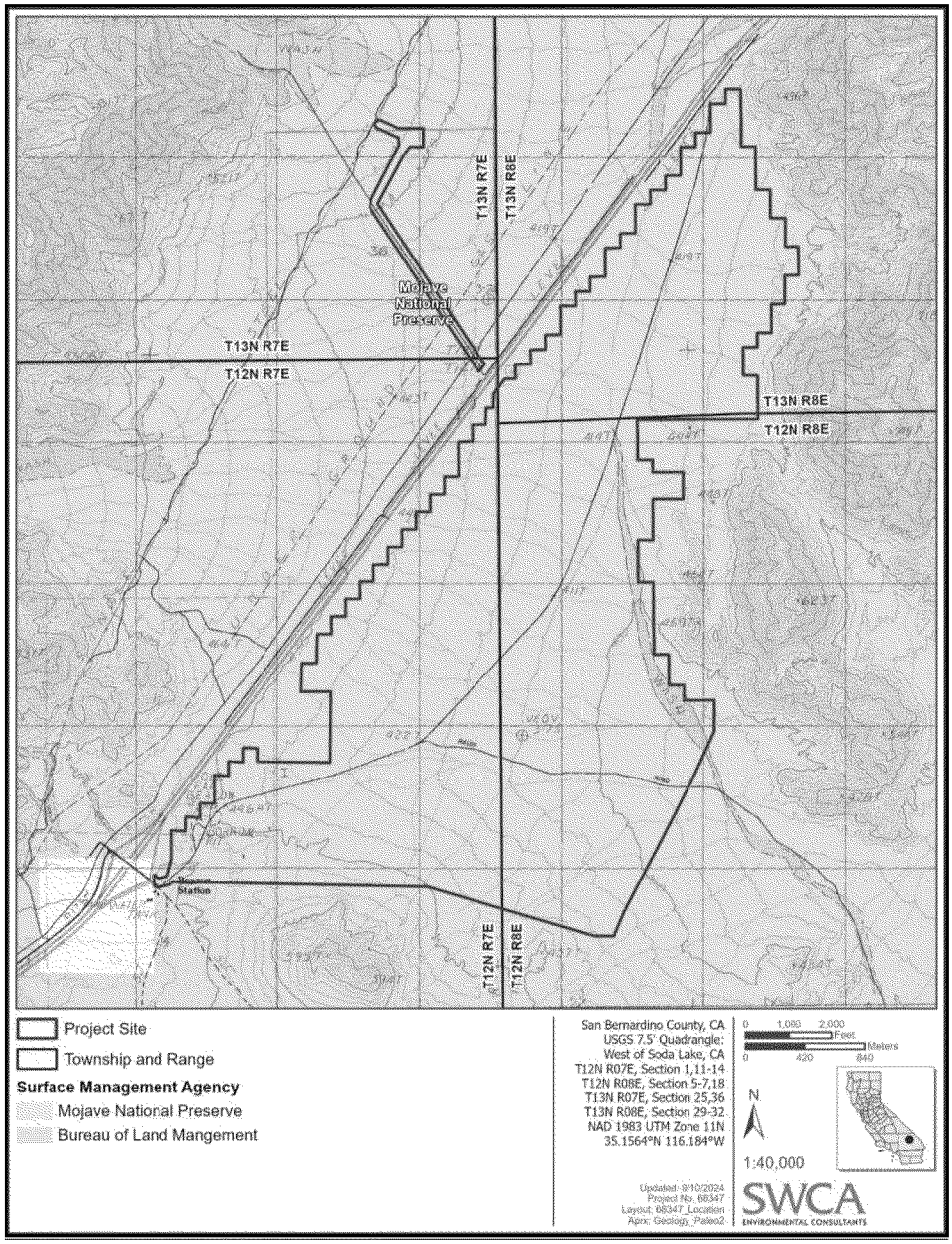

Figure 2-2. Public Land Survey location.

2.3.1.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The project would occupy the alluvial valley dividing the northern and southern portions of the Soda Mountains in the Mojave Desert. The project site is composed of rural desert land and is almost entirely undeveloped~~.~~ (Figure 2-4). Rasor Road, an unimproved BLM public access road, runs from the site's southwest corner ~~of the site~~ and splits into two forks after approximately 1.4 miles. The Rasor Road fork continues from west to east, to the Rasor OHV recreation area. Arrowhead Trail, the other fork, continues northward through the project site. ~~–~~Figure 2-4. Project site location and existing conditions. show the current existing conditions of the project site.

Based on a review of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map, unnamed tributaries are located east of the project site and flow from west to east (FEMA 2023). On-site runoff primarily drains to the southeast side of the project site. FEMA Zone D floodplains, which represent areas of undetermined flood hazards, are located within the project site. Additionally, the project is not located within the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) 100-year DWR Awareness floodplain. The project site is located in the Mojave Desert Air Basin and within a ~~sub-basin of the~~ Soda Lake Valley Groundwater Basin~~.~~ sub-basin.

There are no existing overhead or underground transmission lines on the project site that would be affected by the proposed project. ~~Infrastructure~~The infrastructure surrounding the site includes the four-lane I-15, two ~~highvoltage~~high-voltage electric transmission lines, an electrical distribution line, wireless cellular telephone towers, two fiber-optic cables, and two fuel pipelines. The location of the fiber-optic cables is not publicly available. The two high-voltage electrical transmission lines to the west of I-15 are ~~a~~the Kramer 115-kV sub-transmission line ~~owned~~operated by Southern California Edison (SCE) and the ~~MeadAdelanto~~Mead-Adelanto 500-~~kilovolt (~~kV~~)~~ transmission line operated by the ~~Los Angeles Department of Public Works (~~LADWP~~),~~ as shown ~~on Figure 2-2.~~in Figure 2-3. The project would utilize one of the existing culverts under I-15 to connect the gen-tie to the Mead-Adelanto transmission line. The Mead-Adelanto Transmission Project is a 202-mile~~-~~long, 500~~-~~kV alternating current (AC) transmission line that extends between a southwest terminus at the Adelanto substation in Southern California and a northeast terminus at Marketplace Substation approximately 17 miles southwest of Boulder City, Nevada.

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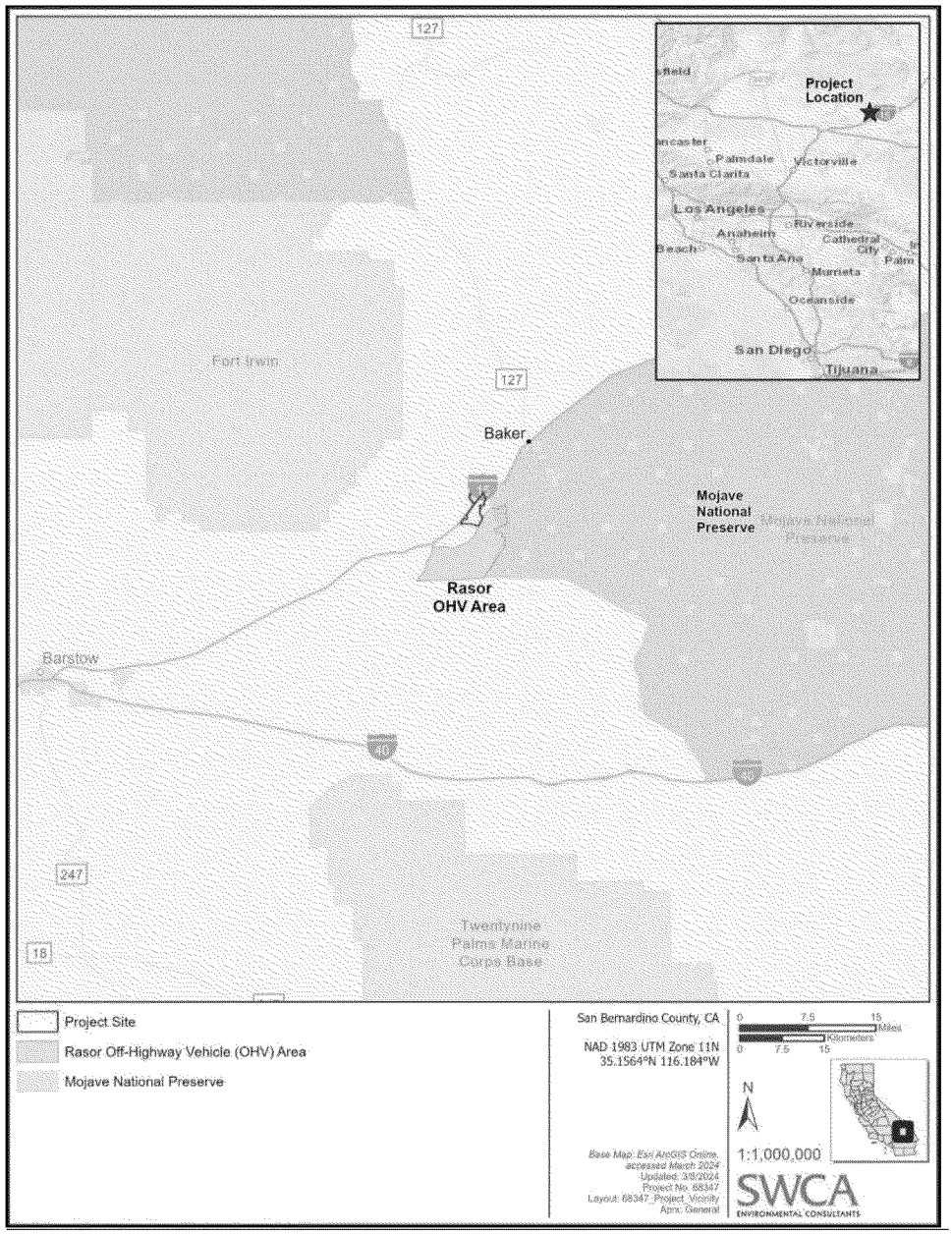
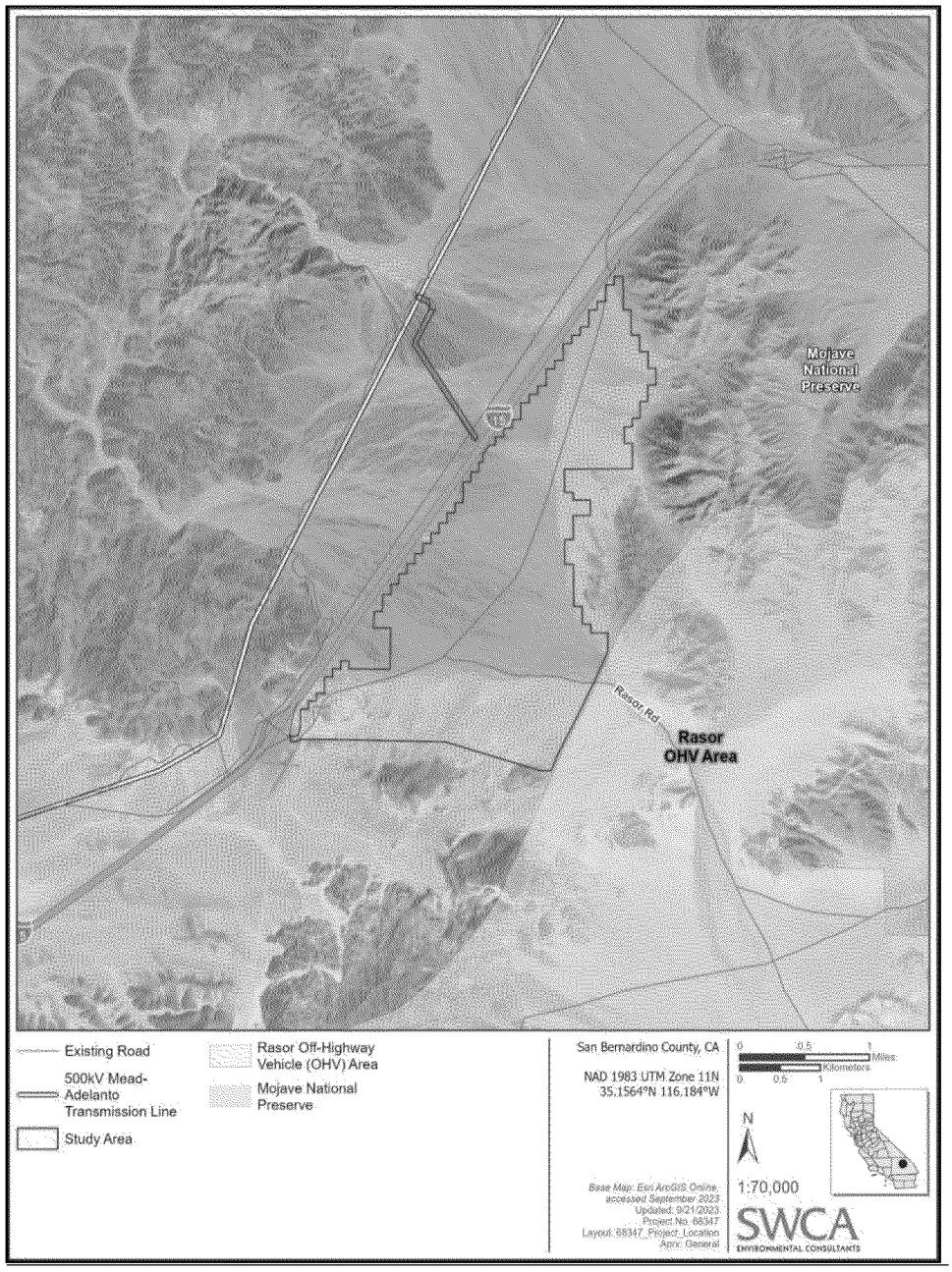
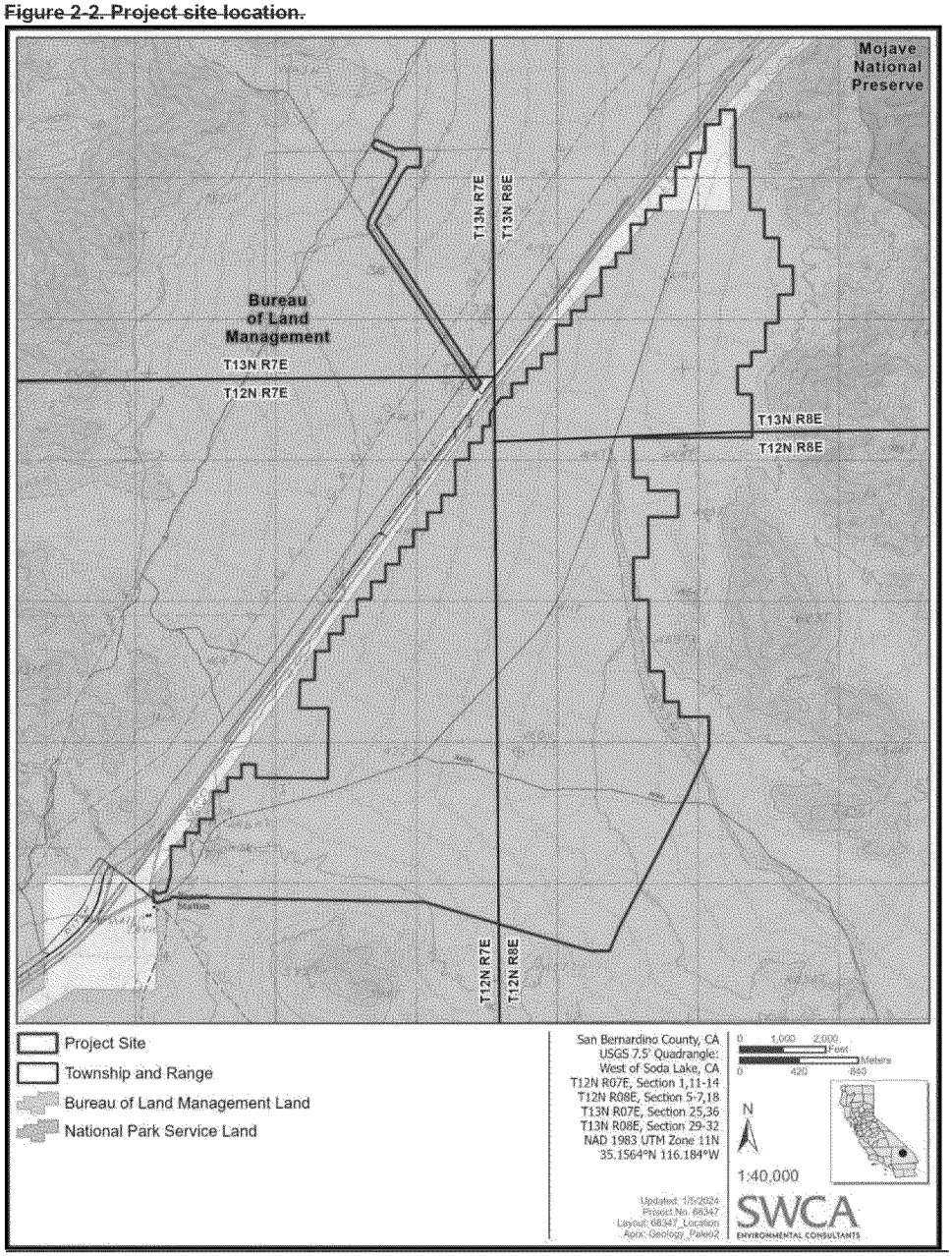


~~Figure 2-1. Project site vicinity.~~


Mojave National Preserve
Rasor Rd
Rasor OHV Area
Existing Road
500kV Mead-Adelanto Transmission Line
Study Area
Rasor Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area
Mojave National Preserve
San Bernardino County, CA
NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N
35.1564°N 116.184°W
0 0.5 1 Miles
0 0.5 1 Kilometers
N
1:70,000
Base Map: Esri ArcGIS Online, accessed September 2023
Updated: 9/21/2023
Project No: 68347
Layout: 68347_Project_Location
Aprx: General
SWCA
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

~~**Figure 2-2. Project site location.**~~



~~**Figure 2-3. Public** Land **Survey location.**~~

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2.3.1.2 ~~FIGURE 1-4. EXISTING VIEW FROM WEST LOOKING EAST AT I-15~~USE AND ~~PROJECT SITE.~~ZONING

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~~2.3.1.2~~ LAND USE AND ZONING

As shown in ~~Figure 2-5,~~Figure 2-3, the project site is located within the BLM's California Desert District, within the jurisdiction of the Barstow Field Office, and the planning boundary of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan and the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP). The BLM signed its

Record of Decision (ROD) approving the DRECP Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA) to the CDCA Plan in September 2016 (BLM 2016). The DRECP is a landscape-level plan established by the California Energy Commission, the BLM, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) which plan covers 22.5 million acres of public land in seven California counties. The DRECP ~~Land Use Plan Amendment~~LUPA includes land use allocations to replace the multiple-use classes established in the CDCA Plan. The project is within lands classified as General Public Land for management. However, given the BLM signed the ROD for the project in March 2016, before the BLM approved the DRECP LUPA, neither the BLM process for project review and approval nor the Conservation and Management Actions (CMAs) outlined in the DRECP are applicable to this project.
The generation-tie line (gen-tie line) west of I-15 would be located within an Area of Critical

Environmental Concern and a designated federal Section 368 Energy Corridor adjacent to I-15 (corridor number 27-225).

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~~2.3.1.3 SITE SELECTION~~

2.3.1.3 SITE SELECTION

The project site was selected given the BLM's issuance of a ~~Record of Decision (~~ROD~~)~~ and associated amendment to the CDCA Plan in March 2016. The site is located within a designated federal Section 368 Energy Corridor adjacent to I-15 (Corridor number 27-225). Additionally, an existing ~~Southern California Edison (~~SCE~~)~~ owned 115 kV sub-transmission line and an LADWP-operated 500 kV transmission line run parallel to and adjacent to the western perimeter of the project site. The project site is located immediately adjacent to existing roadways that ~~provides~~provide readily available access for construction and operations. The project site was selected based on consideration of the project objectives, engineering constraints, site geology, environmental impacts, water, waste and fuel constraints, and electric transmission constraints, among other factors.

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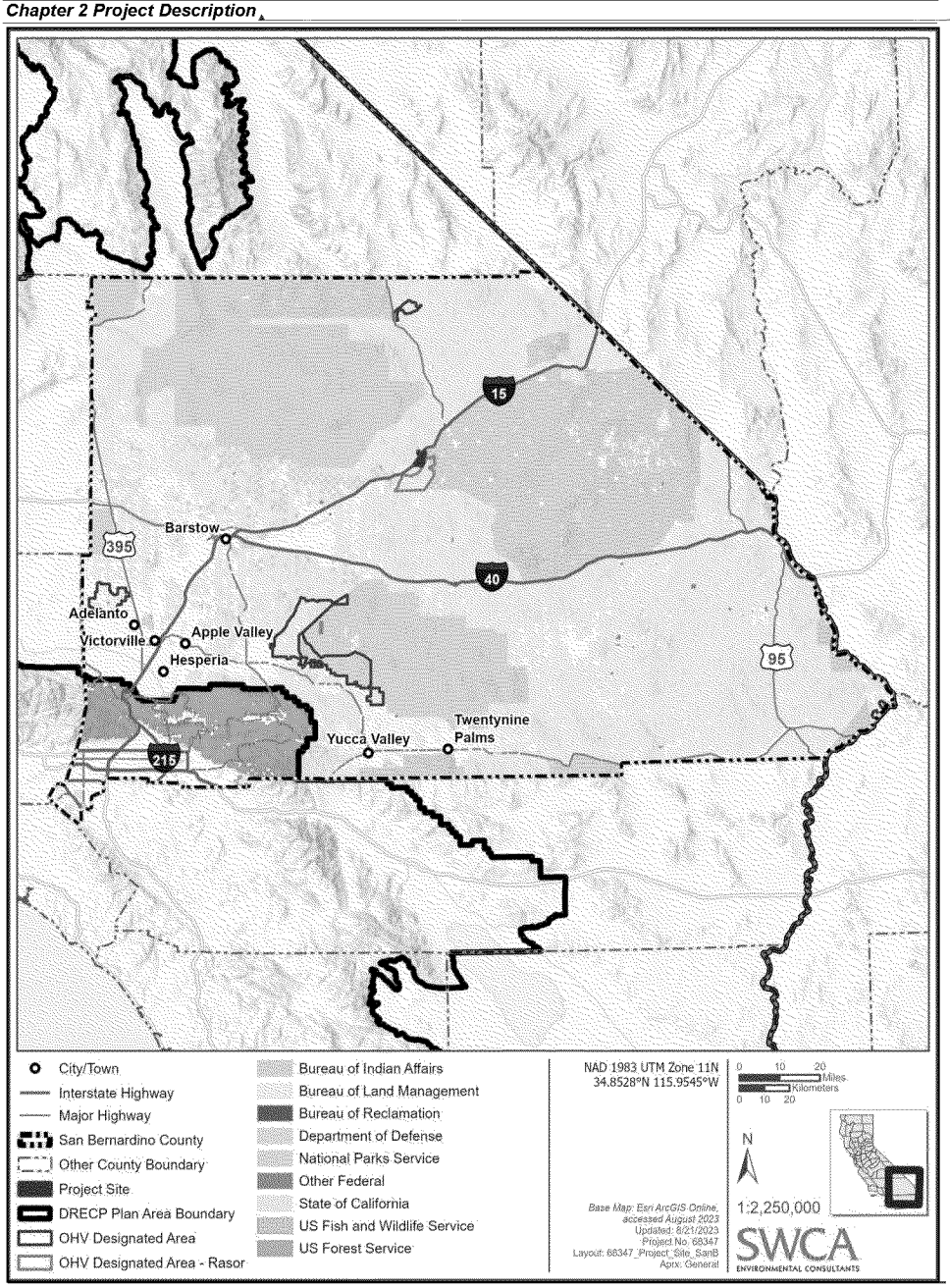

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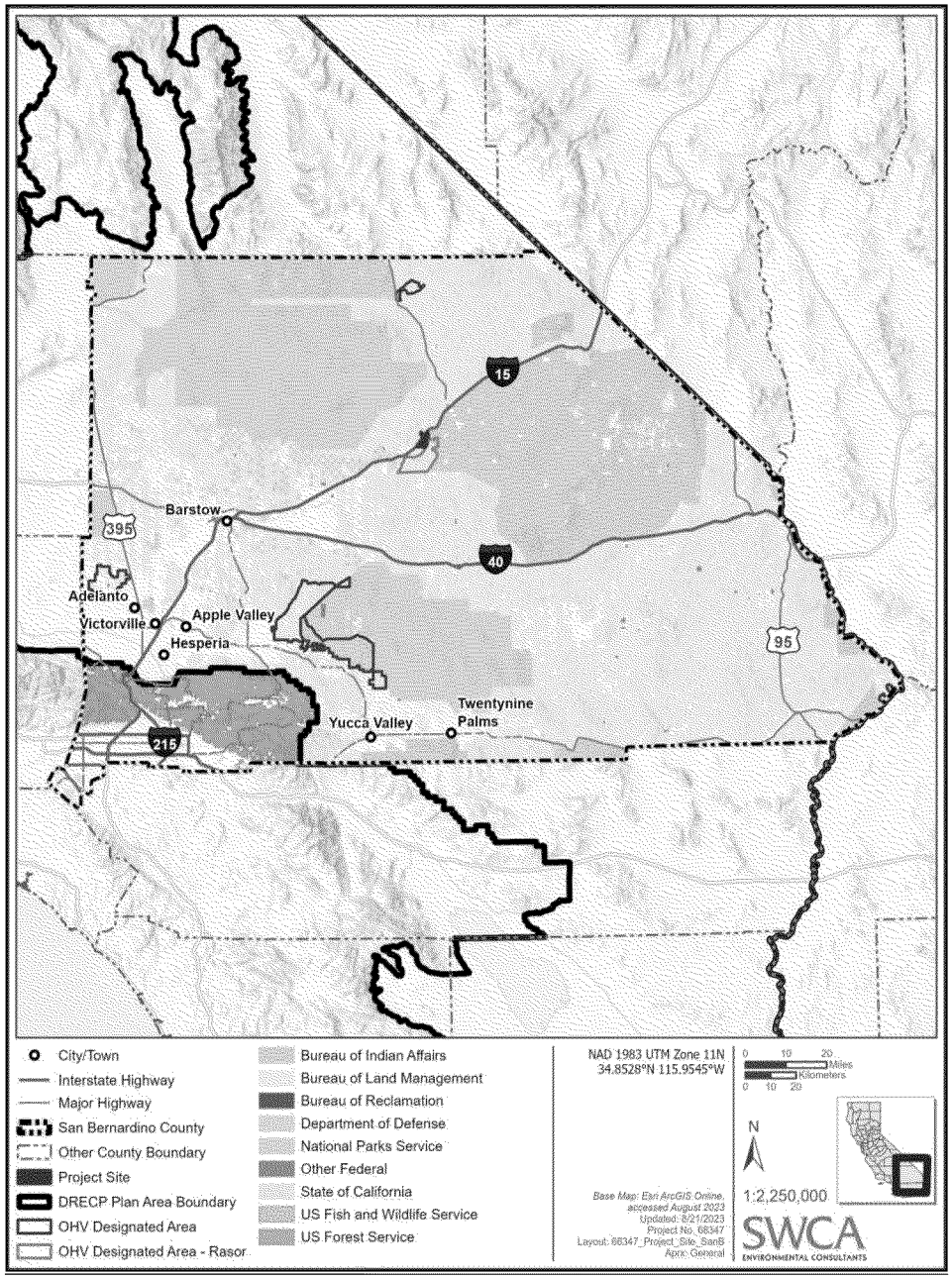

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Figure ~~2-5.~~2-3. Land use management in San Bernardino County.

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2.4

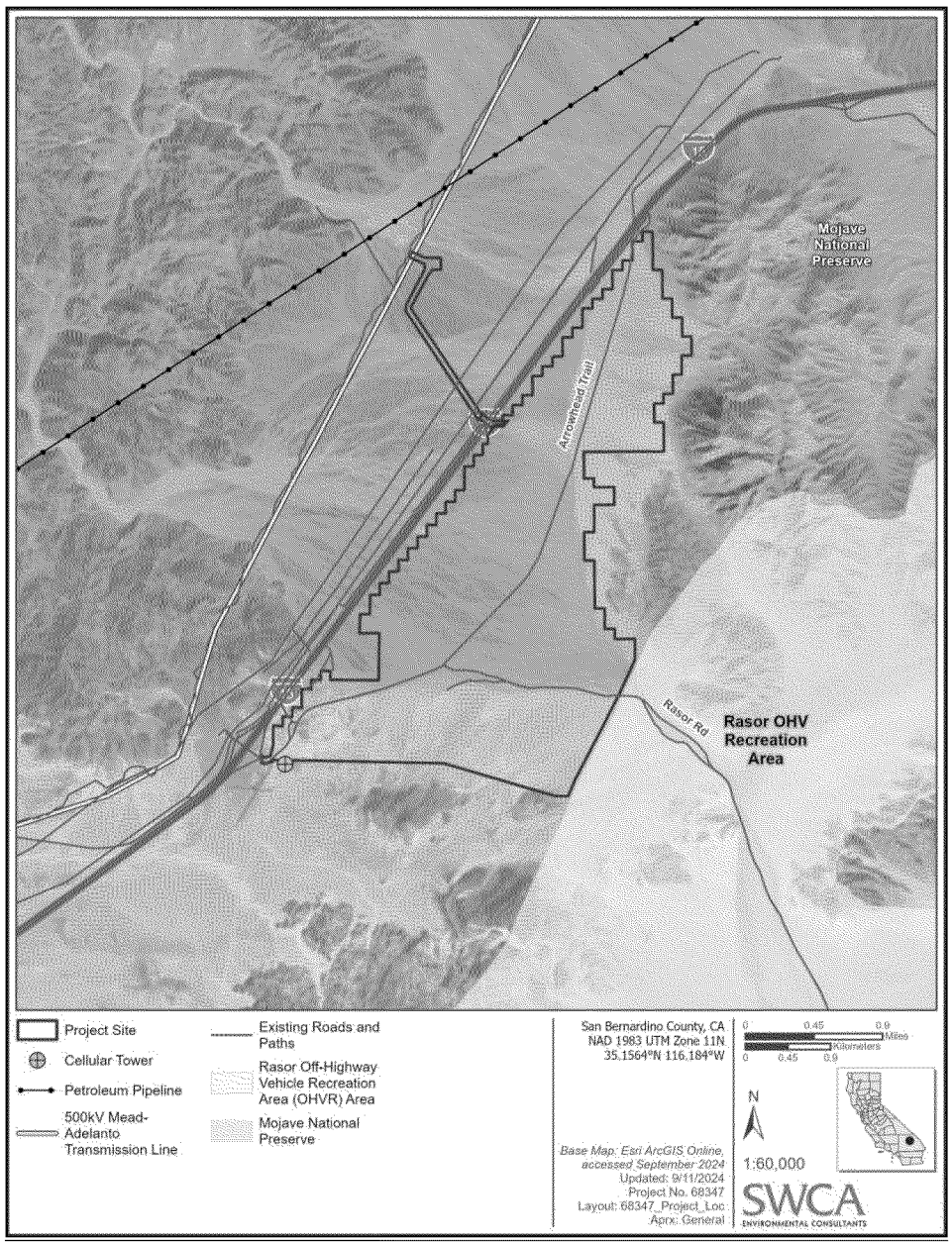

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Figure 2-4. Project site location and existing conditions.

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SMSP00828

Figure 2-5. Existing view from west, facing east toward I-15 and project site.

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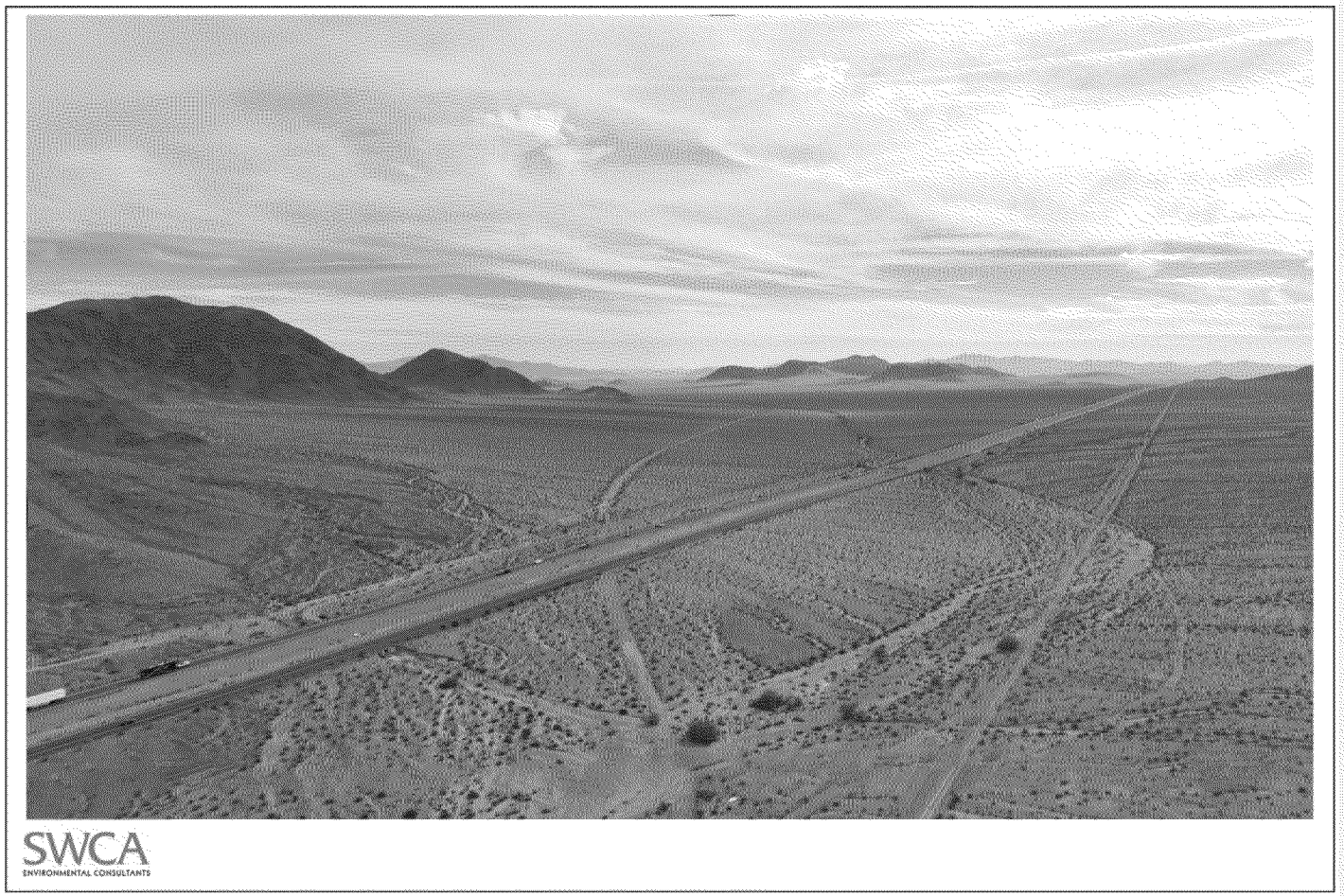

Figure 2-6. Existing view from northwest, facing east across I-15 to project site.

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2.4 Generating Facility Description and Design

The project proposes to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission a proposed 300-MW PV solar facility located on approximately 2,670 acres. The approximate disturbance acreage for the project would be 2,~~081~~059 acres. As shown in ~~Figures 2-6~~Figure 2-7 through ~~2-8,~~Figure 2-10, the 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 the East Array and South Arrays 1, 2, and 3), 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. ~~3.~~Approximately 300 MW/1,200 MWh of battery energy storage system (BESS) across 18 acres.

The project would operate 24 hours per day year-round and would generate electricity during daylight hours when the sun is shining. The project would generate and deliver solar-generated power to the regional electrical grid through an interconnection with the existing Mead-Adelanto 500-kV transmission line operated by LADWP.

~~The following description of project components and infrastructure is based on the project's preliminary site design. During final design, the configuration and number of components may vary as a result of micro-siting but would occur within the project footprint analyzed within this EIR.~~

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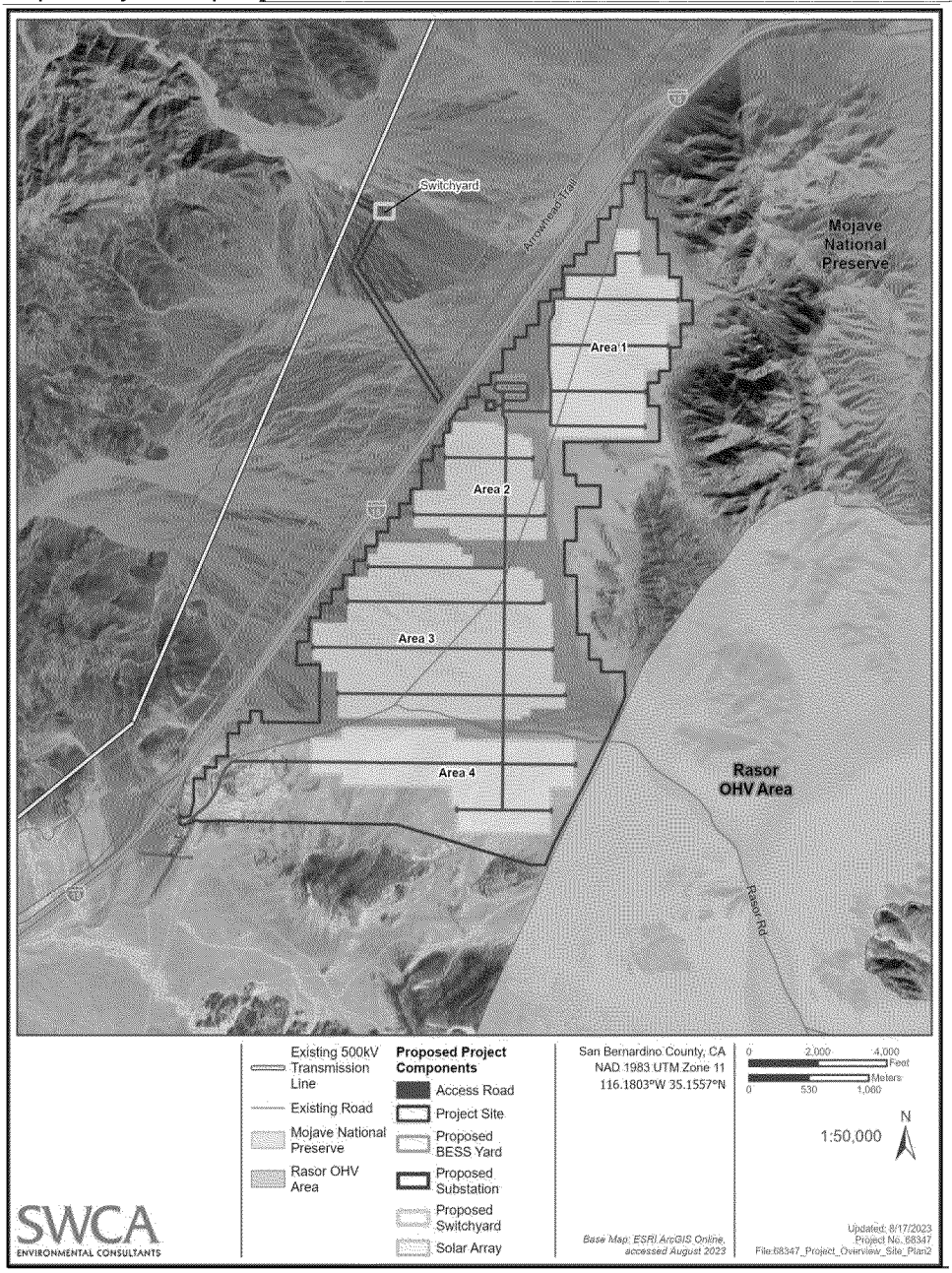

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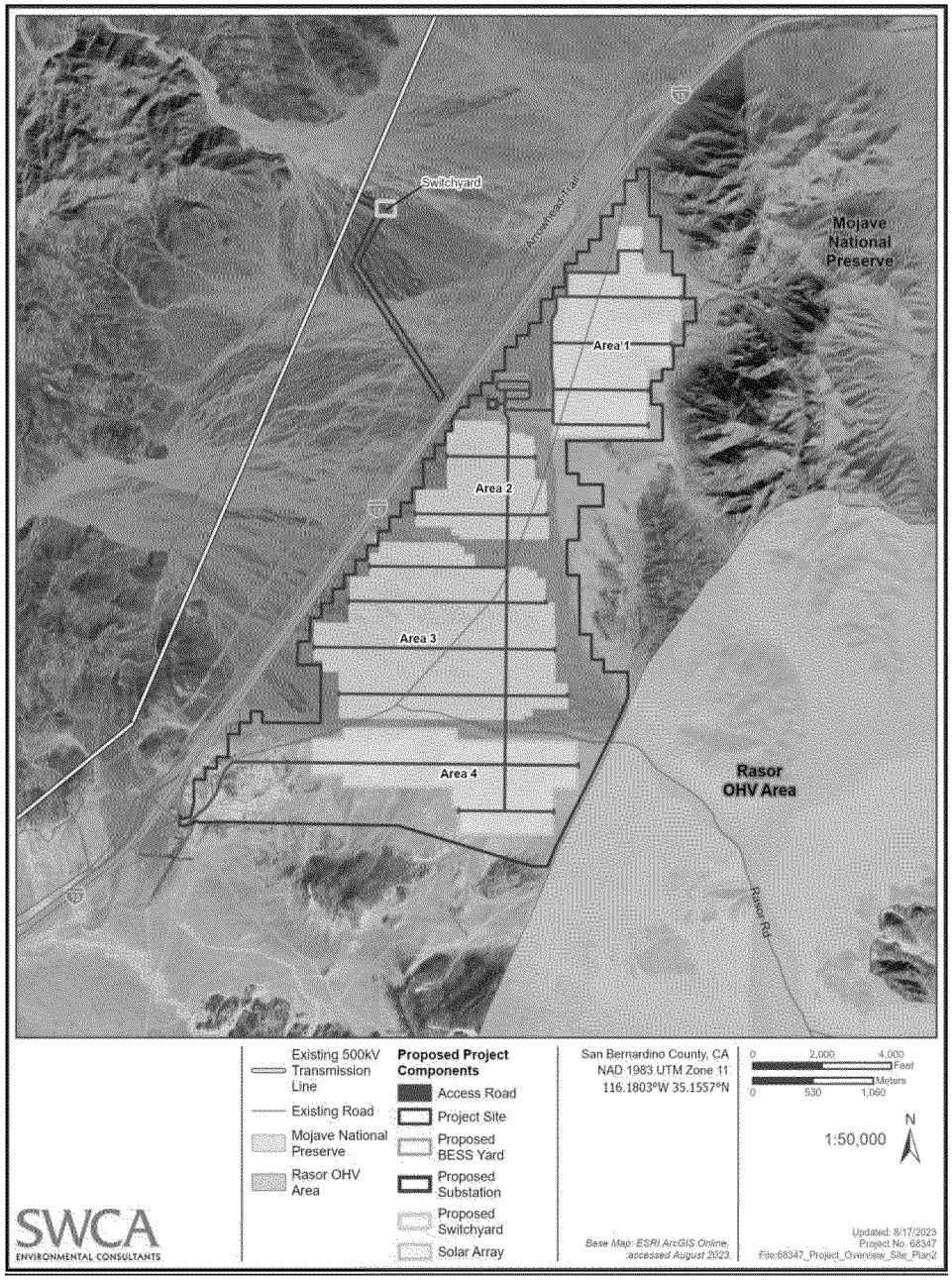

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Figure ~~2-6.~~2-7. Project overview site plan.

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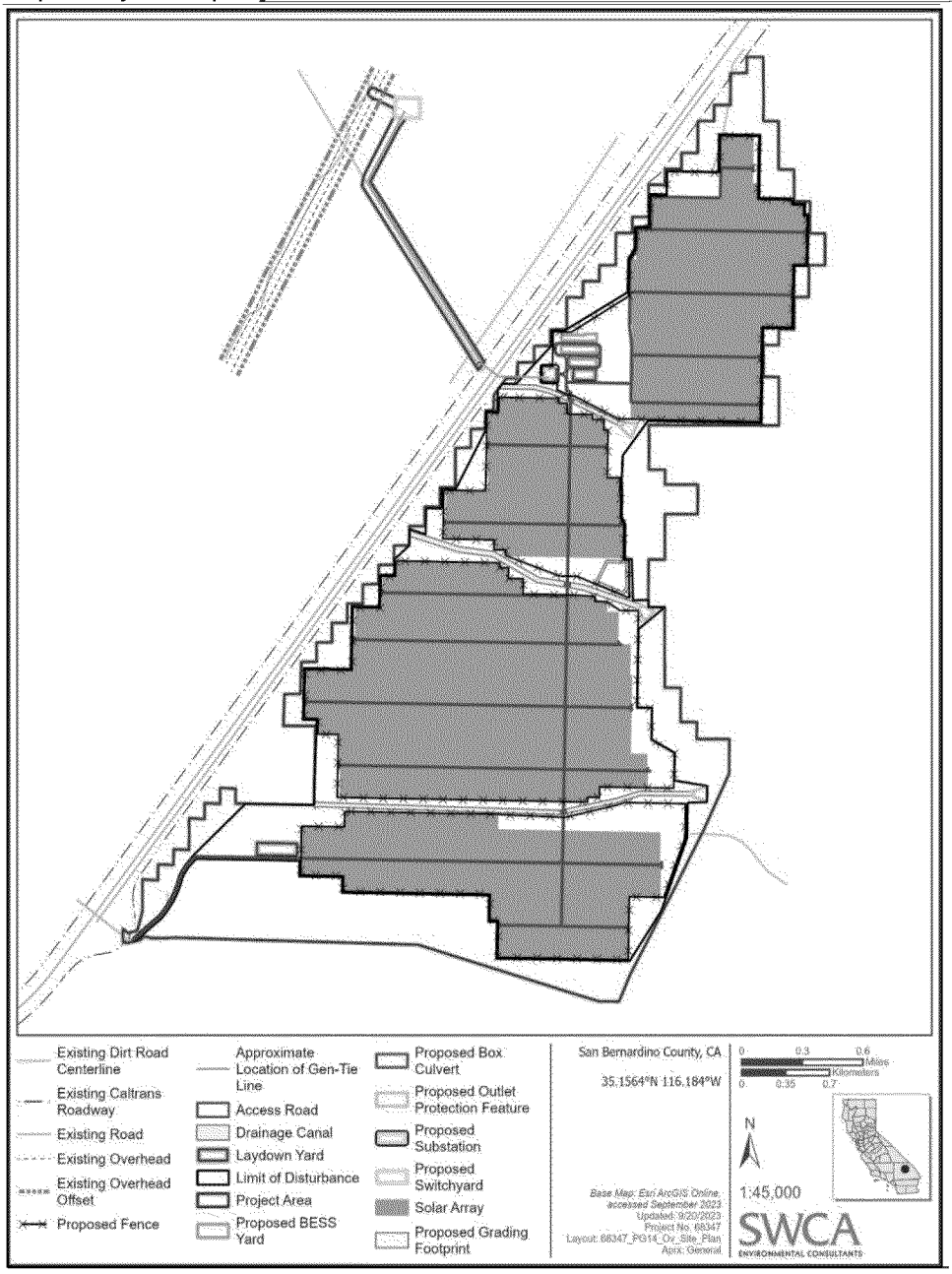

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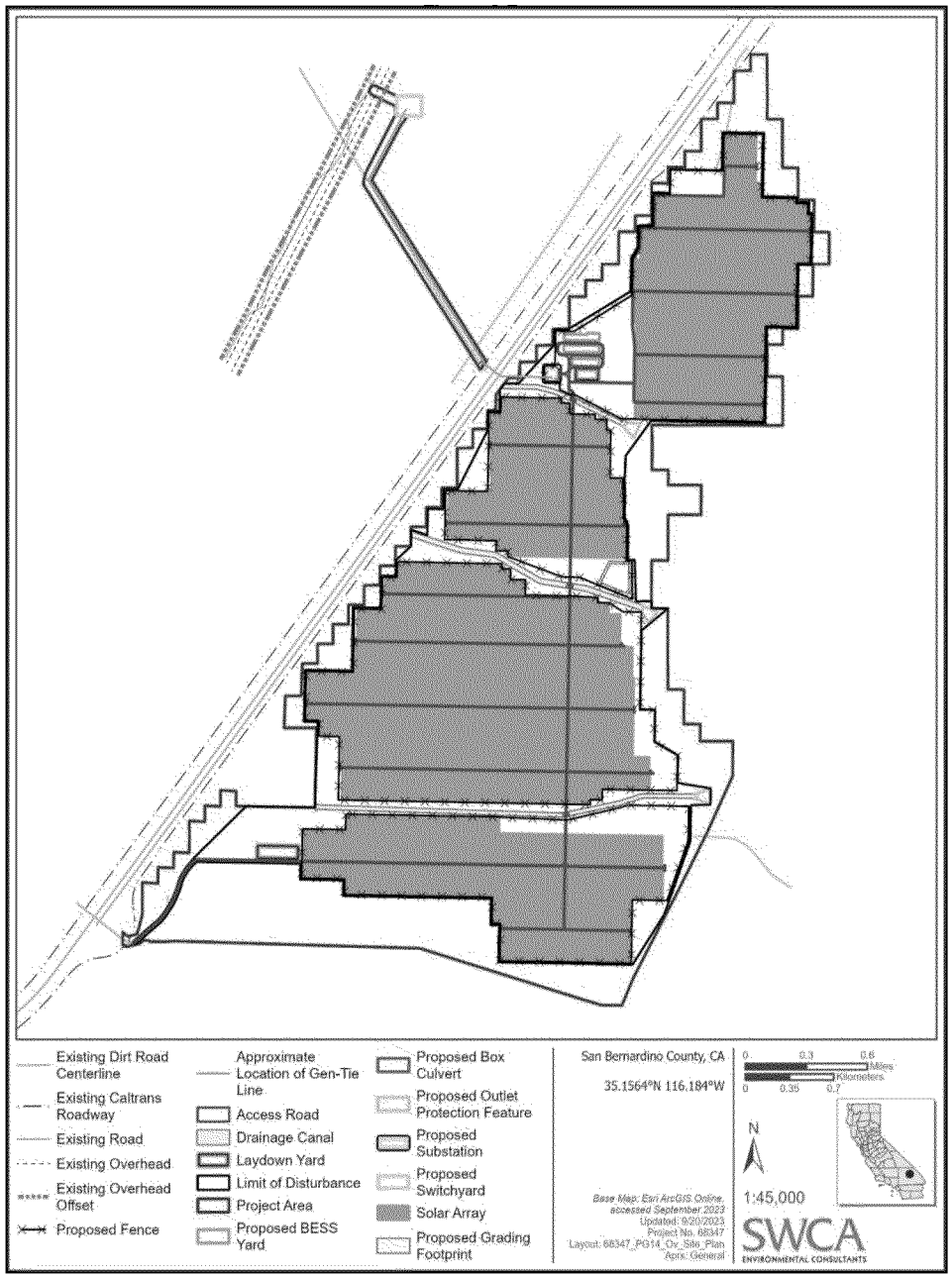

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Figure 2-8. Existing and proposed conditions.

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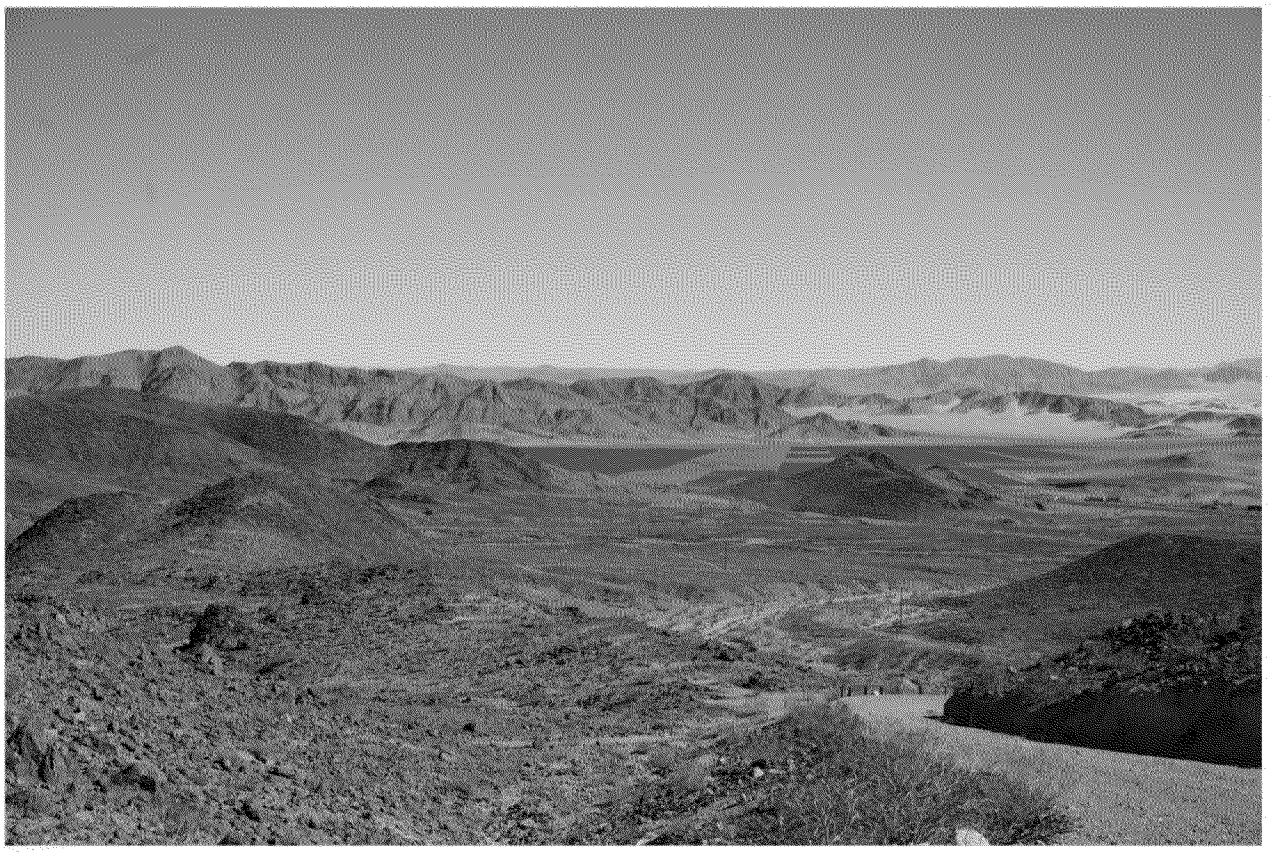

Figure 2-9. Simulated view from west looking east at I-15 and constructed project.

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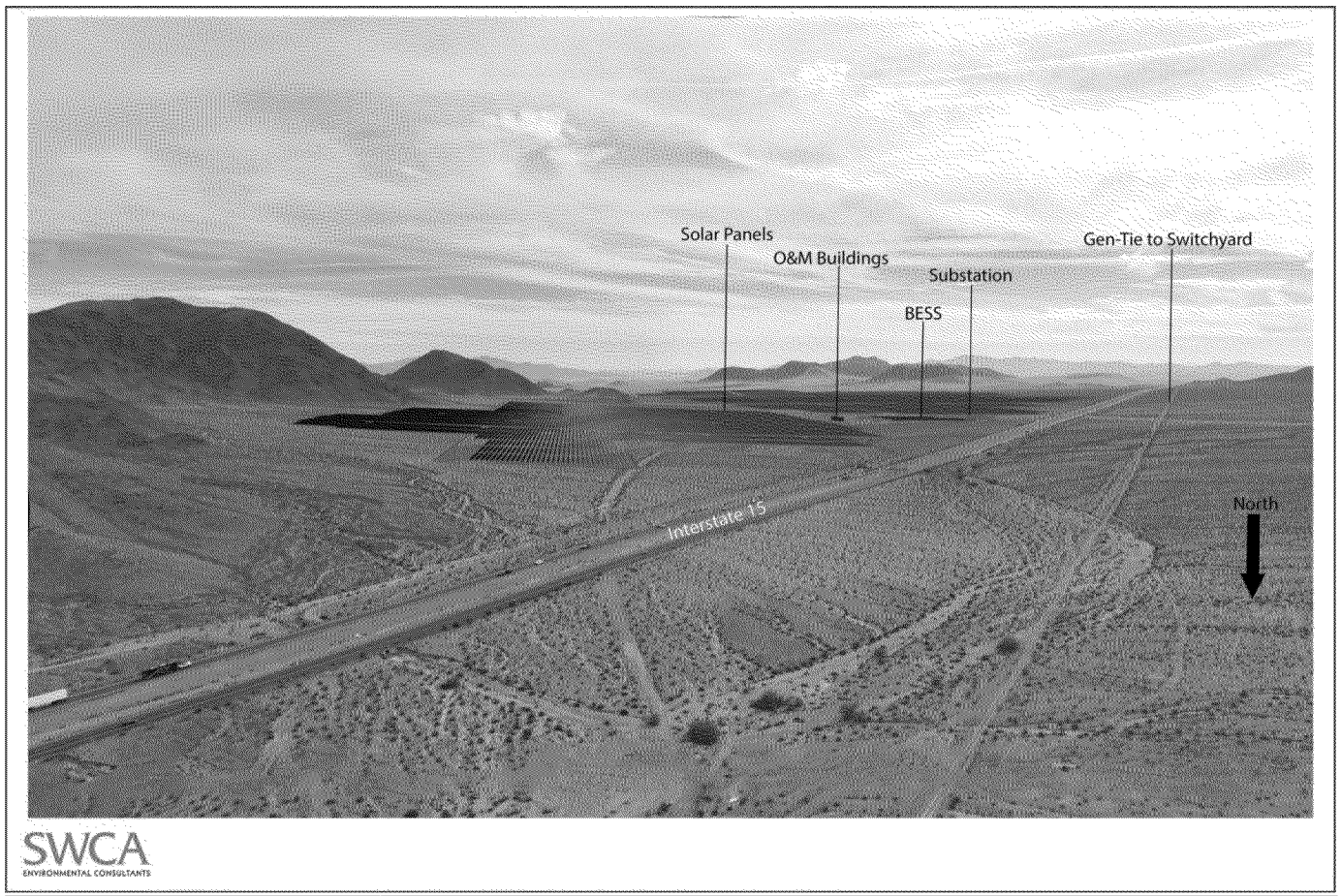

Figure 2-10. Simulated view from northwest, facing east across I-15 to project site.

2.4.1 *Solar Panel Arrays and Support Structures*

~~*2.4.1.1* SOLAR PANEL ARRAYS~~

2.4.1.1 SOLAR PANEL ARRAYS

Solar cells, also called photovoltaic (PV) cells, convert sunlight directly into electricity (voltage), which is called the "PV effect." PV cells are located on panels; rows of solar panels form an array. The PV modules are uniformly dark in color, non-reflective, and designed to be highly absorptive of all light that strikes their glass surfaces. Arrays controlled by a single motor create a system called a single-axis solar tracker, which rotates throughout the day to increase total solar exposure. For the project, hundreds of solar trackers would be interconnected to form a utility-scale PV system. The solar panel arrays would be organized into Area 1, Area 2, Area 3, and Area 4 on the southeast side of I-15, as shown in ~~Figure 2-6.~~ Figure 2-7.

2.4.1.2 ~~*2.4.1.2* SUPPORT AND MOUNTING STRUCTURES~~ SUPPORT AND MOUNTING STRUCTURES

The single-axis solar tracker would be mounted on structures supported by steel piles (e.g., cylindrical pipes, H-beams, or similar), which would be driven into the soil using pile/vibratory/rotary driving technique. Driven pier foundations are a "concrete-free" foundation solution that would result in minimal site disturbance and facilitate site reclamation during decommissioning. Most pier foundations would be driven to approximate depths of ~~8~~6 to 12 feet deep depending upon the required embedment depth. The piles would be spaced 10 to 15 feet apart. The support structure would be elevated at least 1 foot above the base flood elevation and approximately 6 to 12 feet tall, depending on site topography.

~~*2.4.1.3* ELECTRICAL CONNECTION SYSTEM~~

2.4.1.3 ELECTRICAL CONNECTION SYSTEM

Solar panels would be electrically connected using string wiring secured to the panel support system. String wiring terminates at PV array combiner boxes or load break disconnect boxes, which are lockable electrical boxes mounted on- or- near an array's support structure. Output wires from combiner boxes would be routed along an underground trench system approximately 3 to 4~~6~~ feet deep and 1 to ~~3~~6 feet wide, including trench and disturbed area, to the ~~inverters and transformer~~central inverter pads. Inverters are a key component of solar PV ~~powergenerating~~power-generating facilities because they convert the solar panel's direct current (DC) power ~~generated by the solar panel~~ into ~~alternating current (~~AC~~)~~ power ~~that is compatible~~and step up the voltage for use with the transmission network. The output voltage of the inverters would be stepped up from 600 to 1,200V DC to 34.~~5 to 60 kV~~5kV AC power and transmitted by underground collection lines to the project substation.

2.4.2 ~~*2.4.2 Substation and Switchyard*~~ *Substation*

The ~~90~~140,000-square-foot high-voltage substation would be located adjacent to Area 1 and Area 2 on a ~~concrete ground foundation~~raised gravel pad and would have a maximum height of 35 feet (see ~~Figures 2-6~~Figure 2-7 and ~~2-7).~~Figure 2-7). The substation would include ~~transformers,~~ the main Generation Step Up (GSU) transformer, high-voltage circuit breakers, switches, meters, instrumentation transformers,

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relay equipment, a control enclosure, and related equipment. The substation ~~is where all of~~ equipment would be mounted on concrete foundations and steel structures (hot dip galvanized or weathering steel). All the underground 34.~~5kV~~5-kV collection lines ~~are~~would be combined at the substation, and the voltage ~~is then~~would be stepped up to 500 kV via ~~a~~the GSU transformer. All interconnection equipment, including the control room ~~if required~~, would be installed aboveground ~~and~~ on concrete foundations and steel structures within the ~~footprint of the substation.~~

~~The gen-tie line would connect the collector lines from the~~ substation footprint.

Power to the project ~~switchyard~~ substation control enclosure would be provided primarily by ~~boring under I-15. The gen-tie would be~~ a station service transformer (roughly 50 kilovolt amps [kVA]) located within the substation yard. The control enclosure would be equipped with a backup battery and an energy management system capable of powering the control enclosure for 48 hours in the event of an outage. In the event of a prolonged outage, a secondary power source will be provided via an underground connection to Kramer 115-kV sub-transmission line owned by SCE, which runs parallel to I-15.

2.4.3 *Switchyard~~existing Caltrans culvert.~~*

The switchyard would be set on an approximately 234,300-square-foot raised gravel pad and would have a maximum height of 100 feet. The switchyard would be located 0.8-mile northwest of I-15, adjacent to the LADWP Mead-Adelanto 500-kV transmission line ROW. ~~The switchyard would permanently occupy approximately 5 acres on a concrete ground foundation. A permanently gated, 8-foot-high chain-link fence with three-strand barbed wire meeting National Electric Safety Code requirements would be constructed around both the substation and switchyard.~~ The switchyard would include the High Voltage Bus Structure, high-voltage circuit breakers, switches, instrumentation transformers, relay equipment, a control enclosure, and related equipment. Like the substation, the switchyard equipment would be mounted on concrete foundations and steel structures (hot dip galvanized or weathering steel).

~~2.4.3~~ Power to the switching station control enclosure would be provided primarily by a station service transformer (roughly 50 kVA) located within the substation yard. The control enclosure would be equipped with a backup battery and an energy management system capable of powering the control enclosure for 48 hours in the event of an outage. In the event of a prolonged outage, a secondary power source will be provided via an underground connection to Kramer 115-kV sub-transmission line owned by SCE, which runs parallel to I-15.

2.4.4 *Gen-tie Line*

The approximately 1-mile 500-kV gen-tie line would be designed in accordance with LADWP design standards including required right-of-way (ROW) width. The gen-tie would also use eleven tubular steel pole support structures and six lattice towers, all of which would be approximately 160 feet high. A small segment of the gen-tie line, approximately 450 feet, would go under I-15 near an existing Caltrans culvert. On either end of this underground section there would be riser towers and transition to overhead tower structures. Both the underground section of the gen-tie line and the riser towers would be designed in accordance with General Order 128.

2.4.5 *Battery Energy Storage System*

A BESS absorbs, holds, and then reinjects ~~electricity~~energy from the PV system into the electrical grid. The project is anticipated to include up to 300 MW/1,200 MWh of ~~BESS~~energy for dispatch into the local electrical grid via the same point of interconnection as the solar arrays. The BESS would be located

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adjacent to the substation and Area 1. Up to 18 acres may be utilized for the BESS throughout the project site at full buildout.

~~2.4.3.1 BATTERIES~~

2.4.5.1 BATTERIES

Individual lithium-ion cells typically form the core of the BESS and are assembled in sealed battery modules. The battery modules would be installed in self-supporting racks electrically connected either in series or parallel to each other. The operating rack-level DC voltage currently ranges between 700 and 1,500 volts (V). The individual battery racks are connected in series or a parallel configuration to deliver the BESS energy and power rating.

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~~2.4.3.2 BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM ENCLOSURE AND CONTROLLER~~

2.4.5.2 BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM ENCLOSURE AND CONTROLLER

The BESS containers would house the batteries described above, as well as the BESS unit controllers. There would also be a site controller., located in a pad mount enclosure within the BESS yard. The BESS site controller is a multilevel control system for the battery modules, power conversion system, medium-voltage system, and up to the point of connection with the electrical grid. The controllers ensure that the BESS effectively mimics conventional turbine generators when responding to grid emergency conditions. The BESS enclosure would also house required heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and fire protection systems. The battery storage containers would be built using standard International Organization for Standardization (ISO) shipping containers, and each would measure approximately 20- feet in length, 6 feet in width, and 8 feet in height, although other smaller form-factor structures exist that may be used. -The containers would be painted Sudan Brown.

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The safety system would include a fire detection, alarm, and suppression control system that would be triggered automatically when the system senses imminent fire danger. A fire suppression control system would be provided within each on-site battery enclosure. ~~If necessary, the~~The safety system would use either a- waterless evaporating fluid, a sustainable clean agent (not a hydrofluorocarbon clean agent), or an alternative suppression agent, such as an inert gas. The control system would also notify the project operators and could be configured to notify local first responders as well.

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2.4.6 ~~2.4.4~~ *Operation and Maintenance Area Facilities*

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~~2.4.4.1 BUILDINGS~~

2.4.6.1 ~~THE FOLLOWING PERMANENT~~BUILDINGS

Three buildings related to operations, maintenance, and storage would be constructed as part of the project:

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1. ~~Operation and maintenance~~. One building ~~(approximate dimensions: 5,000 square feet, 30 feet high)~~

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~~2. Maintenance facility (approximate dimensions:~~ would be 2,400 square feet, ~~35 feet high)~~

~~3. Warehouse facility (approximate dimensions: 6,000 square feet, 35 feet high)~~

~~4. Substation (approximate dimensions: 90,000 square feet)~~

~~The operation~~ and ~~maintenance building, maintenance facility, and warehouse facility would all be located at the southwest corner of the site. The operation and maintenance building may consist of offices, a restroom, and a storage area and would include a heating, ventilating, and air conditioning system. All~~

the other two buildings would each be 5,000 square feet in area. Similar to the BESS, each building would be painted Sudan Brown. These buildings would be in the northwest portion of the site next to the BESS facilities. All of these facilities would be monitored by on-site ~~operation and maintenance~~O&M personnel and/or remotely. ~~A septic system would be constructed adjacent to the permanent project buildings to serve the sanitary wastewater treatment needs.~~
~~One 500-horsepower emergency diesel generator would be located on site to supply emergency power, as needed.~~

~~2.4.4.2 PARKING AREAS~~

The project would power the O&M buildings via a 480-V circuit from the BESS Auxiliary Power distribution system. This circuit will be fed from the collector substation and transformed to 480 volts via an auxiliary transformer mounted at the BESS yard. Power will be distributed via 480-V switchgear at the BESS yard. Power distribution will be via underground cables. Backup power to the O&M facilities would be via a local microgrid. This system would consist of solar PV panels mounted to the roof of the O&M buildings, a backup battery providing 24 hours of standby power, and an automatic transfer switch. This connection removes the need to have an emergency generator as part of the proposed project.

2.4.6.2 PARKING ~~AREAS~~AREAS

A 13,200-square-foot parking area would be located adjacent to the buildings described above, in the southwest corner of ~~the site~~ the site. They would be composed of compacted soil covered with filter fabric and 4-12" of compacted Class II aggregate base. The parking areas are not expected to exceed approximately 0.33 acre, or 13,200 square feet. Parking would be provided for the anticipated ~~regular~~ employees during project operation, for visitors, and for other equipment anticipated to be on-site at any time.

~~2.4.4.3 ACCESS ROADS~~

2.4.6.3 ACCESS ROADS

Primary operational access to the project site would be provided via the existing Rasor Road, that runs from I-15 eastward to the Rasor OHV recreation area~~.~~ (Figure 2-11). No public road improvements are proposed within the San Bernardino County maintained road ROW on Rasor Road. The portion of Rasor Road ~~that~~on BLM land would serve as the entrance and primary access road within the site is approximately 0.4 mile in length ~~and oriented northsouth.~~. The project would maintain and improve this portion of Rasor Road up to ~~be 20~~26 feet wide and include a gated entrance to the project site which can be accessed approximately 250 feet southeast from the I-15 northbound off-ramp. ~~North of I-15, the~~

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~~existing LADWP/SCE transmission maintenance road would be upgraded for access to the LADWP switchyard. A Caltrans access road may also be used for construction of the gen-tie line.~~ Although it would be closed to the public during project construction, Rasor Road would reopen during project operation and serve as the main access to Rasor OHV recreation area.

~~Internal access roads~~Currently, Arrowhead Trail splits off of Rasor Road and runs north-south. Arrowhead Trail would be ~~developed~~closed; the project would construct internal access road(s) which lead to the substation and between the solar arrays. These internal access roads would be ~~16~~

up to 26 feet wide and include a ~~35~~50-foot turning radius at the project boundary. ~~The Rasor Road primary access road will intersect with an internal access road which leads to the substation. The existing Rasor Road that continues past the internal access road will continue to serve as the main access to Rasor OHV recreation area. The proposed project does not include any improvements to the remainder of Rasor Road.~~

Northwest of I-15, the project would construct an access road up to 26 feet wide underneath the gen-tie line to access the gen-tie line and switchyard.

These roads would consist of compacted native material and would be graded as necessary but would generally follow the existing terrain. covered with filter fabric and 4 to 12 inches of compacted Class II aggregate or amended with Class II aggregate only where native soils are not suitable for heavy traffic. Larger boulders that could impede vehicle access would be removed. These permanent access roads would be compacted to meet load requirements for vehicle traffic over the life of the project.

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~~*2.4.4.4* SITE SECURITY AND FENCING~~

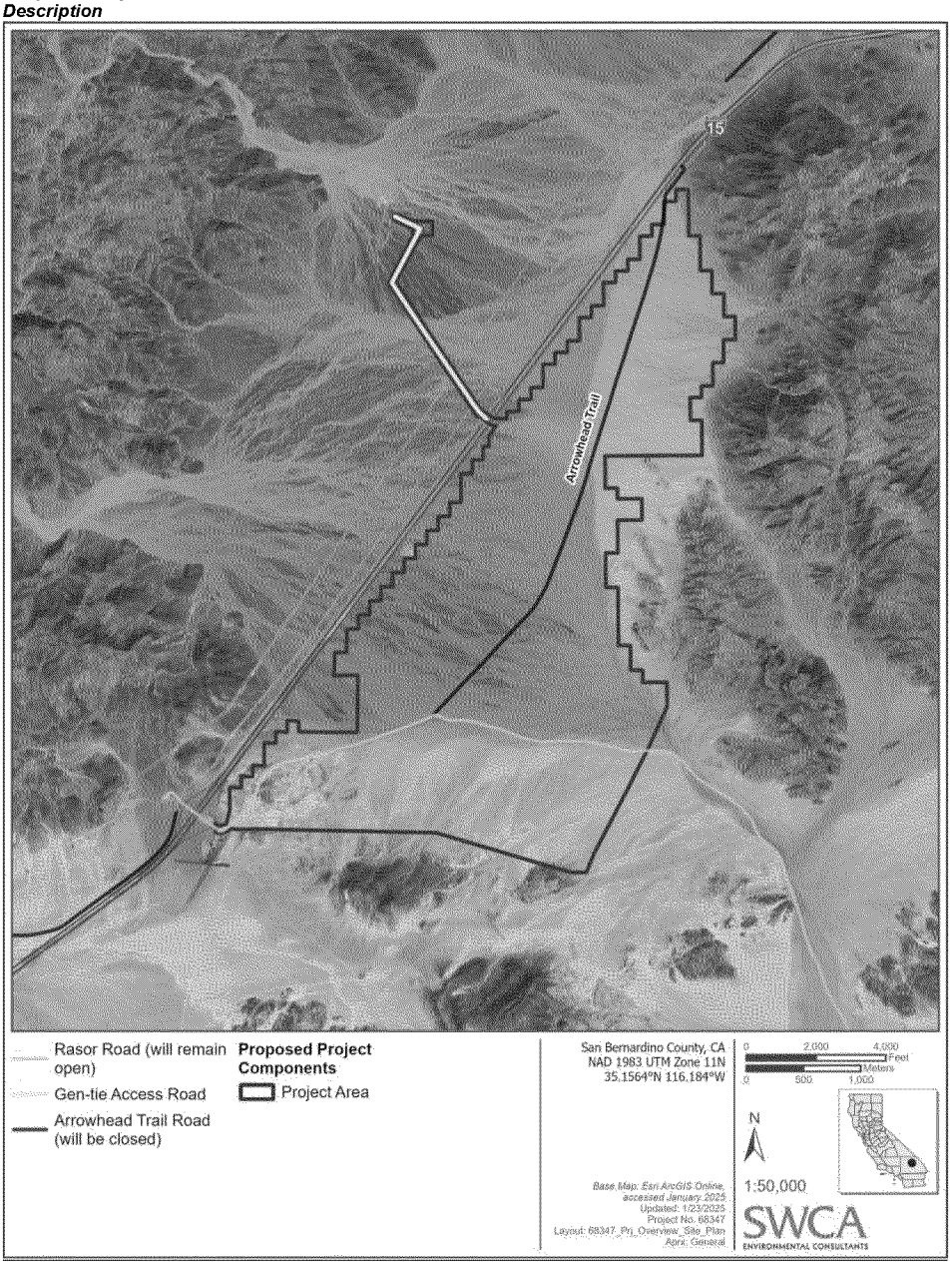

Figure 2-11. Existing and proposed roadways.

2.4.6.4 SITE SECURITY AND FENCING

All project components would be surrounded by warning signage, perimeter security fencing, desert tortoise exclusionary fencing, and perimeter security cameras. Combined security and desert tortoise fencing would be installed surrounding each individual array field and extend to include the substation and BESS area. ~~The security fencing would be an~~A permanently gated, 8-foot-high chain-link fence with ~~an additional 1 foot of~~three-strand barbed wire meeting National Electric Safety Code requirements would be constructed around the substation and the switchyard. The line posts and terminal posts of the fence would be buried up to 3.5 feet deep, and the distance between posts would ~~not exceed~~be approximately 10 feet. All permanent tortoise exclusionary fencing would be constructed in accordance with Chapter 8, Desert Tortoise Exclusion Fence, of the USFWS's 2009 Desert Tortoise Field Manual (USFWS 2009).

~~2.4.4.5 LIGHTING~~

2.4.6.5 LIGHTING

Lighting would be provided at the Rasor Road site entrance, ~~operation and maintenance building~~O&M buildings, substation, and switchyard. Exterior security lighting would be installed to provide safe access to project facilities as well as visual surveillance. Some portable lighting also could be required for essential nighttime maintenance activities. All lighting would be kept to the minimum required for safety and security; sensors, motion detectors, and switches would be used to keep lighting turned off when not required. All ~~lights~~lighting would be ~~downward, shielded, and directed so as to minimize light exposure.~~ compliant with San Bernardino County Dark Sky Ordinance.

2.4.7 ~~2.4.5~~ *Landscaping*

The project would plant a variety of native and drought tolerant trees and shrubs along the western boundary of the project site. There would be approximately 30 acres of landscaped areas on-site, including up to 5 acres of irrigated landscaped areas. as needed.

2.4.8 ~~2.4.6~~ *Drainage and Erosion Control*

Grading of up to 2,~~081~~059 acres and other types of ground treatment would be conducted outside of existing major drainage channels and would not involve substantial changes to site topography. Once construction is complete, the topography beneath the solar panels would generally be the same as the baseline condition except in areas where soil has been compacted or rocks and isolated surface undulations have been removed by grading. Native vegetation would be allowed to reestablish naturally and would be trimmed during operation as necessary.

Security fencing would not be used in the major drainage channels in between the array fields to minimize impacts to wildlife corridors and stormwater flow. If needed along larger drainages, breakaway fencing would consist of a driven post with detachable connections just above ground level, which allow the fencing to yield to the force of a storm event without damage to the embedded portion of the post. Following such an event, the fence would be reattached to the post. The entrance to each access road along the perimeter would include a security gate.

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The design of the array fields would avoid placing solar panels within the stormwater flow corridors downstream of the existing culverts under I-15 so that flows from the culverts would continue to follow existing braided flow channels. Three drainage channels would be constructed between the array fields. Each channel would be approximately 3 feet below grade and vary in width and length. ~~Ten~~Approximately ten temporary sediment basins of varying sizes and depths would be constructed adjacent to the drainage channels and throughout the site and removed at the conclusion of construction.

Development within the channels would be limited to access road crossings and potential subsurface collector lines. ~~Twelve~~Approximately twelve box culverts and eight low-water crossings would be installed at the intersection of access roads and drainage channels, and permanent protection berms would be constructed along the edges of the arrays near these flow corridors to prevent occasional side channel flows from entering the array fields. Temporary and permanent fiber rolls would also be installed on slopes before they transition into steeper slopes to control runoff.

2.4.9 ~~2.4.7~~ Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials Management

Construction would generate solid waste. All waste generated during construction would be stored in wind-proof and wildlife-proof containers that periodically would be transported to an off-site disposal facility authorized to accept the waste. During construction, portable sanitary facilities would be located in the project area and maintained by a local contractor. ~~Concurrently, a septic system would be designed and constructed adjacent to the project buildings to support operation and maintenance employee's sanitary needs. An approximately 2,500-gallon septic tank and adjacent leaching area would be installed.~~

During ~~operation~~operations and maintenance, some PV panels would require replacement due to breakage or other damage or to take advantage of new technologies. Removed PV panels would be recycled or disposed of in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal standards and regulations.

Hazardous materials that may be used and stored during construction and/or ~~operation~~operations and maintenance could include gasoline and diesel fuel, paints, thinners, solvents, sealants, lubricants, hydraulic fluids, herbicides. Facility transformers would contain non-polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB)-rated dielectric fluid. Due to the non-hazardous nature of these transformer fluids, secondary containment is not required. Facility breakers may contain SF6 gas insulating fluid depending on final design but will comply with California Air Resources Board regulations.

Hazardous materials would be stored within secondary containment to control any potential leaks of oils, grease, fuels, and other hazardous materials stored at the project site. All potential contaminants would be stored and used at least 50 feet from any defined or constructed channels or basins at all times. If quantities exceed regulatory thresholds, a spill prevention control and countermeasure (SPCC) plan would be developed prior to project construction in accordance with applicable regulations and would include a facility diagram that would identify the location and contents of hazardous materials containers; potential equipment failures; containment and diversionary structures; facility drainage; personnel, training, and spill prevention procedures; and emergency contact information. Diversionary structures meeting the requirements of the SPCC plan would be provided for oil-containing equipment, including transformers, at the project site. Transformers would be inspected on a regular basis to detect and respond to any leakage.

All use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials associated with the project would be done in strict accordance with federal, state, and local regulations and guidelines. Employees would be trained in the appropriate protocol for notification and cleanup of hazardous materials. Additionally, the site

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would be supplied with adequate spill containment kits and personal protective equipment in case of a~~-~~release.

2.5 ~~2.5~~ Construction

The following sections provide details about the timeline and process for construction of the project. Once construction is complete, the project would operate for approximately ~~30 years.~~ 40 years. Construction would begin in the second quarter of 2026, and initial operation would begin in the fourth quarter of 2027. Full-scale commercial operation is anticipated to begin by the second quarter of 2028.

2.5.1 ~~2.5.1~~ *Construction Schedule and Workforce*

Construction of the project is anticipated to begin in ~~2025~~the second quarter of 2026 and occur over an approximately 18-month period and consist of overlapping construction stages. Stage 1 would include mobilization, site preparation, grading, fencing, preparation of roads and laydown areas, and ~~trenching.~~installation of measures in the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) as well as erosion control features. Stage 2 would include installation of solar array structural components including ~~cables,~~ piles, racking systems, ~~inverters,~~ and ~~modules~~foundations. Stage 3 would include installation of the solar and BESS inverters, solar panels, battery storage systems, and ancillary equipment, and would also include trenching activities to install cables and other electrical equipment. Stage 4 would include inspections, testing, and commissioning~~, and testing.~~. Stage 1 would be from months 1 to 8, Stage 2 would be from months 4 to 12, ~~and~~ Stage 3 would occur during months 10 to 116, and Stage 4 would occur during months 15 to 18. An average of 200 construction workers would operate daily on-site, with an anticipated 300 construction workers during peak construction activities.

The typical construction work schedule is expected to be from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. However, to meet schedule demands or to reduce impacts, it may be necessary to work early mornings, evenings, or ~~nights and~~ on weekends during certain construction phases. The work schedule may be modified throughout the year to account for changing weather conditions (e.g., starting the workday earlier in the summer months to avoid work during the hottest part of the day for health and safety reasons). If construction work takes place outside these typical hours, activities would comply with San Bernardino County standards for construction noise levels. For safety reasons, certain construction tasks, including final electrical terminations, must be performed after dark when no energy is being produced. The project would use restricted nighttime task lighting during construction. Lighting would include only what is needed to provide a safe workplace, and lights would be focused downward, shielded, and directed toward the interior of the site to minimize light exposure outside the construction area.

2.5.2 ~~2.5.2~~ *Preconstruction Activities (Stage 1)*

Prior to construction, all contractors, subcontractors, and other on-site personnel would receive Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training regarding the appropriate work practices necessary to effectively understand and implement the biological commitments in the project description, implement the mitigation measures, comply with applicable environmental laws and regulations, avoid and minimize impacts, and understand the importance of these resources and the purpose and necessity of protecting them.

Qualified biologists would conduct preconstruction surveys for sensitive species. Sensitive resource areas would be flagged so they are avoided or appropriately managed during construction. Preconstruction field

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survey work would include identifying precise locations of the project site boundary and desert tortoise and security fencing. Construction staging areas would be established for storing materials, construction equipment, and vehicles. These features would be subsequently staked in the field. No paint or permanent discoloring agents would be applied to rocks or vegetation to indicate survey or construction limits. All off-road vehicle travel, fence installation, and staging area establishment would be surveyed and/or monitored by qualified biologists, archaeologists, and tribal monitors, as appropriate. The preconstruction field surveys would be conducted during daylight hours, and vary in length and timing, depending on the species found on-site. The proposed WEAP training would be required before a worker would be allowed to work on the site. These trainings would also occur on a continuous basis during construction.

2.5.3 ~~2.5.3~~ Site Preparation (Stage 1)

As shown in ~~Figure 2-9,~~Figure 2-12, approximately 2,~~081~~059 acres throughout the site would be disturbed. Grubbing and grading would be required across a majority of the site to level rough or undulating areas ~~of the site and~~, including around roads and laydown areas, as well as the BESS yard, substation yard, and switchyard. Grubbing and grading would also be required to prepare soils for concrete foundations for substation equipment, inverters, energy storage systems, and the operations and maintenance buildings. Grubbing would involve the removal of vegetation from the construction site, while grading would include earthwork to achieve a certain base or slope. Mowing, minimal grubbing, and grading may also be required in the array areas to prepare the site to receive pile foundations. There would be approximately 630,000 cubic yards of cut and 180,100 cubic yards of fill, thus requiring approximately 449,900 cubic yards of cut on-site. The 449,900 cubic yards of net cut ~~will~~would be ~~transported to~~balanced throughout the ~~nearest Class II or Class III landfill with~~disturbed area within the ~~capacity to receive it.~~ project site.

Per Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District Rule 403, as part of project construction, the applicant would develop a Dust Control Plan that describes all applicable dust control measures to address construction-related dust (Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District 2020). Further, a ~~Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (~~SWPPP~~)~~ or SWPPP-equivalent document required by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) would be prepared by a qualified engineer or erosion control specialist and would be implemented before construction. The SWPPP would be designed to reduce potential impacts related to erosion and surface water quality during construction activities and throughout the life of the project. It would include project information and best management practices (BMPs). The BMPs would include dewatering procedures, stormwater runoff quality control measures, concrete waste management, stormwater detention, watering for dust control, and construction of perimeter silt fences, as needed.

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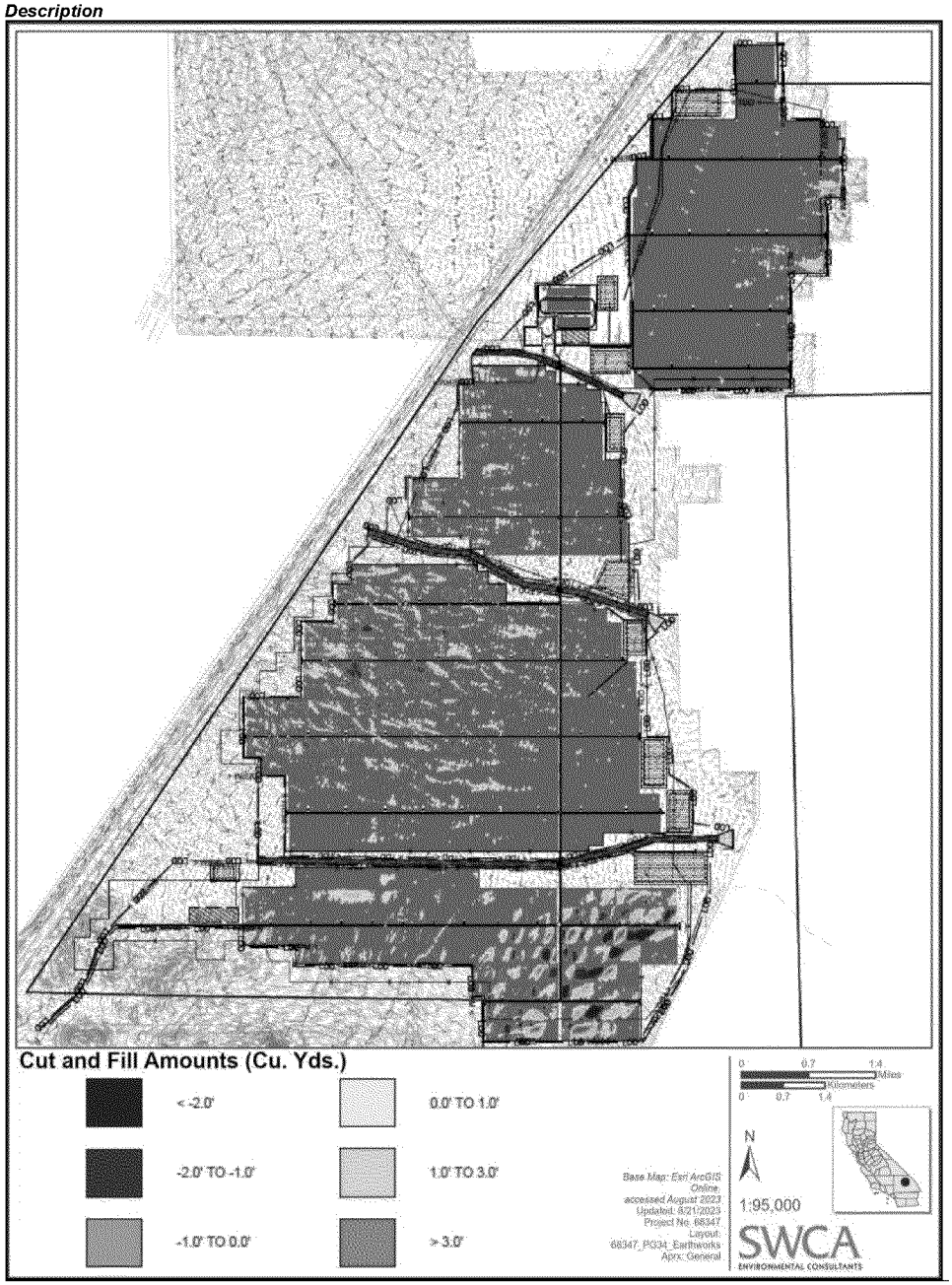

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~~**Figure 2-9. Proposed earthwork.**~~

2.5.4 ~~*2.5.4*~~ *Solar Array Assembly and Construction (Stage 2)*

Construction of the solar arrays would begin with the installation of array support posts, which would be driven into the soil using a pile/vibratory/rotary driving technique to a depth of approximately ~~8 to 12 feet.~~6 to 12 feet. Single-axis solar tracking structures would be fastened to the support piles. Once the support structures are in place, solar panels would be attached to the support frame. The assembled groups of solar panels would be wired together into strings through connectors on the back of the modules. Assembled panel sections would then be connected to combiner boxes located throughout the arrays that would deliver power to the inverter. Output wires from combiner boxes would be routed along an underground trench system approximately 3 to ~~4~~6 feet deep and 1 to ~~3~~6 feet wide, to the central inverter. Central inverters ~~and transformer pads. Inverters~~ would be mounted on concrete pads or driven piles. ~~Inverters and transformers~~Central inverters would be brought in by tractor-trailers through the Rasor Road site entrance and delivered directly to the mounting pad sites. ~~where they are placed by mobile crane.~~

~~2.5.5~~

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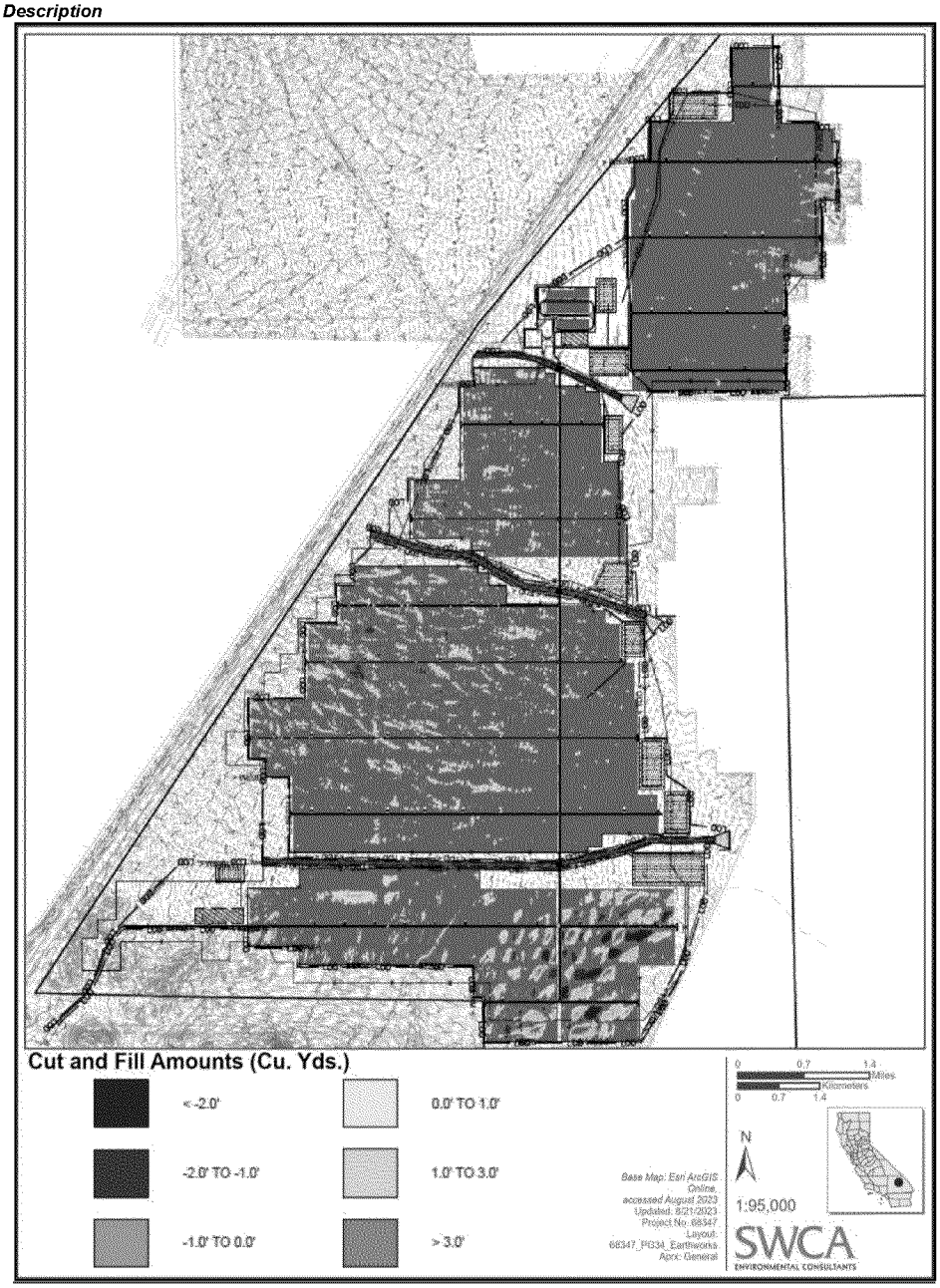

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Figure 2-12. Proposed earthwork.

2.5.5 *Substation ~~and~~, Switchyard, and Gen-tie Construction (Stage 3)*

Construction of the project substation, switchyard, and interconnection to the Mead-Adelanto 500-kV transmission line would occur concurrently with the construction of the solar arrays. ~~One~~In order to construct the transmission line, one tower would be removed from the existing line, and ~~two turning~~multiple new tower structures would be constructed adjacent to location of the removed tower. The ~~turning structures~~new towers would ~~direct~~carry the 500-kV transmission line into and out of the new switchyard. The sequence of construction would be to install the new towers and equipment, string the new line, then request and outage to cut in the new line to the existing Mead-Adelanto line.

The proposed gen-tie line which would connect the new switching station to the project substation would be installed using concrete caisson foundations or driven poles. Upon installation of all poles, the line insulators and switches would be installed. Upon installation of all line equipment, the conductors would be strung along the poles.
The substation and switchyard areas would be graded and compacted to an approximately level grade.

~~A substation and switchyard~~ and raised at least one foot above the adjacent grade to prevent flooding. Upon completion of the raised pad, concrete foundations, underground cabling, and a grounding grid would be installed ~~as required. Multiple concrete pads and/or piers would be~~. Upon completion of the underground work, steel structures would be installed to mount equipment. Once the steel structures are constructed ~~as foundations for~~, the substation equipment ~~and the remaining area would be graveled. Concrete piers and footings would be installed to support the transmission towers, switchyard, and substation buswork. Electrical~~would be installed including transformers, ~~switchgear~~switches, breakers, and ~~related substation facilities would be designed~~control enclosures. Then, wiring and terminations will be performed at all equipment, after which equipment testing will be performed.

The gen-tie line would be routed to the project switchyard by boring under I-15. The boring operation would be accomplished by constructing a boring pit on each side of I-15 to initiate and terminate the bore. The gen-tie line would cross I-15 through bores in a 200-foot-wide corridor at a 90-degree angle and would be installed per Caltrans requirements. Alternative design concepts for boring design, including through an existing culvert, may be considered based on project requirements. ~~installed/constructed to transform the 34.5-kV power on the collection~~No overhead generation-tie lines ~~to the transmission line voltage.~~ crossing I-15 are proposed.

2.5.6 ~~2.5.6~~ *Electrical Construction Activities (Stage 3)*

Buried electrical lines for DC array wiring and AC wiring between inverters and transformers would then be installed using trenching machines. The trenches would be approximately 3 to ~~4~~6 feet deep and 1 to ~~3~~6 feet wide. The trenched areas would be ~~filled once~~backfilled and compacted after the cables are ~~buried. After this work is complete, and depending on the level of ground preparation chosen, the surveyors, vegetation cutters, graders, and trenchers would move on to the next block.~~laid into place It is anticipated that the solar panels would require one washing during the construction phase prior to energizing and performance testing of the arrays in order to remove the dust that has accumulated on the panels during construction.

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The medium-voltage collection cables would be trenched at depths up to 4 to 8 feet using a trenching machine. The trenches would be approximately 12 to ~~24~~36 inches wide. Multiple trenches may be placed adjacent to each other, depending on the number of collector circuits in a particular location. The cables would be ~~manually~~ placed within the trenches in layers (as necessary) followed by ~~a~~ backfill and compaction operation. Alternatively, a single pass trenching and cable ~~lay box would~~installation machine could be used to automate the cable placement and backfill process. The main trenching operations would be for installation of DC cables from the combiner boxes to the ~~inverter skids~~inverters and installation of AC collector circuits between ~~inverter skids~~inverters and the substation. The collector cable would be installed by circuit in conduits, with each circuit contained in a single 6-inch-diameter conduit (typical) spaced approximately 10 feet on center. The exact locations would be determined during detailed design. ~~The gen-tie line would be routed to the project switchyard by boring under I-15. The boring operation would be accomplished by constructing a boring pit on each side of I-15 to initiate and terminate the bore. The gen-tie line would cross I-15 through bores in a 200-foot-wide corridor at a 90-degree angle and would be installed per Caltrans requirements. Alternative design concepts for boring design, including through an existing culvert, may be considered based on project requirements. No overhead generation tie lines crossing I-15 are proposed.~~

2.5.7 ~~2.5.7~~ Construction Equipment and Materials

Standard construction equipment would be used during construction, including earth-moving equipment (e.g., bulldozers, excavators, backhoes) and road-building equipment (e.g., compactors, scrapers, graders). Construction equipment would include air compressors, all-terrain passenger vehicles, backhoes, cranes, a drill rig, tractor-trailers, flat-bed trucks, ~~front-end loaders~~telehandlers, pick-up trucks, pile drivers, trenchers, portable generators, and water trucks. Construction equipment and maintenance trucks would be maintained ~~at all times~~ to minimize leaks of motor oils, hydraulic fluids, and fuels. No extremely hazardous materials are currently anticipated to be produced, used, stored, or disposed of as a result of the project.

Most of the fuel required by construction and operation staff vehicles and engines would be procured at commercial gas stations in the local area, such as at the service station at Rasor Road or in Baker. ~~To fuel construction equipment, mobile fueling and maintenance vehicles would be brought on a daily basis as needed.~~ A limited amount of #2 diesel and gasoline petroleum fuels (approximately 500 gallons each) would be stored in the staging areas in above-grade steel tanks with secondary containment.

Concrete would be required for building or structure footings and foundations and pads for inverters, transformers, water tank footings, and substation equipment. In areas where driven support posts are not practical for the solar arrays, ~~precast concrete ballasted supports~~pre-drilling and installation of posts with sand slurry may be used.

2.5.8 ~~2.5.8~~ Construction Vehicle Access and Traffic

All construction materials would be delivered by truck. Most truck traffic would occur on designated truck routes and major streets. Construction traffic would include periodic truck deliveries of materials and supplies, equipment, recyclables, trash, and other truck shipments, ~~and~~as well as construction worker commuting vehicles. Most construction equipment and vehicles would be brought to the site at the beginning of ~~the~~each construction ~~process~~phase during construction mobilization and remain on-site throughout the duration of the construction ~~activities~~phase for which they were needed. Generally, the equipment and vehicles would not be driven on public roads while in use for the project. Equipment will be brought to site on trailers with permitted load as required by Caltrans.

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Over the approximately 18-month construction period, the project would require approximately ~~5~~1,000- truckloads of construction materials per month for delivery of components and construction materials, including concrete. Up to 90,000 truckloads would result over the total construction period, excluding travel by construction workers. As water is obtained from an off-site source during construction, an estimated 17 water transport truck trips per day would also be required. Average truck traffic would be approximately 80 trucks per day, 25 days per month. The project would use a just-in-time delivery system with supplies and components delivered on a schedule to minimize on-site storage needs.

The project would prepare a Construction Traffic Management Plan, to provide construction vehicle information, facilitate traffic control methods, and provide a designated contact for addressing complaints.

2.5.9 ~~2.5.9~~ *Construction Water Supply and Use*

Project construction would take place over approximately 18 months. Water would be needed primarily for dust control and soil compaction during the first 90 days of grading activities, with small amounts used for sanitary and other purposes. During Stage 1 and Stage 2 of construction, which includes the ~~90day~~90-day grading period, the project would require approximately ~~196,500~~200,000 gpd, or approximately ~~220~~336 acre-feet per year (af/yr.~~)~~). Water requirements in the second year of construction are expected to be less than 110 af/yr, or half of the requirement of the first year of construction.

Five temporary water tanks of 100,000 gallons would be brought on-site by truck to store water in anticipation of construction water needs. The tanks would be housed on trailers located along access roads or within areas that have been cleared for installation of project components. The tanks may be moved around the site as construction progresses and would be used to fill on-site water trucks. The temporary water storage tanks would be removed after construction. Water used for construction would be supplied by ~~two existing~~a private groundwater ~~wells~~well in ~~Newbury Springs~~Baker, San Bernardino County.

2.6 ~~2.6~~ Operation and Maintenance

The project would begin operation in 2027 and operate 7 days a week, 365 days a year, with an approximately ~~35~~40-year anticipated lifespan. 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 (SCADA) system, troubleshooting the collector lines and repairing damaged cables, connections, or equipment, performing preventative maintenance per manufacturer recommendations, and conducting panel-washing activities periodically through the year. Additional maintenance would be required to maintain the administrative buildings, fencing and signage, roadways, and other ancillary facilities at the site. Project would hire local workforce as available to perform operations and maintenance.

2.6.1 ~~2.6.1~~ *Operation and Maintenance Workforce*

The project substation would be uncrewed during operation; however, a workforce of approximately ~~25~~2 to ~~40~~4 personnel would visit the substation on an as needed basis for maintenance, equipment operation, and/or security. The project would be remotely controlled, eliminating the need for permanent on-site employees. Final staffing levels and configuration would be based on the final site configuration and early operating and maintenance experience. The facility would not be accessible to the public, and access will be infrequent and limited to authorized personnel.

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2.6.2 ~~2.6.2~~ *Automated Facility Control and Monitoring System*

The project would be operated and monitored by means of a SCADA system located in the control building. Sensors located at each inverter~~/tracker combiner~~, BESS, project switches, and breakers would report operational parameters. Data- access ~~and inverters are~~, as well as the operation of the project PV and BESS systems would be controlled, either on-site or remotely, through a high-security system. The- non-conductive fiber-optic communications cable would be co-located with the low-voltage DC and AC wiring to reduce environmental impacts.

Personnel communication would use two-way radio/receptor stations, which would require a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) license.

2.6.3 ~~2.6.3~~ *Operational Water Supply and Use*

Project operation would require water for ~~potable use,~~ dust control, panel washing, and fire protection. The non-potable water for the project would be supplied by ~~two~~an existing private groundwater ~~wells~~well located in ~~Newberry Springs~~Baker, San Bernardino County. This water would be trucked in from ~~these wells and installed in three permanent water storage tanks~~this well to support project operations.

~~An approximately 36,000-gallon water tank would be installed on a high point near the operation and maintenance building to provide storage of panel-washing water.~~ Water would be used to clean the PV panels; dust and dirt build-up reduces the amount of incoming solar radiation striking the active PV layer within the panel. To reduce this effect, panel washing ~~with water stored in the 36,000-gallon water tank~~ would be conducted ~~two or~~ three times per year over a 3-week period during operations, or- additionally as necessitated. The water would drain by gravity to panel-washing trucks for use. ~~The project estimates that each panel~~Panel washing~~, including additional miscellaneous operational water needs,~~ would require ~~a total of 1,200~~approximately 2.8 af (912,384 gallons ~~per day (gpd) or 1.3 acre-feet~~) of water per year ~~(af/yr). Based on these project assumptions, the average annual water usage for panel washing would be approximately 3,600 gpd or 3.9 af/yr~~. In total, an estimated 5.6 af/yr of water would be used for panel washing, dust control and suppression during operation.

~~Another approximately 22,500~~Three 10,000-gallon ~~tank~~water tanks would be located throughout the site near the operation and maintenance building, BESS, and adjacent to the solar arrays. The water tanks would provide storage of water used for fire suppression ~~water~~. The tank would not require a regular supply of water because the water would be withdrawn only in the event of a fire. The tank would be monitored periodically and refilled as needed to replace evaporative losses. For fire suppression water supply, the project would conform to County requirements, which incorporate National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards 1142 and 13 by reference and provide minimum requirements for fire suppression water supply where no public water supply is available (Standard 1142) and sprinkler systems (Standard 13).

2.7 ~~2.7~~ Decommissioning and Site Reclamation

The solar ROW grant is authorized for a 30-year term and would be subject to renewal at that time. When- the project reaches the end of its useful life, structures and equipment would be removed for reuse or sold as scrap, and the land surface would be reclaimed. A Decommissioning and Site Reclamation Plan has been prepared for the project. Because site conditions are likely to change over the life of the project, and to ensure that the decommissioning and site reclamation plan addresses all necessary conditions, the draft will be finalized and approved by the BLM ~~and/or CDFW~~ before decommissioning and reclamation activities begin.

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Upon decommissioning, aboveground structures would be dismantled and removed from the site. Where required by the BLM ~~and/or CDFW~~, concrete pads or foundations would be demolished, and rubble would be removed to an off-site disposal facility authorized to accept the waste. Belowground facilities may be disconnected at the surface and left in place in conformance with guidance and approval from the BLM. New project access roads and corridors would be closed, with the exception of Rasor Road, which would remain accessible.

Decommissioning of the substation and switchyard would involve deconstruction of structures. Salvaged materials would be recycled to the extent possible. Material that cannot be recycled would be transported for disposal in authorized landfills. Underground cabling and conduit may be left in place. The substation and office/storage areas would be graded to approximate the natural contour.

The applicant would prepare and implement a final closure and reclamation plan addressing removal of structures and site restoration in conformance with BLM ~~and/or CDFW~~ requirements at the time of decommissioning. Construction hours and site cleanliness practices would be approximately the same during decommissioning as during construction.

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CHAPTER 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Soda Mountain Solar, LLC (applicant), proposes to construct, operate, and maintain a utility-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) electrical generating and storage facility and associated infrastructure to generate and deliver renewable electricity to the statewide electricity transmission grid. The project would generate up to 300 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy and include up to 300 MW of battery storage. The project also includes future decommissioning, which is anticipated to occur after 30 years of operation.
The project is located on approximately 2,670 acres of land administered by the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California Desert District, within the jurisdiction of the Barstow Field Office in San Bernardino County (County).

1.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project's primary goal is to contribute to the achievement of California's renewable energy goals and create a vital new point of interconnection for renewable energy in San Bernardino County to connect to California's electric transmission infrastructure. The project objectives are identified as follows:

- Assist the State of California in achieving or exceeding its Renewables Portfolio Standard and greenhouse gas emissions reduction objectives by developing and constructing new California Renewables Portfolio Standard–qualified solar power generation facilities producing approximately 300 MW.
- Produce and transmit electricity at a competitive cost.
- Provide a new source of energy storage that assists the state in achieving its energy storage mandates.
- Use the existing transmission unused capacity that provides approximately 300 MW of capacity.
- Utilize existing energy infrastructure to the extent possible by locating solar power generation facilities near existing infrastructure, such as electrical transmission facilities.
- Site solar power generation facilities in areas of San Bernardino County that have the best solar resource to maximize energy production and the efficient use of land.
- Develop a solar power generation facility in San Bernardino County that would support the economy by investing in the local community, creating local construction jobs, and increasing tax and fee revenue to the County.

1.3 PROJECT LOCATION

The project is located entirely on federally owned land managed by the BLM. (Figure 1-1). The 2,670-acre project site is located approximately 7 miles southwest of the community of Baker in unincorporated San Bernardino County, California, approximately 50 miles northeast of Barstow. The project site is located in portions of Sections 1 and 11–14, Township 12 North, Range 7 East; Sections 25 and 36, Township 13 North, Range 7 East; Sections 6, 7, 8, and 18, Township 13 North, Range 8 East, San Bernardino Meridian, California.

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1.4 PROJECT ELEMENTS

The project proposes to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission a 300-MW PV solar facility located on approximately 2,670 acres. (Figure 1-2). The 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 the East Array and South Arrays 1, 2, and 3), operation and maintenance buildings and structures, stormwater infrastructure, and related infrastructure and improvements.
2. A substation and switchyard for interconnection to the existing transmission system.
3. Approximately 300 MW of battery energy storage system (BESS) across 18 acres.

The project would operate year-round and would generate electricity during daylight hours when the sun is shining. The project would generate and deliver solar-generated power to the regional electrical grid through an interconnection with the existing Marketplace-Adelanto 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line operated by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP).

1.5 PROJECT SCHEDULE

Construction of the project is anticipated to begin in ~~2025~~the second quarter of 2026, occur over an approximately 18-month period, consist of overlapping construction stages. The project would begin operation in the further quarter of 2027 and begin full-scale commercial operation by the first quarter of 2028. The project would operate 7 days a week, 365 days a year, with an approximately ~~30~~40-year anticipated lifespan.

1.6 PROJECT OWNERSHIP

The project site is located entirely on lands owned by the BLM. The BLM lease owner of the project is a Limited Liability Company named Soda Mountain Solar LLC. The operator of the project is VC Renewables. The power produced by the project would be conveyed to the regional electrical grid through an interconnection with the existing transmission line operated by LADWP.

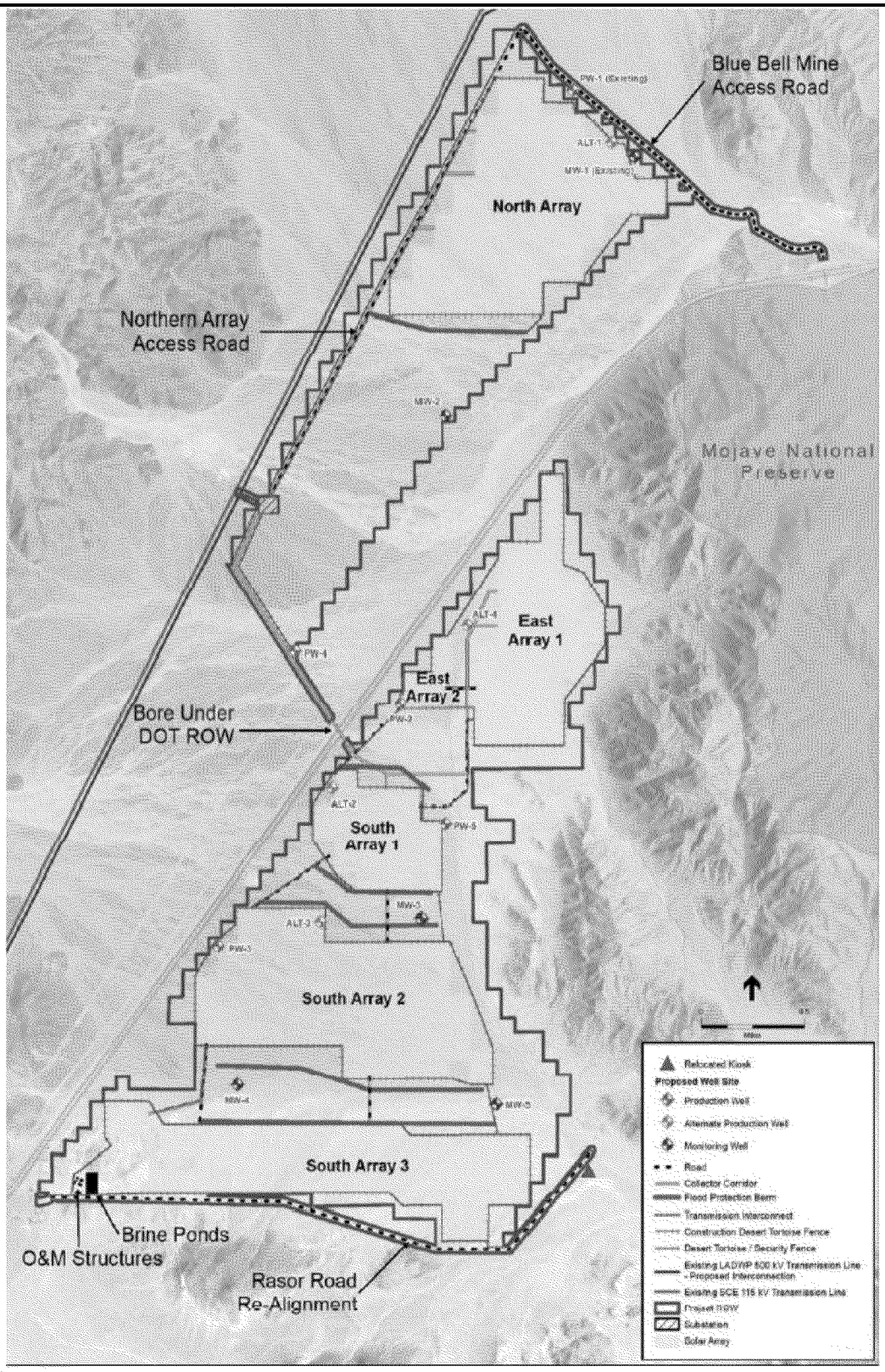
1.7 BACKGROUND AND PROJECT HISTORY

On December 14, 2007, the project applicant, Soda Mountain Solar, LLC, filed a right-of-way (ROW) grant application with the BLM to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission the project (Case File Number CACA-049584). A ROW grant requires compliance with applicable state environmental laws, including the need to obtain an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) and Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA) from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), waste discharge requirements (WDRs) from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and associated approvals of any required mitigation measures. This original project application covered 4,179 acres of BLM-administered land and included a 358-MW solar facility on a proposed development footprint of approximately 2,222 acres (Figure 1-~~1~~3). All of the land within the project application area was within the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan, a Congress-designated, 25-million-acre expanse of resource-rich desert lands in southern California through the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. The proposed project required an amendment to the CDCA Plan to allow use of the project site for solar development. The ROW grant application and proposed project's need for a CDCA Plan Amendment (PA) triggered the need for environmental analysis of potential impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

As part of the original project proposal, Soda Mountain Solar, LLC, applied for groundwater well permits with the County of San Bernardino on August 2, 2012. The groundwater well permit applications triggered the need for environmental analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The BLM and the County jointly prepared a proposed PA to the CDCA Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under NEPA and CEQA.

The BLM and the County published the final CDCA PA and EIS/EIR document on June 12, 2015. The BLM issued a Record of Decision (ROD) to approve a revised configuration of the application and associated amendment to the CDCA Plan in March 2016 (BLM 2016). Compared with the original project analyzed in the PA and EIS/EIR, the revised project configuration in the ROD removed 571 acres from the proposed development (the North Solar Array), reduced impacts to visual resources, and included future efforts to restore connectivity for desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) (Figure 1-~~2~~4).

Soda Mountain Solar, LLC, also filed revised groundwater well permit applications with the County on May 12, 2016. The County held a hearing on adoption of the EIR and approval of the groundwater permits on August 23, 2016. Despite the project receiving a ROD from the BLM and recommendation from the County Planning Staff to approve the project, the County Board of Supervisors declined to certify the EIR. As the County did not certify the EIR, no decision was made regarding the groundwater permits. The revised project configuration approved in the BLM ROD is the same as the proposed project being analyzed under this EIR, with the additional removal of any groundwater wells.



SWCA ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

Source: County of San Bernardino, 2015

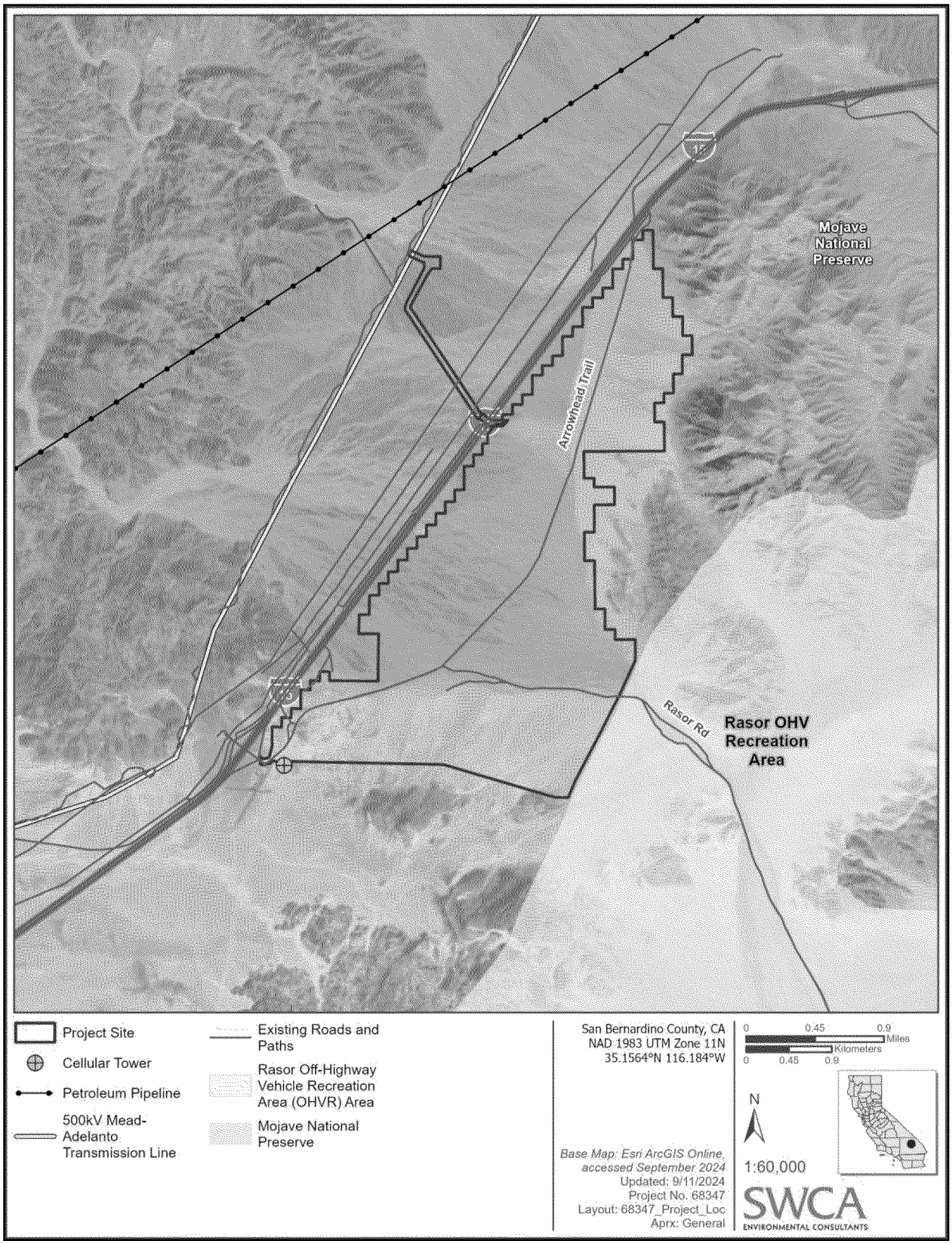


Figure 1-1. Project site location and existing conditions pre-construction.

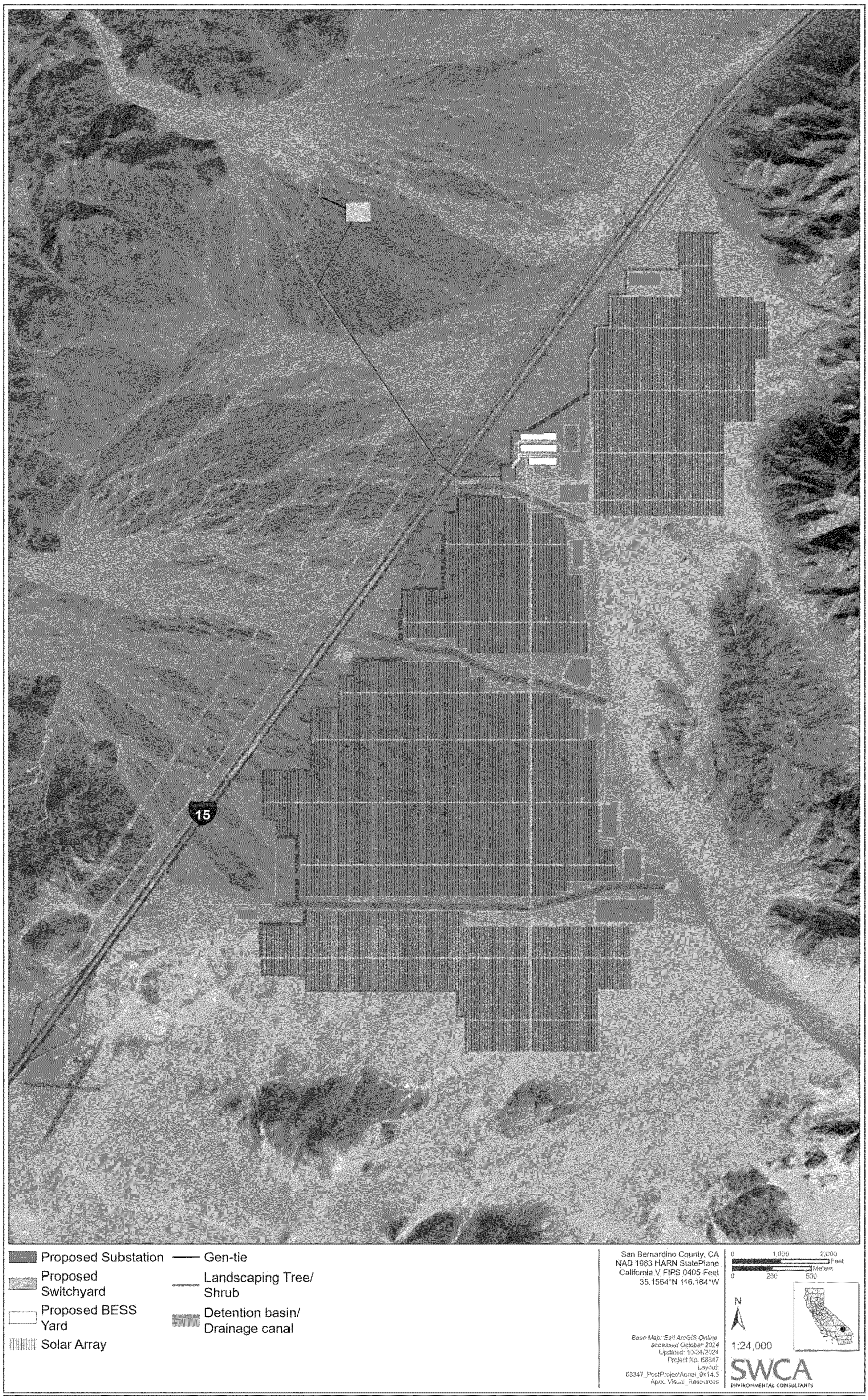
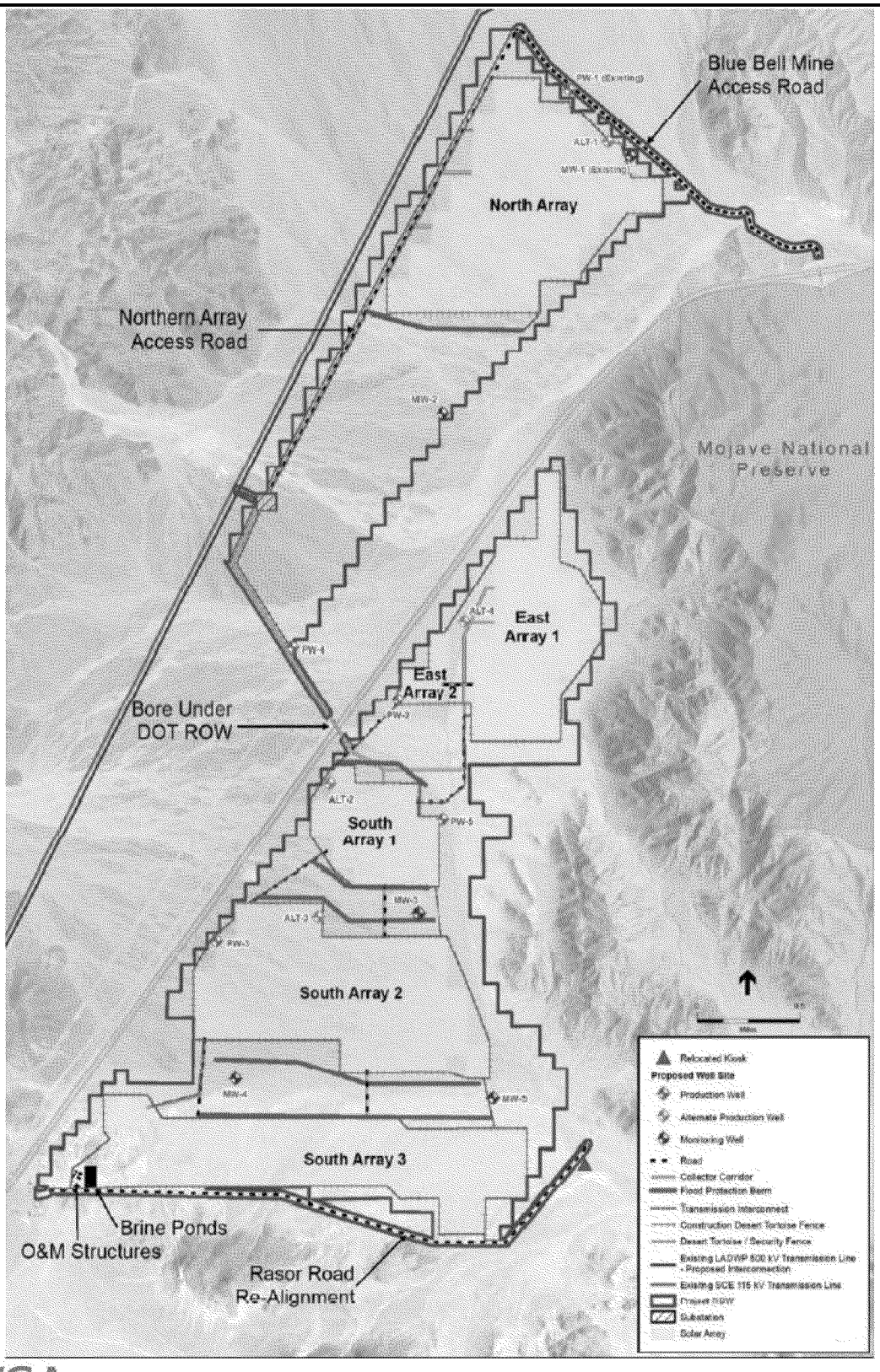


Figure 1-2. Project simulation post-construction.



SWCA ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

Source: County of San Bernardino, 2015

Figure 1-3. Project proposed in 2015.

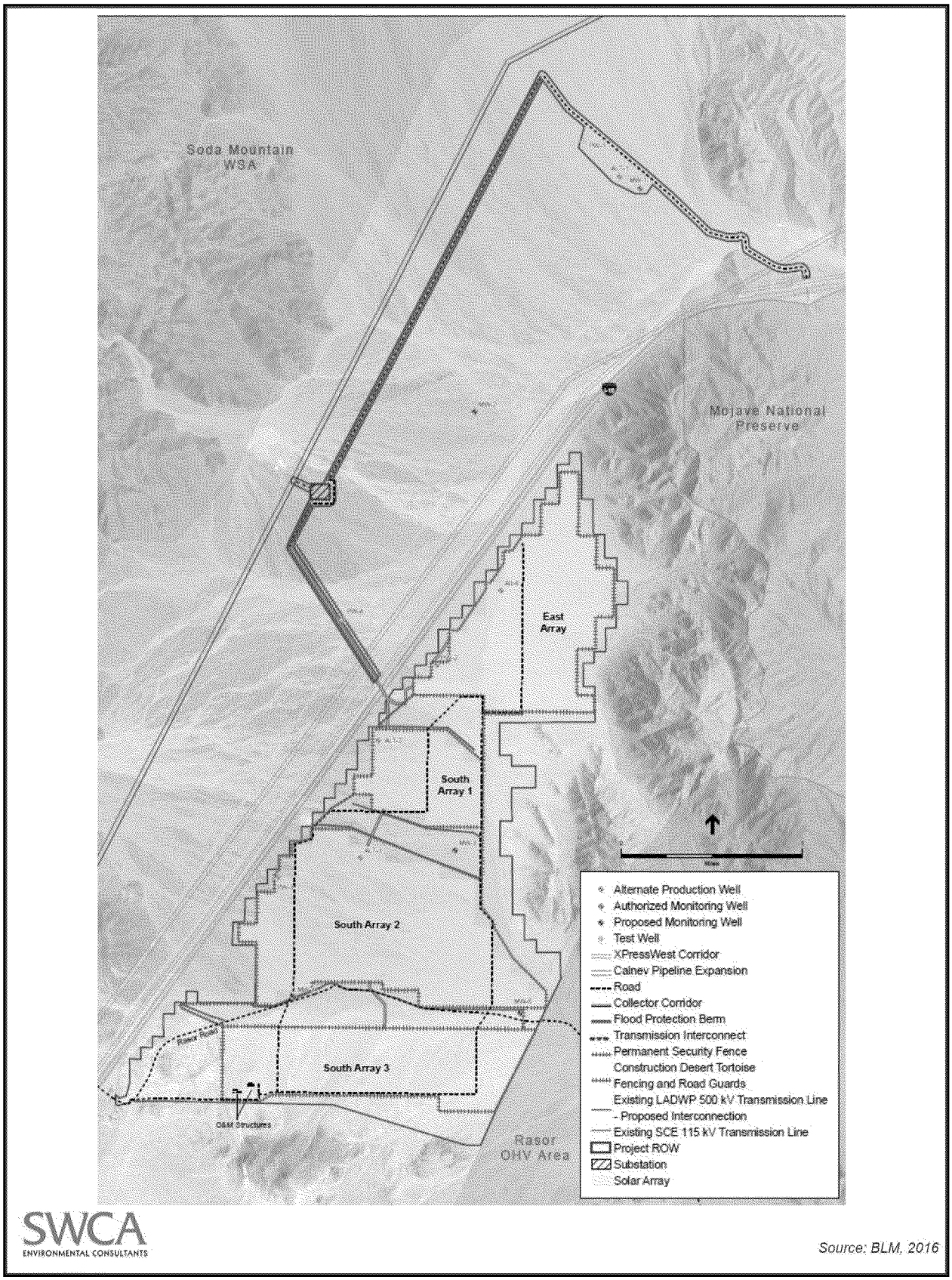


Figure 1-24. Project approved by BLM in 2016.

1.7.1 References Cited

Bureau of Land Management (BLM). 2016. *Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan, Land Use Plan Amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan, Bishop Resource Management Plan, and Bakersfield Resource Management Plan*. Available at: https://eplanning.blm.gov/public_projects/lup/66459/133474/163144/DRECP_BLM_LUPA.pdf. Accessed January 2024.

From: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards [jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov]
Sent: 3/20/2025 9:16:31 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3cc35de240cf4253af9cc7d3d2cbb643-Ackerman, J]; Guerra, Christina@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3c08929c117e4da5bfb45f48fa749c0a-Waterboards]
CC: Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c1ff1d38281a4068b2708271d22c0d94-Abulaban, A]; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=fdbc9163bf404f4d84f0a53c6ed84ab0-Waterboards]
Subject: RE: Data Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

James, Christina Guerra and Tiffany Steinert are the contacts for Soda Mountain. I ask that my team keep me in the loop. @Guerra, Christina@Waterboards can you follow up with James on our comments on Soda Mountain?

Thanks. Jan

From: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 12:43 PM
To: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Data Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

Caution: External Email. Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact DIT or use the Phish Alert Button.

Jan: It looks like we have received a majority of data responses to the CEC's determination of incompleteness (9-3-2024).

Based on Adam White's data requests, it appears LRWQCB staff sent comments, unfortunately these did not get posted to the docket.

Can you provide me with the applicable contact on your staff for the Soda Mountain project so I can send docket links for those documents I believe might be pertinent to LRWQCB concerns.

If possible, please provide the email or document with LRWQCB staff comments regarding the initial Soda Mountain application.

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
ENERGY COMMISSION
SINCE 1974

From: Ackerman, James@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=3CC35DE240CF4253AF9CC7D3D2CBB643-ACKERMAN, J]
Sent: 3/20/2025 10:37:24 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3c08929c117e4da5bfb45f48fa749c0a-Waterboards]; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=fdbc9163bf404f4d84f0a53c6ed84ab0-Waterboards]
CC: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6a535479ac2448c29afb308a1cd6fede-Waterboards]; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c1ff1d38281a4068b2708271d22c0d94-Abulaban, A]
Subject: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

Christina & Tiffany: It looks like we have received a majority of data responses to the CEC's determination of incompleteness (9-3-2024).

Here is a list of revised documents in our docket that I believe would be of interest to LRWQCB:

- TN261668_ CEC Data Request Response Set #2
- TN261595_Chapter 2_Project Description – February 2025 – Revision 1-1
- TN261597_Section 3.4 Biological Resources – February 2025 – Revision 1
- TN261601_Section 3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality – February 2025 – Revision 1
- TN261670_Appendix BB1 - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- TN261671_Appendix BB - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- TN261589_Appendix D3 – Restoration and Revegetation Plan for Temporary Impact Areas
- TN261604_Appendix E-1 Aquatic Resources Delineation
- TN261606_Appendix E-3 Request for Jurisdictional Determination
- TN261592_Appendix E-4 Waste Discharge Requirements
- TN261605_Appendix J Water Supply Report – February 2025 – Revision 1

Here is a link to the Soda Mountain Solar Project docket:
https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-03

Please review the available applicant response and revised documents and inform us of any omissions or deficiencies.

BTY: Could you provide the email or document with LRWQCB staff comments regarding the initial Soda Mountain application.

Some Items that have changed with the project:

- There will be no brine pond.
- The facility will be run remotely, so there will be no septic system or need for potable water supply.

Contact me if you have any questions.

James Ackerman, PG #6493

Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards [Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov]
Sent: 3/21/2025 9:58:34 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3cc35de240cf4253af9cc7d3d2cbb643-Ackerman, J]; Guerra, Christina@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3c08929c117e4da5bfb45f48fa749c0a-Waterboards]
CC: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c1ff1d38281a4068b2708271d22c0d94-Abulaban, A]; Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6a535479ac2448c29afb308a1cd6fede-Waterboards]
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project
Attachments: Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) - Request for Regional Water Board Comments

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Hi James,

Here is that email with our request for information.

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road
Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

- 760-241-7305
- 760-241-6583 Front Desk

tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov
Home Page | Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (ca.gov)

***Please submit all 401 Certification/Dredge & Fill documentation to the Lahontan email box at lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov. If your Project has been assigned to a staff person please include their name ***

From: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 5:02 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

I spoke with the PM and she informed me it is 25 days.

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division

Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 4:23 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi James,

Can you please provide us a timeline by which you need our response.

Thanks

Christina Guerra, P.G. 9475
Senior Engineering Geologist (Supervisor)

Land Disposal/401/Stormwater Unit
15095 Amargosa Road Bldg. 2, Ste 210
Victorville, CA 92394
Direct - (760) 241-7333, Cell - (760) 713-1380
christina.guerra@waterboards.ca.gov

California Water Boards
Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 4:01 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

Hi James,

Yes. Are you looking for the email that I first sent out requesting the application? If so, it is in the docket somewhere because I saw it there.

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road
Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

760-241-7305
760-241-6583 Front Desk
tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov
Home Page | Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (ca.gov)

***Please submit all 401 Certification/Dredge & Fill documentation to the Lahontan email box at lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov. If your Project has been assigned to a staff person please include their name ***

From: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 4:00 PM
To: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

Tiffany: For my information, is this the dredge and fill permit?

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 3:55 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>; Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi James,

Thanks for the list. This will help me find the items I need for the permit.

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road
Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

760-241-7305
760-241-6583 Front Desk
tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov
Home Page | Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (ca.gov)

***Please submit all 401 Certification/Dredge & Fill documentation to the Lahontan email box at lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov. If your Project has been assigned to a staff person please include their name ***

From: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 3:37 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

Caution: External Email. Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact DIT or use the Phish Alert Button.

Christina & Tiffany: It looks like we have received a majority of data responses to the CEC's determination of incompleteness (9-3-2024).

Here is a list of revised documents in our docket that I believe would be of interest to LRWQCB:

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- TN261595_Chapter 2_Project Description – February 2025 – Revision 1-1
- TN261597_Section 3.4 Biological Resources – February 2025 – Revision 1
- TN261601_Section 3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality – February 2025 – Revision 1
- TN261670_Appendix BB1 - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- TN261671_Appendix BB - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- TN261589_Appendix D3 – Restoration and Revegetation Plan for Temporary Impact Areas
- TN261604_Appendix E-1 Aquatic Resources Delineation
- TN261606_Appendix E-3 Request for Jurisdictional Determination
- TN261592_Appendix E-4 Waste Discharge Requirements
- TN261605_Appendix J Water Supply Report – February 2025 – Revision 1

Here is a link to the Soda Mountain Solar Project docket:
https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-03

Please review the available applicant response and revised documents and inform us of any omissions or deficiencies.

BTY: Could you provide the email or document with LRWQCB staff comments regarding the initial Soda Mountain application.

Some Items that have changed with the project:

- There will be no brine pond.
- The facility will be run remotely, so there will be no septic system or need for potable water supply.

Contact me if you have any questions.

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards [Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov]
Sent: 8/16/2024 6:31:47 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; McCann, Lisa@Waterboards [Lisa.McCann@waterboards.ca.gov]; White, Adam@Energy [Adam.White@Energy.ca.gov]; Crader, Phillip@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=7210c7994d3941d4a5501541b6a379f1-Waterboards]; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c1ff1d38281a4068b2708271d22c0d94-Abulaban, A]; Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]
CC: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6a535479ac2448c29afb308a1cd6fede-Waterboards]; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=fdbc9163bf404f4d84f0a53c6ed84ab0-Waterboards]
Subject: Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) - Request for Regional Water Board Comments
Attachments: SodaMountain_MOU Agencies Notice of Application Receipt.pdf

CEC team, in response to email notification of receipt of an Opt-in application for Soda Mountain Solar Project, dated August 2, 2024, I am your primary point of contact for coordination with the Regional Board for this project.

Lahontan Regional Board staff have reviewed relevant portions of the Opt-in application for Soda Mountain Solar Project. Based on the MOA between the Regional Board and CEC, we are providing our initial comments on the project with respect to water quality, what permitting requirements might be applicable, and the additional information we need to complete our evaluation. Once the additional information we outline below has been provided, we respectfully request 30 days to complete our review and evaluation.

1. We request the Applicant provide specific end use/disposal for all liquid and solid waste streams, including but not limited to excavated soil, solar panel waste, battery energy storage system waste, sanitary waste, process water, panel wash water, waste oil, solvents, and fuels. Additionally, we request the Applicant provide a full characterization (chemical composition) of all liquid waste streams. This information is necessary to determine whether we would request the Applicant to submit a Report of Waste Discharge.
2. The Opt-in application states an onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS) septic system is proposed to support employee sanitary needs. Information is not provided on the OWTS. We request the Applicant provide information on the OWTS including but not limited to project description, flow sources, average, daily, and annual volumes and, system type. The Opt-in application also states any wastewater that cannot be treated by the septic system would be collected and treated or disposed of off-site. We request the Applicant provide information on how this wastewater would be identified and the determination made that the OWTS cannot treat it. This information is necessary to determine whether we would request the Applicant to submit a Report of Waste Discharge.
3. In order for the Lahontan Water Board to be able to issue our permits in line with the CEC we will need the applicant to complete a 401 Water Quality Certification/Dredge and Fill application which can be found here - https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/water_issues/programs/clean_water_act_401/as.
4. Please provide a copy of construction plans that are at least 90% complete. This ensures that we've evaluated the final design and identified all significant permitting requirements with respect to water quality, including any additional impacts to surface waters.

5. The Water Boards preliminary mitigation ratio for this project is 3 to 1. This ratio assumes no temporal loss, in-kind mitigation, and loss of waters. We request the Applicant provide the compensatory mitigation plan. Additionally, we will need a restoration plan for temporary impacts.
6. The Jurisdictional Delineation report does not include maps of sufficient scale to identify waters of the state onsite or in the vicinity. We request the Applicant update this report to include appropriately scaled maps and supporting documentation. This information is necessary to determine whether waters of the state that may be present on site are included in the delineation as the Lahontan Water Board asserts jurisdiction over all channelized flow.
7. We request the Applicant provide a draft Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. This plan will help us better understand stormwater flow paths and capture for reuse and/or percolation, and aid in our determination of whether a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit or an individual stormwater permit would be appropriate for this project.
8. Will the project include stormwater infiltration ponds? If so, please include those design plans that and ensure they show the capacity and where the pond would discharge should they overflow.
9. We request the Applicant provide a full characterization (chemical composition) of the process water and panel wash water. We request the Applicant provide a process water flow diagram and panel wash water management plan, to include wash frequencies and estimated volumes of water generation. This information is necessary to determine whether sufficient mitigations are in place and whether we would request the Applicant submit a Report of Waste Discharge.
10. The Opt-in application states the disposal method for process water and panel wash water is evaporation. Information is not provided as to how process water and panel wash water will be evaporated (e.g., evaporation pond). We request the Applicant provide information on how process water and panel wash water will be evaporated. This information is necessary to determine whether a waste management unit (pond) is needed, which would require the Applicant submit a Report of Waste Discharge for an evaporation pond. This pond must be constructed, maintained, monitored, and closed in accordance with California Code of Regulations, title 27.

Please pass this information request to the Applicant. And please, let me know if you have any questions. Thank you.

Christina Guerra, P.G. 9475
Senior Engineering Geologist (Supervisor)

Land Disposal/401/Stormwater Unit
15095 Amargosa Road Bldg. 2, Ste 210
Victorville, CA 92394
Direct - (760) 241-7333, Cell - (760) 713-1380
christina.guerra@waterboards.ca.gov

CALIFORNIA
Water Boards

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, August 2, 2024 8:39 AM
To: Crader, Phillip@Waterboards <Phillip.Crader@waterboards.ca.gov>; Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards

<jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>; McCann, Lisa@Waterboards <Lisa.McCann@waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: White, Adam@Energy <Adam.White@Energy.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>; Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Waterboards Notification of Receipt of Opt-in application for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) per MOU

Caution: External Email. Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact DIT or use the Phish Alert Button.

Hello,

This email serves as notification of receipt of an Opt-in application under Public Resources Code 25519 for the proposed Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03). This project is proposed in San Bernardino County, California. The attached letter outlines project information and your responsibilities under Assembly Bill 205.

Adam White will be your technical staff contact for Water Resources. He will reach out to you to discuss the data completeness worksheet and data request format. We will include any data requests you have of the applicant in our Data Completeness Letter that will be posted to the proceeding's docket. Abdel-Karim (Karim) Abulaban is the unit supervisor.

If you have any technical questions, please contact Adam and Karim. If you have questions about the project in general or about the Opt-in process, please contact me.

This information should be provided within 15-days per the MOU, which falls on Friday August 16, 2024.
We appreciate your timely responses and look forward to coordinating with you as the evaluation moves forward.

Thank you,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=E4BBC7048B38485084BDB03FB494B25B-WORRALL, LI]
Sent: 3/21/2025 11:53:10 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]; Vorters, Dian@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=2c5604e712a74c029e412542e0db72ac-Vorters, Di]; Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]; Huber, Elizabeth@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=93f40660c3d446578d63390926fd5e5a-Huber, Eliz]; Chris Huntley [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=018948a34a3149c4a3833144594ae8b3-ff2eee5c-df]; Branch, Alexander(Harllee)@Wildlife [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=efe78fbc6c1e408da007e97ea1d8cdf6-WildlifeHar]; Black, Devin@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c6ec9f417a6e448aae52465b9f719b5d-ea9475b4-16]; Cabrera, Crystal@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ed6e32a127144ccfa19a6f4347765a9e-00a33618-ff]; Pinkerton, Matthew@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=88b6ef1fba134a2cb0aacd56262dc6c4-Pinkerton,]; Crisp, Ann@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b89c4de7ece742679d19e1e3ee713dc2-Crisp, Ann@]; Shirley Innecken [Shirley.Innecken@swca.com]; Epstein, Barry [bepstein@allenmatkins.com]; Justin Wood [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=86ee559cfc814439b69a025b0961d2a2-536cef40-79]; Jamison Miner [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e9a371186e0e402a994145a67d6e7684-546eb26e-f8]; Rodriguez, Magdalena@Wildlife [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=4f4ad51c29814356b0c486d7bbf5aefa-WildlifeMag]; Sharma, Shankar@Wildlife [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ff57c77ed43c4a89b8604d77f99a3104-WildlifeSha]
CC: Hannah Gbeh [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Subject: Fw: Soda Mountain Big horn sheep meeting- Agenda
Attachments: TN261667_20250209T201032_Appendix AA_Determination of Infeasibility for DR BIO-20.pdf

Hi all,

Below, Hannah has kindly provided an agenda for Monday's 8:30 am meeting. The applicant's response on the infeasibility of DR BIO-20 is attached for your reference.

Have a great weekend everyone and see you on Monday.

Thanks,

Lisa

From: Hannah Arkin
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 4:39 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy
Cc: Chang, Kaycee@Energy
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Big horn sheep meeting

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Lisa,

Here is our agenda for Monday's meeting.

- Introductions
- Applicant Team - Summary of Determination of Infeasibility (4 min)
- CDFW Staff - Questions and Comments
- CEC Staff - Questions and Comments

If you are able to distribute our determination of infeasibility letter to the meeting participants, that should help us have the most productive conversation possible. I have attached it to this email.

Thank you and have a wonderful weekend!

Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 1:32 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain Big horn sheep meeting

Hi Hannah,

Can you send an agenda for Monday's meeting. It would be helpful.

Thanks kindly,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	24-OPT-03
Project Title:	Soda Mountain Solar
TN #:	261667
Document Title:	Appendix AA_Determination of Infeasibility for DR BIO-20
Description:	Appendix AA provides a determination of infeasibility for CEC Data Request BIO-20, which requested an assessment of the feasibility of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope.
Filer:	Hannah Arkin
Organization:	Resolution Environmental
Submitter Role:	Applicant Consultant
Submission Date:	2/9/2025 8:10:48 PM
Docketed Date:	2/10/2025

February 9, 2025

Mr. Drew Bohan

Executive Director

California Energy Commission

715 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: DETERMINATION OF INFEASIBILITY FOR CEC DATA REQUEST BIO-20, SODA MOUNTAIN SOLAR PROJECT (24-OPT-03)

Dear Mr. Bohan,

Thank you for your letter titled "*Determination of Incomplete Application and Request for Information for the Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)",* issued on September 3, 2024. The following letter provides a detailed analysis and response regarding Data Request (DR) BIO-20, which requested an assessment of the feasibility of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope. This has been determined infeasible to implement as both a project alternative or mitigation measure. Implementing a 0.25-mile buffer as an alternative or mitigation measure would prevent the project from attaining most of the basic project objectives. Additionally, there are specific economic, legal, environmental, social, and technological factors that make implementing a 0.25-mile buffer infeasible as a project alternative or mitigation measure. This letter describes these conflicts with the basic project objectives and outlines the specific factors that result in a determination of infeasibility. All other data requests within the September 3, 2024 letter have been deemed feasible to implement.

1. INTRODUCTION

DR BIO-20 requests an assessment of feasibility of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope to address potential impacts to desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*). This request is based upon information contained within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03) Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948), which was completed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer would result in a project footprint reduction of 236 acres, or approximately 12% of the project footprint, when compared to the proposed project submitted in the Opt-In Application for the Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03). Please see Table 1 and Figure 1.

This letter also addresses information provided by Christina Aiello and Clinton Epps within a report titled "Potential impacts of the proposed Soda Mountain Solar development on desert bighorn sheep" (TN 261255), herein referred to as Aiello Report. The recommendations contained within the Aiello Report request the project implement a 1.24-mile buffer between the project components and bighorn sheep habitat. Implementation of this recommendation results in a buffer covering the entire project site and would effectively prohibit any project components from being constructed. See Figure 2. As discussed below in Section 4, there is insufficient evidence to support the determination that the implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer, or any larger buffer, would substantially lessen any of the project's impacts to desert bighorn sheep, beyond the measures the project is currently proposing to implement to reduce such impacts. Further, since the project's already-applied measures are sufficient to reduce the impacts to desert bighorn sheep to less than significant, consideration of additional measures – whether as mitigation or alternatives – is not warranted or proper.

It is also important to note that the Applicant's preferred project would construct a 2,558-acre renewable energy development, not the 2058.97-acre project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03). The Applicant's preferred project was presented to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in 2015. The project footprint was subsequently reduced by 500 acres, or 20%, by BLM, in consultation with other regulatory agencies, during the BLM's approval process in order to address impacts to desert bighorn sheep. Therefore, the project presented within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03) already provides a significant reduction in the original project footprint, specifically made to reduce impacts to desert bighorn sheep. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction of 736 acres, or a 33% total reduction in project footprint.

Table 1. Project Footprint Reduction with Implementation of a 0.25-Mile Buffer

Project Component	**2015 Applicant Preferred Project Footprint**	**Opt-In Application 24-OPT-03 Project Footprint**	**Project Footprint Reduction from Implementation of 0.25-Mile Buffer**	**Remaining Project Footprint after Implementation of 0.25-Mile Buffer**
		(in acres)		
North Array	500	0	--	--
East Array	341.67	341.67	151.7	189.97
South Array 1	205.58	205.58	2.23	203.35
South Array 2	632.04	632.04	8.69	623.35
South Array 3	326.64	326.64	8.32	318.32
Total Impact Area	2558.97	2058.97	236.01	1822.96
Source: SWCA Environmental Consultants 2025				

Implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would reduce the project's 300 MW solar energy generation capacity and 300 MW battery energy storage capacity by at least 12%. It is important to note that the reduction in project footprint size due to implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer may not result in a linear reduction in the project's energy generation and storage capacity. In other words, a 12% reduction in the project footprint could result in a reduction in the project's energy generation and storage capacity of much greater than 12%. This is because the project contains civil design features such as roads, fences, and basins, and moving these project components would lead to an even greater reduction to the solar field and BESS size than the 236-acre reduction from buffer implementation.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03) is to contribute to the achievement of California's renewable energy goals and create a vital new point of interconnection for renewable energy in San Bernardino County to connect to California's electric transmission infrastructure. There are 7 specific project objectives for the project. The discussion below identifies how implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer would be in direct conflict with the proposed project's objectives and would impede the project from attaining the project's objectives.

Project Objective 1: Assist the State of California in achieving or exceeding its Renewables Portfolio Standard and greenhouse gas emissions reduction objectives by developing and constructing new California Renewables Portfolio Standard–qualified solar power generation facilities producing approximately 300 MW.

The Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) is one of California's key programs for advancing renewable energy. The program sets continuously escalating renewable energy procurement requirements for the

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State's load-serving entities. The RPS requires all load-serving entities in California to procure an increasing portion of their electricity sales from eligible renewable resources. Senate Bill (SB) 1078, passed in September 2002, set the RPS of 20% total renewables generation by 2020.

- SB 107, passed in September 2006, accelerated achievement of the 20% RPS to 2010.
- SB X1-2, signed in April 2011, raised the RPS goal to 33% in 2020.
- SB 350, signed in 2015, increased the RPS goal to 50% in 2030.
- SB 100, signed into law in September 2018, revised the RPS goal to 60% by 2030 and set a long-term target of 100% carbon-free energy by December 31, 2045.

Electricity generated by the project would be used to serve the needs of California customers and would facilitate compliance with California's RPS. The project would assist the State in achieving its energy objectives under SB 100 and SB 350 and greenhouse gas emissions–reduction goals under Assembly Bill 32. The project would advance the goals of the State to reduce use of fossil fuels and increase the availability of electricity from solar energy, which is eligible for compliance with the RPS.

Implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as an alternative or mitigation measure would result in a significant direct loss of renewable energy generation. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy and would directly conflict with the project objective to transition the State to renewable energy and meeting RPS targets by providing 300 MW of RPS-qualified solar energy generation facilities. This loss of solar energy generation would also impact the State's ability to maintain electrical system reliability under this transition and during extreme climate change driven events. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #1.

Project Objective 2: Produce and transmit electricity at a competitive cost.

Economies of scale allow for cost advantages when building large-scale renewable energy developments. It is more cost effective to construct one large project to produce 300 MW of renewable energy, than constructing multiple smaller projects to cumulatively produce 300 MW of renewable energy. Solar panels, inverters and other components are more cost competitive when bought in large quantities, lowering the overall project cost. Fixed cost distribution such as interconnection facilities, permitting, design, land acquisition and project management are spread across a larger number of watts generated in a large-scale project, lowering the cost per watt. Energy capture is also subject to economies of scale and cost savings for rate payers can be maximized by utilizing an optimal land layout and panel orientation. Large utility-scale solar projects can be better integrated into the electrical grid, potentially reducing transmission losses and providing more predictable power output. The most significant fixed cost is associated with the new high-voltage interconnection facilities required by LADWP. Which are currently estimated to cost over $60 million dollars. These costs remain the same even if the project size and energy generation are greatly reduced, thus making a significant reduction in project size particularly harmful to the project's ability to sell power cheaply.

Last, a reduction in footprint due to implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope may not result in a linear reduction in project size, and ensuing energy generation loss could be far greater than 12% or 236 acres. This is because the project area being reduced by implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer contains civil design features such as roads, fences and basins, and re-arranging these project components would lead to an even greater reduction to the solar field and BESS size than the 236-acre reduction from buffer implementation.

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For the reasons above, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would cause a significantly more expensive project and impair the Applicant's ability to sell power more cheaply on the wholesale market or to LADWP directly. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer as a project alternative or mitigation measure would directly impact the project's ability to save California ratepayers money and would impede the project from attaining project objective #2.

Project Objective 3: Provide a new source of energy storage that assists the State in achieving its energy storage mandates.

Implementation of the proposed project supports a significant number of energy storage mandates. The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) is a landscape-scale renewable energy and conservation planning effort covering more than 22 million acres in the California desert. The project site is within the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA), which is amended by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) DRECP Land Use Plan Amendment (BLM 2016). The project site is within an area designated as a Development Focus Area (DFA). DFAs are locations where renewable energy generation is an allowable use, incentivized, and could be streamlined for approval under the DRECP.

The project site is within the BLM's California Desert District (within the jurisdiction of the Barstow Field Office), the planning boundary of the CDCA Plan, and the DRECP. The project would be consistent with federal goals for the construction of renewable energy infrastructure and generation of renewable energy and would make the best use of public lands to generate, store, and transmit affordable renewable solar electricity for distribution to the State.

Within the State of California, implementation of the project supports the Energy Action Plan and Loading Order, which established a high-level, coherent approach to meeting California's electricity and natural gas needs and set forth the "loading order" to address California's future energy needs. The "loading order" established that the State, in meeting its energy needs, would invest first in energy efficiency and demand-side resources, followed by renewable resources, and only then in clean conventional electricity supply. Since that time, the California Public Utilities Commission and California Energy Commission have overseen the plans, policies, and programs for prioritizing the preferred resources, including energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Electricity from the project would be used to serve the needs of California customers and would facilitate compliance with California's RPS. The project would assist the State in achieving its energy objectives under SBs 100 and 350 and greenhouse gas emissions–reduction goals under Assembly Bill 32. The project would advance the goals of the State to reduce use of fossil fuels and increase the availability of electricity from solar energy, which is eligible for compliance with the RPS.

When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy and would directly conflict with the project objective of advancing the energy storage mandates. The reduction in energy generation would reduce the amount of solar energy that would flow into the BESS and would require the BESS facility to be downsized in the same proportion as the solar field. A downsized solar energy system would not generate sufficient energy to charge a BESS of 300 MW, and the implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer would result in a direct reduction in energy storage capacity. This loss of energy storage would negatively impact the State's ability to accelerate a transition to renewable energy and would negatively impact the State's ability to maintain electrical system reliability under this transition and during extreme climate change driven events. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #3.

Project Objective 4: Use the existing transmission unused capacity that provides approximately 300 MW of capacity.

The power produced by the project would be conveyed to the regional electrical grid through an interconnection with the existing Marketplace-Adelanto 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line operated by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). Transmission is critical to ensuring grid reliability and resilience, particularly as the state faces extreme weather events caused by climate change. According to the California ISO Transmission Plan, the need for new energy generation over the next 10 years has escalated rapidly, driving an accelerated pace for new transmission development. The combination of dramatically increasing the pace of renewable generation and load forecast growth are driving an increase in transmission requirements. To meet the State's renewable energy goals, an expanded, upgraded and reinforced transmission system is required.

The proposed project does not require the construction of new off-site transmission infrastructure and instead maximizes the use of existing infrastructure that is currently underutilized and directly adjacent to the project site. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction in project footprint would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy and 300 MW of energy storage, and would directly conflict with the project objective of maximizing the utilization of the existing transmission line's unused capacity of 300 MW. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #4.

Project Objective 5: Utilize existing energy infrastructure to the extent possible by locating solar power generation facilities near existing infrastructure, such as electrical transmission facilities.

The project proposes a large-scale solar and battery storage facility within an area that contains existing infrastructure, including the existing Marketplace-Adelanto 500 kV transmission line operated by the LADWP. Although reducing the project footprint would still allow for the remaining project components to connect to the existing energy infrastructure, reducing the project's energy generation capabilities would not maximize the existing energy infrastructure in the project area. The existing Marketplace-Adelanto 500 kV transmission line has the capacity to handle an additional 300 MW of energy, which would be generated by the project.

The project has an existing executed Interconnection Agreement for 300 MW of capacity with LADWP. A significant reduction in size caused by implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope is prohibited under the current interconnection agreement and would trigger a "material modification process" with LADWP, further causing re-study and amendment of the Agreement. Such a process causes significant unknowns related to study timing, future costs and project schedule, and until resolved would impede the financial investment necessary to advance the project development and construction. Every action for this project that is not consistent with the existing LADWP Agreement requires 11 approvals from all members of the Mead-Adelanto Project leading to significant additional time beyond normal interconnection processes. Implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in an anticipated freeze on the project advancement of a minimum of 18 months. This potential delay would prevent the project from being capable of being accomplished within a reasonable period of time and is therefore infeasible.

When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project

footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy and the reduced production of energy at this project site would have to be made up by installing solar panels at another site. Thus, the effect of implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would be to preclude the utilization, to the extent possible, of the existing infrastructure adjacent to the project site. This consequence would directly conflict with the project objective of utilizing existing transmission infrastructure. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #5.

Project Objective 6: Site solar power generation facilities in areas of San Bernardino County that have the best solar resource to maximize energy production and the efficient use of land.

The project site is located within a designated federal Section 368 Energy Corridor adjacent to I-15 (Corridor number 27-225). Additionally, an existing Southern California Edison (SCE)-owned 115 kV sub transmission line and an LADWP-operated 500 kV transmission line run parallel to and adjacent to the western perimeter of the project site. The project site is located immediately adjacent to existing roadways that provide readily available access for construction and operations. The project site was selected to maximize energy production and the most efficient use of land, considering existing infrastructure, site geology, environmental impacts, water, waste and fuel constraints and electric transmission constraints.

The State has prepared the DRECP, a multi-agency effort to develop a comprehensive habitat conservation plan with streamlined federal permitting for renewable energy projects on 22 million acres of State and federally owned public land. The DRECP is a collaborative effort between the California Energy Commission, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, also known as the Renewable Energy Action Team. San Bernardino County is one of seven counties participating in this effort. The DRECP establishes mitigation and conservation measures that renewable energy projects could implement for desert habitat and species impacts. The DRECP focuses on renewable energy projects on State and federally owned land, as well as on projects that require federal permitting as a result of impacts to certain species and habitat. Although the project is located entirely within BLM lands that are not under the jurisdiction of the County of San Bernardino, the project has been developed in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of the County and has involved the County in its review.

The proposed project is located within the DRECP area of the County of San Bernardino and was sited in this area in an effort maximize energy production while efficiently using land. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy. A reduction in the project footprint could result in a separate project being proposed elsewhere within the County to fully meet energy production goals. This would directly conflict with the project objective of siting solar power generation facilities in areas of San Bernardino County that have the best solar resource to maximize energy production while efficiently using of land. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #6.

Project Objective 7: Develop a solar power generation facility in San Bernardino County that would support the economy by investing in the local community, creating local construction jobs, and increasing tax and fee revenue to the County.

A Socioeconomic study was completed for the project and is included as Appendix P (TN #259903) within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03). As stated in this study, construction of the project would provide a

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temporary increase in employment of approximately 200 direct and another 420 indirect and induced jobs. Long-term (30-years or longer) employment growth derived from the operation of the project is estimated at up to 49 jobs per year. The project would provide economic benefits to the County of San Bernardino and to its residents and businesses by increasing spending in the community as a result of construction and development-related work. It would provide opportunities for local tradespeople to develop their skills and gain experience installing solar and battery storage facilities and would reduce the amount of time that many of these people spend commuting by offering a local job opportunity. It also would provide increased sales and use taxes, personal property tax, and possessory interest property tax revenues to the County over many years.

When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. The reduction in project footprint would reduce construction and operational jobs, project taxes, and associated local economic benefits to the County and local businesses. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #7.

3. ECONOMIC AND LEGAL FACTORS

Reduction of the project footprint would result in a financial burden that would significantly hinder the project's viability and the economic benefits to the community. Practical limitations, such as direct conflicts with legal agreements contained within the LADWP Interconnection Agreement and Facilities Studies, create an infeasible scenario for reducing the project footprint.

The project has an existing executed Interconnection Agreement for 300 MW of capacity with LADWP. A significant reduction in size caused by implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would be prohibited under the current agreement and would result in the triggering of a "material modification process" with LADWP, further causing re-study and amendment of the Agreement. Such a process causes significant unknowns related to study timing, future costs and project schedule, and until resolved would impede the financial investment necessary to advance the project development and construction. Every action for this project that is not consistent with the existing LADWP Interconnection Agreement requires 11 approvals from all members of the Mead-Adelanto Project leading to significant additional time beyond normal interconnection processes. Implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in an anticipated freeze on the project advancement of a minimum of 18 months. This potential delay would prevent the project from being capable of being accomplished within a reasonable period of time and is therefore infeasible.

Implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope may also result in a breach of the LADWP Agreement that could result in a termination of this agreement, which has significant economic consequences and creates a situation that makes implementing a 0.25-mile buffer infeasible. It is also expected that implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a higher cost per watt for the project by not maximizing economies of scale. Economically, a reduction in the project footprint would also significantly reduce the living wage jobs that would be provided during project construction and operation. This would result in a direct reduction in the economic benefits of the project to the County and its residents by decreasing spending in the community as a result of construction and development-related work. The reduction in project footprint would reduce the direct and indirect economic benefits of the project, including reducing labor costs, contractor's profit and overhead, sales and use taxes, personal property tax, and possessory interest tax revenues to the State of California and County of San Bernardino. The total fiscal benefit to the County and State from implementation of the project would be substantially reduced with implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

There is insufficient evidence to support the determination that the implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would substantially lessen any of the project's impacts to desert bighorn sheep, beyond the measures the project is currently proposing to implement to reduce such impacts. Further, since those already-applied measures are sufficient to reduce the impacts to desert bighorn sheep to less than significant, consideration of additional measures – whether as mitigation or alternatives – is not warranted.

The project currently proposes to implement a significant number of project design features, applicant proposed measures and mitigation measures to sufficiently reduce any potential direct, indirect, cumulative, short-term or long-term project impacts to desert bighorn sheep. These measures are identified in Attachment A. The Applicant has considered and agreed to all of these mitigation measures, which are considered feasible and will be adopted as part of the project's environmental commitment through the mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP). With implementation of the currently proposed avoidance and minimization measures, the project's direct, indirect, cumulative short-term and long-term project impacts to desert bighorn sheep movement would be less than significant.

DR BIO-20 is a request to implement a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope that was based upon a recommendation within Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948). This recommendation was based upon an analysis of a total of 261,868 desert bighorn sheep data tracking points. Of the 261,868 data points analyzed, 30 points were determined as located within the proposed project site. The analysis within the Desert Bighorn Sheep Study identified that only 0.01% of the total desert bighorn sheep movement in the region utilize the project site. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. A 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope to reduce the proposed project footprint by 236 acres to address movement of 0.01% of desert bighorn sheep appears to be out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

Further, the proposed project site does not contain high quality habitat for the desert bighorn sheep. As stated within Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948), desert bighorn sheep spend most of their time in mountain habitat, as it is visually open, allowing for early predator detection, and it provides escape terrain in the form of steep, generally rocky, slopes. Mountain habitat is defined as a slope of 15% or greater. The project site is primarily flat and contains a large desert wash habitat. It is not considered mountain habitat and does not contain the highest quality habitat for desert bighorn sheep. As stated in Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948), it is unlikely the onsite habitat would experience frequent and heavy use by desert bighorn sheep. A 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope to reduce the proposed project footprint by 236 acres in an area that does not contain high quality habitat appears to be out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

Further, Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948), performed wildlife linkage and connectivity modeling and identified that the project site is not within a designated area of importance. The Study states that while there are four existing underpasses and bridges near the Soda Mountain Solar study area, there have been few documented observations of desert bighorn sheep using these structures. The wildlife crossings of importance to the species are off-site to the north and south. A 0 a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope to reduce the proposed project footprint by 236 acres in an area that does not contain data supporting that the site is used as a critical wildlife corridor for desert bighorn sheep appears to be out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

Lastly, Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948) states that desert bighorn sheep are highly influenced by the location of, and distance to, reliable water sources, particularly during the hot, summer

months. There are no reliable water sources for desert bighorn sheep on the project site. Aquatic resources include prominent and non-prominent drainages that encompass a desert wash system. The request to reduce the proposed project footprint by 236 acres, in an area that does not contain any significant water sources for desert bighorn sheep, appears to be out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

The recommendations contained within the Aiello Report request the project implement a 1.24-mile buffer between the project components and bighorn sheep habitat. Implementation of this recommendation results in a buffer covering the entire project site and would effectively prohibit any project components from being constructed. See Figure 2. The buffer requests within the Aiello Report are disproportionally large and there is insufficient evidence to support the determination that the implementation of any buffer would substantially lessen any of the project's impacts to desert bighorn sheep. The Aiello Report fails to account for the significant number of applicant proposed measures and mitigation measures (Attachment A) that are required to be implemented by the project to sufficiently reduce any potential direct, indirect, cumulative, short-term or long-term project impacts to desert bighorn sheep. The Aiello Report also fails to account for the 500-acre reduction in project footprint that has already occurred to reduce project impacts related to bighorn sheep. The data presented within the Aiello Report specifically states that the project site is considered irregularly used habitat by the bighorn sheep. It also discloses that there is limited data to draw on regarding impacts of the project related to bighorn sheep, and the recommendations within the report appear to be based upon a project-specific modeling simulation that has not undergone peer review. There is insufficient data provided to support the concept that this model provides an unbiased, accurate and reliable analysis of the project site. Instead, it appears the information presented within the Aiello Report supports the determination that the project site does not support bighorn sheep movement, nor does it contain high quality bighorn sheep habitat. For example, Table 1 within the Aiello Report identifies that the simulation (performed by the non-peer reviewed model and based on unknown assumptions that are higher than documented collaring data) results in only 126 acres of the total 2,435 acres of the project site being considered "frequently" used by bighorn sheep. This represents 5% of the total project site being "frequently" used by bighorn sheep. This 5% is based upon assumptions that are not clearly outlined and contradicts the actual data tracking results which identified that only 0.01% of the total desert bighorn sheep in the region utilize the project site. The Aiello Report requests the CEC requires the project implement a 1.24 mile buffer for bighorn sheep, which would effectively prohibit any project components from being constructed. The request for a buffer covering the entire project site when only 5% of the project site was modeled as "frequently" used, is out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

5. Social Factors

Reducing the project footprint would also reduce the socioeconomic benefits of the project, including employment for local residences and sources of income through the direct and indirect employment opportunities identified within the project's Socioeconomic Study (Appendix P TN #259903). A reduction in the project footprint would substantially reduce the project's ability to help provide a reliable local source of renewable power that would minimize power outages and disruptions by reducing rolling blackouts during peak demand periods.

6. Technological Factors

The proposed project is a large-scale infrastructure project that utilizes state-of-the-art solar energy generation and battery energy storage technology. The project site was selected because it is located directly adjacent to existing large scale infrastructure projects – including the I-15, Brightline West high speed rail project and existing transmission lines. The project offers a model for safely locating solar and battery energy storage facilities far away from residential areas, clustered adjacent to dense infrastructure projects, and connecting to underutilized transmission lines, which prevents the need for new transmission lines to be constructed in wilderness or populated areas. Reducing the project footprint reduces the project's

capability for maximizing technology in an effort to build environmentally friendly solar and battery storage developments.

7. Conclusion

Implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as an alternative or mitigation measure would prevent the project from attaining most of the basic project objectives. Additionally, there are specific economic, legal, environmental, social, and technological factors that make implementing a buffer infeasible as a project alternatives or mitigation measure. Further, there does not appear to be sufficient evidence to support the determination that implementation of a buffer would substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project related to desert bighorn sheep, beyond what the project is currently proposing to implement to reduce such impacts. Finally, implementing a buffer, whether as a mitigation measure or project alternative, is not warranted since the already-identified set of measures reduces the project's impacts on desert bighorn sheep to a less than significant level.

Although it is infeasible to implement a 0.25-mile buffer, if the CEC believes that the information and analysis provided by the Applicant is insufficient to reduce impacts to less than significant, there are other feasible mitigation measures that would be equivalent to or more effective than a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope in avoiding and reducing significant effects to the desert bighorn sheep. These measures would require approval from BLM and CEC but would further reduce any potential direct and indirect impacts to desert bighorn sheep movement to at least the same degree, or to a greater degree, than a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope, and could include:

- Providing onsite habitat enhancement north of I-15 on BLM lands not currently proposed for development
- Providing offsite habitat enhancement
- Paying in-lieu fees or establishing an in-lieu fee program for desert bighorn sheep research and monitoring
- Removing legacy fencing on nearby BLM or State lands to increase regional wildlife connectivity

It is requested that the CEC certify the Soda Mountain Solar Project with the project footprint as described within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03). Implementation of a buffer is not a feasible alternative or feasible mitigation measure due to its direct conflicts with project objectives and other specific environmental, economic, legal, social, technological and other conditions. We thank you for your consideration in our request.

Sincerely,

Hannah Arkin

CEO, Resolution Environmental

References

1. Aiello and Epps. Potential impacts of the proposed Soda Mountain Solar development on desert bighorn sheep. A report prepared for the National Park Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Soda Mountain Solar CEC Docket TN 261255.
2. California Natural Gas Vehicle Coalition v. State Air Resources Board. Fifth Appellate District Decision (F084229). 8/27/24.
3. California Environmental Quality Act Statute and Guidelines. Public Resources Code 21000–21189 and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000–15387

4. California ISP 2021-2022 Transmission Plan March 17, 2022.
5. County of San Bernardino. General Plan. Renewable Energy and Conservation Element. February 2019.
6. Dudek. Desert Bighorn Sheep Study. Soda Mountain Solar Project. June 2024.
7. SWCA Environmental Consultants. Soda Mountain Solar Project Opt-In Application Section 3-6 Energy. 2024
8. SWCA Environmental Consultants. Soda Mountain Solar Project Opt-In Application Section 3-4 Biological Resources. 2024
9. SWCA Environmental Consultants. Soda Mountain Solar Project Opt-In Application Section 3-8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions. 2024

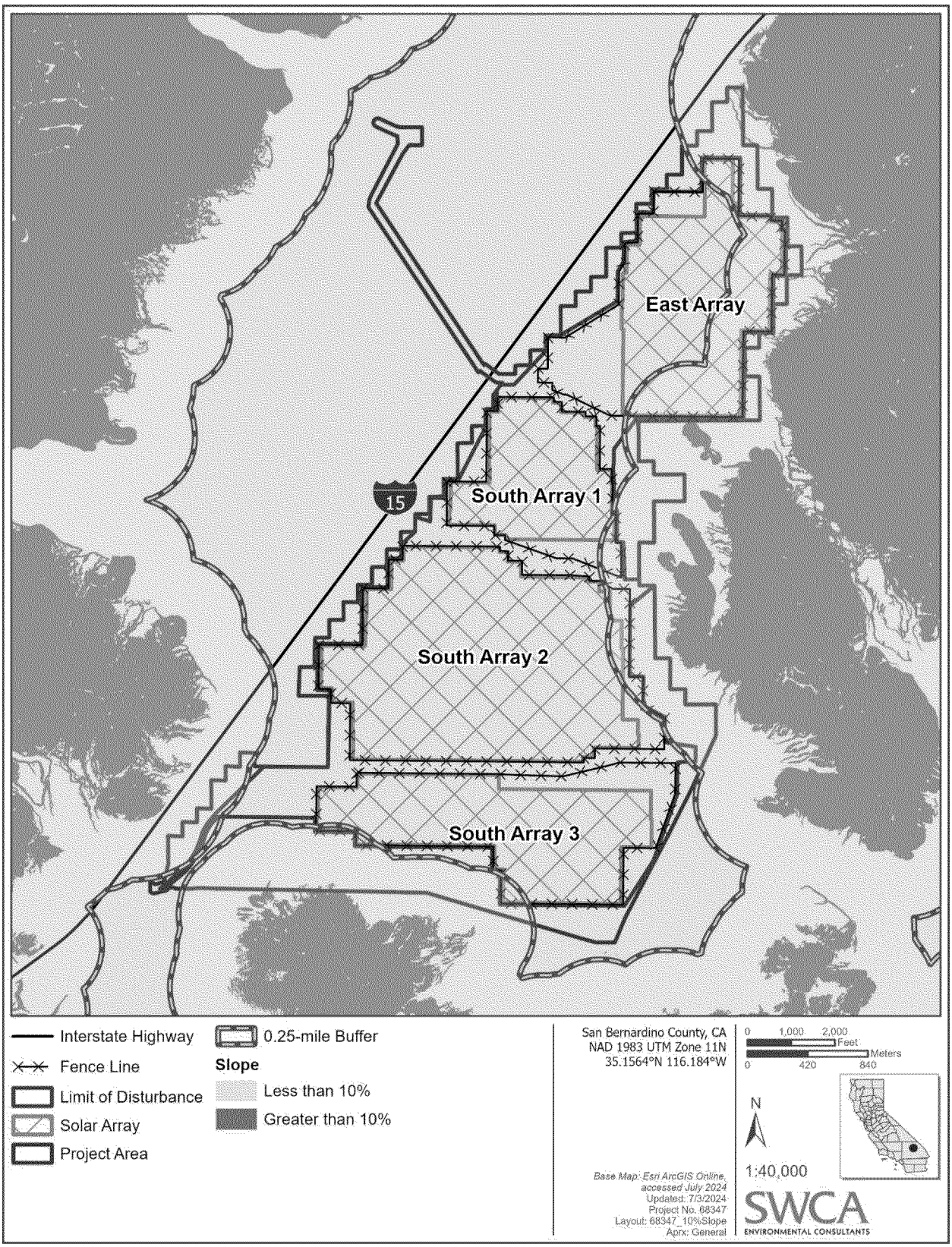
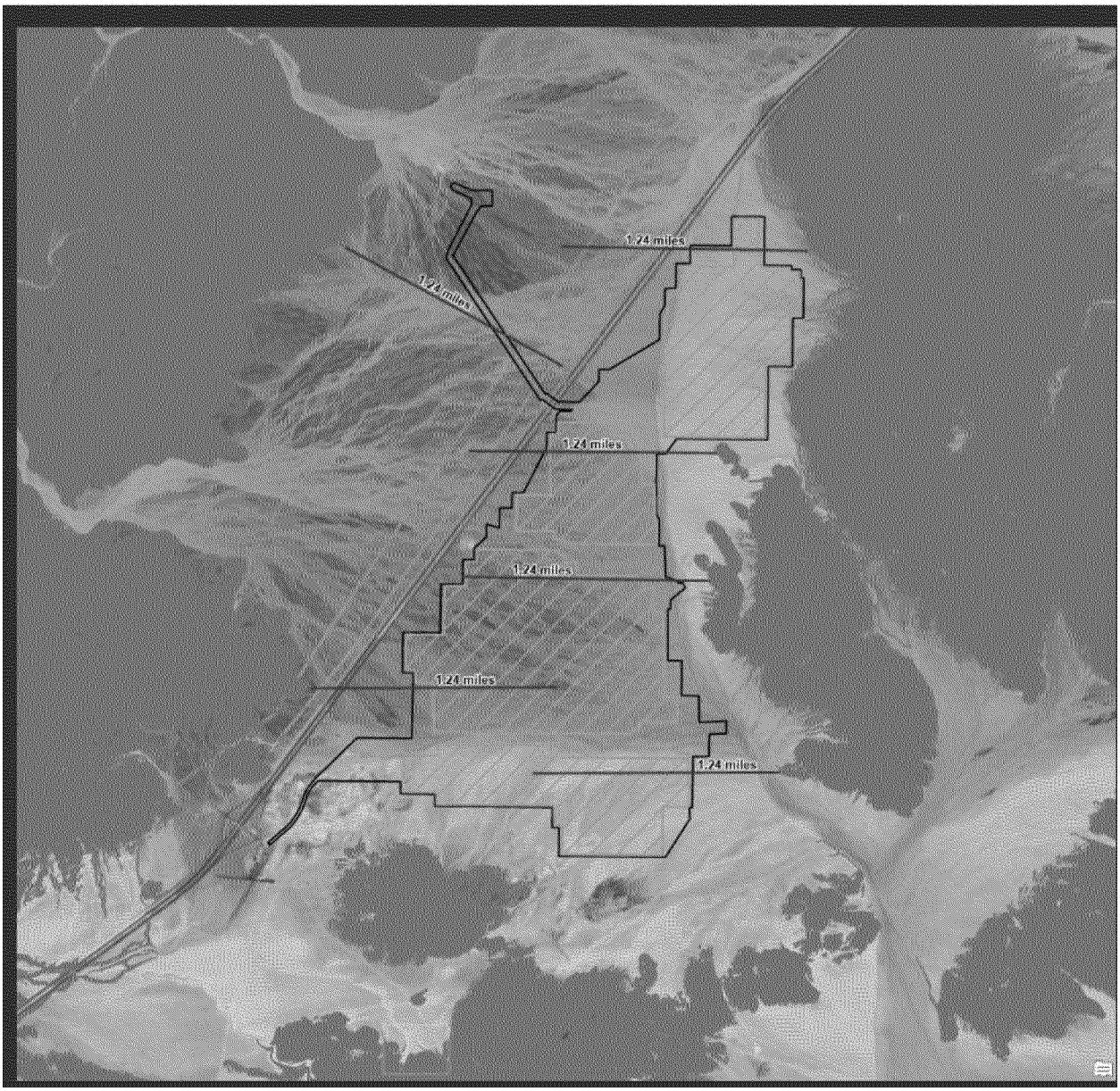


Figure 1. 0.25 mile buffer from 10% slope

Figure 2. 1.24 buffer from 10% slope



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Attachment A

3.4.4.3 Applicant-Proposed Measures

The Applicant has identified and committed to implement the following APMs as part of the proposed Projects to avoid or substantially lessen potentially significant impacts to biological resources, to the extent feasible. The APMs, where applicable, are discussed in the impact analysis section below.

VEGETATION

APM BIO-1: The site shall be revegetated after decommissioning according to the Final Closure Plan described in MM BIO-29 and prepared in conformance with BLM requirements at the time of decommissioning.

APM BIO-2: The applicant shall prepare and implement a Vegetation Resources Management Plan that contains the following components:

- Vegetation Salvage Plans that discuss the methods that will be used to transplant cacti present within the proposed disturbance areas. Salvage and transplant methods used will be approved by the CEC. In addition, the Vegetation Salvage Plans will also include methods that will be used to transplant special-status plant species that occur within proposed disturbance areas.

- Restoration Plans discussing the methods that will be used to restore any of the four native plant community types (creosote bush-white bursage scrub, cheesebush scrub, and creosote bush scrub,) present within the project area that may be temporarily disturbed by construction activities. The applicant will obtain CEC approval for any seed mixtures used for restoration.
- Vegetation Salvage and Restoration Plans that will specify success criteria and performance standards. The applicant will be responsible for implementing the Vegetation Salvage and Restoration Plan according to CEC requirements.

APM BIO-3: Herbicides shall not be applied systemically over the entire project area. Herbicides shall be applied in focused treatments in areas where invasive weed infestations have been identified, such as where there is a clump or monotypic stand of invasive weeds. Herbicides shall not be applied within 100 feet of a special-status plant.

APM BIO-4: Only a State of California and federally certified contractor (i.e., Qualified Applicator), who is also approved by CDFW, and holds and maintains a Qualified Applicator License from California Department of Pesticide Regulation, shall be permitted to perform herbicide applications. Herbicides shall be applied in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and permit stipulations. All herbicide applications must follow U.S. Environmental Protection Agency label instructions.

APM BIO-5: Herbicides shall not be applied during rain events, within 48 hours of a forecasted rain event with a 50% or greater chance of precipitation, or when wind velocity exceeds 10 mph (for liquids) and 15 mph for granular herbicides.

APM BIO-6: The applicant shall implement an Integrated Weed Management Plan (IWMP) to control weed infestations and the spread of noxious weeds in the study area.

APM BIO-7: After project construction, areas of temporary disturbance shall be closed and the restoration measures in the Vegetation Resource Management Plan shall be implemented.

APM BIO-8: Foundations shall be removed to a minimum of 3 feet below surrounding grade during decommissioning and covered with soil to allow adequate root penetration for native plants. Petroleum product leaks and chemical releases shall be remediated prior to completion of decommissioning.

APM BIO-9: Decommissioning methods shall minimize new site disturbance and removal of native vegetation.

SPECIAL-STATUS PLANTS

APM BIO-10: All special-status and rare plant (CRPR 1, 2, 3, and 4) occurrences within the project area will be documented during preconstruction surveys. The applicant will also provide a 100-foot buffer area surrounding each avoided occurrence in which no construction activities will take place, if feasible. If avoidance is not feasible, the applicant shall provide on-site mitigation (e.g., vegetation salvage) for impacts to special-status and rare plants.

APM BIO-11: Before construction of a given phase begins, the applicant shall stake and flag the construction area boundaries, including the construction areas for the solar arrays and associated infrastructure; construction laydown, parking, and work areas; and the boundaries of all temporary and permanent access roads. A CEC-approved biologist shall then survey all areas of proposed ground disturbance for rare or special-status plant species and cacti during the appropriate period (blooming or otherwise identifiable) for those species having the potential to occur in the construction areas. All rare or special-status plant species and cacti observed shall be flagged for transplantation.

SPECIAL-STATUS WILDLIFE

APM BIO-12: The applicant shall implement a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) to educate workers about the environmental issues associated with the project and the MMs that will be implemented at the site, including nest awareness and non-disturbance exclusion zones.

APM BIO-13: Preconstruction clearance surveys to identify active bird nests shall be conducted within 2 weeks of ground disturbance or vegetation removal in all active work areas during the breeding season (February 1–August 31). The work area will need to be resurveyed following periods of inactivity of 2 weeks or more. Active nests shall be avoided using non-disturbance buffer zones as shown below.

- Avian Awareness and Baseline Non-Disturbance Buffer Zones
- Starting Distance of Awareness or Type Non-Disturbance Exclusion Zones Passerines 300 feet from active nest Raptors 500 feet from active nest Golden Eagles 1 mile and line of sight from active nest Burrowing 250 feet from active burrows during nesting Owls1 season (February 1–August 31) 160 feet from active burrows during the wintering period (September 1–January 31)
- Implementation Notes: A qualified biologist may reduce or increase the buffer distance if there is sufficient evidence based on species, habitat, and other factors, that applicant activity would not impact nesting activity. Buffers would be maintained until a qualified biologist has determined that the nest is no longer active.

APM BIO-14: Monitoring of any active nests within or adjacent to the work areas shall be conducted until nestlings have fledged and dispersed. Ongoing breeding-season monitoring of work areas shall be conducted throughout the duration of construction. Nest monitoring results shall be recorded in a Nest Check Form. Typically, a nest check will have a minimum duration of 30 minutes, but it may be longer or shorter, or more frequent than one check per day, as determined by the Designated Biologist (see MM BIO-7 for Designated Biologist) based on the type of construction activity (duration, equipment being used, potential for construction-related disturbance) and other factors related to assessment of nest disturbance (weather variations, pair behavior, nest stage, nest type, species, etc.). The Designated Biologist shall record the construction activity occurring at the time of the nest check and note any work exclusion buffer in effect at the time of the nest check. Non-project activities in the area should also be recorded (e.g., adjacent construction sites, roads, commercial/industrial activities, recreational use, etc.). The Designated Biologist shall record any sign of disturbance to the active nest, including but not limited to parental alarm calls, agitated behavior, distraction displays, nest fleeing and returning, chicks falling out of the nest or chicks or eggs being predated as a result of parental abandonment of the nest. Should the Designated Biologist determine project activities are causing or contributing to nest disturbance that might lead to nest failure, the Designated Biologist shall coordinate with the Construction Manager to limit the duration or location of work, and/or set other limits related to use of project vehicles and/or heavy equipment. Nest locations, project activities in the vicinity of nests, and any adjustments to buffer areas shall be described and reported in regular monitoring and compliance reports.

APM BIO-15: Preconstruction surveys for burrows containing suitable bat roosting habitat that could be used as individual bat roosts shall be conducted in all project work areas.

APM BIO-16: The connection from the substation to the transmission line shall be designed to meet the most recent Avian Power Line Interaction Committee guidelines to the extent practicable.

APM BIO-17: Roads, power lines, fences, and other infrastructure associated with the project shall be minimized to reduce habitat loss. Fencing will use wildlife compatible design standards.

APM BIO-18: Collector lines shall be placed underground to reduce avian collisions.

APM BIO-19: Federal and state measures for handling toxic substances shall be followed to minimize danger from spills to water and wildlife resources. Facility operators shall maintain Hazardous Materials Spill Kits on-site. Personnel shall be trained to use the Hazardous Materials Spill Kits.

APM BIO-20: The applicant shall clear vegetation outside of the bird breeding season to the maximum extent practicable. Preconstruction avian clearance surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist for vegetation clearing during the bird breeding season (February 1–August 31). If a nest(s) is identified in the preconstruction avian clearance surveys, a qualified monitor shall be on-site during vegetation removal in order to enforce non-disturbance buffers and stop activities as necessary should construction disturb nesting activity.

APM BIO-21: Trash shall be disposed of in covered containers and regularly removed from the site.

APM BIO-22: Surveys for burrowing owl shall be conducted in suitable burrowing owl habitat prior to construction and if construction is suspended for 2 weeks or more. Surveys shall be performed pursuant to the CDFW *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFW 2012). If active burrows are found, they shall be avoided using non-disturbance buffer zones. Passive relocation shall be used as described above once the burrow is determined to be inactive.

APM BIO-23: A qualified biologist shall conduct a ground-based golden eagle clearance survey for active golden eagle nests in a 2-mile area surrounding the project, as accessible. Golden eagle clearance surveys shall be conducted annually for each year of construction during the golden eagle nesting season. If active nests are found in the study area, the applicant shall coordinate with CEC, BLM, USFWS, and CDFW to ensure that construction does not result in disturbance of the golden eagles.

APM BIO-24: Project personnel shall remove and dispose of roadkill near the study area to avoid attracting raptors and other scavengers to the site and shall regularly remove vegetation around larger facilities (such as the substation) to reduce raptor foraging.

APM BIO-25: The project shall minimize the use of lighting that could attract migrating birds and bats (that could feed on concentrations of insects at lights). Lighting will be kept to the minimum level necessary for safety and security. High-intensity, steady burning, bright lights such as sodium vapor or spotlights will not be used on project facilities.

APM BIO-26: Project personnel and visitors shall be instructed to drive at low speeds (<15 mph) and be alert for wildlife, especially in low-visibility conditions.

APM BIO-27: Fencing shall be removed at the completion of decommissioning.

APM BIO-28: Desert tortoise exclusion fencing shall be installed at the perimeter of project construction areas (i.e., solar array areas, project buildings, substation/switchyard, earthen berms, and along the edge of access roads and collector line corridors). The fence locations will be determined during final design and will enclose areas of project activity. The fence line and a 30-foot-wide buffer shall be surveyed for desert tortoise before construction of the fence and according to USFWS protocol. Desert tortoise translocation will adhere to guidelines of the desert tortoise translocation plan for the project (see MM BIO-12). Tortoises found in the fence line study area or spotted within 50 m of the fence line study area shall be:

- Assigned a USFWS identification number.
- Given a health assessment.

- Fitted with a transmitter. Tortoises that are too small to accept a transmitter (i.e., no transmitter is available that is 10% or less of the tortoise's body weight) shall be treated as a translocatee and held in situ.
- Moved into habitat adjacent outside the fence line. The tortoise shall be moved into an empty burrow if clearance of the fence area takes place outside the tortoise active season (i.e., November–March and June–August).
- Any of the moved tortoises that return to the project area before completion of fence construction shall be treated as translocatees. Desert tortoises remaining outside the fence line prior to completion of the fence shall be deemed residents. The transmitter shall be removed from the resident tortoise, and no further action shall be taken for the resident tortoises. USFWS procedures shall be followed to clear and handle the desert tortoise.

APM BIO-29: The project area desert tortoise preconstruction clearance survey shall be conducted during the desert tortoise active season (April–May and September–October) unless otherwise agreed to by CEC, USFWS, and CDFW. The survey shall be conducted according to USFWS protocol and preferably during early morning hours to increase the chance juvenile tortoises are found, per the Guidelines. Any tortoise scat shall be collected on each pass of a transect, per the Guidelines. USFWS procedures shall be followed to clear and handle the desert tortoise.

APM BIO-30: The linear facilities desert tortoise preconstruction clearance survey(s) can be conducted at any time throughout the year. Linear facilities for this project include the buried collector lines between arrays and connecting to the substation. Located desert tortoises shall be undisturbed and allowed to clear the site without assistance or interference. Tortoises shall be moved if necessary to reduce the potential for harm from construction activities but shall not be moved more than 500 m in such a scenario. USFWS procedures shall be followed to clear and handle the desert tortoise.

APM BIO-31: Data shall be collected during desert tortoise clearance surveys as described in this section. The same data shall be collected again on tortoises held in the interim in situ on the day that the tortoise is translocated from the study area. The data include:

- Date
- Time
- Temperature (°C)
- Project name
- Site type (project/recipient/control)
- Landowner (BLM)
- Permit/BO #
- Coverage #
- Field crew vendor
- Surveyor (first and last name)
- ID#
- Midline carapace length (MCL) (millimeters)
- Sex

- Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) (Easting)
- UTM (Northing)
- Location (e.g., burrow)
- Transmitter manufacturer
- Transmitter serial #
- Transmitter frequency
- Transmitter install date
- Battery life (months)
- Status (alive/dead/lost)

APM BIO-32: Following installation of the desert tortoise exclusion fencing, the fencing shall be regularly inspected. Permanent fencing shall be inspected monthly and during and within 24 hours following all major rainfall events. A major rainfall event is defined as one for which flow is detectable within the fenced drainage. Any damage to the fencing shall be temporarily repaired immediately to keep tortoises out of the site, and permanently repaired within 72 hours between March 15 and October 31 and within 7 days between November 1 and March 14 of observing damage. Inspections of permanent site fencing shall occur while desert tortoise fencing is in place.

APM BIO-33: No construction, operation, or decommissioning activities shall occur in unfenced areas without a USFWS-approved desert tortoise biologist present. These activities include the construction phase (construction, revegetation), decommissioning phase, and maintenance activities during the operations phase that require new surface disturbance. An adequate number of trained and experienced monitors must be present during all construction and decommissioning activities in unfenced areas, depending on the various construction tasks, locations, and season. A biologist shall be on-site from March 15 through October 31 (active season) during ground-disturbing activities in areas outside the exclusion fencing, and shall be on-call from November 1 through March 14 (inactive season).
The biologist shall check all construction areas immediately before construction activities begin.
The biologist shall inspect construction pipes, culverts, or similar structures 1) with a diameter greater than 3 inches, 2) stored for one or more nights, 3) less than 8 inches aboveground, and 4) within desert tortoise habitat (i.e., outside the permanently fenced area), before the materials are moved, buried, or capped. Alternatively, such materials may be capped before storing outside the fenced area or placing on pipe racks.

APM BIO-34: A Raven Monitoring and Control Plan shall be prepared consistent with the most current USFWS-approved raven management guidelines. The purpose of the plan is to avoid any project-related increases in raven numbers during construction, operation, and decommissioning. The Raven Monitoring and Control Plan shall be submitted to CEC, BLM, CDFW, and USFWS for approval at least 30 days prior to the start of construction.

APM BIO-35: A Burrowing Owl Relocation Plan shall be prepared and submitted to CDFW for approval. Burrowing owls occupying burrows on-site shall be passively relocated outside the nesting season (February 1–August 31) or after a qualified biologist determines that the burrow does not contain eggs or chicks and after consultation with CEC. Prior to construction and passive relocation, artificial burrows shall be installed in areas that would not be disturbed during construction at a ratio of 5:1 for each burrow that will be destroyed by project construction. Passive relocation shall be conducted prior to construction and according to guidelines from the California Burrowing Owl Consortium (1993).

APM BIO-36: Compensatory habitat mitigation shall be provided at a 1:1 ratio for impacts to suitable desert tortoise habitat during construction. A Habitat Compensation Plan shall be prepared to the approval of CEC, CDFW, USFWS, and BLM.

APM BIO-37: No pets or domestic animals shall be allowed on-site prior to or during construction, except kit fox scat detection dogs (with CEC approval) used for preconstruction surveys or postconstruction kit fox mortality monitoring. The project will not authorize the housing or grazing of domestic animals on the project site. Feeding of animals will be prohibited to discourage the spread of non-native birds, to discourage the spread of disease and pathogens, etc.

APM BIO-38: A preconstruction survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist to identify sign of recent mountain lion use of the area (e.g. tracks; scat). The survey will be conducted no more than three days prior to initiation of construction activities. If mountain lion are observed in the study area, the applicant shall coordinate with CEC to ensure that construction does not result in disturbance of mountain lion.

APM BIO-39: A preconstruction survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist to identify sign of recent ringtail use of the area. The survey will be conducted no more than three days prior to initiation of construction activities. If ringtail activity is observed in the study area, the applicant shall coordinate with CEC to ensure that construction activities do not result in disturbance of local ringtail populations.

3.4.5 Mitigation Measures

APMs specific to the proposed project are provided in Section 3.4.4.3. Additional mitigation measures with the potential to decrease the project's impact to biological resources are provided below:

MM BIO-1: Best Management Practices. To reduce indirect impacts to special-status plants and wildlife that may occur in the study area, BMPs shall be implemented prior to and during construction to control dust pollution, prevent discharge of potentially harmful chemicals, and prevent changes in hydrology. BMPs may include the installation of erosion and sedimentation control devices, applying water to control dust, placing drip pans under equipment when not in use, refueling in designated areas, and containing concrete washout properly, among other practices.

MM BIO-2: Worker Environmental Awareness Program. Prior to project initiation, the Designated Biologist shall develop and implement the WEAP (APM BIO-12), which will be available in English and Spanish. Wallet-sized cards summarizing the information shall be provided to all construction and operation and maintenance personnel. The WEAP shall include the following:

- An explanation of the sensitivity of the vegetation communities and special-status plant and wildlife species within and adjacent to work areas, and proper identification of these resources.
- Biology and status of the desert tortoise, golden eagle, burrowing owl, other nesting birds, desert bighorn sheep, kit fox, and American badger and measures to reduce potential effects on these species.
- Actions and reporting procedures to be used if desert tortoise, burrowing owl, other nesting birds, desert bighorn sheep, kit fox, or American badger are encountered.
- An explanation of the function of flagging that designates authorized work areas.
- Driving procedures and techniques to reduce mortality of wildlife on roads.
- Discussion of the federal ESA and CESA, BGEPA, and MBTA and the consequences of non-compliance with these acts.
- The importance of avoiding the introduction of invasive weeds onto the project area and surrounding areas.
- A discussion of general safety protocols such as hazardous substance spill prevention and containment measures and fire prevention and protection measures.
- A review of mitigation requirements that are applicable to their work.

MM BIO-3: Construction Impact Minimization. The project shall implement an advanced technology terrain-following solar tracker system (such as the Nextracker NX Horizon-XTR-0.75 10-inch tracker system, Nevados All Terrain Tracker system, or other system resulting in a similar reduction) that reduces grading under the solar field, consisting of solar power arrays identified as East Array and South Arrays 1, 2 and 3. Quarterly construction monitoring reports shall be provided to the CEC during the

construction period for the project. The quarterly construction monitoring reports shall quantify and document all remaining permanent and temporary grading acreage from project construction with the terrain-following tracker system. All temporary grading impact areas shall be revegetated onsite as described in the project-specific Temporary Disturbance Revegetation Plan (APM BIO-7 and MM-BIO-24). All permanent grading impact areas shall be mitigated at the required compensatory mitigation standards of the resource agencies (APM BIO-36, MM BIO-14, MM BIO-24).

MM BIO-4: Special-Status Plant Species and Cacti Impact Avoidance and Minimization. This measure will provide guidance on how project personnel can avoid unintended impacts to special-status plants on the project area (e.g., Utah vine milkweed) and provide for the salvage of protected cacti prior to construction. This measure includes the following requirements:

- The applicant shall establish Environmentally Sensitive Areas around Utah vine milkweed that have been identified on the project area and/or may be identified in project disturbance areas during site preparation. A minimum 100-foot exclusion area shall be established around the plants, which shall be clearly identified and maintained throughout construction to ensure that avoided plants are not inadvertently harmed. ESAs shall be clearly delineated in the field with temporary construction fencing and signs prohibiting movement of the fencing or sediment controls under penalty of work stoppages or compensatory mitigation.
- *Worker Environmental Awareness Program*. The WEAP (APM BIO-12; MM BIO-2) shall include training components specific to protection of special-status plants that occur on the project area.
- *Herbicide and Soil Stabilizer Drift Control Measures*. Special-status plant occurrences within 100 feet of the project disturbance area, including Utah vine milkweed shall be protected from herbicide and soil stabilizer drift. The IWMP includes measures to avoid chemical drift or residual toxicity to special-status plants consistent with guidelines such as those provided by the Nature Conservancy's Global Invasive Species Team, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Pesticide Action Network Database.
- *Erosion and Sediment Control Measures*. Erosion and sediment control measures shall not inadvertently impact special-status plants (e.g., by using invasive or non–Mojave Desert native plants in seed mixtures, introducing pest plants through contaminated seed or straw, etc.). These measures shall be incorporated in the Comprehensive Drainage, Stormwater, and Sedimentation Control Plan.
- *Preconstruction Vegetation Salvage*. The applicant shall provide a draft Vegetation Resources Management Plan detailing the methods for the salvage and transplantation of target succulent species covered under the CDNPA. The plan shall be submitted to CDFW for review and approval at least 30 days prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities and shall include, at a minimum, the following elements:
    a. **Soil baseline characterization**. The characterization shall be presented to CDFW prior to ground disturbance and shall include:
        i. Profile description of three representative pedons. (A pedon is the smallest three-dimensional sampling unit displaying the full range of characteristics of a particular soil and typically occupies an area ranging from about 1 to 10 square yards.)
        ii. Characterization of surface application (desert pavement or biological soil crust present). Description of biological soil crust shall include major groups of organisms identified at the site (filamentous cyanobacteria, other cyanobacteria, mosses, lichens, liverworts) and the characteristics by which they were identified (see item b, below).
        iii. Documentation of soil macro-invertebrates (that is, presence of ants, termites, and other

significant macro-invertebrates).

- Bulk density, along with a reference to a generally accepted method for making the determination.
- Fertility (nutrient status, electrical conductivity, sodium adsorption ratio), along with methods by which composite samples were collected and the laboratory methods used to determine these properties. Composite samples will contain equal contributions from at least six randomly located collection points within the soil donor area.
- Organic matter content and total carbon and nitrogen content, along with a reference to generally accepted methods for making the determinations.

a. Soil compaction shall be determined by measurement of bulk density in grams per cubic centimeter (or numerically equivalent units). Bulk density may be determined by any of several standard measurements, but the method used must be referenced to a widely accepted soil methodology publication. In no case shall soil be compacted to a bulk density that exceeds 1.6 grams per cubic centimeter except where no planting is to take place. Penetrometer measurements are not a substitute for bulk density measurements.

Once characterized, the top 3 inches of topsoil shall be salvaged from the areas where traditional grading will be used per the following protocol, and stored within the project area. The upper 0.25 inch may be collected separately to preserve biological crust organisms. Topsoil may not be distinguishable from subsoils by color or organic content at the time of salvage but is characterized as the layer that contains fine roots during the active growing season. Soil shall be collected, transported, and formed into stockpiles only while the soil is dry. The vegetation in place at or immediately before topsoil collection shall be healthy native vegetation with less than 15% absolute cover of exotic weed growth. Soil occupied by vegetation of high plant diversity shall be given priority over soil occupied by low-diversity native vegetation. Soil may be collected with a front loader, bulldozer, or scraper and transported to storage areas by front loader, dump truck, or scraper. The equipment transporting the soil may not travel across the stockpile more than the minimum number of times required to build the soil to its intended depth. The depth of the stockpiles shall not exceed 4 feet in the case of sandy loam or loamy sand soils. Topsoil stockpiles shall be kept dry and covered if no vegetation is introduced. If native vegetation is grown on the stockpiles to increase seeds and soil organisms, no cover is required. Artificial watering may be provided at the applicant's option.

Stockpiled topsoil shall be used to grow native plant species for the purpose of producing native seeds and building beneficial microorganisms in the soil volume. All native plant species encountered in the vegetation surveys shall be included in the growing rotation on the stockpiles. Most growing space needs to be dedicated to the species for which the most seeds shall be required. At least half by area of the growing area during each growing cycle shall be dedicated to plant species known to be good mycorrhizal host plants. Members of the families Chenopodiaceae and Amaranthaceae should be limited to less than half the area of the soil stockpiles, with the other half occupied by known mycorrhizal host plant species.

b. **Biological Soil Crust Characterization and Preservation.** Biological soil crust is defined here as a mixture of organisms that occupy and protect the surface of the soil in most desert ecosystems. The organisms often include filamentous and non-filamentous cyanobacteria, mosses, lichens, liverworts, and fungi. Biological soil crust shall be preserved by collecting the upper 0.25 inch of topsoil from areas to be graded. The applicant and/or its contractor(s) shall collect from specific areas known to contain biological crust organisms or collect upper soil from the entire area to be graded. Collections shall emphasize filamentous cyanobacteria, but other cyanobacteria, mosses, lichens, and liverworts are also considered valuable

contributors to biological soil crust and important in protecting against erosion and reducing weed invasion and shall be collected as a secondary priority. Soil surface crust shall be air dried and stored dry in a shaded location in containers that allow air movement, such as loose-weave fabric bags. In no case may the stored crust be subject to wetting or direct sunlight during storage. All containers shall be clearly labeled with date and location of original collection; name and contact information of persons responsible for identifying suitable material to collect; and the persons who collected, stored, and maintained collections. Biological soil crust shall be re-applied at the time of replanting by crumbling the stored material and broadcasting it on the surface of the soil. Approximately 10% of the stored material shall be broadcast on topsoil storage areas among plants being grown for seed and soil microorganisms. When the growing cycle progresses to new planting, the soil supporting biological crust shall be collected and stored by the same methods prescribed for collections from the original soil, in clearly labeled bags or other suitable containers.

c. **Succulent Transplant**. The majority of the succulent plants located in areas to be dragged, rolled, or spot graded, or above mowing height, shall be salvaged and transplanted into a nursery area. The Succulent Transplant portion of the Vegetation Resources Management Plan shall include, at a minimum:

   i. The location of target plants on the project area;

   ii. Criteria for determining which individual plants are appropriate for salvage;

   iii. The proposed methods for salvage, propagation, transport, and planting;

   iv. Procedures for identifying target species during preconstruction clearance surveys;

   v. Considerations for storing salvaged plants or pre-planting requirements; and

   vi. Suggested transplantation sites.

   Succulents to be transplanted into the nursery area shall be placed in their same compass orientation as they were in their original location. The salvaged plants also shall be kept in long-term soil stockpiles, along with natives grown on the stockpiles, to keep the soil biota fresh.

   Succulent transplants done during preparation of the project area shall be fully documented and serve as trials of methods to be used during plant salvage on the project area. Records shall be maintained for each transplanted specimen including species; height; number of branches or pads as appropriate; donor location by UTM coordinates; methods used to remove, transport, and store the plant; period of temporary storage; location; facility description; planting medium used for storage; and frequency of watering during storage. Records shall be kept at the time of planting at the storage area, and quarterly thereafter during storage until such time as each plant is placed in the field or dies. Transplanted individuals shall be maintained for 3 years, including removal of invasive species and irrigation (if necessary), as well as monitored for 3 years to determine the percentage of surviving plants each year and to adjust maintenance activities using an adaptive management approach.

d. **Seed Collection**. Seed collection shall be carried out within the ROW grant area and within 10 miles of the boundaries of the project area on similar terrain, soil, exposure, slope and elevation to the project area. Seed collection guidelines shall conform to all laws and regulations in effect at the time of collection. Seed collection shall include all plant species known to be removed from the facility. If insufficient seeds are provided by "seed farming" and collection within 10 miles of the site, CEC may approve collection from a greater distance provided other environmental factors at the collection site are good matches to the project area. Collected seed may be used to seed salvaged topsoil piles during the construction phase

and after decommissioning related to restoring the project area.

e. If the palo verde trees on-site meet the CDFW size criterion for replacement (i.e., at least one stem greater than 2 inches in diameter) and cannot be salvaged based on the professional opinion of a qualified biologist/horticulturalist, three replacement plants shall be planted in or near the project area for each affected tree and monitored following the above guidance.

MM BIO-5: Biological Monitoring. Biological Monitor(s) shall be employed to assist the Designated Biologist in conducting preconstruction surveys and monitoring ground disturbance, grading, construction, decommissioning, and restoration activities. Additionally, biological monitoring shall be performed during any ground disturbance or grading activities that occur during operation and maintenance. The Biological Monitor(s) shall have sufficient education and field experience to understand resident wildlife species biology; have experience conducting desert tortoise, burrowing owl, kit fox, and badger field monitoring; and be able to identify these species and their sign (including active burrows). The Designated Biologist shall submit a resume, at least three references, and contact information for each prospective Biological Monitor to CEC, CDFW, and USFWS for approval. To avoid and minimize effects on biological resources, the Biological Monitor(s) shall assist the Designated Biologist with the following:

- Be present during construction activities that take place in suitable habitat for desert tortoise, burrowing owl, kit fox, badger, or other protected species to prevent or minimize harm or injury to these species. This also includes unfenced construction activities for desert bighorn sheep.
- Activities of the Biological Monitor(s) include, but are not limited to, ensuring compliance with all avoidance and minimization measures; monitoring for desert tortoise, burrowing owl, kit fox, badger, and other protected species; halting construction activity in the area if an individual is found; and checking the staking/flagging of all disturbance areas to be sure that they are intact and that all construction activities are being kept within the staked/flagged limits. If a desert tortoise, burrowing owl, desert bighorn sheep, kit fox, badger, or other protected species is found within a work area, the Biological Monitor(s) shall immediately notify the Designated Biologist, who shall determine measures to be taken to ensure that the individual is not harmed.
- Inspect the study area for any special-status wildlife species.
- Ensure that potential habitats within the construction zone are not occupied by special-status species (e.g., potential burrows or nests are inspected).
- In the event of the discovery of a non-listed, special-status ground-dwelling animal, recover and relocate the animal to adjacent suitable habitat at least 200 feet from the limits of construction activities.
- At the end of each work day, inspect all potential wildlife pitfalls (e.g., trenches, bores, other excavations) for wildlife and remove wildlife as necessary. If the potential pitfalls will not be immediately backfilled following inspection, the Biological Monitor(s) will ensure that the construction crew slopes the ends of the excavation (3:1 slope), provides wildlife escape ramps, or completely and securely covers the excavation to prevent wildlife entry.
- Inspect the site to ensure trash and food-related waste is placed in closed-lid containers and that workers do not feed wildlife. Also inspect the work area each day to ensure that no microtrash (e.g., bolts, screws, etc.) is left behind.

MM BIO-6: Crotch's Bumble Bee Impact Avoidance and Minimization. The below mitigation measures shall only be required if Crotch's bumble bee remains as a candidate state endangered species or is listed as a state endangered species at the time of project construction, operations and maintenance, or

decommissioning. These avoidance measures will be implemented to avoid take of the species if vegetation clearance and ground disturbance activities are proposed to occur during the following periods:

- Queen Flight Season (February through March), when queens emerge in the spring searching for nest sites.
- Colony Active Period (April through August), the most active flight period and highest detection probability for the species.
- Gyne Flight Season (September through October), the fall flight period when gynes mate and search for overwintering habitat.

If it is determined that "take" or adverse impacts to Crotch's bumble bee cannot be avoided during project activities, the applicant must consult the CEC to determine if a CESA incidental take permit is required.

1. ***Pre-construction Surveys.*** Pre-construction surveys for the Crotch's bumble bee shall be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to vegetation clearance and ground disturbance activities that are proposed to occur during the following periods:

    a. *Nesting Season.* Prior to vegetation removal and ground disturbing activities occurring during the Queen Flight Season and Colony Active Period (February 1 through August 31), a qualified biologist shall perform two (2) visual surveys consisting of meandering transects no more than 10 days prior to the commencement of vegetation removal and ground disturbance in that area. A qualified biologist shall conduct surveys at least four (4) days apart, with the second survey occurring within two (2) days prior to the onset of vegetation removal and ground disturbance in that area. The biologist shall focus attention on areas with blooming native and non-native nectar and pollen resources. The survey duration shall be appropriate to the size of the area planned for vegetation removal and ground disturbance plus 50 feet, based on the metric of a minimum of one (1) person-hour of searching per three (3) acres of suitable habitat as outlined within CDFW's Survey Considerations for CESA Candidate Bumble Bee Species (CDFW 2023). To the maximum extent possible, surveys shall be conducted between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM on sunny days between 55- and 90-degrees Fahrenheit, with sustained wind speeds measuring less than 10 miles per hour.

    If Crotch's bumble bee is detected or suspected during pre-construction surveys, the biologist shall flag the area where the observation was made and closely monitor the flagged areas during vegetation removal and ground disturbing activities. Additionally, if Crotch's bumble bee is suspected or confirmed within the project area, a qualified biologist shall make every effort to locate active nests. The biologist shall observe any burrow entrances for signs of Crotch's bumble bee. To confirm a suspected nest, a qualified biologist may block/cover any burrow entrance with a jar of appropriate size for no more than 30 minutes or until a bumble bee is detected. If a Crotch's bumble bee nest is detected or suspected, the applicant shall immediately halt all project activities within 50 feet of the nest. A qualified biologist shall delineate the 50-foot buffer and notify all workers not to enter the environmentally sensitive area. The applicant shall contact the CEC within 24 hours for further consultation. The biologist shall record the nest location with a GPS unit (including datum and horizontal accuracy in feet) and include photographs and a map of the nest location as part of notification to the CEC. The no disturbance buffer shall be maintained until the nest(s) senesce. Starting in July, nest activity shall be observed for a minimum of 1 hour per day for 3 consecutive days to determine if activity has

ceased and if the nest has senesced. The applicant shall increase the size and/or modify the nest buffer dependent upon notice from CEC.

b. *Overwintering Season.* If vegetation removal and ground disturbing activities occur during the overwintering season (November 1 through January 31), a qualified biologist shall walk ahead of grading and vegetation removal equipment and look for potential hibernacula such as leaf litter, logs, and rodent burrows. If any overwintering Crotch's bumble bees are found, the applicant shall immediately stop and prohibit all project activities within 50 feet of the overwintering queen and hibernaculum. A qualified biologist shall delineate a 50-foot buffer and notify all workers not to enter the environmentally sensitive area. If an overwintering queen is exposed, a qualified biologist shall cover and protect the queen using the substrate it was found within/under and return any removed materials (e.g., grass, vegetation, bark, and debris) to re-create pre-disturbed conditions. The applicant shall contact the CEC within 24 hours for further consultation. The biologist shall record the queen's location with a GPS unit (including datum and horizontal accuracy in feet) and include photographs and a map of the queen's location as part of notification to the CEC. The applicant shall increase the size and/or modify the nest buffer dependent upon notice from CDFW. Overwintering buffers shall be maintained until further instructions are received from the CEC.

If Crotch's bumble bee individuals are identified during pre-construction surveys, then the following additional avoidance measures should be implemented:

1. ***Initiate Consultation with the CEC.*** The applicant will consult with the CEC to determine if incidental take at the project will be likely, and if an incidental take permit is required.
2. ***Biological Monitoring During Construction.*** A qualified biologist(s) will be present each day during initial ground disturbance activities if Crotch's bumble bees are identified during pre-construction surveys.
3. ***Seasonal Restrictions and Vegetation Management.*** Vegetation and ground disturbance within suitable Crotch's bumble bee habitat shall be avoided during the Queen Flight Season (February through March) and the Gyne Flight Season (September through October), to the greatest extent feasible. If feasible, native and non-native flowering vegetation removal shall occur prior to the blooming period of potential floral resources and before the Queen/Gyne Flight Seasons and Colony Active Period (February through October). If vegetation removal cannot be avoided during this period, or if vegetation needs to be removed during the bloom period for potential floral resources: flowering vegetation should be removed in a patched manner so as to leave areas of floral resources as refugia for foragers or wait until bloom has ceased. Additionally, removal of non-native plants should be prioritized over native plants. If mowing activities are to occur, vegetation shall be mowed to a height no lower than 4 inches to prevent disturbance of established nests or overwintering queen hibernacula.
4. ***Provide Compensatory Mitigation for Impacts on Crotch's Bumble Bee.*** Direct impacts to suitable Crotch's bumble bee habitat shall be offset through compensatory mitigation, which may include, but is not necessarily limited to, on-site or off-site habitat preservation, enhancement, restoration, and/or creation at a ratio of no less than 1:1.

MM BIO-7: Designated Biologist. The applicant shall assign at least one Designated Biologist to the project. The applicant shall submit the resume of the proposed Designated Biologist(s), with at least three

references and contact information, to the BLM Authorized Officer for approval in consultation with the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS.

The Designated Biologist must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Have a bachelor's degree in biological sciences, zoology, botany, ecology, or a closely related field;
- Have 3 years of experience in field biology or current certification of a nationally recognized biological society, such as The Ecological Society of America or The Wildlife Society;
- Have at least 1 year of field experience with biological resources found in or near the study area;
- Meet the current USFWS Authorized Biologist qualifications criteria, demonstrate familiarity with protocols and guidelines for the desert tortoise, and be approved by the USFWS;
- Possess a CESA Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to Section 2081(a) for desert tortoise.

In lieu of the above requirements, the resume shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the BLM Authorized Officer, in consultation with the CEC, CDFW and USFWS, that the proposed Designated Biologist or alternate has the appropriate training and background to effectively implement the MMs.

MM BIO-8: Fence Design and Site Permeability. Permanent site fencing installed around the project—including perimeter security fencing desert tortoise exclusionary fencing—should be designed to direct wildlife toward the wildlife undercrossing to provide safe passage under the freeway and shall be regularly inspected and maintained for the life of the project. Alternate designs may also be constructed with prior written approval from the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS. Regardless, the project shall ensure that any such fence meets existing specifications that have been developed to preclude accidental entanglement of desert bighorn sheep, deer, and other animals.

Fencing should be sufficient to prevent desert bighorn sheep passage (e.g., 2m-2.5m tall chain-link) – should be installed at the corridor entrances between (a) the East Array and South Array 1, (b) South Array 1 and South Array 2, and (c) South Array 2 and South Array 3 on the east side (Figure 2, Project Design). Additionally, the project shall extend a line of project fencing to the north to connect with the wildlife exclusion fencing associated with the I-15 overcrossing structure (Figure 13; Dudek 2024). Approximately 1,640 linear feet of this can be accomplished within the existing project boundary, but the additional approximately 300 linear feet will need to be coordinated with BLM and possibly Caltrans. The project will secure the necessary encroachment permits or other mechanism to continue fencing between the project boundary and the wildlife exclusion fencing associated with the I-15 overcrossing structure. Care should be taken when connecting the fences to make sure that they are physically connected or directly abut one another such that wildlife can't pass through or get stuck between them. The ultimate fencing plans should be reviewed by the CEC for final approval prior to site disturbance activities.

MM BIO-9: Compliance Monitoring by the Designated Biologist. Prior to ground-disturbing activities, an individual shall be designated and approved by the CEC and CDFW as a Designated Biologist (i.e., field contact representative). Designated Biologist qualifications are presented below.

The Designated Biologist shall be employed for the period during which ongoing construction and postconstruction monitoring and reporting by an approved biologist is required. Each successive Designated Biologist shall be approved by the CEC. The Designated Biologist shall have the authority to ensure compliance with all measures set forth in the BO and CESA Section 2081 take authorization and with all MMs included herein, and shall be the primary agency contact for the implementation of these measures. The Designated Biologist shall have the authority and responsibility to halt any project

activities that are in violation of the terms of the BO, Section 2081 take authorization, or project MMs. A list of responsibilities of the Designated Biologist is summarized below.

To avoid and minimize effects to biological resources, the Designated Biologist shall:

- Notify the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS at least 14 calendar days before initiation of ground-disturbing activities.
- Immediately notify the CEC in writing if the applicant/owner does not comply with any of the MMs or terms of the BO and/or the Section 2081 take authorization including, but not limited to, any actual or anticipated failure to implement such measures within the periods specified.
- Ensure performance of daily compliance inspections during ongoing construction as clearing, grubbing, and grading are completed, and submit a monthly compliance report to the CEC until construction is complete.

MM BIO-10: Speed Limits. Speed limits along all access roads outside of permanent desert tortoise fencing shall not exceed 15 mph to minimize dust during construction activities. Speed limits within permanent desert tortoise fencing shall not exceed 25 mph to minimize impacts during operation and maintenance. Nighttime vehicle traffic associated with project activities shall be kept to a minimum volume and speed (maximum of 15 mph) to prevent mortality of nocturnal wildlife species.

MM BIO-11: Desert Tortoise Protection. The applicant/owner shall undertake appropriate measures to manage the construction site and related facilities in a manner to avoid or minimize impacts to desert tortoise. Methods for clearance surveys, fence specification and installation, tortoise handling, artificial burrow construction, egg handling, and other procedures shall be consistent with those described in the USFWS's *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (USFWS 2009) or more current guidance provided by CDFW and USFWS. The applicant/owner shall also implement all terms and conditions described in the BO to be prepared by USFWS and CESA ITP. These measures include, but are not limited to, the following, subject to modification by the terms of incidental take authorizations issued by the USFWS and CEC:

- ***Desert Tortoise Fencing along I-15.*** If required by the CEC, to avoid increases in vehicle-related mortality from disruption of local movement patterns along the existing ephemeral wash systems, desert tortoise-proof fencing shall be installed along the existing freeway ROW fencing on both sides of I-15 for the entire east-west dimension of the project area. The tortoise fencing shall be designed to direct tortoises to existing undercrossing to provide safe passage under the freeway and shall be regularly inspected and maintained for the life of the project.
- ***Desert Tortoise Exclusion Fence Installation.*** To avoid impacts to desert tortoise, permanent desert tortoise exclusion fencing shall be installed along the permanent perimeter security fence and temporarily installed along road corridors during construction. The proposed alignments for the permanent perimeter fence and temporary fencing shall be flagged and surveyed within 24 hours prior to the initiation of fence construction. Clearance surveys of the perimeter fence and temporary fencing areas shall be conducted by the Designated Biologist(s) using techniques outlined in the USFWS's *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* and may be conducted in any season with the CEC, USFWS, and CDFW approval. Biological Monitors may assist the Designated Biologist under his or her supervision. These fence clearance surveys shall provide 100% coverage of all areas to be disturbed and an additional transect along both sides of the fence line covering an area approximately 90 feet wide centered on the fence alignment. Transects shall be no greater than 15 feet apart. All desert tortoise burrows and burrows constructed by other species that might be used by desert tortoise shall be examined to assess occupancy of each burrow by desert tortoise and handled in accordance with the USFWS's

Desert Tortoise Field Manual. Any desert tortoise located during fence clearance surveys shall be handled by the Designated Biologist in accordance with the USFWS's 2009 *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (USFWS 2009).

a. *Timing, Supervision of Fence Installation*. The exclusion fencing shall be installed prior to the onset of site clearing and grubbing. The fence installation shall be supervised by the Designated Biologist and monitored by the Biological Monitors to ensure the safety of any tortoise present.

b. *Fence Material and Installation*. The permanent tortoise exclusionary fencing shall be constructed in accordance with the USFWS's *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (Chapter 8 – Desert Tortoise Exclusion Fence) (USFWS 2009).

c. *Security Gates*. Security gates shall be designed with minimal ground clearance to deter ingress by tortoises. The gates may be electronically activated to open and close immediately after the vehicle(s) have entered or exited to prevent the gates from being kept open for long periods of time. Cattle grating designed to safely exclude desert tortoise shall be installed at the gated entries to discourage tortoises from gaining entry.

d. *Fence Inspections*. Following installation of the desert tortoise exclusion fencing for both the permanent site fencing and temporary fencing, the fencing shall be regularly inspected. If tortoises were moved out of harm's way during fence construction, permanent and temporary fencing shall be inspected at least two times per day for the first 7 days to ensure a recently moved tortoise has not been trapped within the fence. Thereafter, permanent fencing shall be inspected monthly and during or within 24 hours following all major rainfall events. Exceptions to inspections during major rainfall events may be made as needed to maintain crew safety. A major rainfall event is defined as one for which flow is detectable within the fenced drainage. Any damage to the fencing shall be temporarily repaired immediately to keep tortoises out of the site, and permanently repaired within 48 hours of observing damage. Inspections of permanent site fencing shall occur for the life of the project. Temporary fencing shall be inspected weekly and, where drainages intersect the fencing, during and within 24 hours following major rainfall events. All damaged temporary fencing shall be repaired immediately upon discovery and, if the fence may have permitted tortoise entry while damaged, the Designated Biologist shall inspect the area for tortoise.

- ***Desert Tortoise Clearance Surveys within Solar Arrays and Gen-tie.*** Clearance surveys shall be conducted in accordance with the USFWS *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (USFWS 2009) (Chapter 6 – Clearance Survey Protocol for the Desert Tortoise – Mojave Population) and shall consist of two surveys covering 100% of the study area by walking transects no more than 15 feet apart. If a desert tortoise is located during the second survey, a third survey shall be conducted. Each separate survey shall be walked in a different direction to allow opposing angles of observation. Clearance surveys of the project area may only be conducted when tortoises are most active (April–May or September–October) unless the project receives approval from the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS. Clearance surveys of linear features may be conducted during any time of the year. Any tortoise located during clearance surveys of solar arrays shall be translocated or relocated and monitored in accordance with the DTTP (MM 3.4-2b). The Designated Biologist, who may be assisted by the Biological Monitors, shall assess occupancy of each burrow by desert tortoise in accordance with the USFWS *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (USFWS 2009). All potential desert tortoise burrows located during clearance surveys shall be excavated by hand, tortoises removed, and burrows collapsed or blocked to prevent occupation by desert tortoise in accordance with the DTTP.

- ***Monitoring Following Clearing.*** Following the desert tortoise clearance and removal from the project area, workers and heavy equipment shall be allowed to enter the project area to perform

clearing, grubbing, leveling, and trenching activities. A Designated Biologist or Biological Monitor shall be on-site for clearing and grading activities to move tortoises missed during the initial tortoise clearance survey. Should a tortoise be discovered, it shall be relocated or translocated as described in the DTTP.

- ***Reporting.*** The Designated Biologist shall record the following information for any desert tortoise handled: a) the locations (narrative and maps) and dates of observation; b) general condition and health, including injuries, state of healing and whether desert tortoise voided their bladders; c) location moved from and location moved to (using GPS); d) gender, carapace length, and diagnostic markings (i.e., identification numbers or marked lateral scutes); e) ambient temperature when handled and released; and f) digital photograph of each handled tortoise. Desert tortoise moved from within the project area shall be marked and monitored in accordance with the DTTP. All collected data related to tortoise relocation shall be provided to the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS.

MM BIO-12: Desert Tortoise Translocation Plan. The applicant/owner shall develop and implement a USFWS- and CEC-approved DTTP. The DTTP, which shall be approved prior to any ground disturbance or tortoise relocation, shall include measures to minimize the potential for repeated translocations of individual desert tortoise. The goals of the DTTP shall be to relocate all desert tortoise from the project area to nearby suitable habitat; minimize impacts on resident desert tortoise outside the project area; minimize stress, disturbance, and injuries to relocated/translocated tortoises; and assess the success of the translocation effort through monitoring. The DTTP shall follow the *Translocation of Mojave Desert Tortoises from Project Sites: Plan Development Guidance* (USFWS 2020) and shall clearly define how it addresses the 11 steps outlined in the guidance. The final DTTP shall be based on the draft DTTP prepared by the applicant/owner and shall include all revisions deemed necessary by CEC, CDFW, and USFWS. The final plan will be subject to modification for consistency with the CESA ITP, USFWS take authorization and/or BO conservation requirements.

MM BIO-13: Desert Tortoise Compliance Verification. The applicant/owner shall provide CDFW and USFWS staff with unfettered access to the project area and compensation lands under the control of the project owner and shall otherwise fully cooperate with the CEC's efforts to verify the project owner's compliance with, or the effectiveness of, adopted MMs. The Designated Biologist shall do all of the following:

- ***Notification.*** Notify the CEC at least 14 calendar days before initiating construction-related ground disturbance activities; immediately notify the CEC in writing if the project owner is not in compliance with any conditions of certification, including but not limited to any actual or anticipated failure to implement MMs within the time periods specified in the conditions of certification;
- ***Monitoring During Grubbing and Grading.*** Remain on-site daily while vegetation salvage, grubbing, grading, and other ground-disturbing construction activities are taking place to avoid or minimize take of listed species, and verify personally or have Biological Monitor(s) verify compliance with all impact avoidance and minimization measures, including checking all exclusion zones to ensure that signs, stakes, and fencing are intact and that human activities are restricted in these protective zones.
- ***Monthly Compliance Inspections.*** Conduct compliance inspections at a minimum of once per month after clearing, grubbing, and grading are completed and submit a monthly compliance report to the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS during construction.
- ***Notification of Injured or Dead Listed Species.*** If an injured or dead federally or state-listed species is detected on or near the project area the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS shall be notified

immediately by phone. Notification shall occur no later than noon on the business day following the event if it occurs outside normal business hours so that the agencies can determine whether further actions are required to protect listed species. Written follow-up notification via facsimile or electronic communication shall be submitted to these agencies within 2 calendar days of the incident and include the following information as relevant:

a. *Injured Desert Tortoise*. If a desert tortoise is injured as a result of project-related activities during construction, the Designated Biologist or Biological Monitor(s) shall immediately take it to a CDFW-approved wildlife rehabilitation and/or veterinarian clinic. Any veterinarian bills for such injured animals shall be paid by the applicant/owner. Following phone notification as required above, CDFW and USFWS shall determine the final disposition of the injured animal, if it recovers. Written notification shall include, at a minimum, the date, time, location, and circumstances of the incident and the name of the facility where the animal was taken.

b. *Desert Tortoise Fatality*. If a desert tortoise is killed by project-related activities during construction, operation and maintenance, or decommissioning, a written report with the same information as an injury report shall be submitted the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS. These desert tortoises shall be salvaged according to federally established guidelines. The applicant/owner shall pay to have the desert tortoises transported and necropsied. The report shall include the date and time of the finding or incident.

    1. ***Final Listed Species Mitigation Report.*** The Designated Biologist shall provide the CEC and CDFW a Final Listed Species Mitigation Report that includes, at a minimum, 1) all available information about project-related incidental take of listed species; 2) information about other project impacts to the listed species; 3) construction dates; 4) an assessment of the effectiveness of conditions of certification in minimizing and compensating for project impacts; 5) recommendations on how MMs might be changed to more effectively minimize and mitigate the impacts of future projects on the listed species; and 6) any other pertinent information, including the level of take of the listed species associated with the project.

    2. ***Stop Work Order.*** CEC may issue the project owner a written stop work order to suspend any activity related to the construction or operation of the project to prevent or remedy a violation of one or more conditions of certification (including but not limited to failure to comply with reporting, monitoring, or habitat acquisition obligations) or to prevent the illegal take of an endangered, threatened, or protected species. The project owner shall comply with the stop work order immediately upon receipt thereof.

MM BIO-14: Desert Tortoise Compensatory Mitigation: To fully mitigate for habitat loss and potential take of desert tortoise, the project owner shall provide compensatory mitigation consistent with federal requirements, adjusted to reflect the final project footprint. The acreage for mitigation of desert tortoise habitat will be at a 1:1 ratio. For the purposes of this condition, the project footprint means all lands disturbed in the construction and operation of the project, including all project linears, as well as undeveloped areas inside the project's boundaries that will no longer provide viable long-term habitat for the desert tortoise. To satisfy this condition, the project owner shall acquire, protect, and transfer 1 acre of desert tortoise habitat for every acre of habitat within the final project footprint, and provide associated funding for the acquired lands, as specified below. In lieu of acquiring land itself, the project owner may satisfy the requirements of this condition by depositing funds into the Renewable Energy Action Team (REAT) Account established with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), as provided below in Section 3.i. of this measure.

If compensation lands are acquired in fee title or in easement, the requirements for acquisition, initial improvement, and long-term management of compensation lands include all of the following, subject to modification by the terms of incidental take authorizations issued by USFWS and CEC:

- ***Selection Criteria for Compensation Lands.*** The compensation lands selected for acquisition in fee title or in easement shall:
  a. be within the Western Mojave Recovery Unit, or, with prior CEC, USFWS, and CDFW approval, within the Eastern Mojave Recovery Unit as defined in the 2011 Revised Recovery Plan (USFWS 2011b), with potential to contribute to desert tortoise habitat connectivity and build linkages between desert tortoise designated critical habitat, known populations of desert tortoise, and/or other preserve lands;
  b. provide habitat for desert tortoise with capacity to regenerate naturally when disturbances are removed;
  c. be prioritized near larger blocks of land that are either already protected or planned for protection, such as Desert Wildlife Management Areas within the Western Mojave Recovery Unit (or nearby portions of the Eastern Mojave Recovery Unit with prior USFWS and CDFW approval) or which could feasibly be protected long term by a public resource agency or a non-governmental organization dedicated to habitat preservation;
  d. be connected to lands with desert tortoise habitat equal to or better quality than the project area, ideally with populations that are stable, recovering, or likely to recover;
  e. not have a history of intensive recreational use or other disturbance that does not have the capacity to regenerate naturally when disturbances are removed or might make habitat recovery and restoration infeasible;
  f. not be characterized by high densities of invasive species, either on or immediately adjacent to the parcels under consideration, that might jeopardize habitat recovery and restoration;
  g. not contain hazardous wastes that cannot be removed to the extent that the site could not provide suitable habitat; and
  h. have water and mineral rights included as part of the acquisition, unless BLM and CEC, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS, agree in writing to the acceptability of the land.
- ***Review and Approval of Compensation Lands Prior to Acquisition.*** The project owner shall submit a formal acquisition proposal to the CEC, BLM, CDFW, and USFWS describing the parcel(s) intended for purchase. This acquisition proposal shall discuss the suitability of the proposed parcel(s) as compensation lands for desert tortoise in relation to the criteria listed above. Approval from the CEC and BLM, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS shall be required for acquisition of all compensatory mitigation parcels.
- ***Compensation Lands Acquisition Requirements.*** The project owner shall comply with the following requirements relating to acquisition of the compensation lands after the CEC and BLM, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS, have approved the proposed compensation lands:
  a. *Preliminary Report*. The project owner, or approved third party, shall provide a recent preliminary title report, initial hazardous materials survey report, biological analysis, and other necessary or requested documents for the proposed compensation land to the BLM. All documents conveying or conserving compensation lands and all conditions of title are subject to review and approval by the CEC and BLM, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS. For conveyances to the State, approval may also be required from the California Department of General Services, the Fish and Game Commission, and the Wildlife Conservation Board.

b. *Title/Conveyance.* The project owner shall transfer fee title to the compensation lands, a conservation easement over the lands, or both fee title and conservation easement as required by the BLM and CEC. Transfer of either fee title or an approved conservation easement will usually be sufficient, but some situations, e.g., the donation of lands burdened by a conservation easement to BLM, will require that both types of transfers be completed. Any transfer of a conservation easement or fee title must be to CEC, a non-profit organization qualified to hold title to and manage compensation lands (pursuant to California Government Code section 65965), or BLM under terms approved by the BLM. If an approved non-profit organization holds title to the compensation lands, a conservation easement shall be recorded in favor of the CEC in a form approved by the CEC. If an approved non-profit holds a conservation easement, the CEC shall be named a third-party beneficiary.

c. *Initial Habitat Improvement Fund.* The project owner shall fund the initial protection and habitat improvement of the compensation lands. Alternatively, a non-profit organization may hold the habitat improvement funds if it is qualified to manage the compensation lands (pursuant to California Government Code Section 65965) and if it meets the approval of CEC and BLM. If CEC takes fee title to the compensation lands, the habitat improvement fund must be paid to CEC or its designee.

d. *Property Analysis Record.* Upon identification of the compensation lands, the project owner shall conduct a Property Analysis Record (PAR) or PAR-like analysis to establish the appropriate long-term maintenance and management fee to fund the in-perpetuity management of the acquired mitigation lands.

e. *Long-term Maintenance and Management Fund.* The project owner shall deposit in NFWF's REAT Account a capital long-term maintenance and management fee in the amount determined through the PAR or PAR-like analysis conducted for the compensation lands. BLM, in consultation with CDFW, may designate another non-profit organization to hold the long-term maintenance and management fee if the organization is qualified to manage the compensation lands in perpetuity. If the CEC takes fee title to the compensation lands, the CEC shall determine whether it will hold the long-term management fee in the special deposit fund, leave the money in the REAT Account, or designate another entity to manage the long-term maintenance and management fee for the CEC and with CEC supervision.

f. *Interest, Principal, and Pooling of Funds.* The project owner, BLM, and the CEC shall ensure that an agreement is in place with the long-term maintenance and management fee holder/manager to ensure the following conditions:

    i. Interest. Interest generated from the initial capital long-term maintenance and management fee shall be available for reinvestment into the principal and for the long-term operation, management, and protection of the approved compensation lands, including reasonable administrative overhead, biological monitoring, improvements to carrying capacity, law enforcement measures, and any other action approved by the CEC designed to protect or improve the habitat values of the compensation lands.

    ii. Withdrawal of Principal. The long-term maintenance and management fee principal shall not be drawn upon unless such withdrawal is deemed necessary by the CEC or the approved third-party long-term maintenance and management fee manager to ensure the continued viability of the species on the compensation lands. If the CEC takes fee title to the compensation lands, monies received by the CEC pursuant to this provision shall be deposited in a special deposit fund established solely for the purpose to manage lands in perpetuity unless the CEC designates NFWF or another entity to manage the long-term maintenance and management fee for the CEC.

iii. Pooling Long-Term Maintenance and Management Fee Funds. The CEC, or a BLM- and CDFW-approved non-profit organization qualified to hold long-term maintenance and management fees solely for the purpose to manage lands in perpetuity, may pool the endowment with other endowments for the operation, management, and protection of the compensation lands for local populations of desert tortoise. However, for reporting purposes, the long-term maintenance and management fee fund must be tracked and reported individually to the CEC.

g. *Other expenses*. In addition to the costs listed above, the project owner shall be responsible for all other costs related to acquisition of compensation lands and conservation easements, including but not limited to title and document review costs; expenses incurred from other state agency reviews; overhead related to providing compensation lands to the CEC or an approved third party; escrow fees or costs; environmental contaminants clearance; and other site cleanup measures.

h. *Mitigation Securit*y. The project owner shall provide financial assurances to the BLM and the CEC with copies of the document(s) to the CDFW and USFWS, to guarantee that an adequate level of funding is available to implement the MMs described in this condition. These funds shall be used solely for implementation of the measures associated with the project in the event the project owner fails to comply with the requirements specified in this condition, or shall be returned to the project owner upon successful compliance with the requirements in this condition. The BLM's or CEC's use of the security to implement measures in this condition may not fully satisfy the project owner's obligations under this condition. Financial assurance can be provided to the BLM and CEC in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit, a pledged savings account, or another form of security ("Security"). Prior to submitting the Security to the BLM and CEC, the project owner shall obtain the BLM's approval in consultation with CDFW and the USFWS of the form of the Security. The actual costs to comply with this condition will vary depending on the final footprint of the project and the actual costs of acquiring, improving, and managing the compensation lands.

i. *NFWF REAT Account*. The project owner may elect to fund the acquisition and initial improvement of compensation lands through NFWF by depositing funds for that purpose into NFWF's REAT Account. Initial deposits for this purpose must be made in the same amounts as the security required above and may be provided in lieu of security. If this option is used for the acquisition and initial improvement, the project owner shall make an additional deposit into the REAT Account if necessary to cover the actual acquisition costs and administrative costs and fees of the compensation land purchase once land is identified and the actual costs are known. If the actual costs for acquisition and administrative costs and fees are less than anticipated in the PAR analysis, the excess money deposited in the REAT Account shall be returned to the project owner. Money deposited for the initial protection and improvement of the compensation lands shall not be returned to the project owner.

The responsibility for acquisition of compensation lands may be delegated to a third party other than NFWF, such as a non-governmental organization supportive of desert habitat conservation, by written agreement of the BLM and CDFW. Such delegation shall be subject to approval by the BLM and the CEC, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS, prior to land acquisition, initial protection, or maintenance and management activities. Agreements to delegate land acquisition to an approved third party, or to manage compensation lands, shall be implemented with 18 months of BLM's approval.

MM BIO-15: Minimize Vehicle and Equipment Impacts during Operation and Maintenance.
The applicant/owner shall implement measures to minimize the potential for desert tortoise and other wildlife species mortality along access and maintenance roads. These measures shall include:

- Speed limits identified in MM BIO-10 shall continue to be applied during operation and maintenance.
- Pedestrian access outside the limits of the designated access/maintenance roads is permitted year-round as long as no ground-disturbing activities take place.
- Vehicle traffic and parking shall be confined to designated access roads, and equipment and materials staging areas shall be clearly defined to avoid impacting habitat during the operation phase.

MM BIO-16: Mojave Fringe-toed Lizard Protection Measures. A qualified biologist will conduct a focused survey for Mojave fringe-toed lizard prior to ground disturbance in suitable habitat (aeolian sand deposits) within all active work areas. Two survey replicates will be performed during the Mojave fringe-toed lizard active season (March–October) during appropriate weather conditions. Qualified biologists will walk transects spaced 10m apart throughout areas with suitable habitat within the study area. Detections of Mojave fringe-toed lizard will be recorded using a GPS unit. If Mojave fringe-toed lizards are not detected, then no further action is needed. If Mojave fringe-toed lizards are found, then a pre-construction survey should be conducted no more than one week before ground disturbance begins, and any Mojave fringe-toed lizards should be moved to suitable habitat south of the Project area where the species was confirmed to be present.

MM BIO-17: Avian Monitoring and Mitigation Program. An Avian Monitoring and Mitigation Program (AMMP) shall be initiated and approved by the CEC and BLM in consultation with CDFW and USFWS prior to construction and continue for at least 5 years following commercial operation (and longer if determined necessary and appropriate by the Designated Biologist). The AMMP shall prevent substantial adverse effects to special-status species through implementation of the approach outlined in the postconstruction monitoring and adaptive management provisions of Region 8 Interim Guidelines for the Development of a Project-specific Avian and Bat Protection Plan for Solar Energy Plants and Related Transmission Facilities (USFWS 2010), in conjunction with any measures required after consultation with USFWS and/or CDFW under the ESA, CESA, or BGEPA, if applicable. The Program shall use surveys and monitoring of on-site avian and bat use and behavior to document species composition and changes in avian and bat use over time. The purpose of the AMMP is to provide an adaptive management and decision-making framework for reviewing, characterizing, and responding to avian and bat monitoring results, and reducing long-term impacts on these taxa. The AMMP shall include the following components:

- A description of the baseline and ongoing avian and bat survey methods, including identification of onsite survey locations and seasonal survey considerations, and a description of acoustic bat monitoring methods.
- Avian and bat mortality and injury monitoring that includes:
    a. Onsite monitoring of representative locations in the facility, at a level of effort that accounts for potential spatial bias and allows for the extrapolation of survey results to non-surveyed areas. The AMMP will provide a rationale justifying the proposed schedule of carcass searches.
    b. Low-visibility and high-wind weather event monitoring to document potential weather-related collision risks that may be associated increased risk of avian or bat collisions with project features, including foggy, highly overcast, or rainy night-time weather typically associated with an advancing frontal system, and high wind events (40-mph winds) are sustained for period of greater than 4 hours. The monitoring report shall include survey frequency, locations, and methods.

c. Scavenger and searcher efficiency trials to document the extent to which avian or bat fatalities remain visible over time and can be detected, and to adjust the survey timing and survey results to reflect scavenger and searcher efficiency rates.

d. A description of statistical methods used to generate facility estimates of potential avian and bat impacts based on the number of detections during standardized searches during the monitoring season for which the cause of death can be determined.

e. Field detection and mortality or injury identification, cause attribution, handling and reporting requirements. The AMMP shall include detailed specifications on data collection and provide a carcass collection protocol.

- All postconstruction mortality monitoring studies included in the AMMP shall be performed by a -third party contractor for 5 years following commercial operation and approval of the AMMP by the BLM. At the end of the 5-year period, the BLM shall determine whether the survey program shall be continued.
- An adaptive management program shall be developed to identify and implement reasonable and feasible measures that would reduce levels of avian or bat mortality or injury attributable to project operations and facilities. Such measures could potentially include efforts to make panels more visible to birds (e.g., white borders around panel edges or the use of noise deterrents).

The adaptive management program shall include (i) reasonable measures for characterizing the extent and importance of detected mortality and injuries clearly attributable to the project; (ii) potential measures that the project owner could implement to adaptively respond to detected mortality and injuries attributable to the project. Adaptive actions undertaken will be discussed and evaluated in survey reports. Any impact reduction measures must be commensurate (in terms of factors that include geographic scope, costs, and scale of effort) with the level of avian or bat mortality or injury that is specifically and clearly attributable to the project facilities; and (iii) Appropriate performance standards for mitigation of impacts to any species regulated by BGEPA, ESA, and CESA as well as MMs that reduce or offset mortalities caused by the project to a level that avoids a substantial, long-term reduction in the demographic viability of the local population of the species in question.

MM BIO-18. Avoid Disturbance to Nesting Birds. Vegetation clearing shall take place outside of the general avian breeding season (February 15–September 1), when feasible. If vegetation clearing cannot occur outside the avian breeding season, the Designated Biologist/Biological Monitor(s) shall conduct a preconstruction survey for nesting birds no more than 3 days prior to vegetation clearing. If no active nests are found, clearing can proceed. If active nests are found, no clearing shall be allowed within 150 feet (for passerines) to 250 feet (for raptors) of the active nests until the Designated Biologist/Biological Monitor(s) determines the nest is no longer active or the nest fails. Based on observation of the individual birds' tolerance to human activity, this buffer may be reduced by a qualified biologist. Encroachment into the buffer may occur at the discretion of a qualified biologist.

The Designated Biologist/Biological Monitor(s) shall submit the results of the preconstruction nesting bird surveys to the CEC, BLM, USFWS, and CDFW. Following agency coordination, the size of the next buffer may be adjusted based upon the magnitude of proposed activities and observed sensitivity of the bird to disturbance.

MM BIO-19: Lighting Specifications to Minimize Bird and Bat Impacts. The applicant/owner shall minimize night lighting during construction by using shielded directional lighting that is pointed downward, thereby avoiding illumination to adjacent natural areas and the night sky.

MM BIO-20: Bird and Bat Conservation Strategy (BBCS). The applicant/owner shall develop a BBCS to address project impacts to special-status avian and bat species that shall be consistent with the Region 8 *Interim Guidelines for the Development of a Project-specific Avian and Bat Protection Plan for Solar Energy Plants and Related Transmission Facilities* (USFWS 2010). The applicant/owner shall submit the BBCS to the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS for review and approval prior to initiation of project construction. The BBCS shall include an assessment of potential avian and bat impacts from lighting, noise, collision, electrocution, and attraction of ravens, as applicable; measures to mitigate for the effects to birds; a description of general avoidance and minimization measures applicable during construction, operation and maintenance, and postconstruction to include nest management and postconstruction monitoring; a description of the reporting requirements and reporting schedule and duration; and the adaptive management strategy. A raven management element shall be included in the BBCS or provided separately that includes measures such as storage of garbage in raven-proof containers and installation of anti-nesting devices on structures where raven nests could be built.

MM BIO-21: Burrowing Owl Protection Measures. To fully mitigate for habitat loss and potential take of burrowing owl, the project owner shall provide compensatory mitigation consistent with CDFW requirements, adjusted to reflect the final project footprint. The acreage for mitigation of burrowing owl habitat will be at a 1:1 ratio. For the purposes of this condition, the project footprint means all lands disturbed in the construction and operation of the project, including all project linears, as well as undeveloped areas inside the project's boundaries that will no longer provide viable long-term habitat for burrowing owl.

If compensation lands are acquired in fee title or in easement, the requirements for acquisition, initial improvement, and long-term management of compensation lands must comply with the terms of incidental take authorizations issued by the CEC. The compensation lands selected for acquisition in fee title or in easement shall comply with the terms of incidental take authorizations issued by the CEC.

No more than 14 days prior to the start of ground disturbance, a preconstruction survey for burrowing owls in conformance with the CDFW *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFW 2012) shall be completed within suitable habitat at every work area and within a 150-m buffer zone of each work area. Work areas will be resurveyed following periods of inactivity of 2 weeks or more. The applicant/owner shall submit the results of the preconstruction survey to BLM's Authorized Officer and the CEC. The applicant/owner shall also submit evidence of conformance with federal and state regulations regarding the protection of the burrowing owl by demonstrating compliance with the following:

- Impacts to active burrowing owl territories shall be mitigated at a minimum of a 1:1 ratio through a combination of off-site habitat compensation and/or off-site restoration of disturbed habitat capable of supporting this species. The acquisition of occupied habitat off-site shall be in an area where energy facilities would not pose a mortality risk. Acquisition of habitat shall be consistent with the CDFW's *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFW 2012). The preserved habitat shall be occupied by burrowing owl and shall be of superior or similar habitat quality to the impacted areas in terms of soil features, extent of disturbance, habitat structure, and dominant species composition, as determined by a qualified ornithologist. The site shall be approved by the BLM and CEC. Land shall be purchased and/or placed in a conservation easement in perpetuity and managed to maintain suitable habitat. The off-site area to be preserved can coincide with other off-site mitigation lands, with the approval of the CEC.
- The approved biologist shall remain on-site until all vegetation is cleared and, at a minimum, conduct site and fence inspections on a regular (monthly) schedule throughout construction to ensure that the project is in compliance with the MMs.
- Employees and contractors shall look under vehicles and equipment for the presence of wildlife prior to moving vehicles and equipment. If present, the animal shall be left to move on its own.

No listed species shall be handled without concurrence from USFWS and/or CDFW, as applicable.

MM BIO-22: American Badger and Desert Kit Fox Protection. To avoid direct impacts to American badger and desert kit fox, preconstruction surveys shall be conducted for these species concurrently with the desert tortoise surveys. Surveys shall be conducted as described below:

- Biological Monitors shall perform preconstruction surveys for badger and kit fox dens in the project disturbance area, including a 20-foot swath beyond the disturbed area, utility corridors, and access roads. If dens are detected, each den shall be classified as inactive, potentially active, or definitely active.
- Inactive dens that would be directly impacted by construction activities shall be excavated by hand and backfilled to prevent reuse by badgers or kit fox.
- Potentially and definitely active dens that would be directly impacted by construction activities shall be monitored by the Biological Monitor for 3 consecutive nights using a tracking medium (such as diatomaceous earth or fire clay) and/or infrared camera stations at the entrance.
- If no tracks are observed in the tracking medium or no photos of the target species are captured after 3 consecutive nights, the den shall be excavated and backfilled by hand.
- If tracks are observed, the den shall be progressively blocked with natural materials (rocks, dirt, sticks, and vegetation piled in front of the entrance) for the next three to five nights to discourage the badger or kit fox from continued use. After verification that the den is unoccupied it shall then be excavated and backfilled by hand to ensure that no badgers or kit fox are trapped in the den.
- If an active natal den is detected on the site, the BLM Authorized Officer and CDFW shall be contacted within 24 hours to determine the appropriate course of action to minimize the potential for harm or mortality. The course of action would depend on the age of the pups, location of the den on the site (e.g., is the den in a central area or in a perimeter location), status of the perimeter site fence (completed or not), and the pending construction activities proposed near the den. A 500-foot no-disturbance buffer shall be maintained around active natal dens.
- The following measures are required to reduce the likelihood of distemper transmission:
    a. No pets shall be allowed on the site prior to or during construction, with the possible exception of kit fox scat detection dogs during preconstruction surveys, and then only with prior CDFW approval;
    b. Any kit fox hazing activities that include the use of animal repellents such as coyote urine must be cleared through CDFW prior to use; and
    c. Any documented kit fox mortality shall be reported to CDFW and the BLM Authorized Officer within 24 hours of identification. If a dead kit fox is observed, it shall be retained and protected from scavengers until CDFW determines whether the collection of necropsy samples is justified.

MM-BIO-23. Mitigation and Monitoring Plan: Prior to site disturbance, the project will prepare a desert bighorn sheep mitigation and monitoring plan. The plan will be approved by CDFW and BLM. This plan will require monitoring of wildlife crossings, fencing effectiveness, water sources, and all other implemented mitigation measures for a minimum of 8 years with an annual monitoring report provided to CDFW by January 31, and a final report covering the entire monitoring period (i.e., at least 8 years) by January 31st of the final year. Components of this requirement may be modified if already covered by other monitoring efforts (e.g., Brightline, Caltrans). The plan will include the methods for monitoring, identify what is being monitored, identify the goals of the measures, methods for determining the

effectiveness of the measures, and remedial triggers and measures if the mitigation does not meet the goals.

MM-BIO-24. Limited Operating Period: Noises greater than 85 A-weighted decibels (dBA) maximum sound level (Lmax) will not be allowed within 500 meters of the hinge point (10% slope line) between December 1 and June 30. If loud work must occur, even briefly, then the project must get CDFW concurrence that the desert bighorn sheep lambing period is done or verify, in coordination with CDFW, that there are no desert bighorn sheep on the facing slope within a distance that would be expected to be subject to an 85 dBA Lmax sound level. If the project believes that they may need to ultimately perform loud work during the lambing period, then they shall coordinate with CDFW early (i.e., ideally as soon as possible, but minimally before the lambing period) to determine how much additional desert bighorn sheep-specific monitoring will be needed for CDFW to evaluate whether the request is feasible. Simply monitoring a week or two in advance will not provide enough data to perform the evaluation.

MM-BIO-25. Work Boot Decontamination: All construction personnel will be trained on the importance of and procedures for decontaminating boots to prevent transmission of disease from domesticated sheep and goats to desert bighorn sheep. In addition, all quarry workers who have potential contact with domesticated sheep and/or goats (for example at farms, fairs, etc.) will be identified and shall decontaminate work boots prior to entering the project area. Decontamination shall involve scrubbing the soles of work boots with a 10% bleach solution to remove all organic matter and kill pathogens. Alternatively, footwear may be changed to ensure that potentially contaminated footwear does not enter any quarry area.

MM-BIO-26. Artificial Water Sources: The project will design and install at least five new artificial water sources for desert bighorn sheep to use. The location, design, and method of installations will be determined in cooperation with CEC, CDFW, and BLM and the ultimate plan will be approved by CEC, CDFW, and BLM. The locations may be on private or public lands but must be located within 5 miles of the project boundary to mitigate this metapopulation. Because the I-15 wildlife overcrossing will be installed adjacent to the site, water structure installations should occur on both sides on I-15 with a possible preference for one proximate to the overcrossing structure. The project shall establish a non-wasting endowment to monitor and maintain the water features in perpetuity.

MM-BIO-27. Compensatory Mitigation: If MM-BIO-14 (Desert Tortoise Compensatory Mitigation) is adhered to and occurs within approximately 1 kilometer of desert bighorn sheep-occupied or CDFW-identified/modeled desert bighorn sheep habitat, then no additional compensatory habitat mitigation would be required as the acquired habitat would also satisfy the foraging needs of desert bighorn sheep. However, if the mitigation lands acquired for MM-BIO-12 do not satisfy this requirement, then separate compensatory mitigation for loss of desert bighorn sheep foraging habitat (i.e., all lands east of I-15 that are fenced in) at a 1:1 ratio meeting all of the other requirements (i.e., requirements for acquisition, initial improvement, and long-term management of compensation lands) and protections afforded under MM-BIO-14 will be required.

MM BIO-28: Vegetation Best Management Practices. The applicant shall undertake the following measures to manage the construction site and related facilities in a manner to avoid or minimize impacts to vegetation resources:

- Limit Area of Disturbance. The boundaries of all areas to be disturbed (including staging areas, access roads, and sites for temporary placement of spoils) shall be delineated with stakes and flagging prior to construction activities in consultation with the Designated Biologist. Spoils and topsoil shall be stockpiled in disturbed areas within the project area. Parking areas and staging and disposal site locations shall similarly be located in areas without native vegetation or special-

status species habitat. All disturbances, project vehicles, and equipment shall be confined to the flagged areas.

- Minimize Road Impacts. New and existing roads that are planned for construction, widening, or other improvements shall not extend beyond the flagged impact area as described above. All vehicles passing or turning around would do so within the planned impact area or in previously disturbed areas. Where new access is required outside of existing roads or the construction zone, the route shall be clearly marked (i.e., flagged and/or staked) prior to the onset of construction.
- Minimize Traffic Impacts. Vehicular traffic during project construction and operation shall be confined to existing routes of travel to and from the project area, and cross-country vehicle and equipment use outside designated work areas shall be prohibited.
- Monitor During Construction. In areas that have not been fenced with desert tortoise exclusion fencing and cleared, a Designated Biologist shall be present at the construction site during all project construction activities that have potential to disturb soil, vegetation, and wildlife. The Designated Biologist or Biological Monitor shall review areas immediately ahead of equipment during brushing and grading activities.
- Minimize Impacts of Staging Areas. Staging areas for construction on the project area shall be within the area that has been fenced with desert tortoise exclusion fencing. For construction activities outside of the solar project area, access roads, pulling sites, and storage and parking areas shall be designed, utilized, and maintained with the goal of avoiding or minimizing impacts to native plant communities and sensitive biological resources. Staging areas outside of the project area shall maintain a minimal disturbance footprint, avoid jurisdictional wetlands, and avoid disturbance to native plant communities whenever possible.
- Avoid Use of Toxic Substances. Soil bonding and weighting agents used on unpaved surfaces (per MM 3.2-1) shall be non-toxic to plants and wildlife.
- Implement Erosion Control Measures. All erosion control measures promoted by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) in its Project Guidelines for Erosion Control (Board Order No R6T-2003-0-04 Attachment G) (Lahontan RWQCB 2003) shall be implemented for all phases of construction and operation where sediment run-off from exposed slopes threatens to enter "waters of the State." Sediment and other flow-restricting materials shall be moved to a location where they shall not be washed back into drainages. All disturbed soils and roads within the project area shall be stabilized to reduce erosion potential, both during and following construction. Areas of disturbed soils (access and staging areas) with slopes toward a drainage shall be stabilized to reduce erosion potential. To avoid impacts associated with generation of fugitive dust, surface application of water would be employed during construction and operation and maintenance activities.
- Monitor Ground-Disturbing Activities Prior to Preconstruction Site Mobilization. If preconstruction site mobilization requires ground-disturbing activities such as for geotechnical borings or hazardous waste evaluations, a Designated Biologist or Biological Monitor shall be present to monitor any actions that could disturb soil, vegetation, or wildlife.
- Revegetation of Temporarily Disturbed Areas. The applicant shall prepare and implement a Temporary Disturbance Revegetation Plan to restore all areas subject to temporary disturbance to pre-project grade and conditions. The plan shall be submitted to the BLM and CEC for review and approval at least 30 days prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities. Temporarily disturbed areas within the project area include, but are not limited to, all proposed locations for linear facilities, temporary access roads, berms, areas surrounding the drainage diffusers,

construction work temporary lay-down areas not converted to part of the solar field, and construction equipment staging areas. The Temporary Disturbance Revegetation Plan shall include a description of topsoil salvage and seeding techniques and a monitoring and reporting plan, and plan to achieve the following performance standards by the end of monitoring year 2:

a. At least 80% of the species observed within the temporarily disturbed areas shall be native species that naturally occur in desert scrub habitats; and

b. Relative cover and density of plant species within the temporarily disturbed areas shall equal at least 60% relative to pre-disturbance conditions.

- Integrated Weed Management Plan. This measure provides further detail and clarifies requirements for the applicant's draft IWMP. Prior to beginning construction on the project, the applicant shall prepare, circulate to BLM for comment and approval, and then implement an IWMP that meets the approval of BLM's Authorized Officer and conforms to the CDCA Plan to prevent the spread of existing invasive species and the introduction of new invasive species to the project area. The plan shall be consistent with BLM's *Record of Decision for Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in 17 Western States* (BLM 2007) and the *2008-2012 National Invasive Species Management Plan* (National Invasive Species Council 2008). The IWMP shall include, at a minimum, specific management objectives and measures for each target invasive species, baseline conditions, weed risk assessment, measures (both preventative and containment/control) to prevent/limit the introduction and spread of invasive species, monitoring and surveying methods, and reporting requirements. The BLM-approved IWMP shall include:

  a. Preventative measures to prevent the spread of weeds into new habitats, such as equipment inspections, use of weed-free erosion control materials and soils, and a mandatory site training element that includes weed management;

  b. Weed containment and control measures such as the removal of invasive species primarily via mechanical means, with the use of herbicides restricted to BLM-policies and approved usage (e.g., BLM's Herbicide Use Standard Operating Procedures provided in Appendix B of the *Record of Decision for the Final Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (BLM 2007);

  c. Monitoring and reporting standards annually during construction and for 3 years following the completion of construction to describe trends in weed distribution and direct weed management measures, and;

  d. Reporting of monitoring and management efforts in annual reports and a final monitoring report completed at the end of 3 years of postconstruction monitoring. Copies of these reports will be provided to BLM for review and comment. BLM will use the results of these reports to determine whether any additional monitoring or control measures are necessary. Weed control will be ongoing on the project area for the life of the project, but plan success will be determined by BLM after the 3 years of operations monitoring through the reporting and review process. Success criteria will be defined as having no more than a 10% increase in a weed species or in overall weed cover in any part of the project area.

MM BIO-29: Final Closure Plan. At least 12 months prior to project closure, the applicant shall prepare a Final Closure Plan to restore the site's topography and hydrology to a relatively natural condition and to establish native vegetation communities within the project area. The Final Closure Plan shall include a cost estimate for implementing the proposed decommissioning and reclamation activities, and shall cover the estimated cost as though BLM were to contract with a third party to decommission the project and

From: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Sent: 3/19/2025 11:52:57 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
CC: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]; Crisp, Ann@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b89c4de7ece742679d19e1e3ee713dc2-Crisp, Ann@]; Chris Huntley [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=018948a34a3149c4a3833144594ae8b3-ff2eee5c-df]
Subject: Re: Big horn sheep meeting March 24th 8:30 am for Soda Mountain Solar Project
Attachments: Outlook-cid_image0

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Lisa,

Thank you for scheduling this meeting for us, we greatly appreciate it! I will have the relevant team members attend. If possible, I would love to provide a brief presentation at the beginning of the meeting. I think this will inform the conversation and help everyone better understand the concerns of the Applicant.

Best,
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 12:14 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Chris Huntley <chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Subject: Big horn sheep meeting March 24th 8:30 am for Soda Mountain Solar Project

Hi Hannah,

I have set up a meeting on Monday March 24th on the big horn sheep for Soda Mountain. I have invited CDFW as well as our staff and wanted to let you know that CDFW invited their legal staff and therefore, I invited ours and wanted to let you know so you can invite yours if you wish.

The meeting is at 8:30 am for 30 minutes. Sorry about the early meeting, but there was no other time available for the rest of the attendees.

Thanks,

Lisa Worrall

Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=E4BBC7048B38485084BDB03FB494B25B-WORRALL, LI]
Sent: 3/18/2025 11:47:55 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]; Vorters, Dian@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=2c5604e712a74c029e412542e0db72ac-Vorters, Di]; Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]; Huber, Elizabeth@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=93f40660c3d446578d63390926fd5e5a-Huber, Eliz]; Chris Huntley [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=018948a34a3149c4a3833144594ae8b3-ff2eee5c-df]; Jamison Miner [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e9a371186e0e402a994145a67d6e7684-546eb26e-f8]; Justin Wood [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=86ee559cfc814439b69a025b0961d2a2-536cef40-79]; Rodriguez, Magdalena@Wildlife [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=4f4ad51c29814356b0c486d7bbf5aefa-WildlifeMag]; Weiss, Eric@Wildlife [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ef9364d10040472ba14e4a32bcfd0550-WildlifeEri]; Hannah Gbeh [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]; Sharma, Shankar@Wildlife [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ff57c77ed43c4a89b8604d77f99a3104-WildlifeSha]
CC: Branch, Alexander(Harllee)@Wildlife [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=efe78fbc6c1e408da007e97ea1d8cdf6-WildlifeHar]; Black, Devin@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c6ec9f417a6e448aae52465b9f719b5d-ea9475b4-16]; Cabrera, Crystal@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ed6e32a127144ccfa19a6f4347765a9e-00a33618-ff]; Pinkerton, Matthew@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=88b6ef1fba134a2cb0aacd56262dc6c4-Pinkerton,]; Crisp, Ann@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b89c4de7ece742679d19e1e3ee713dc2-Crisp, Ann@]; Shirley Innecken [Shirley.Innecken@swca.com]; Epstein, Barry [bepstein@allenmatkins.com]

Subject: Soda Mountain Big Horn Sheep- DR BIO-20
Attachments: TN261667_20250209T201032_Appendix AA_Determination of Infeasibility for DR BIO-20.pdf
Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Start: 3/24/2025 3:30:00 PM
End: 3/24/2025 4:00:00 PM
Show Time As: Busy

Recurrence: (none)
Required Attendees: Chang, Kaycee@Energy; Vorters, Dian@Energy; Knight, Eric@Energy; Huber, Elizabeth@Energy; Chris Huntley; Jamison Miner; Justin Wood; Rodriguez, Magdalena@Wildlife; Weiss, Eric@Wildlife; Hannah Gbeh; Sharma, Shankar@Wildlife
Optional Attendees: Branch, Alexander(Harllee)@Wildlife; Black, Devin@Energy; Cabrera, Crystal@Energy; Pinkerton, Matthew@Energy; Crisp, Ann@Energy; Shirley Innecken; Epstein, Barry

This meeting is scheduled to hear from the applicant about their concerns with DR BIO-20.

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DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	24-OPT-03
Project Title:	Soda Mountain Solar
TN #:	261667
Document Title:	Appendix AA_Determination of Infeasibility for DR BIO-20
Description:	Appendix AA provides a determination of infeasibility for CEC Data Request BIO-20, which requested an assessment of the feasibility of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope.
Filer:	Hannah Arkin
Organization:	Resolution Environmental
Submitter Role:	Applicant Consultant
Submission Date:	2/9/2025 8:10:48 PM
Docketed Date:	2/10/2025

February 9, 2025

Mr. Drew Bohan

Executive Director

California Energy Commission

715 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: DETERMINATION OF INFEASIBILITY FOR CEC DATA REQUEST BIO-20, SODA MOUNTAIN SOLAR PROJECT (24-OPT-03)

Dear Mr. Bohan,

Thank you for your letter titled "*Determination of Incomplete Application and Request for Information for the Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)",* issued on September 3, 2024. The following letter provides a detailed analysis and response regarding Data Request (DR) BIO-20, which requested an assessment of the feasibility of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope. This has been determined infeasible to implement as both a project alternative or mitigation measure. Implementing a 0.25-mile buffer as an alternative or mitigation measure would prevent the project from attaining most of the basic project objectives. Additionally, there are specific economic, legal, environmental, social, and technological factors that make implementing a 0.25-mile buffer infeasible as a project alternative or mitigation measure. This letter describes these conflicts with the basic project objectives and outlines the specific factors that result in a determination of infeasibility. All other data requests within the September 3, 2024 letter have been deemed feasible to implement.

1. INTRODUCTION

DR BIO-20 requests an assessment of feasibility of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope to address potential impacts to desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*). This request is based upon information contained within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03) Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948), which was completed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer would result in a project footprint reduction of 236 acres, or approximately 12% of the project footprint, when compared to the proposed project submitted in the Opt-In Application for the Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03). Please see Table 1 and Figure 1.

This letter also addresses information provided by Christina Aiello and Clinton Epps within a report titled "Potential impacts of the proposed Soda Mountain Solar development on desert bighorn sheep" (TN 261255), herein referred to as Aiello Report. The recommendations contained within the Aiello Report request the project implement a 1.24-mile buffer between the project components and bighorn sheep habitat. Implementation of this recommendation results in a buffer covering the entire project site and would effectively prohibit any project components from being constructed. See Figure 2. As discussed below in Section 4, there is insufficient evidence to support the determination that the implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer, or any larger buffer, would substantially lessen any of the project's impacts to desert bighorn sheep, beyond the measures the project is currently proposing to implement to reduce such impacts. Further, since the project's already-applied measures are sufficient to reduce the impacts to desert bighorn sheep to less than significant, consideration of additional measures – whether as mitigation or alternatives – is not warranted or proper.

It is also important to note that the Applicant's preferred project would construct a 2,558-acre renewable energy development, not the 2058.97-acre project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03). The Applicant's preferred project was presented to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in 2015. The project footprint was subsequently reduced by 500 acres, or 20%, by BLM, in consultation with other regulatory agencies, during the BLM's approval process in order to address impacts to desert bighorn sheep. Therefore, the project presented within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03) already provides a significant reduction in the original project footprint, specifically made to reduce impacts to desert bighorn sheep. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction of 736 acres, or a 33% total reduction in project footprint.

Table 1. Project Footprint Reduction with Implementation of a 0.25-Mile Buffer

Project Component	**2015 Applicant Preferred Project Footprint**	**Opt-In Application 24-OPT-03 Project Footprint**	**Project Footprint Reduction from Implementation of 0.25-Mile Buffer**	**Remaining Project Footprint after Implementation of 0.25-Mile Buffer**
		(in acres)		
North Array	500	0	--	--
East Array	341.67	341.67	151.7	189.97
South Array 1	205.58	205.58	2.23	203.35
South Array 2	632.04	632.04	8.69	623.35
South Array 3	326.64	326.64	8.32	318.32
Total Impact Area	2558.97	2058.97	236.01	1822.96
Source: SWCA Environmental Consultants 2025				

Implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would reduce the project's 300 MW solar energy generation capacity and 300 MW battery energy storage capacity by at least 12%. It is important to note that the reduction in project footprint size due to implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer may not result in a linear reduction in the project's energy generation and storage capacity. In other words, a 12% reduction in the project footprint could result in a reduction in the project's energy generation and storage capacity of much greater than 12%. This is because the project contains civil design features such as roads, fences, and basins, and moving these project components would lead to an even greater reduction to the solar field and BESS size than the 236-acre reduction from buffer implementation.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03) is to contribute to the achievement of California's renewable energy goals and create a vital new point of interconnection for renewable energy in San Bernardino County to connect to California's electric transmission infrastructure. There are 7 specific project objectives for the project. The discussion below identifies how implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer would be in direct conflict with the proposed project's objectives and would impede the project from attaining the project's objectives.

Project Objective 1: Assist the State of California in achieving or exceeding its Renewables Portfolio Standard and greenhouse gas emissions reduction objectives by developing and constructing new California Renewables Portfolio Standard–qualified solar power generation facilities producing approximately 300 MW.

The Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) is one of California's key programs for advancing renewable energy. The program sets continuously escalating renewable energy procurement requirements for the

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State's load-serving entities. The RPS requires all load-serving entities in California to procure an increasing portion of their electricity sales from eligible renewable resources. Senate Bill (SB) 1078, passed in September 2002, set the RPS of 20% total renewables generation by 2020.

- SB 107, passed in September 2006, accelerated achievement of the 20% RPS to 2010.
- SB X1-2, signed in April 2011, raised the RPS goal to 33% in 2020.
- SB 350, signed in 2015, increased the RPS goal to 50% in 2030.
- SB 100, signed into law in September 2018, revised the RPS goal to 60% by 2030 and set a long-term target of 100% carbon-free energy by December 31, 2045.

Electricity generated by the project would be used to serve the needs of California customers and would facilitate compliance with California's RPS. The project would assist the State in achieving its energy objectives under SB 100 and SB 350 and greenhouse gas emissions–reduction goals under Assembly Bill 32. The project would advance the goals of the State to reduce use of fossil fuels and increase the availability of electricity from solar energy, which is eligible for compliance with the RPS.

Implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as an alternative or mitigation measure would result in a significant direct loss of renewable energy generation. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy and would directly conflict with the project objective to transition the State to renewable energy and meeting RPS targets by providing 300 MW of RPS-qualified solar energy generation facilities. This loss of solar energy generation would also impact the State's ability to maintain electrical system reliability under this transition and during extreme climate change driven events. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #1.

Project Objective 2: Produce and transmit electricity at a competitive cost.

Economies of scale allow for cost advantages when building large-scale renewable energy developments. It is more cost effective to construct one large project to produce 300 MW of renewable energy, than constructing multiple smaller projects to cumulatively produce 300 MW of renewable energy. Solar panels, inverters and other components are more cost competitive when bought in large quantities, lowering the overall project cost. Fixed cost distribution such as interconnection facilities, permitting, design, land acquisition and project management are spread across a larger number of watts generated in a large-scale project, lowering the cost per watt. Energy capture is also subject to economies of scale and cost savings for rate payers can be maximized by utilizing an optimal land layout and panel orientation. Large utility-scale solar projects can be better integrated into the electrical grid, potentially reducing transmission losses and providing more predictable power output. The most significant fixed cost is associated with the new high-voltage interconnection facilities required by LADWP. Which are currently estimated to cost over $60 million dollars. These costs remain the same even if the project size and energy generation are greatly reduced, thus making a significant reduction in project size particularly harmful to the project's ability to sell power cheaply.

Last, a reduction in footprint due to implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope may not result in a linear reduction in project size, and ensuing energy generation loss could be far greater than 12% or 236 acres. This is because the project area being reduced by implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer contains civil design features such as roads, fences and basins, and re-arranging these project components would lead to an even greater reduction to the solar field and BESS size than the 236-acre reduction from buffer implementation.

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For the reasons above, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would cause a significantly more expensive project and impair the Applicant's ability to sell power more cheaply on the wholesale market or to LADWP directly. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer as a project alternative or mitigation measure would directly impact the project's ability to save California ratepayers money and would impede the project from attaining project objective #2.

Project Objective 3: Provide a new source of energy storage that assists the State in achieving its energy storage mandates.

Implementation of the proposed project supports a significant number of energy storage mandates. The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) is a landscape-scale renewable energy and conservation planning effort covering more than 22 million acres in the California desert. The project site is within the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA), which is amended by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) DRECP Land Use Plan Amendment (BLM 2016). The project site is within an area designated as a Development Focus Area (DFA). DFAs are locations where renewable energy generation is an allowable use, incentivized, and could be streamlined for approval under the DRECP.

The project site is within the BLM's California Desert District (within the jurisdiction of the Barstow Field Office), the planning boundary of the CDCA Plan, and the DRECP. The project would be consistent with federal goals for the construction of renewable energy infrastructure and generation of renewable energy and would make the best use of public lands to generate, store, and transmit affordable renewable solar electricity for distribution to the State.

Within the State of California, implementation of the project supports the Energy Action Plan and Loading Order, which established a high-level, coherent approach to meeting California's electricity and natural gas needs and set forth the "loading order" to address California's future energy needs. The "loading order" established that the State, in meeting its energy needs, would invest first in energy efficiency and demand-side resources, followed by renewable resources, and only then in clean conventional electricity supply. Since that time, the California Public Utilities Commission and California Energy Commission have overseen the plans, policies, and programs for prioritizing the preferred resources, including energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Electricity from the project would be used to serve the needs of California customers and would facilitate compliance with California's RPS. The project would assist the State in achieving its energy objectives under SBs 100 and 350 and greenhouse gas emissions–reduction goals under Assembly Bill 32. The project would advance the goals of the State to reduce use of fossil fuels and increase the availability of electricity from solar energy, which is eligible for compliance with the RPS.

When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy and would directly conflict with the project objective of advancing the energy storage mandates. The reduction in energy generation would reduce the amount of solar energy that would flow into the BESS and would require the BESS facility to be downsized in the same proportion as the solar field. A downsized solar energy system would not generate sufficient energy to charge a BESS of 300 MW, and the implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer would result in a direct reduction in energy storage capacity. This loss of energy storage would negatively impact the State's ability to accelerate a transition to renewable energy and would negatively impact the State's ability to maintain electrical system reliability under this transition and during extreme climate change driven events. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #3.

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Project Objective 4: Use the existing transmission unused capacity that provides approximately 300 MW of capacity.

The power produced by the project would be conveyed to the regional electrical grid through an interconnection with the existing Marketplace-Adelanto 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line operated by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). Transmission is critical to ensuring grid reliability and resilience, particularly as the state faces extreme weather events caused by climate change. According to the California ISO Transmission Plan, the need for new energy generation over the next 10 years has escalated rapidly, driving an accelerated pace for new transmission development. The combination of dramatically increasing the pace of renewable generation and load forecast growth are driving an increase in transmission requirements. To meet the State's renewable energy goals, an expanded, upgraded and reinforced transmission system is required.

The proposed project does not require the construction of new off-site transmission infrastructure and instead maximizes the use of existing infrastructure that is currently underutilized and directly adjacent to the project site. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction in project footprint would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy and 300 MW of energy storage, and would directly conflict with the project objective of maximizing the utilization of the existing transmission line's unused capacity of 300 MW. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #4.

Project Objective 5: Utilize existing energy infrastructure to the extent possible by locating solar power generation facilities near existing infrastructure, such as electrical transmission facilities.

The project proposes a large-scale solar and battery storage facility within an area that contains existing infrastructure, including the existing Marketplace-Adelanto 500 kV transmission line operated by the LADWP. Although reducing the project footprint would still allow for the remaining project components to connect to the existing energy infrastructure, reducing the project's energy generation capabilities would not maximize the existing energy infrastructure in the project area. The existing Marketplace-Adelanto 500 kV transmission line has the capacity to handle an additional 300 MW of energy, which would be generated by the project.

The project has an existing executed Interconnection Agreement for 300 MW of capacity with LADWP. A significant reduction in size caused by implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope is prohibited under the current interconnection agreement and would trigger a "material modification process" with LADWP, further causing re-study and amendment of the Agreement. Such a process causes significant unknowns related to study timing, future costs and project schedule, and until resolved would impede the financial investment necessary to advance the project development and construction. Every action for this project that is not consistent with the existing LADWP Agreement requires 11 approvals from all members of the Mead-Adelanto Project leading to significant additional time beyond normal interconnection processes. Implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in an anticipated freeze on the project advancement of a minimum of 18 months. This potential delay would prevent the project from being capable of being accomplished within a reasonable period of time and is therefore infeasible.

When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project

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footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy and the reduced production of energy at this project site would have to be made up by installing solar panels at another site. Thus, the effect of implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would be to preclude the utilization, to the extent possible, of the existing infrastructure adjacent to the project site. This consequence would directly conflict with the project objective of utilizing existing transmission infrastructure. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #5.

Project Objective 6: Site solar power generation facilities in areas of San Bernardino County that have the best solar resource to maximize energy production and the efficient use of land.

The project site is located within a designated federal Section 368 Energy Corridor adjacent to I-15 (Corridor number 27-225). Additionally, an existing Southern California Edison (SCE)-owned 115 kV sub transmission line and an LADWP-operated 500 kV transmission line run parallel to and adjacent to the western perimeter of the project site. The project site is located immediately adjacent to existing roadways that provide readily available access for construction and operations. The project site was selected to maximize energy production and the most efficient use of land, considering existing infrastructure, site geology, environmental impacts, water, waste and fuel constraints and electric transmission constraints.

The State has prepared the DRECP, a multi-agency effort to develop a comprehensive habitat conservation plan with streamlined federal permitting for renewable energy projects on 22 million acres of State and federally owned public land. The DRECP is a collaborative effort between the California Energy Commission, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, also known as the Renewable Energy Action Team. San Bernardino County is one of seven counties participating in this effort. The DRECP establishes mitigation and conservation measures that renewable energy projects could implement for desert habitat and species impacts. The DRECP focuses on renewable energy projects on State and federally owned land, as well as on projects that require federal permitting as a result of impacts to certain species and habitat. Although the project is located entirely within BLM lands that are not under the jurisdiction of the County of San Bernardino, the project has been developed in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of the County and has involved the County in its review.

The proposed project is located within the DRECP area of the County of San Bernardino and was sited in this area in an effort maximize energy production while efficiently using land. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. This reduction would prevent the project from producing 300 MW of solar energy. A reduction in the project footprint could result in a separate project being proposed elsewhere within the County to fully meet energy production goals. This would directly conflict with the project objective of siting solar power generation facilities in areas of San Bernardino County that have the best solar resource to maximize energy production while efficiently using of land. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #6.

Project Objective 7: Develop a solar power generation facility in San Bernardino County that would support the economy by investing in the local community, creating local construction jobs, and increasing tax and fee revenue to the County.

A Socioeconomic study was completed for the project and is included as Appendix P (TN #259903) within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03). As stated in this study, construction of the project would provide a

temporary increase in employment of approximately 200 direct and another 420 indirect and induced jobs. Long-term (30-years or longer) employment growth derived from the operation of the project is estimated at up to 49 jobs per year. The project would provide economic benefits to the County of San Bernardino and to its residents and businesses by increasing spending in the community as a result of construction and development-related work. It would provide opportunities for local tradespeople to develop their skills and gain experience installing solar and battery storage facilities and would reduce the amount of time that many of these people spend commuting by offering a local job opportunity. It also would provide increased sales and use taxes, personal property tax, and possessory interest property tax revenues to the County over many years.

When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. The reduction in project footprint would reduce construction and operational jobs, project taxes, and associated local economic benefits to the County and local businesses. Therefore, implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as a project alternative or mitigation measure would impede the project from attaining project objective #7.

3. ECONOMIC AND LEGAL FACTORS

Reduction of the project footprint would result in a financial burden that would significantly hinder the project's viability and the economic benefits to the community. Practical limitations, such as direct conflicts with legal agreements contained within the LADWP Interconnection Agreement and Facilities Studies, create an infeasible scenario for reducing the project footprint.

The project has an existing executed Interconnection Agreement for 300 MW of capacity with LADWP. A significant reduction in size caused by implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would be prohibited under the current agreement and would result in the triggering of a "material modification process" with LADWP, further causing re-study and amendment of the Agreement. Such a process causes significant unknowns related to study timing, future costs and project schedule, and until resolved would impede the financial investment necessary to advance the project development and construction. Every action for this project that is not consistent with the existing LADWP Interconnection Agreement requires 11 approvals from all members of the Mead-Adelanto Project leading to significant additional time beyond normal interconnection processes. Implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in an anticipated freeze on the project advancement of a minimum of 18 months. This potential delay would prevent the project from being capable of being accomplished within a reasonable period of time and is therefore infeasible.

Implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope may also result in a breach of the LADWP Agreement that could result in a termination of this agreement, which has significant economic consequences and creates a situation that makes implementing a 0.25-mile buffer infeasible. It is also expected that implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a higher cost per watt for the project by not maximizing economies of scale. Economically, a reduction in the project footprint would also significantly reduce the living wage jobs that would be provided during project construction and operation. This would result in a direct reduction in the economic benefits of the project to the County and its residents by decreasing spending in the community as a result of construction and development-related work. The reduction in project footprint would reduce the direct and indirect economic benefits of the project, including reducing labor costs, contractor's profit and overhead, sales and use taxes, personal property tax, and possessory interest tax revenues to the State of California and County of San Bernardino. The total fiscal benefit to the County and State from implementation of the project would be substantially reduced with implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

There is insufficient evidence to support the determination that the implementation of a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would substantially lessen any of the project's impacts to desert bighorn sheep, beyond the measures the project is currently proposing to implement to reduce such impacts. Further, since those already-applied measures are sufficient to reduce the impacts to desert bighorn sheep to less than significant, consideration of additional measures – whether as mitigation or alternatives – is not warranted.

The project currently proposes to implement a significant number of project design features, applicant proposed measures and mitigation measures to sufficiently reduce any potential direct, indirect, cumulative, short-term or long-term project impacts to desert bighorn sheep. These measures are identified in Attachment A. The Applicant has considered and agreed to all of these mitigation measures, which are considered feasible and will be adopted as part of the project's environmental commitment through the mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP). With implementation of the currently proposed avoidance and minimization measures, the project's direct, indirect, cumulative short-term and long-term project impacts to desert bighorn sheep movement would be less than significant.

DR BIO-20 is a request to implement a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope that was based upon a recommendation within Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948). This recommendation was based upon an analysis of a total of 261,868 desert bighorn sheep data tracking points. Of the 261,868 data points analyzed, 30 points were determined as located within the proposed project site. The analysis within the Desert Bighorn Sheep Study identified that only 0.01% of the total desert bighorn sheep movement in the region utilize the project site. When compared to the Applicant's preferred project, implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 736 acres, or 33% of the total project footprint. When compared to the project proposed within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03), implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope would result in a reduction to the total project footprint of 236 acres or 12%. A 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope to reduce the proposed project footprint by 236 acres to address movement of 0.01% of desert bighorn sheep appears to be out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

Further, the proposed project site does not contain high quality habitat for the desert bighorn sheep. As stated within Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948), desert bighorn sheep spend most of their time in mountain habitat, as it is visually open, allowing for early predator detection, and it provides escape terrain in the form of steep, generally rocky, slopes. Mountain habitat is defined as a slope of 15% or greater. The project site is primarily flat and contains a large desert wash habitat. It is not considered mountain habitat and does not contain the highest quality habitat for desert bighorn sheep. As stated in Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948), it is unlikely the onsite habitat would experience frequent and heavy use by desert bighorn sheep. A 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope to reduce the proposed project footprint by 236 acres in an area that does not contain high quality habitat appears to be out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

Further, Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948), performed wildlife linkage and connectivity modeling and identified that the project site is not within a designated area of importance. The Study states that while there are four existing underpasses and bridges near the Soda Mountain Solar study area, there have been few documented observations of desert bighorn sheep using these structures. The wildlife crossings of importance to the species are off-site to the north and south. A 0 a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope to reduce the proposed project footprint by 236 acres in an area that does not contain data supporting that the site is used as a critical wildlife corridor for desert bighorn sheep appears to be out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

Lastly, Appendix D2 Desert Bighorn Sheep Study (TN 257948) states that desert bighorn sheep are highly influenced by the location of, and distance to, reliable water sources, particularly during the hot, summer

months. There are no reliable water sources for desert bighorn sheep on the project site. Aquatic resources include prominent and non-prominent drainages that encompass a desert wash system. The request to reduce the proposed project footprint by 236 acres, in an area that does not contain any significant water sources for desert bighorn sheep, appears to be out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

The recommendations contained within the Aiello Report request the project implement a 1.24-mile buffer between the project components and bighorn sheep habitat. Implementation of this recommendation results in a buffer covering the entire project site and would effectively prohibit any project components from being constructed. See Figure 2. The buffer requests within the Aiello Report are disproportionally large and there is insufficient evidence to support the determination that the implementation of any buffer would substantially lessen any of the project's impacts to desert bighorn sheep. The Aiello Report fails to account for the significant number of applicant proposed measures and mitigation measures (Attachment A) that are required to be implemented by the project to sufficiently reduce any potential direct, indirect, cumulative, short-term or long-term project impacts to desert bighorn sheep. The Aiello Report also fails to account for the 500-acre reduction in project footprint that has already occurred to reduce project impacts related to bighorn sheep. The data presented within the Aiello Report specifically states that the project site is considered irregularly used habitat by the bighorn sheep. It also discloses that there is limited data to draw on regarding impacts of the project related to bighorn sheep, and the recommendations within the report appear to be based upon a project-specific modeling simulation that has not undergone peer review. There is insufficient data provided to support the concept that this model provides an unbiased, accurate and reliable analysis of the project site. Instead, it appears the information presented within the Aiello Report supports the determination that the project site does not support bighorn sheep movement, nor does it contain high quality bighorn sheep habitat. For example, Table 1 within the Aiello Report identifies that the simulation (performed by the non-peer reviewed model and based on unknown assumptions that are higher than documented collaring data) results in only 126 acres of the total 2,435 acres of the project site being considered "frequently" used by bighorn sheep. This represents 5% of the total project site being "frequently" used by bighorn sheep. This 5% is based upon assumptions that are not clearly outlined and contradicts the actual data tracking results which identified that only 0.01% of the total desert bighorn sheep in the region utilize the project site. The Aiello Report requests the CEC requires the project implement a 1.24 mile buffer for bighorn sheep, which would effectively prohibit any project components from being constructed. The request for a buffer covering the entire project site when only 5% of the project site was modeled as "frequently" used, is out of scale and not proportional to any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by the project.

5. Social Factors

Reducing the project footprint would also reduce the socioeconomic benefits of the project, including employment for local residences and sources of income through the direct and indirect employment opportunities identified within the project's Socioeconomic Study (Appendix P TN #259903). A reduction in the project footprint would substantially reduce the project's ability to help provide a reliable local source of renewable power that would minimize power outages and disruptions by reducing rolling blackouts during peak demand periods.

6. Technological Factors

The proposed project is a large-scale infrastructure project that utilizes state-of-the-art solar energy generation and battery energy storage technology. The project site was selected because it is located directly adjacent to existing large scale infrastructure projects – including the I-15, Brightline West high speed rail project and existing transmission lines. The project offers a model for safely locating solar and battery energy storage facilities far away from residential areas, clustered adjacent to dense infrastructure projects, and connecting to underutilized transmission lines, which prevents the need for new transmission lines to be constructed in wilderness or populated areas. Reducing the project footprint reduces the project's

capability for maximizing technology in an effort to build environmentally friendly solar and battery storage developments.

7. Conclusion

Implementing a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope as an alternative or mitigation measure would prevent the project from attaining most of the basic project objectives. Additionally, there are specific economic, legal, environmental, social, and technological factors that make implementing a buffer infeasible as a project alternatives or mitigation measure. Further, there does not appear to be sufficient evidence to support the determination that implementation of a buffer would substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project related to desert bighorn sheep, beyond what the project is currently proposing to implement to reduce such impacts. Finally, implementing a buffer, whether as a mitigation measure or project alternative, is not warranted since the already-identified set of measures reduces the project's impacts on desert bighorn sheep to a less than significant level.

Although it is infeasible to implement a 0.25-mile buffer, if the CEC believes that the information and analysis provided by the Applicant is insufficient to reduce impacts to less than significant, there are other feasible mitigation measures that would be equivalent to or more effective than a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope in avoiding and reducing significant effects to the desert bighorn sheep. These measures would require approval from BLM and CEC but would further reduce any potential direct and indirect impacts to desert bighorn sheep movement to at least the same degree, or to a greater degree, than a 0.25-mile buffer from areas with 10% slope, and could include:

- Providing onsite habitat enhancement north of I-15 on BLM lands not currently proposed for development
- Providing offsite habitat enhancement
- Paying in-lieu fees or establishing an in-lieu fee program for desert bighorn sheep research and monitoring
- Removing legacy fencing on nearby BLM or State lands to increase regional wildlife connectivity

It is requested that the CEC certify the Soda Mountain Solar Project with the project footprint as described within Opt-In Application (24-OPT-03). Implementation of a buffer is not a feasible alternative or feasible mitigation measure due to its direct conflicts with project objectives and other specific environmental, economic, legal, social, technological and other conditions. We thank you for your consideration in our request.

Sincerely,

Hannah Arkin

CEO, Resolution Environmental

References

1. Aiello and Epps. Potential impacts of the proposed Soda Mountain Solar development on desert bighorn sheep. A report prepared for the National Park Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Soda Mountain Solar CEC Docket TN 261255.
2. California Natural Gas Vehicle Coalition v. State Air Resources Board. Fifth Appellate District Decision (F084229). 8/27/24.
3. California Environmental Quality Act Statute and Guidelines. Public Resources Code 21000–21189 and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000–15387

4. California ISP 2021-2022 Transmission Plan March 17, 2022.
5. County of San Bernardino. General Plan. Renewable Energy and Conservation Element. February 2019.
6. Dudek. Desert Bighorn Sheep Study. Soda Mountain Solar Project. June 2024.
7. SWCA Environmental Consultants. Soda Mountain Solar Project Opt-In Application Section 3-6 Energy. 2024
8. SWCA Environmental Consultants. Soda Mountain Solar Project Opt-In Application Section 3-4 Biological Resources. 2024
9. SWCA Environmental Consultants. Soda Mountain Solar Project Opt-In Application Section 3-8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions. 2024

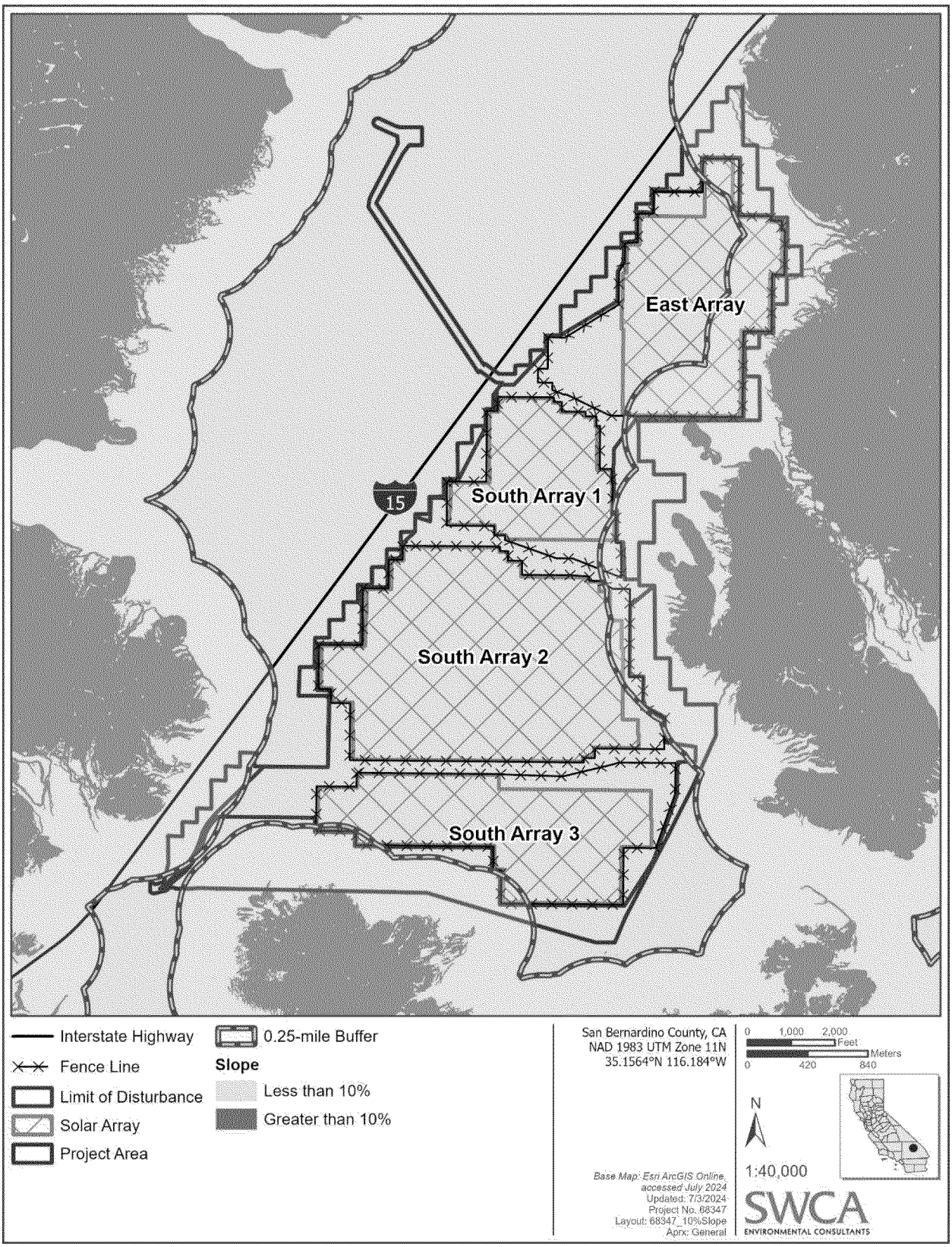
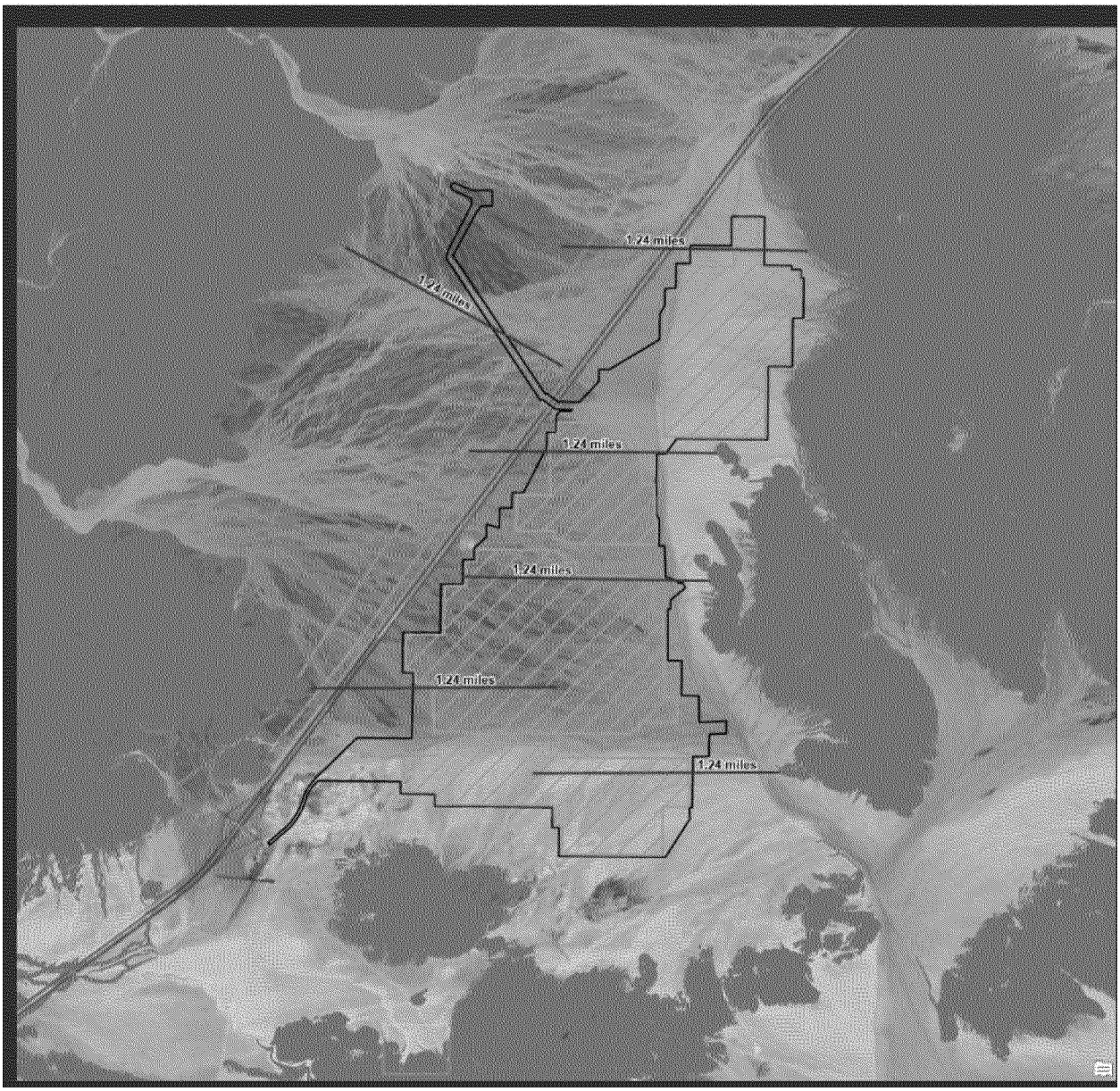


Figure 1. 0.25 mile buffer from 10% slope

Figure 2. 1.24 buffer from 10% slope



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Attachment A

3.4.4.3 Applicant-Proposed Measures

The Applicant has identified and committed to implement the following APMs as part of the proposed Projects to avoid or substantially lessen potentially significant impacts to biological resources, to the extent feasible. The APMs, where applicable, are discussed in the impact analysis section below.

VEGETATION

APM BIO-1: The site shall be revegetated after decommissioning according to the Final Closure Plan described in MM BIO-29 and prepared in conformance with BLM requirements at the time of decommissioning.

APM BIO-2: The applicant shall prepare and implement a Vegetation Resources Management Plan that contains the following components:

- Vegetation Salvage Plans that discuss the methods that will be used to transplant cacti present within the proposed disturbance areas. Salvage and transplant methods used will be approved by the CEC. In addition, the Vegetation Salvage Plans will also include methods that will be used to transplant special-status plant species that occur within proposed disturbance areas.

- Restoration Plans discussing the methods that will be used to restore any of the four native plant community types (creosote bush-white bursage scrub, cheesebush scrub, and creosote bush scrub,) present within the project area that may be temporarily disturbed by construction activities. The applicant will obtain CEC approval for any seed mixtures used for restoration.
- Vegetation Salvage and Restoration Plans that will specify success criteria and performance standards. The applicant will be responsible for implementing the Vegetation Salvage and Restoration Plan according to CEC requirements.

APM BIO-3: Herbicides shall not be applied systemically over the entire project area. Herbicides shall be applied in focused treatments in areas where invasive weed infestations have been identified, such as where there is a clump or monotypic stand of invasive weeds. Herbicides shall not be applied within 100 feet of a special-status plant.

APM BIO-4: Only a State of California and federally certified contractor (i.e., Qualified Applicator), who is also approved by CDFW, and holds and maintains a Qualified Applicator License from California Department of Pesticide Regulation, shall be permitted to perform herbicide applications. Herbicides shall be applied in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and permit stipulations. All herbicide applications must follow U.S. Environmental Protection Agency label instructions.

APM BIO-5: Herbicides shall not be applied during rain events, within 48 hours of a forecasted rain event with a 50% or greater chance of precipitation, or when wind velocity exceeds 10 mph (for liquids) and 15 mph for granular herbicides.

APM BIO-6: The applicant shall implement an Integrated Weed Management Plan (IWMP) to control weed infestations and the spread of noxious weeds in the study area.

APM BIO-7: After project construction, areas of temporary disturbance shall be closed and the restoration measures in the Vegetation Resource Management Plan shall be implemented.

APM BIO-8: Foundations shall be removed to a minimum of 3 feet below surrounding grade during decommissioning and covered with soil to allow adequate root penetration for native plants. Petroleum product leaks and chemical releases shall be remediated prior to completion of decommissioning.

APM BIO-9: Decommissioning methods shall minimize new site disturbance and removal of native vegetation.

SPECIAL-STATUS PLANTS

APM BIO-10: All special-status and rare plant (CRPR 1, 2, 3, and 4) occurrences within the project area will be documented during preconstruction surveys. The applicant will also provide a 100-foot buffer area surrounding each avoided occurrence in which no construction activities will take place, if feasible. If avoidance is not feasible, the applicant shall provide on-site mitigation (e.g., vegetation salvage) for impacts to special-status and rare plants.

APM BIO-11: Before construction of a given phase begins, the applicant shall stake and flag the construction area boundaries, including the construction areas for the solar arrays and associated infrastructure; construction laydown, parking, and work areas; and the boundaries of all temporary and permanent access roads. A CEC-approved biologist shall then survey all areas of proposed ground disturbance for rare or special-status plant species and cacti during the appropriate period (blooming or otherwise identifiable) for those species having the potential to occur in the construction areas. All rare or special-status plant species and cacti observed shall be flagged for transplantation.

SPECIAL-STATUS WILDLIFE

APM BIO-12: The applicant shall implement a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) to educate workers about the environmental issues associated with the project and the MMs that will be implemented at the site, including nest awareness and non-disturbance exclusion zones.

APM BIO-13: Preconstruction clearance surveys to identify active bird nests shall be conducted within 2 weeks of ground disturbance or vegetation removal in all active work areas during the breeding season (February 1–August 31). The work area will need to be resurveyed following periods of inactivity of 2 weeks or more. Active nests shall be avoided using non-disturbance buffer zones as shown below.

- Avian Awareness and Baseline Non-Disturbance Buffer Zones
- Starting Distance of Awareness or Type Non-Disturbance Exclusion Zones Passerines 300 feet from active nest Raptors 500 feet from active nest Golden Eagles 1 mile and line of sight from active nest Burrowing 250 feet from active burrows during nesting Owls1 season (February 1–August 31) 160 feet from active burrows during the wintering period (September 1–January 31)
- Implementation Notes: A qualified biologist may reduce or increase the buffer distance if there is sufficient evidence based on species, habitat, and other factors, that applicant activity would not impact nesting activity. Buffers would be maintained until a qualified biologist has determined that the nest is no longer active.

APM BIO-14: Monitoring of any active nests within or adjacent to the work areas shall be conducted until nestlings have fledged and dispersed. Ongoing breeding-season monitoring of work areas shall be conducted throughout the duration of construction. Nest monitoring results shall be recorded in a Nest Check Form. Typically, a nest check will have a minimum duration of 30 minutes, but it may be longer or shorter, or more frequent than one check per day, as determined by the Designated Biologist (see MM BIO-7 for Designated Biologist) based on the type of construction activity (duration, equipment being used, potential for construction-related disturbance) and other factors related to assessment of nest disturbance (weather variations, pair behavior, nest stage, nest type, species, etc.). The Designated Biologist shall record the construction activity occurring at the time of the nest check and note any work exclusion buffer in effect at the time of the nest check. Non-project activities in the area should also be recorded (e.g., adjacent construction sites, roads, commercial/industrial activities, recreational use, etc.). The Designated Biologist shall record any sign of disturbance to the active nest, including but not limited to parental alarm calls, agitated behavior, distraction displays, nest fleeing and returning, chicks falling out of the nest or chicks or eggs being predated as a result of parental abandonment of the nest. Should the Designated Biologist determine project activities are causing or contributing to nest disturbance that might lead to nest failure, the Designated Biologist shall coordinate with the Construction Manager to limit the duration or location of work, and/or set other limits related to use of project vehicles and/or heavy equipment. Nest locations, project activities in the vicinity of nests, and any adjustments to buffer areas shall be described and reported in regular monitoring and compliance reports.

APM BIO-15: Preconstruction surveys for burrows containing suitable bat roosting habitat that could be used as individual bat roosts shall be conducted in all project work areas.

APM BIO-16: The connection from the substation to the transmission line shall be designed to meet the most recent Avian Power Line Interaction Committee guidelines to the extent practicable.

APM BIO-17: Roads, power lines, fences, and other infrastructure associated with the project shall be minimized to reduce habitat loss. Fencing will use wildlife compatible design standards.

APM BIO-18: Collector lines shall be placed underground to reduce avian collisions.

APM BIO-19: Federal and state measures for handling toxic substances shall be followed to minimize danger from spills to water and wildlife resources. Facility operators shall maintain Hazardous Materials Spill Kits on-site. Personnel shall be trained to use the Hazardous Materials Spill Kits.

APM BIO-20: The applicant shall clear vegetation outside of the bird breeding season to the maximum extent practicable. Preconstruction avian clearance surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist for vegetation clearing during the bird breeding season (February 1–August 31). If a nest(s) is identified in the preconstruction avian clearance surveys, a qualified monitor shall be on-site during vegetation removal in order to enforce non-disturbance buffers and stop activities as necessary should construction disturb nesting activity.

APM BIO-21: Trash shall be disposed of in covered containers and regularly removed from the site.

APM BIO-22: Surveys for burrowing owl shall be conducted in suitable burrowing owl habitat prior to construction and if construction is suspended for 2 weeks or more. Surveys shall be performed pursuant to the CDFW *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFW 2012). If active burrows are found, they shall be avoided using non-disturbance buffer zones. Passive relocation shall be used as described above once the burrow is determined to be inactive.

APM BIO-23: A qualified biologist shall conduct a ground-based golden eagle clearance survey for active golden eagle nests in a 2-mile area surrounding the project, as accessible. Golden eagle clearance surveys shall be conducted annually for each year of construction during the golden eagle nesting season. If active nests are found in the study area, the applicant shall coordinate with CEC, BLM, USFWS, and CDFW to ensure that construction does not result in disturbance of the golden eagles.

APM BIO-24: Project personnel shall remove and dispose of roadkill near the study area to avoid attracting raptors and other scavengers to the site and shall regularly remove vegetation around larger facilities (such as the substation) to reduce raptor foraging.

APM BIO-25: The project shall minimize the use of lighting that could attract migrating birds and bats (that could feed on concentrations of insects at lights). Lighting will be kept to the minimum level necessary for safety and security. High-intensity, steady burning, bright lights such as sodium vapor or spotlights will not be used on project facilities.

APM BIO-26: Project personnel and visitors shall be instructed to drive at low speeds (<15 mph) and be alert for wildlife, especially in low-visibility conditions.

APM BIO-27: Fencing shall be removed at the completion of decommissioning.

APM BIO-28: Desert tortoise exclusion fencing shall be installed at the perimeter of project construction areas (i.e., solar array areas, project buildings, substation/switchyard, earthen berms, and along the edge of access roads and collector line corridors). The fence locations will be determined during final design and will enclose areas of project activity. The fence line and a 30-foot-wide buffer shall be surveyed for desert tortoise before construction of the fence and according to USFWS protocol. Desert tortoise translocation will adhere to guidelines of the desert tortoise translocation plan for the project (see MM BIO-12). Tortoises found in the fence line study area or spotted within 50 m of the fence line study area shall be:

- Assigned a USFWS identification number.
- Given a health assessment.

- Fitted with a transmitter. Tortoises that are too small to accept a transmitter (i.e., no transmitter is available that is 10% or less of the tortoise's body weight) shall be treated as a translocatee and held in situ.
- Moved into habitat adjacent outside the fence line. The tortoise shall be moved into an empty burrow if clearance of the fence area takes place outside the tortoise active season (i.e., November–March and June–August).
- Any of the moved tortoises that return to the project area before completion of fence construction shall be treated as translocatees. Desert tortoises remaining outside the fence line prior to completion of the fence shall be deemed residents. The transmitter shall be removed from the resident tortoise, and no further action shall be taken for the resident tortoises. USFWS procedures shall be followed to clear and handle the desert tortoise.

APM BIO-29: The project area desert tortoise preconstruction clearance survey shall be conducted during the desert tortoise active season (April–May and September–October) unless otherwise agreed to by CEC, USFWS, and CDFW. The survey shall be conducted according to USFWS protocol and preferably during early morning hours to increase the chance juvenile tortoises are found, per the Guidelines. Any tortoise scat shall be collected on each pass of a transect, per the Guidelines. USFWS procedures shall be followed to clear and handle the desert tortoise.

APM BIO-30: The linear facilities desert tortoise preconstruction clearance survey(s) can be conducted at any time throughout the year. Linear facilities for this project include the buried collector lines between arrays and connecting to the substation. Located desert tortoises shall be undisturbed and allowed to clear the site without assistance or interference. Tortoises shall be moved if necessary to reduce the potential for harm from construction activities but shall not be moved more than 500 m in such a scenario. USFWS procedures shall be followed to clear and handle the desert tortoise.

APM BIO-31: Data shall be collected during desert tortoise clearance surveys as described in this section. The same data shall be collected again on tortoises held in the interim in situ on the day that the tortoise is translocated from the study area. The data include:

- Date
- Time
- Temperature (°C)
- Project name
- Site type (project/recipient/control)
- Landowner (BLM)
- Permit/BO #
- Coverage #
- Field crew vendor
- Surveyor (first and last name)
- ID#
- Midline carapace length (MCL) (millimeters)
- Sex

- Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) (Easting)
- UTM (Northing)
- Location (e.g., burrow)
- Transmitter manufacturer
- Transmitter serial #
- Transmitter frequency
- Transmitter install date
- Battery life (months)
- Status (alive/dead/lost)

APM BIO-32: Following installation of the desert tortoise exclusion fencing, the fencing shall be regularly inspected. Permanent fencing shall be inspected monthly and during and within 24 hours following all major rainfall events. A major rainfall event is defined as one for which flow is detectable within the fenced drainage. Any damage to the fencing shall be temporarily repaired immediately to keep tortoises out of the site, and permanently repaired within 72 hours between March 15 and October 31 and within 7 days between November 1 and March 14 of observing damage. Inspections of permanent site fencing shall occur while desert tortoise fencing is in place.

APM BIO-33: No construction, operation, or decommissioning activities shall occur in unfenced areas without a USFWS-approved desert tortoise biologist present. These activities include the construction phase (construction, revegetation), decommissioning phase, and maintenance activities during the operations phase that require new surface disturbance. An adequate number of trained and experienced monitors must be present during all construction and decommissioning activities in unfenced areas, depending on the various construction tasks, locations, and season. A biologist shall be on-site from March 15 through October 31 (active season) during ground-disturbing activities in areas outside the exclusion fencing, and shall be on-call from November 1 through March 14 (inactive season).
The biologist shall check all construction areas immediately before construction activities begin.
The biologist shall inspect construction pipes, culverts, or similar structures 1) with a diameter greater than 3 inches, 2) stored for one or more nights, 3) less than 8 inches aboveground, and 4) within desert tortoise habitat (i.e., outside the permanently fenced area), before the materials are moved, buried, or capped. Alternatively, such materials may be capped before storing outside the fenced area or placing on pipe racks.

APM BIO-34: A Raven Monitoring and Control Plan shall be prepared consistent with the most current USFWS-approved raven management guidelines. The purpose of the plan is to avoid any project-related increases in raven numbers during construction, operation, and decommissioning. The Raven Monitoring and Control Plan shall be submitted to CEC, BLM, CDFW, and USFWS for approval at least 30 days prior to the start of construction.

APM BIO-35: A Burrowing Owl Relocation Plan shall be prepared and submitted to CDFW for approval. Burrowing owls occupying burrows on-site shall be passively relocated outside the nesting season (February 1–August 31) or after a qualified biologist determines that the burrow does not contain eggs or chicks and after consultation with CEC. Prior to construction and passive relocation, artificial burrows shall be installed in areas that would not be disturbed during construction at a ratio of 5:1 for each burrow that will be destroyed by project construction. Passive relocation shall be conducted prior to construction and according to guidelines from the California Burrowing Owl Consortium (1993).

APM BIO-36: Compensatory habitat mitigation shall be provided at a 1:1 ratio for impacts to suitable desert tortoise habitat during construction. A Habitat Compensation Plan shall be prepared to the approval of CEC, CDFW, USFWS, and BLM.

APM BIO-37: No pets or domestic animals shall be allowed on-site prior to or during construction, except kit fox scat detection dogs (with CEC approval) used for preconstruction surveys or postconstruction kit fox mortality monitoring. The project will not authorize the housing or grazing of domestic animals on the project site. Feeding of animals will be prohibited to discourage the spread of non-native birds, to discourage the spread of disease and pathogens, etc.

APM BIO-38: A preconstruction survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist to identify sign of recent mountain lion use of the area (e.g. tracks; scat). The survey will be conducted no more than three days prior to initiation of construction activities. If mountain lion are observed in the study area, the applicant shall coordinate with CEC to ensure that construction does not result in disturbance of mountain lion.

APM BIO-39: A preconstruction survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist to identify sign of recent ringtail use of the area. The survey will be conducted no more than three days prior to initiation of construction activities. If ringtail activity is observed in the study area, the applicant shall coordinate with CEC to ensure that construction activities do not result in disturbance of local ringtail populations.

3.4.5 Mitigation Measures

APMs specific to the proposed project are provided in Section 3.4.4.3. Additional mitigation measures with the potential to decrease the project's impact to biological resources are provided below:

MM BIO-1: Best Management Practices. To reduce indirect impacts to special-status plants and wildlife that may occur in the study area, BMPs shall be implemented prior to and during construction to control dust pollution, prevent discharge of potentially harmful chemicals, and prevent changes in hydrology. BMPs may include the installation of erosion and sedimentation control devices, applying water to control dust, placing drip pans under equipment when not in use, refueling in designated areas, and containing concrete washout properly, among other practices.

MM BIO-2: Worker Environmental Awareness Program. Prior to project initiation, the Designated Biologist shall develop and implement the WEAP (APM BIO-12), which will be available in English and Spanish. Wallet-sized cards summarizing the information shall be provided to all construction and operation and maintenance personnel. The WEAP shall include the following:

- An explanation of the sensitivity of the vegetation communities and special-status plant and wildlife species within and adjacent to work areas, and proper identification of these resources.
- Biology and status of the desert tortoise, golden eagle, burrowing owl, other nesting birds, desert bighorn sheep, kit fox, and American badger and measures to reduce potential effects on these species.
- Actions and reporting procedures to be used if desert tortoise, burrowing owl, other nesting birds, desert bighorn sheep, kit fox, or American badger are encountered.
- An explanation of the function of flagging that designates authorized work areas.
- Driving procedures and techniques to reduce mortality of wildlife on roads.
- Discussion of the federal ESA and CESA, BGEPA, and MBTA and the consequences of non-compliance with these acts.
- The importance of avoiding the introduction of invasive weeds onto the project area and surrounding areas.
- A discussion of general safety protocols such as hazardous substance spill prevention and containment measures and fire prevention and protection measures.
- A review of mitigation requirements that are applicable to their work.

MM BIO-3: Construction Impact Minimization. The project shall implement an advanced technology terrain-following solar tracker system (such as the Nextracker NX Horizon-XTR-0.75 10-inch tracker system, Nevados All Terrain Tracker system, or other system resulting in a similar reduction) that reduces grading under the solar field, consisting of solar power arrays identified as East Array and South Arrays 1, 2 and 3. Quarterly construction monitoring reports shall be provided to the CEC during the

construction period for the project. The quarterly construction monitoring reports shall quantify and document all remaining permanent and temporary grading acreage from project construction with the terrain-following tracker system. All temporary grading impact areas shall be revegetated onsite as described in the project-specific Temporary Disturbance Revegetation Plan (APM BIO-7 and MM-BIO-24). All permanent grading impact areas shall be mitigated at the required compensatory mitigation standards of the resource agencies (APM BIO-36, MM BIO-14, MM BIO-24).

MM BIO-4: Special-Status Plant Species and Cacti Impact Avoidance and Minimization. This measure will provide guidance on how project personnel can avoid unintended impacts to special-status plants on the project area (e.g., Utah vine milkweed) and provide for the salvage of protected cacti prior to construction. This measure includes the following requirements:

- The applicant shall establish Environmentally Sensitive Areas around Utah vine milkweed that have been identified on the project area and/or may be identified in project disturbance areas during site preparation. A minimum 100-foot exclusion area shall be established around the plants, which shall be clearly identified and maintained throughout construction to ensure that avoided plants are not inadvertently harmed. ESAs shall be clearly delineated in the field with temporary construction fencing and signs prohibiting movement of the fencing or sediment controls under penalty of work stoppages or compensatory mitigation.
- *Worker Environmental Awareness Program*. The WEAP (APM BIO-12; MM BIO-2) shall include training components specific to protection of special-status plants that occur on the project area.
- *Herbicide and Soil Stabilizer Drift Control Measures*. Special-status plant occurrences within 100 feet of the project disturbance area, including Utah vine milkweed shall be protected from herbicide and soil stabilizer drift. The IWMP includes measures to avoid chemical drift or residual toxicity to special-status plants consistent with guidelines such as those provided by the Nature Conservancy's Global Invasive Species Team, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Pesticide Action Network Database.
- *Erosion and Sediment Control Measures*. Erosion and sediment control measures shall not inadvertently impact special-status plants (e.g., by using invasive or non–Mojave Desert native plants in seed mixtures, introducing pest plants through contaminated seed or straw, etc.). These measures shall be incorporated in the Comprehensive Drainage, Stormwater, and Sedimentation Control Plan.
- *Preconstruction Vegetation Salvage*. The applicant shall provide a draft Vegetation Resources Management Plan detailing the methods for the salvage and transplantation of target succulent species covered under the CDNPA. The plan shall be submitted to CDFW for review and approval at least 30 days prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities and shall include, at a minimum, the following elements:
    a. **Soil baseline characterization**. The characterization shall be presented to CDFW prior to ground disturbance and shall include:
        i. Profile description of three representative pedons. (A pedon is the smallest three-dimensional sampling unit displaying the full range of characteristics of a particular soil and typically occupies an area ranging from about 1 to 10 square yards.)
        ii. Characterization of surface application (desert pavement or biological soil crust present). Description of biological soil crust shall include major groups of organisms identified at the site (filamentous cyanobacteria, other cyanobacteria, mosses, lichens, liverworts) and the characteristics by which they were identified (see item b, below).
        iii. Documentation of soil macro-invertebrates (that is, presence of ants, termites, and other

significant macro-invertebrates).

- Bulk density, along with a reference to a generally accepted method for making the determination.
- Fertility (nutrient status, electrical conductivity, sodium adsorption ratio), along with methods by which composite samples were collected and the laboratory methods used to determine these properties. Composite samples will contain equal contributions from at least six randomly located collection points within the soil donor area.
- Organic matter content and total carbon and nitrogen content, along with a reference to generally accepted methods for making the determinations.

a. Soil compaction shall be determined by measurement of bulk density in grams per cubic centimeter (or numerically equivalent units). Bulk density may be determined by any of several standard measurements, but the method used must be referenced to a widely accepted soil methodology publication. In no case shall soil be compacted to a bulk density that exceeds 1.6 grams per cubic centimeter except where no planting is to take place. Penetrometer measurements are not a substitute for bulk density measurements.

Once characterized, the top 3 inches of topsoil shall be salvaged from the areas where traditional grading will be used per the following protocol, and stored within the project area. The upper 0.25 inch may be collected separately to preserve biological crust organisms. Topsoil may not be distinguishable from subsoils by color or organic content at the time of salvage but is characterized as the layer that contains fine roots during the active growing season. Soil shall be collected, transported, and formed into stockpiles only while the soil is dry. The vegetation in place at or immediately before topsoil collection shall be healthy native vegetation with less than 15% absolute cover of exotic weed growth. Soil occupied by vegetation of high plant diversity shall be given priority over soil occupied by low-diversity native vegetation. Soil may be collected with a front loader, bulldozer, or scraper and transported to storage areas by front loader, dump truck, or scraper. The equipment transporting the soil may not travel across the stockpile more than the minimum number of times required to build the soil to its intended depth. The depth of the stockpiles shall not exceed 4 feet in the case of sandy loam or loamy sand soils. Topsoil stockpiles shall be kept dry and covered if no vegetation is introduced. If native vegetation is grown on the stockpiles to increase seeds and soil organisms, no cover is required. Artificial watering may be provided at the applicant's option.

Stockpiled topsoil shall be used to grow native plant species for the purpose of producing native seeds and building beneficial microorganisms in the soil volume. All native plant species encountered in the vegetation surveys shall be included in the growing rotation on the stockpiles. Most growing space needs to be dedicated to the species for which the most seeds shall be required. At least half by area of the growing area during each growing cycle shall be dedicated to plant species known to be good mycorrhizal host plants. Members of the families Chenopodiaceae and Amaranthaceae should be limited to less than half the area of the soil stockpiles, with the other half occupied by known mycorrhizal host plant species.

b. **Biological Soil Crust Characterization and Preservation.** Biological soil crust is defined here as a mixture of organisms that occupy and protect the surface of the soil in most desert ecosystems. The organisms often include filamentous and non-filamentous cyanobacteria, mosses, lichens, liverworts, and fungi. Biological soil crust shall be preserved by collecting the upper 0.25 inch of topsoil from areas to be graded. The applicant and/or its contractor(s) shall collect from specific areas known to contain biological crust organisms or collect upper soil from the entire area to be graded. Collections shall emphasize filamentous cyanobacteria, but other cyanobacteria, mosses, lichens, and liverworts are also considered valuable

contributors to biological soil crust and important in protecting against erosion and reducing weed invasion and shall be collected as a secondary priority. Soil surface crust shall be air dried and stored dry in a shaded location in containers that allow air movement, such as loose-weave fabric bags. In no case may the stored crust be subject to wetting or direct sunlight during storage. All containers shall be clearly labeled with date and location of original collection; name and contact information of persons responsible for identifying suitable material to collect; and the persons who collected, stored, and maintained collections. Biological soil crust shall be re-applied at the time of replanting by crumbling the stored material and broadcasting it on the surface of the soil. Approximately 10% of the stored material shall be broadcast on topsoil storage areas among plants being grown for seed and soil microorganisms. When the growing cycle progresses to new planting, the soil supporting biological crust shall be collected and stored by the same methods prescribed for collections from the original soil, in clearly labeled bags or other suitable containers.

c. **Succulent Transplant**. The majority of the succulent plants located in areas to be dragged, rolled, or spot graded, or above mowing height, shall be salvaged and transplanted into a nursery area. The Succulent Transplant portion of the Vegetation Resources Management Plan shall include, at a minimum:

   i. The location of target plants on the project area;

   ii. Criteria for determining which individual plants are appropriate for salvage;

   iii. The proposed methods for salvage, propagation, transport, and planting;

   iv. Procedures for identifying target species during preconstruction clearance surveys;

   v. Considerations for storing salvaged plants or pre-planting requirements; and

   vi. Suggested transplantation sites.

   Succulents to be transplanted into the nursery area shall be placed in their same compass orientation as they were in their original location. The salvaged plants also shall be kept in long-term soil stockpiles, along with natives grown on the stockpiles, to keep the soil biota fresh.

   Succulent transplants done during preparation of the project area shall be fully documented and serve as trials of methods to be used during plant salvage on the project area. Records shall be maintained for each transplanted specimen including species; height; number of branches or pads as appropriate; donor location by UTM coordinates; methods used to remove, transport, and store the plant; period of temporary storage; location; facility description; planting medium used for storage; and frequency of watering during storage. Records shall be kept at the time of planting at the storage area, and quarterly thereafter during storage until such time as each plant is placed in the field or dies. Transplanted individuals shall be maintained for 3 years, including removal of invasive species and irrigation (if necessary), as well as monitored for 3 years to determine the percentage of surviving plants each year and to adjust maintenance activities using an adaptive management approach.

d. **Seed Collection**. Seed collection shall be carried out within the ROW grant area and within 10 miles of the boundaries of the project area on similar terrain, soil, exposure, slope and elevation to the project area. Seed collection guidelines shall conform to all laws and regulations in effect at the time of collection. Seed collection shall include all plant species known to be removed from the facility. If insufficient seeds are provided by "seed farming" and collection within 10 miles of the site, CEC may approve collection from a greater distance provided other environmental factors at the collection site are good matches to the project area. Collected seed may be used to seed salvaged topsoil piles during the construction phase

and after decommissioning related to restoring the project area.

e. If the palo verde trees on-site meet the CDFW size criterion for replacement (i.e., at least one stem greater than 2 inches in diameter) and cannot be salvaged based on the professional opinion of a qualified biologist/horticulturalist, three replacement plants shall be planted in or near the project area for each affected tree and monitored following the above guidance.

MM BIO-5: Biological Monitoring. Biological Monitor(s) shall be employed to assist the Designated Biologist in conducting preconstruction surveys and monitoring ground disturbance, grading, construction, decommissioning, and restoration activities. Additionally, biological monitoring shall be performed during any ground disturbance or grading activities that occur during operation and maintenance. The Biological Monitor(s) shall have sufficient education and field experience to understand resident wildlife species biology; have experience conducting desert tortoise, burrowing owl, kit fox, and badger field monitoring; and be able to identify these species and their sign (including active burrows). The Designated Biologist shall submit a resume, at least three references, and contact information for each prospective Biological Monitor to CEC, CDFW, and USFWS for approval. To avoid and minimize effects on biological resources, the Biological Monitor(s) shall assist the Designated Biologist with the following:

- Be present during construction activities that take place in suitable habitat for desert tortoise, burrowing owl, kit fox, badger, or other protected species to prevent or minimize harm or injury to these species. This also includes unfenced construction activities for desert bighorn sheep.
- Activities of the Biological Monitor(s) include, but are not limited to, ensuring compliance with all avoidance and minimization measures; monitoring for desert tortoise, burrowing owl, kit fox, badger, and other protected species; halting construction activity in the area if an individual is found; and checking the staking/flagging of all disturbance areas to be sure that they are intact and that all construction activities are being kept within the staked/flagged limits. If a desert tortoise, burrowing owl, desert bighorn sheep, kit fox, badger, or other protected species is found within a work area, the Biological Monitor(s) shall immediately notify the Designated Biologist, who shall determine measures to be taken to ensure that the individual is not harmed.
- Inspect the study area for any special-status wildlife species.
- Ensure that potential habitats within the construction zone are not occupied by special-status species (e.g., potential burrows or nests are inspected).
- In the event of the discovery of a non-listed, special-status ground-dwelling animal, recover and relocate the animal to adjacent suitable habitat at least 200 feet from the limits of construction activities.
- At the end of each work day, inspect all potential wildlife pitfalls (e.g., trenches, bores, other excavations) for wildlife and remove wildlife as necessary. If the potential pitfalls will not be immediately backfilled following inspection, the Biological Monitor(s) will ensure that the construction crew slopes the ends of the excavation (3:1 slope), provides wildlife escape ramps, or completely and securely covers the excavation to prevent wildlife entry.
- Inspect the site to ensure trash and food-related waste is placed in closed-lid containers and that workers do not feed wildlife. Also inspect the work area each day to ensure that no microtrash (e.g., bolts, screws, etc.) is left behind.

MM BIO-6: Crotch's Bumble Bee Impact Avoidance and Minimization. The below mitigation measures shall only be required if Crotch's bumble bee remains as a candidate state endangered species or is listed as a state endangered species at the time of project construction, operations and maintenance, or

decommissioning. These avoidance measures will be implemented to avoid take of the species if vegetation clearance and ground disturbance activities are proposed to occur during the following periods:

- Queen Flight Season (February through March), when queens emerge in the spring searching for nest sites.
- Colony Active Period (April through August), the most active flight period and highest detection probability for the species.
- Gyne Flight Season (September through October), the fall flight period when gynes mate and search for overwintering habitat.

If it is determined that "take" or adverse impacts to Crotch's bumble bee cannot be avoided during project activities, the applicant must consult the CEC to determine if a CESA incidental take permit is required.

1. ***Pre-construction Surveys.*** Pre-construction surveys for the Crotch's bumble bee shall be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to vegetation clearance and ground disturbance activities that are proposed to occur during the following periods:

    a. *Nesting Season.* Prior to vegetation removal and ground disturbing activities occurring during the Queen Flight Season and Colony Active Period (February 1 through August 31), a qualified biologist shall perform two (2) visual surveys consisting of meandering transects no more than 10 days prior to the commencement of vegetation removal and ground disturbance in that area. A qualified biologist shall conduct surveys at least four (4) days apart, with the second survey occurring within two (2) days prior to the onset of vegetation removal and ground disturbance in that area. The biologist shall focus attention on areas with blooming native and non-native nectar and pollen resources. The survey duration shall be appropriate to the size of the area planned for vegetation removal and ground disturbance plus 50 feet, based on the metric of a minimum of one (1) person-hour of searching per three (3) acres of suitable habitat as outlined within CDFW's Survey Considerations for CESA Candidate Bumble Bee Species (CDFW 2023). To the maximum extent possible, surveys shall be conducted between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM on sunny days between 55- and 90-degrees Fahrenheit, with sustained wind speeds measuring less than 10 miles per hour.

    If Crotch's bumble bee is detected or suspected during pre-construction surveys, the biologist shall flag the area where the observation was made and closely monitor the flagged areas during vegetation removal and ground disturbing activities. Additionally, if Crotch's bumble bee is suspected or confirmed within the project area, a qualified biologist shall make every effort to locate active nests. The biologist shall observe any burrow entrances for signs of Crotch's bumble bee. To confirm a suspected nest, a qualified biologist may block/cover any burrow entrance with a jar of appropriate size for no more than 30 minutes or until a bumble bee is detected. If a Crotch's bumble bee nest is detected or suspected, the applicant shall immediately halt all project activities within 50 feet of the nest. A qualified biologist shall delineate the 50-foot buffer and notify all workers not to enter the environmentally sensitive area. The applicant shall contact the CEC within 24 hours for further consultation. The biologist shall record the nest location with a GPS unit (including datum and horizontal accuracy in feet) and include photographs and a map of the nest location as part of notification to the CEC. The no disturbance buffer shall be maintained until the nest(s) senesce. Starting in July, nest activity shall be observed for a minimum of 1 hour per day for 3 consecutive days to determine if activity has

ceased and if the nest has senesced. The applicant shall increase the size and/or modify the nest buffer dependent upon notice from CEC.

b. *Overwintering Season.* If vegetation removal and ground disturbing activities occur during the overwintering season (November 1 through January 31), a qualified biologist shall walk ahead of grading and vegetation removal equipment and look for potential hibernacula such as leaf litter, logs, and rodent burrows. If any overwintering Crotch's bumble bees are found, the applicant shall immediately stop and prohibit all project activities within 50 feet of the overwintering queen and hibernaculum. A qualified biologist shall delineate a 50-foot buffer and notify all workers not to enter the environmentally sensitive area. If an overwintering queen is exposed, a qualified biologist shall cover and protect the queen using the substrate it was found within/under and return any removed materials (e.g., grass, vegetation, bark, and debris) to re-create pre-disturbed conditions. The applicant shall contact the CEC within 24 hours for further consultation. The biologist shall record the queen's location with a GPS unit (including datum and horizontal accuracy in feet) and include photographs and a map of the queen's location as part of notification to the CEC. The applicant shall increase the size and/or modify the nest buffer dependent upon notice from CDFW. Overwintering buffers shall be maintained until further instructions are received from the CEC.

If Crotch's bumble bee individuals are identified during pre-construction surveys, then the following additional avoidance measures should be implemented:

1. ***Initiate Consultation with the CEC.*** The applicant will consult with the CEC to determine if incidental take at the project will be likely, and if an incidental take permit is required.
2. ***Biological Monitoring During Construction.*** A qualified biologist(s) will be present each day during initial ground disturbance activities if Crotch's bumble bees are identified during pre-construction surveys.
3. ***Seasonal Restrictions and Vegetation Management.*** Vegetation and ground disturbance within suitable Crotch's bumble bee habitat shall be avoided during the Queen Flight Season (February through March) and the Gyne Flight Season (September through October), to the greatest extent feasible. If feasible, native and non-native flowering vegetation removal shall occur prior to the blooming period of potential floral resources and before the Queen/Gyne Flight Seasons and Colony Active Period (February through October). If vegetation removal cannot be avoided during this period, or if vegetation needs to be removed during the bloom period for potential floral resources: flowering vegetation should be removed in a patched manner so as to leave areas of floral resources as refugia for foragers or wait until bloom has ceased. Additionally, removal of non-native plants should be prioritized over native plants. If mowing activities are to occur, vegetation shall be mowed to a height no lower than 4 inches to prevent disturbance of established nests or overwintering queen hibernacula.
4. ***Provide Compensatory Mitigation for Impacts on Crotch's Bumble Bee.*** Direct impacts to suitable Crotch's bumble bee habitat shall be offset through compensatory mitigation, which may include, but is not necessarily limited to, on-site or off-site habitat preservation, enhancement, restoration, and/or creation at a ratio of no less than 1:1.

MM BIO-7: Designated Biologist. The applicant shall assign at least one Designated Biologist to the project. The applicant shall submit the resume of the proposed Designated Biologist(s), with at least three

references and contact information, to the BLM Authorized Officer for approval in consultation with the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS.

The Designated Biologist must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Have a bachelor's degree in biological sciences, zoology, botany, ecology, or a closely related field;
- Have 3 years of experience in field biology or current certification of a nationally recognized biological society, such as The Ecological Society of America or The Wildlife Society;
- Have at least 1 year of field experience with biological resources found in or near the study area;
- Meet the current USFWS Authorized Biologist qualifications criteria, demonstrate familiarity with protocols and guidelines for the desert tortoise, and be approved by the USFWS;
- Possess a CESA Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to Section 2081(a) for desert tortoise.

In lieu of the above requirements, the resume shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the BLM Authorized Officer, in consultation with the CEC, CDFW and USFWS, that the proposed Designated Biologist or alternate has the appropriate training and background to effectively implement the MMs.

MM BIO-8: Fence Design and Site Permeability. Permanent site fencing installed around the project—including perimeter security fencing desert tortoise exclusionary fencing—should be designed to direct wildlife toward the wildlife undercrossing to provide safe passage under the freeway and shall be regularly inspected and maintained for the life of the project. Alternate designs may also be constructed with prior written approval from the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS. Regardless, the project shall ensure that any such fence meets existing specifications that have been developed to preclude accidental entanglement of desert bighorn sheep, deer, and other animals.

Fencing should be sufficient to prevent desert bighorn sheep passage (e.g., 2m-2.5m tall chain-link) – should be installed at the corridor entrances between (a) the East Array and South Array 1, (b) South Array 1 and South Array 2, and (c) South Array 2 and South Array 3 on the east side (Figure 2, Project Design). Additionally, the project shall extend a line of project fencing to the north to connect with the wildlife exclusion fencing associated with the I-15 overcrossing structure (Figure 13; Dudek 2024). Approximately 1,640 linear feet of this can be accomplished within the existing project boundary, but the additional approximately 300 linear feet will need to be coordinated with BLM and possibly Caltrans. The project will secure the necessary encroachment permits or other mechanism to continue fencing between the project boundary and the wildlife exclusion fencing associated with the I-15 overcrossing structure. Care should be taken when connecting the fences to make sure that they are physically connected or directly abut one another such that wildlife can't pass through or get stuck between them. The ultimate fencing plans should be reviewed by the CEC for final approval prior to site disturbance activities.

MM BIO-9: Compliance Monitoring by the Designated Biologist. Prior to ground-disturbing activities, an individual shall be designated and approved by the CEC and CDFW as a Designated Biologist (i.e., field contact representative). Designated Biologist qualifications are presented below.

The Designated Biologist shall be employed for the period during which ongoing construction and postconstruction monitoring and reporting by an approved biologist is required. Each successive Designated Biologist shall be approved by the CEC. The Designated Biologist shall have the authority to ensure compliance with all measures set forth in the BO and CESA Section 2081 take authorization and with all MMs included herein, and shall be the primary agency contact for the implementation of these measures. The Designated Biologist shall have the authority and responsibility to halt any project

activities that are in violation of the terms of the BO, Section 2081 take authorization, or project MMs. A list of responsibilities of the Designated Biologist is summarized below.

To avoid and minimize effects to biological resources, the Designated Biologist shall:

- Notify the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS at least 14 calendar days before initiation of ground-disturbing activities.
- Immediately notify the CEC in writing if the applicant/owner does not comply with any of the MMs or terms of the BO and/or the Section 2081 take authorization including, but not limited to, any actual or anticipated failure to implement such measures within the periods specified.
- Ensure performance of daily compliance inspections during ongoing construction as clearing, grubbing, and grading are completed, and submit a monthly compliance report to the CEC until construction is complete.

MM BIO-10: Speed Limits. Speed limits along all access roads outside of permanent desert tortoise fencing shall not exceed 15 mph to minimize dust during construction activities. Speed limits within permanent desert tortoise fencing shall not exceed 25 mph to minimize impacts during operation and maintenance. Nighttime vehicle traffic associated with project activities shall be kept to a minimum volume and speed (maximum of 15 mph) to prevent mortality of nocturnal wildlife species.

MM BIO-11: Desert Tortoise Protection. The applicant/owner shall undertake appropriate measures to manage the construction site and related facilities in a manner to avoid or minimize impacts to desert tortoise. Methods for clearance surveys, fence specification and installation, tortoise handling, artificial burrow construction, egg handling, and other procedures shall be consistent with those described in the USFWS's *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (USFWS 2009) or more current guidance provided by CDFW and USFWS. The applicant/owner shall also implement all terms and conditions described in the BO to be prepared by USFWS and CESA ITP. These measures include, but are not limited to, the following, subject to modification by the terms of incidental take authorizations issued by the USFWS and CEC:

- ***Desert Tortoise Fencing along I-15.*** If required by the CEC, to avoid increases in vehicle-related mortality from disruption of local movement patterns along the existing ephemeral wash systems, desert tortoise-proof fencing shall be installed along the existing freeway ROW fencing on both sides of I-15 for the entire east-west dimension of the project area. The tortoise fencing shall be designed to direct tortoises to existing undercrossing to provide safe passage under the freeway and shall be regularly inspected and maintained for the life of the project.
- ***Desert Tortoise Exclusion Fence Installation.*** To avoid impacts to desert tortoise, permanent desert tortoise exclusion fencing shall be installed along the permanent perimeter security fence and temporarily installed along road corridors during construction. The proposed alignments for the permanent perimeter fence and temporary fencing shall be flagged and surveyed within 24 hours prior to the initiation of fence construction. Clearance surveys of the perimeter fence and temporary fencing areas shall be conducted by the Designated Biologist(s) using techniques outlined in the USFWS's *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* and may be conducted in any season with the CEC, USFWS, and CDFW approval. Biological Monitors may assist the Designated Biologist under his or her supervision. These fence clearance surveys shall provide 100% coverage of all areas to be disturbed and an additional transect along both sides of the fence line covering an area approximately 90 feet wide centered on the fence alignment. Transects shall be no greater than 15 feet apart. All desert tortoise burrows and burrows constructed by other species that might be used by desert tortoise shall be examined to assess occupancy of each burrow by desert tortoise and handled in accordance with the USFWS's

Desert Tortoise Field Manual. Any desert tortoise located during fence clearance surveys shall be handled by the Designated Biologist in accordance with the USFWS's 2009 *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (USFWS 2009).

a. *Timing, Supervision of Fence Installation*. The exclusion fencing shall be installed prior to the onset of site clearing and grubbing. The fence installation shall be supervised by the Designated Biologist and monitored by the Biological Monitors to ensure the safety of any tortoise present.

b. *Fence Material and Installation*. The permanent tortoise exclusionary fencing shall be constructed in accordance with the USFWS's *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (Chapter 8 – Desert Tortoise Exclusion Fence) (USFWS 2009).

c. *Security Gates*. Security gates shall be designed with minimal ground clearance to deter ingress by tortoises. The gates may be electronically activated to open and close immediately after the vehicle(s) have entered or exited to prevent the gates from being kept open for long periods of time. Cattle grating designed to safely exclude desert tortoise shall be installed at the gated entries to discourage tortoises from gaining entry.

d. *Fence Inspections*. Following installation of the desert tortoise exclusion fencing for both the permanent site fencing and temporary fencing, the fencing shall be regularly inspected. If tortoises were moved out of harm's way during fence construction, permanent and temporary fencing shall be inspected at least two times per day for the first 7 days to ensure a recently moved tortoise has not been trapped within the fence. Thereafter, permanent fencing shall be inspected monthly and during or within 24 hours following all major rainfall events. Exceptions to inspections during major rainfall events may be made as needed to maintain crew safety. A major rainfall event is defined as one for which flow is detectable within the fenced drainage. Any damage to the fencing shall be temporarily repaired immediately to keep tortoises out of the site, and permanently repaired within 48 hours of observing damage. Inspections of permanent site fencing shall occur for the life of the project. Temporary fencing shall be inspected weekly and, where drainages intersect the fencing, during and within 24 hours following major rainfall events. All damaged temporary fencing shall be repaired immediately upon discovery and, if the fence may have permitted tortoise entry while damaged, the Designated Biologist shall inspect the area for tortoise.

- ***Desert Tortoise Clearance Surveys within Solar Arrays and Gen-tie.*** Clearance surveys shall be conducted in accordance with the USFWS *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (USFWS 2009) (Chapter 6 – Clearance Survey Protocol for the Desert Tortoise – Mojave Population) and shall consist of two surveys covering 100% of the study area by walking transects no more than 15 feet apart. If a desert tortoise is located during the second survey, a third survey shall be conducted. Each separate survey shall be walked in a different direction to allow opposing angles of observation. Clearance surveys of the project area may only be conducted when tortoises are most active (April–May or September–October) unless the project receives approval from the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS. Clearance surveys of linear features may be conducted during any time of the year. Any tortoise located during clearance surveys of solar arrays shall be translocated or relocated and monitored in accordance with the DTTP (MM 3.4-2b). The Designated Biologist, who may be assisted by the Biological Monitors, shall assess occupancy of each burrow by desert tortoise in accordance with the USFWS *Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Field Manual* (USFWS 2009). All potential desert tortoise burrows located during clearance surveys shall be excavated by hand, tortoises removed, and burrows collapsed or blocked to prevent occupation by desert tortoise in accordance with the DTTP.

- ***Monitoring Following Clearing.*** Following the desert tortoise clearance and removal from the project area, workers and heavy equipment shall be allowed to enter the project area to perform

clearing, grubbing, leveling, and trenching activities. A Designated Biologist or Biological Monitor shall be on-site for clearing and grading activities to move tortoises missed during the initial tortoise clearance survey. Should a tortoise be discovered, it shall be relocated or translocated as described in the DTTP.

- ***Reporting.*** The Designated Biologist shall record the following information for any desert tortoise handled: a) the locations (narrative and maps) and dates of observation; b) general condition and health, including injuries, state of healing and whether desert tortoise voided their bladders; c) location moved from and location moved to (using GPS); d) gender, carapace length, and diagnostic markings (i.e., identification numbers or marked lateral scutes); e) ambient temperature when handled and released; and f) digital photograph of each handled tortoise. Desert tortoise moved from within the project area shall be marked and monitored in accordance with the DTTP. All collected data related to tortoise relocation shall be provided to the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS.

MM BIO-12: Desert Tortoise Translocation Plan. The applicant/owner shall develop and implement a USFWS- and CEC-approved DTTP. The DTTP, which shall be approved prior to any ground disturbance or tortoise relocation, shall include measures to minimize the potential for repeated translocations of individual desert tortoise. The goals of the DTTP shall be to relocate all desert tortoise from the project area to nearby suitable habitat; minimize impacts on resident desert tortoise outside the project area; minimize stress, disturbance, and injuries to relocated/translocated tortoises; and assess the success of the translocation effort through monitoring. The DTTP shall follow the *Translocation of Mojave Desert Tortoises from Project Sites: Plan Development Guidance* (USFWS 2020) and shall clearly define how it addresses the 11 steps outlined in the guidance. The final DTTP shall be based on the draft DTTP prepared by the applicant/owner and shall include all revisions deemed necessary by CEC, CDFW, and USFWS. The final plan will be subject to modification for consistency with the CESA ITP, USFWS take authorization and/or BO conservation requirements.

MM BIO-13: Desert Tortoise Compliance Verification. The applicant/owner shall provide CDFW and USFWS staff with unfettered access to the project area and compensation lands under the control of the project owner and shall otherwise fully cooperate with the CEC's efforts to verify the project owner's compliance with, or the effectiveness of, adopted MMs. The Designated Biologist shall do all of the following:

- ***Notification.*** Notify the CEC at least 14 calendar days before initiating construction-related ground disturbance activities; immediately notify the CEC in writing if the project owner is not in compliance with any conditions of certification, including but not limited to any actual or anticipated failure to implement MMs within the time periods specified in the conditions of certification;
- ***Monitoring During Grubbing and Grading.*** Remain on-site daily while vegetation salvage, grubbing, grading, and other ground-disturbing construction activities are taking place to avoid or minimize take of listed species, and verify personally or have Biological Monitor(s) verify compliance with all impact avoidance and minimization measures, including checking all exclusion zones to ensure that signs, stakes, and fencing are intact and that human activities are restricted in these protective zones.
- ***Monthly Compliance Inspections.*** Conduct compliance inspections at a minimum of once per month after clearing, grubbing, and grading are completed and submit a monthly compliance report to the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS during construction.
- ***Notification of Injured or Dead Listed Species.*** If an injured or dead federally or state-listed species is detected on or near the project area the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS shall be notified

immediately by phone. Notification shall occur no later than noon on the business day following the event if it occurs outside normal business hours so that the agencies can determine whether further actions are required to protect listed species. Written follow-up notification via facsimile or electronic communication shall be submitted to these agencies within 2 calendar days of the incident and include the following information as relevant:

a. *Injured Desert Tortoise*. If a desert tortoise is injured as a result of project-related activities during construction, the Designated Biologist or Biological Monitor(s) shall immediately take it to a CDFW-approved wildlife rehabilitation and/or veterinarian clinic. Any veterinarian bills for such injured animals shall be paid by the applicant/owner. Following phone notification as required above, CDFW and USFWS shall determine the final disposition of the injured animal, if it recovers. Written notification shall include, at a minimum, the date, time, location, and circumstances of the incident and the name of the facility where the animal was taken.

b. *Desert Tortoise Fatality*. If a desert tortoise is killed by project-related activities during construction, operation and maintenance, or decommissioning, a written report with the same information as an injury report shall be submitted the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS. These desert tortoises shall be salvaged according to federally established guidelines. The applicant/owner shall pay to have the desert tortoises transported and necropsied. The report shall include the date and time of the finding or incident.

    1. ***Final Listed Species Mitigation Report.*** The Designated Biologist shall provide the CEC and CDFW a Final Listed Species Mitigation Report that includes, at a minimum, 1) all available information about project-related incidental take of listed species; 2) information about other project impacts to the listed species; 3) construction dates; 4) an assessment of the effectiveness of conditions of certification in minimizing and compensating for project impacts; 5) recommendations on how MMs might be changed to more effectively minimize and mitigate the impacts of future projects on the listed species; and 6) any other pertinent information, including the level of take of the listed species associated with the project.

    2. ***Stop Work Order.*** CEC may issue the project owner a written stop work order to suspend any activity related to the construction or operation of the project to prevent or remedy a violation of one or more conditions of certification (including but not limited to failure to comply with reporting, monitoring, or habitat acquisition obligations) or to prevent the illegal take of an endangered, threatened, or protected species. The project owner shall comply with the stop work order immediately upon receipt thereof.

MM BIO-14: Desert Tortoise Compensatory Mitigation: To fully mitigate for habitat loss and potential take of desert tortoise, the project owner shall provide compensatory mitigation consistent with federal requirements, adjusted to reflect the final project footprint. The acreage for mitigation of desert tortoise habitat will be at a 1:1 ratio. For the purposes of this condition, the project footprint means all lands disturbed in the construction and operation of the project, including all project linears, as well as undeveloped areas inside the project's boundaries that will no longer provide viable long-term habitat for the desert tortoise. To satisfy this condition, the project owner shall acquire, protect, and transfer 1 acre of desert tortoise habitat for every acre of habitat within the final project footprint, and provide associated funding for the acquired lands, as specified below. In lieu of acquiring land itself, the project owner may satisfy the requirements of this condition by depositing funds into the Renewable Energy Action Team (REAT) Account established with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), as provided below in Section 3.i. of this measure.

If compensation lands are acquired in fee title or in easement, the requirements for acquisition, initial improvement, and long-term management of compensation lands include all of the following, subject to modification by the terms of incidental take authorizations issued by USFWS and CEC:

- ***Selection Criteria for Compensation Lands.*** The compensation lands selected for acquisition in fee title or in easement shall:
  a. be within the Western Mojave Recovery Unit, or, with prior CEC, USFWS, and CDFW approval, within the Eastern Mojave Recovery Unit as defined in the 2011 Revised Recovery Plan (USFWS 2011b), with potential to contribute to desert tortoise habitat connectivity and build linkages between desert tortoise designated critical habitat, known populations of desert tortoise, and/or other preserve lands;
  b. provide habitat for desert tortoise with capacity to regenerate naturally when disturbances are removed;
  c. be prioritized near larger blocks of land that are either already protected or planned for protection, such as Desert Wildlife Management Areas within the Western Mojave Recovery Unit (or nearby portions of the Eastern Mojave Recovery Unit with prior USFWS and CDFW approval) or which could feasibly be protected long term by a public resource agency or a non-governmental organization dedicated to habitat preservation;
  d. be connected to lands with desert tortoise habitat equal to or better quality than the project area, ideally with populations that are stable, recovering, or likely to recover;
  e. not have a history of intensive recreational use or other disturbance that does not have the capacity to regenerate naturally when disturbances are removed or might make habitat recovery and restoration infeasible;
  f. not be characterized by high densities of invasive species, either on or immediately adjacent to the parcels under consideration, that might jeopardize habitat recovery and restoration;
  g. not contain hazardous wastes that cannot be removed to the extent that the site could not provide suitable habitat; and
  h. have water and mineral rights included as part of the acquisition, unless BLM and CEC, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS, agree in writing to the acceptability of the land.
- ***Review and Approval of Compensation Lands Prior to Acquisition.*** The project owner shall submit a formal acquisition proposal to the CEC, BLM, CDFW, and USFWS describing the parcel(s) intended for purchase. This acquisition proposal shall discuss the suitability of the proposed parcel(s) as compensation lands for desert tortoise in relation to the criteria listed above. Approval from the CEC and BLM, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS shall be required for acquisition of all compensatory mitigation parcels.
- ***Compensation Lands Acquisition Requirements.*** The project owner shall comply with the following requirements relating to acquisition of the compensation lands after the CEC and BLM, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS, have approved the proposed compensation lands:
  a. *Preliminary Report*. The project owner, or approved third party, shall provide a recent preliminary title report, initial hazardous materials survey report, biological analysis, and other necessary or requested documents for the proposed compensation land to the BLM. All documents conveying or conserving compensation lands and all conditions of title are subject to review and approval by the CEC and BLM, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS. For conveyances to the State, approval may also be required from the California Department of General Services, the Fish and Game Commission, and the Wildlife Conservation Board.

b. *Title/Conveyance.* The project owner shall transfer fee title to the compensation lands, a conservation easement over the lands, or both fee title and conservation easement as required by the BLM and CEC. Transfer of either fee title or an approved conservation easement will usually be sufficient, but some situations, e.g., the donation of lands burdened by a conservation easement to BLM, will require that both types of transfers be completed. Any transfer of a conservation easement or fee title must be to CEC, a non-profit organization qualified to hold title to and manage compensation lands (pursuant to California Government Code section 65965), or BLM under terms approved by the BLM. If an approved non-profit organization holds title to the compensation lands, a conservation easement shall be recorded in favor of the CEC in a form approved by the CEC. If an approved non-profit holds a conservation easement, the CEC shall be named a third-party beneficiary.

c. *Initial Habitat Improvement Fund.* The project owner shall fund the initial protection and habitat improvement of the compensation lands. Alternatively, a non-profit organization may hold the habitat improvement funds if it is qualified to manage the compensation lands (pursuant to California Government Code Section 65965) and if it meets the approval of CEC and BLM. If CEC takes fee title to the compensation lands, the habitat improvement fund must be paid to CEC or its designee.

d. *Property Analysis Record.* Upon identification of the compensation lands, the project owner shall conduct a Property Analysis Record (PAR) or PAR-like analysis to establish the appropriate long-term maintenance and management fee to fund the in-perpetuity management of the acquired mitigation lands.

e. *Long-term Maintenance and Management Fund.* The project owner shall deposit in NFWF's REAT Account a capital long-term maintenance and management fee in the amount determined through the PAR or PAR-like analysis conducted for the compensation lands. BLM, in consultation with CDFW, may designate another non-profit organization to hold the long-term maintenance and management fee if the organization is qualified to manage the compensation lands in perpetuity. If the CEC takes fee title to the compensation lands, the CEC shall determine whether it will hold the long-term management fee in the special deposit fund, leave the money in the REAT Account, or designate another entity to manage the long-term maintenance and management fee for the CEC and with CEC supervision.

f. *Interest, Principal, and Pooling of Funds.* The project owner, BLM, and the CEC shall ensure that an agreement is in place with the long-term maintenance and management fee holder/manager to ensure the following conditions:

    i. Interest. Interest generated from the initial capital long-term maintenance and management fee shall be available for reinvestment into the principal and for the long-term operation, management, and protection of the approved compensation lands, including reasonable administrative overhead, biological monitoring, improvements to carrying capacity, law enforcement measures, and any other action approved by the CEC designed to protect or improve the habitat values of the compensation lands.

    ii. Withdrawal of Principal. The long-term maintenance and management fee principal shall not be drawn upon unless such withdrawal is deemed necessary by the CEC or the approved third-party long-term maintenance and management fee manager to ensure the continued viability of the species on the compensation lands. If the CEC takes fee title to the compensation lands, monies received by the CEC pursuant to this provision shall be deposited in a special deposit fund established solely for the purpose to manage lands in perpetuity unless the CEC designates NFWF or another entity to manage the long-term maintenance and management fee for the CEC.

iii. Pooling Long-Term Maintenance and Management Fee Funds. The CEC, or a BLM- and CDFW-approved non-profit organization qualified to hold long-term maintenance and management fees solely for the purpose to manage lands in perpetuity, may pool the endowment with other endowments for the operation, management, and protection of the compensation lands for local populations of desert tortoise. However, for reporting purposes, the long-term maintenance and management fee fund must be tracked and reported individually to the CEC.

g. *Other expenses*. In addition to the costs listed above, the project owner shall be responsible for all other costs related to acquisition of compensation lands and conservation easements, including but not limited to title and document review costs; expenses incurred from other state agency reviews; overhead related to providing compensation lands to the CEC or an approved third party; escrow fees or costs; environmental contaminants clearance; and other site cleanup measures.

h. *Mitigation Securit*y. The project owner shall provide financial assurances to the BLM and the CEC with copies of the document(s) to the CDFW and USFWS, to guarantee that an adequate level of funding is available to implement the MMs described in this condition. These funds shall be used solely for implementation of the measures associated with the project in the event the project owner fails to comply with the requirements specified in this condition, or shall be returned to the project owner upon successful compliance with the requirements in this condition. The BLM's or CEC's use of the security to implement measures in this condition may not fully satisfy the project owner's obligations under this condition. Financial assurance can be provided to the BLM and CEC in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit, a pledged savings account, or another form of security ("Security"). Prior to submitting the Security to the BLM and CEC, the project owner shall obtain the BLM's approval in consultation with CDFW and the USFWS of the form of the Security. The actual costs to comply with this condition will vary depending on the final footprint of the project and the actual costs of acquiring, improving, and managing the compensation lands.

i. *NFWF REAT Account*. The project owner may elect to fund the acquisition and initial improvement of compensation lands through NFWF by depositing funds for that purpose into NFWF's REAT Account. Initial deposits for this purpose must be made in the same amounts as the security required above and may be provided in lieu of security. If this option is used for the acquisition and initial improvement, the project owner shall make an additional deposit into the REAT Account if necessary to cover the actual acquisition costs and administrative costs and fees of the compensation land purchase once land is identified and the actual costs are known. If the actual costs for acquisition and administrative costs and fees are less than anticipated in the PAR analysis, the excess money deposited in the REAT Account shall be returned to the project owner. Money deposited for the initial protection and improvement of the compensation lands shall not be returned to the project owner.

The responsibility for acquisition of compensation lands may be delegated to a third party other than NFWF, such as a non-governmental organization supportive of desert habitat conservation, by written agreement of the BLM and CDFW. Such delegation shall be subject to approval by the BLM and the CEC, in consultation with CDFW and USFWS, prior to land acquisition, initial protection, or maintenance and management activities. Agreements to delegate land acquisition to an approved third party, or to manage compensation lands, shall be implemented with 18 months of BLM's approval.

MM BIO-15: Minimize Vehicle and Equipment Impacts during Operation and Maintenance.
The applicant/owner shall implement measures to minimize the potential for desert tortoise and other wildlife species mortality along access and maintenance roads. These measures shall include:

- Speed limits identified in MM BIO-10 shall continue to be applied during operation and maintenance.
- Pedestrian access outside the limits of the designated access/maintenance roads is permitted year-round as long as no ground-disturbing activities take place.
- Vehicle traffic and parking shall be confined to designated access roads, and equipment and materials staging areas shall be clearly defined to avoid impacting habitat during the operation phase.

MM BIO-16: Mojave Fringe-toed Lizard Protection Measures. A qualified biologist will conduct a focused survey for Mojave fringe-toed lizard prior to ground disturbance in suitable habitat (aeolian sand deposits) within all active work areas. Two survey replicates will be performed during the Mojave fringe-toed lizard active season (March–October) during appropriate weather conditions. Qualified biologists will walk transects spaced 10m apart throughout areas with suitable habitat within the study area. Detections of Mojave fringe-toed lizard will be recorded using a GPS unit. If Mojave fringe-toed lizards are not detected, then no further action is needed. If Mojave fringe-toed lizards are found, then a pre-construction survey should be conducted no more than one week before ground disturbance begins, and any Mojave fringe-toed lizards should be moved to suitable habitat south of the Project area where the species was confirmed to be present.

MM BIO-17: Avian Monitoring and Mitigation Program. An Avian Monitoring and Mitigation Program (AMMP) shall be initiated and approved by the CEC and BLM in consultation with CDFW and USFWS prior to construction and continue for at least 5 years following commercial operation (and longer if determined necessary and appropriate by the Designated Biologist). The AMMP shall prevent substantial adverse effects to special-status species through implementation of the approach outlined in the postconstruction monitoring and adaptive management provisions of Region 8 Interim Guidelines for the Development of a Project-specific Avian and Bat Protection Plan for Solar Energy Plants and Related Transmission Facilities (USFWS 2010), in conjunction with any measures required after consultation with USFWS and/or CDFW under the ESA, CESA, or BGEPA, if applicable. The Program shall use surveys and monitoring of on-site avian and bat use and behavior to document species composition and changes in avian and bat use over time. The purpose of the AMMP is to provide an adaptive management and decision-making framework for reviewing, characterizing, and responding to avian and bat monitoring results, and reducing long-term impacts on these taxa. The AMMP shall include the following components:

- A description of the baseline and ongoing avian and bat survey methods, including identification of onsite survey locations and seasonal survey considerations, and a description of acoustic bat monitoring methods.
- Avian and bat mortality and injury monitoring that includes:
    a. Onsite monitoring of representative locations in the facility, at a level of effort that accounts for potential spatial bias and allows for the extrapolation of survey results to non-surveyed areas. The AMMP will provide a rationale justifying the proposed schedule of carcass searches.
    b. Low-visibility and high-wind weather event monitoring to document potential weather-related collision risks that may be associated increased risk of avian or bat collisions with project features, including foggy, highly overcast, or rainy night-time weather typically associated with an advancing frontal system, and high wind events (40-mph winds) are sustained for period of greater than 4 hours. The monitoring report shall include survey frequency, locations, and methods.

c. Scavenger and searcher efficiency trials to document the extent to which avian or bat fatalities remain visible over time and can be detected, and to adjust the survey timing and survey results to reflect scavenger and searcher efficiency rates.

d. A description of statistical methods used to generate facility estimates of potential avian and bat impacts based on the number of detections during standardized searches during the monitoring season for which the cause of death can be determined.

e. Field detection and mortality or injury identification, cause attribution, handling and reporting requirements. The AMMP shall include detailed specifications on data collection and provide a carcass collection protocol.

- All postconstruction mortality monitoring studies included in the AMMP shall be performed by a -third party contractor for 5 years following commercial operation and approval of the AMMP by the BLM. At the end of the 5-year period, the BLM shall determine whether the survey program shall be continued.
- An adaptive management program shall be developed to identify and implement reasonable and feasible measures that would reduce levels of avian or bat mortality or injury attributable to project operations and facilities. Such measures could potentially include efforts to make panels more visible to birds (e.g., white borders around panel edges or the use of noise deterrents).

The adaptive management program shall include (i) reasonable measures for characterizing the extent and importance of detected mortality and injuries clearly attributable to the project; (ii) potential measures that the project owner could implement to adaptively respond to detected mortality and injuries attributable to the project. Adaptive actions undertaken will be discussed and evaluated in survey reports. Any impact reduction measures must be commensurate (in terms of factors that include geographic scope, costs, and scale of effort) with the level of avian or bat mortality or injury that is specifically and clearly attributable to the project facilities; and (iii) Appropriate performance standards for mitigation of impacts to any species regulated by BGEPA, ESA, and CESA as well as MMs that reduce or offset mortalities caused by the project to a level that avoids a substantial, long-term reduction in the demographic viability of the local population of the species in question.

MM BIO-18. Avoid Disturbance to Nesting Birds. Vegetation clearing shall take place outside of the general avian breeding season (February 15–September 1), when feasible. If vegetation clearing cannot occur outside the avian breeding season, the Designated Biologist/Biological Monitor(s) shall conduct a preconstruction survey for nesting birds no more than 3 days prior to vegetation clearing. If no active nests are found, clearing can proceed. If active nests are found, no clearing shall be allowed within 150 feet (for passerines) to 250 feet (for raptors) of the active nests until the Designated Biologist/Biological Monitor(s) determines the nest is no longer active or the nest fails. Based on observation of the individual birds' tolerance to human activity, this buffer may be reduced by a qualified biologist. Encroachment into the buffer may occur at the discretion of a qualified biologist.

The Designated Biologist/Biological Monitor(s) shall submit the results of the preconstruction nesting bird surveys to the CEC, BLM, USFWS, and CDFW. Following agency coordination, the size of the next buffer may be adjusted based upon the magnitude of proposed activities and observed sensitivity of the bird to disturbance.

MM BIO-19: Lighting Specifications to Minimize Bird and Bat Impacts. The applicant/owner shall minimize night lighting during construction by using shielded directional lighting that is pointed downward, thereby avoiding illumination to adjacent natural areas and the night sky.

MM BIO-20: Bird and Bat Conservation Strategy (BBCS). The applicant/owner shall develop a BBCS to address project impacts to special-status avian and bat species that shall be consistent with the Region 8 *Interim Guidelines for the Development of a Project-specific Avian and Bat Protection Plan for Solar Energy Plants and Related Transmission Facilities* (USFWS 2010). The applicant/owner shall submit the BBCS to the CEC, CDFW, and USFWS for review and approval prior to initiation of project construction. The BBCS shall include an assessment of potential avian and bat impacts from lighting, noise, collision, electrocution, and attraction of ravens, as applicable; measures to mitigate for the effects to birds; a description of general avoidance and minimization measures applicable during construction, operation and maintenance, and postconstruction to include nest management and postconstruction monitoring; a description of the reporting requirements and reporting schedule and duration; and the adaptive management strategy. A raven management element shall be included in the BBCS or provided separately that includes measures such as storage of garbage in raven-proof containers and installation of anti-nesting devices on structures where raven nests could be built.

MM BIO-21: Burrowing Owl Protection Measures. To fully mitigate for habitat loss and potential take of burrowing owl, the project owner shall provide compensatory mitigation consistent with CDFW requirements, adjusted to reflect the final project footprint. The acreage for mitigation of burrowing owl habitat will be at a 1:1 ratio. For the purposes of this condition, the project footprint means all lands disturbed in the construction and operation of the project, including all project linears, as well as undeveloped areas inside the project's boundaries that will no longer provide viable long-term habitat for burrowing owl.

If compensation lands are acquired in fee title or in easement, the requirements for acquisition, initial improvement, and long-term management of compensation lands must comply with the terms of incidental take authorizations issued by the CEC. The compensation lands selected for acquisition in fee title or in easement shall comply with the terms of incidental take authorizations issued by the CEC.

No more than 14 days prior to the start of ground disturbance, a preconstruction survey for burrowing owls in conformance with the CDFW *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFW 2012) shall be completed within suitable habitat at every work area and within a 150-m buffer zone of each work area. Work areas will be resurveyed following periods of inactivity of 2 weeks or more. The applicant/owner shall submit the results of the preconstruction survey to BLM's Authorized Officer and the CEC. The applicant/owner shall also submit evidence of conformance with federal and state regulations regarding the protection of the burrowing owl by demonstrating compliance with the following:

- Impacts to active burrowing owl territories shall be mitigated at a minimum of a 1:1 ratio through a combination of off-site habitat compensation and/or off-site restoration of disturbed habitat capable of supporting this species. The acquisition of occupied habitat off-site shall be in an area where energy facilities would not pose a mortality risk. Acquisition of habitat shall be consistent with the CDFW's *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFW 2012). The preserved habitat shall be occupied by burrowing owl and shall be of superior or similar habitat quality to the impacted areas in terms of soil features, extent of disturbance, habitat structure, and dominant species composition, as determined by a qualified ornithologist. The site shall be approved by the BLM and CEC. Land shall be purchased and/or placed in a conservation easement in perpetuity and managed to maintain suitable habitat. The off-site area to be preserved can coincide with other off-site mitigation lands, with the approval of the CEC.
- The approved biologist shall remain on-site until all vegetation is cleared and, at a minimum, conduct site and fence inspections on a regular (monthly) schedule throughout construction to ensure that the project is in compliance with the MMs.
- Employees and contractors shall look under vehicles and equipment for the presence of wildlife prior to moving vehicles and equipment. If present, the animal shall be left to move on its own.

No listed species shall be handled without concurrence from USFWS and/or CDFW, as applicable.

MM BIO-22: American Badger and Desert Kit Fox Protection. To avoid direct impacts to American badger and desert kit fox, preconstruction surveys shall be conducted for these species concurrently with the desert tortoise surveys. Surveys shall be conducted as described below:

- Biological Monitors shall perform preconstruction surveys for badger and kit fox dens in the project disturbance area, including a 20-foot swath beyond the disturbed area, utility corridors, and access roads. If dens are detected, each den shall be classified as inactive, potentially active, or definitely active.
- Inactive dens that would be directly impacted by construction activities shall be excavated by hand and backfilled to prevent reuse by badgers or kit fox.
- Potentially and definitely active dens that would be directly impacted by construction activities shall be monitored by the Biological Monitor for 3 consecutive nights using a tracking medium (such as diatomaceous earth or fire clay) and/or infrared camera stations at the entrance.
- If no tracks are observed in the tracking medium or no photos of the target species are captured after 3 consecutive nights, the den shall be excavated and backfilled by hand.
- If tracks are observed, the den shall be progressively blocked with natural materials (rocks, dirt, sticks, and vegetation piled in front of the entrance) for the next three to five nights to discourage the badger or kit fox from continued use. After verification that the den is unoccupied it shall then be excavated and backfilled by hand to ensure that no badgers or kit fox are trapped in the den.
- If an active natal den is detected on the site, the BLM Authorized Officer and CDFW shall be contacted within 24 hours to determine the appropriate course of action to minimize the potential for harm or mortality. The course of action would depend on the age of the pups, location of the den on the site (e.g., is the den in a central area or in a perimeter location), status of the perimeter site fence (completed or not), and the pending construction activities proposed near the den. A 500-foot no-disturbance buffer shall be maintained around active natal dens.
- The following measures are required to reduce the likelihood of distemper transmission:
    a. No pets shall be allowed on the site prior to or during construction, with the possible exception of kit fox scat detection dogs during preconstruction surveys, and then only with prior CDFW approval;
    b. Any kit fox hazing activities that include the use of animal repellents such as coyote urine must be cleared through CDFW prior to use; and
    c. Any documented kit fox mortality shall be reported to CDFW and the BLM Authorized Officer within 24 hours of identification. If a dead kit fox is observed, it shall be retained and protected from scavengers until CDFW determines whether the collection of necropsy samples is justified.

MM-BIO-23. Mitigation and Monitoring Plan: Prior to site disturbance, the project will prepare a desert bighorn sheep mitigation and monitoring plan. The plan will be approved by CDFW and BLM. This plan will require monitoring of wildlife crossings, fencing effectiveness, water sources, and all other implemented mitigation measures for a minimum of 8 years with an annual monitoring report provided to CDFW by January 31, and a final report covering the entire monitoring period (i.e., at least 8 years) by January 31st of the final year. Components of this requirement may be modified if already covered by other monitoring efforts (e.g., Brightline, Caltrans). The plan will include the methods for monitoring, identify what is being monitored, identify the goals of the measures, methods for determining the

effectiveness of the measures, and remedial triggers and measures if the mitigation does not meet the goals.

MM-BIO-24. Limited Operating Period: Noises greater than 85 A-weighted decibels (dBA) maximum sound level (Lmax) will not be allowed within 500 meters of the hinge point (10% slope line) between December 1 and June 30. If loud work must occur, even briefly, then the project must get CDFW concurrence that the desert bighorn sheep lambing period is done or verify, in coordination with CDFW, that there are no desert bighorn sheep on the facing slope within a distance that would be expected to be subject to an 85 dBA Lmax sound level. If the project believes that they may need to ultimately perform loud work during the lambing period, then they shall coordinate with CDFW early (i.e., ideally as soon as possible, but minimally before the lambing period) to determine how much additional desert bighorn sheep-specific monitoring will be needed for CDFW to evaluate whether the request is feasible. Simply monitoring a week or two in advance will not provide enough data to perform the evaluation.

MM-BIO-25. Work Boot Decontamination: All construction personnel will be trained on the importance of and procedures for decontaminating boots to prevent transmission of disease from domesticated sheep and goats to desert bighorn sheep. In addition, all quarry workers who have potential contact with domesticated sheep and/or goats (for example at farms, fairs, etc.) will be identified and shall decontaminate work boots prior to entering the project area. Decontamination shall involve scrubbing the soles of work boots with a 10% bleach solution to remove all organic matter and kill pathogens. Alternatively, footwear may be changed to ensure that potentially contaminated footwear does not enter any quarry area.

MM-BIO-26. Artificial Water Sources: The project will design and install at least five new artificial water sources for desert bighorn sheep to use. The location, design, and method of installations will be determined in cooperation with CEC, CDFW, and BLM and the ultimate plan will be approved by CEC, CDFW, and BLM. The locations may be on private or public lands but must be located within 5 miles of the project boundary to mitigate this metapopulation. Because the I-15 wildlife overcrossing will be installed adjacent to the site, water structure installations should occur on both sides on I-15 with a possible preference for one proximate to the overcrossing structure. The project shall establish a non-wasting endowment to monitor and maintain the water features in perpetuity.

MM-BIO-27. Compensatory Mitigation: If MM-BIO-14 (Desert Tortoise Compensatory Mitigation) is adhered to and occurs within approximately 1 kilometer of desert bighorn sheep-occupied or CDFW-identified/modeled desert bighorn sheep habitat, then no additional compensatory habitat mitigation would be required as the acquired habitat would also satisfy the foraging needs of desert bighorn sheep. However, if the mitigation lands acquired for MM-BIO-12 do not satisfy this requirement, then separate compensatory mitigation for loss of desert bighorn sheep foraging habitat (i.e., all lands east of I-15 that are fenced in) at a 1:1 ratio meeting all of the other requirements (i.e., requirements for acquisition, initial improvement, and long-term management of compensation lands) and protections afforded under MM-BIO-14 will be required.

MM BIO-28: Vegetation Best Management Practices. The applicant shall undertake the following measures to manage the construction site and related facilities in a manner to avoid or minimize impacts to vegetation resources:

- Limit Area of Disturbance. The boundaries of all areas to be disturbed (including staging areas, access roads, and sites for temporary placement of spoils) shall be delineated with stakes and flagging prior to construction activities in consultation with the Designated Biologist. Spoils and topsoil shall be stockpiled in disturbed areas within the project area. Parking areas and staging and disposal site locations shall similarly be located in areas without native vegetation or special-

status species habitat. All disturbances, project vehicles, and equipment shall be confined to the flagged areas.

- Minimize Road Impacts. New and existing roads that are planned for construction, widening, or other improvements shall not extend beyond the flagged impact area as described above. All vehicles passing or turning around would do so within the planned impact area or in previously disturbed areas. Where new access is required outside of existing roads or the construction zone, the route shall be clearly marked (i.e., flagged and/or staked) prior to the onset of construction.
- Minimize Traffic Impacts. Vehicular traffic during project construction and operation shall be confined to existing routes of travel to and from the project area, and cross-country vehicle and equipment use outside designated work areas shall be prohibited.
- Monitor During Construction. In areas that have not been fenced with desert tortoise exclusion fencing and cleared, a Designated Biologist shall be present at the construction site during all project construction activities that have potential to disturb soil, vegetation, and wildlife. The Designated Biologist or Biological Monitor shall review areas immediately ahead of equipment during brushing and grading activities.
- Minimize Impacts of Staging Areas. Staging areas for construction on the project area shall be within the area that has been fenced with desert tortoise exclusion fencing. For construction activities outside of the solar project area, access roads, pulling sites, and storage and parking areas shall be designed, utilized, and maintained with the goal of avoiding or minimizing impacts to native plant communities and sensitive biological resources. Staging areas outside of the project area shall maintain a minimal disturbance footprint, avoid jurisdictional wetlands, and avoid disturbance to native plant communities whenever possible.
- Avoid Use of Toxic Substances. Soil bonding and weighting agents used on unpaved surfaces (per MM 3.2-1) shall be non-toxic to plants and wildlife.
- Implement Erosion Control Measures. All erosion control measures promoted by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) in its Project Guidelines for Erosion Control (Board Order No R6T-2003-0-04 Attachment G) (Lahontan RWQCB 2003) shall be implemented for all phases of construction and operation where sediment run-off from exposed slopes threatens to enter "waters of the State." Sediment and other flow-restricting materials shall be moved to a location where they shall not be washed back into drainages. All disturbed soils and roads within the project area shall be stabilized to reduce erosion potential, both during and following construction. Areas of disturbed soils (access and staging areas) with slopes toward a drainage shall be stabilized to reduce erosion potential. To avoid impacts associated with generation of fugitive dust, surface application of water would be employed during construction and operation and maintenance activities.
- Monitor Ground-Disturbing Activities Prior to Preconstruction Site Mobilization. If preconstruction site mobilization requires ground-disturbing activities such as for geotechnical borings or hazardous waste evaluations, a Designated Biologist or Biological Monitor shall be present to monitor any actions that could disturb soil, vegetation, or wildlife.
- Revegetation of Temporarily Disturbed Areas. The applicant shall prepare and implement a Temporary Disturbance Revegetation Plan to restore all areas subject to temporary disturbance to pre-project grade and conditions. The plan shall be submitted to the BLM and CEC for review and approval at least 30 days prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities. Temporarily disturbed areas within the project area include, but are not limited to, all proposed locations for linear facilities, temporary access roads, berms, areas surrounding the drainage diffusers,

construction work temporary lay-down areas not converted to part of the solar field, and construction equipment staging areas. The Temporary Disturbance Revegetation Plan shall include a description of topsoil salvage and seeding techniques and a monitoring and reporting plan, and plan to achieve the following performance standards by the end of monitoring year 2:

a. At least 80% of the species observed within the temporarily disturbed areas shall be native species that naturally occur in desert scrub habitats; and

b. Relative cover and density of plant species within the temporarily disturbed areas shall equal at least 60% relative to pre-disturbance conditions.

- Integrated Weed Management Plan. This measure provides further detail and clarifies requirements for the applicant's draft IWMP. Prior to beginning construction on the project, the applicant shall prepare, circulate to BLM for comment and approval, and then implement an IWMP that meets the approval of BLM's Authorized Officer and conforms to the CDCA Plan to prevent the spread of existing invasive species and the introduction of new invasive species to the project area. The plan shall be consistent with BLM's *Record of Decision for Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in 17 Western States* (BLM 2007) and the *2008-2012 National Invasive Species Management Plan* (National Invasive Species Council 2008). The IWMP shall include, at a minimum, specific management objectives and measures for each target invasive species, baseline conditions, weed risk assessment, measures (both preventative and containment/control) to prevent/limit the introduction and spread of invasive species, monitoring and surveying methods, and reporting requirements. The BLM-approved IWMP shall include:

  a. Preventative measures to prevent the spread of weeds into new habitats, such as equipment inspections, use of weed-free erosion control materials and soils, and a mandatory site training element that includes weed management;

  b. Weed containment and control measures such as the removal of invasive species primarily via mechanical means, with the use of herbicides restricted to BLM-policies and approved usage (e.g., BLM's Herbicide Use Standard Operating Procedures provided in Appendix B of the *Record of Decision for the Final Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (BLM 2007);

  c. Monitoring and reporting standards annually during construction and for 3 years following the completion of construction to describe trends in weed distribution and direct weed management measures, and;

  d. Reporting of monitoring and management efforts in annual reports and a final monitoring report completed at the end of 3 years of postconstruction monitoring. Copies of these reports will be provided to BLM for review and comment. BLM will use the results of these reports to determine whether any additional monitoring or control measures are necessary. Weed control will be ongoing on the project area for the life of the project, but plan success will be determined by BLM after the 3 years of operations monitoring through the reporting and review process. Success criteria will be defined as having no more than a 10% increase in a weed species or in overall weed cover in any part of the project area.

MM BIO-29: Final Closure Plan. At least 12 months prior to project closure, the applicant shall prepare a Final Closure Plan to restore the site's topography and hydrology to a relatively natural condition and to establish native vegetation communities within the project area. The Final Closure Plan shall include a cost estimate for implementing the proposed decommissioning and reclamation activities, and shall cover the estimated cost as though BLM were to contract with a third party to decommission the project and

Sent: 3/21/2025 7:05:45 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3c08929c117e4da5bfb45f48fa749c0a-Waterboards]
Subject: Review of Data Completeness Worksheets, Soda Mountain Solar Project

Christina: I am reviewing the applicant's responses to the data completeness worksheets and associated data requests.

In the original data requests prepared by Adam White, he mentions Federal Executive Order 12088 with respect to stormwater controls requirements since the project is on BLM land.

Are you familiar with this executive order and how it works with the general construction NPDES permit?

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Ackerman, James@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=3CC35DE240CF4253AF9CC7D3D2CBB643-ACKERMAN, J]
Sent: 3/20/2025 11:06:11 PM
To: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards [Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov]
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

Perhaps you are better at navigating around our Docket then I am.

I will take a closer look.

I could not find any documents linked to the LRWQCB when I looked before.

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Christina & Tiffany: It looks like we have received a majority of data responses to the CEC's determination of incompleteness (9-3-2024).

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- TN261606_Appendix E-3 Request for Jurisdictional Determination
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To: Ackerman, James@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3cc35de240cf4253af9cc7d3d2cbb643-Ackerman, J]
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Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 3:55 PM
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Cc: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi James,

Thanks for the list. This will help me find the items I need for the permit.

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road
Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

- 760-241-7305
- 760-241-6583 Front Desk

tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov

***Please submit all 401 Certification/Dredge & Fill documentation to the Lahontan email box at lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov. If your Project has been assigned to a staff person please include their name ***

From: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 3:37 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

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Christina & Tiffany: It looks like we have received a majority of data responses to the CEC's determination of incompleteness (9-3-2024).

Here is a list of revised documents in our docket that I believe would be of interest to LRWQCB:

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

Please review the available applicant response and revised documents and inform us of any omissions or deficiencies.

BTY: Could you provide the email or document with LRWQCB staff comments regarding the initial Soda Mountain application.

Some Items that have changed with the project:

- There will be no brine pond.

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Contact me if you have any questions.

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Sent: 3/30/2025 10:55:01 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain- need Aermod input output files
Attachments: Outlook-cid_image0

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi! I just sent the link. If you need anything else, or can't access the files, please just let me know.

Thanks!
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2025 3:22 PM
To: Hannah Arkin
Subject: Soda Mountain- need Aermod input output files

Hi Hannah,

Can you provide the Aermod input output files. Apparently we didn't get all of the data set.

Thanks,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

From: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards [Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov]
Sent: 4/11/2025 9:26:36 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3cc35de240cf4253af9cc7d3d2cbb643-Ackerman, J]; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c1ff1d38281a4068b2708271d22c0d94-Abulaban, A]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
CC: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6a535479ac2448c29afb308a1cd6fede-Waterboards]; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=fdbc9163bf404f4d84f0a53c6ed84ab0-Waterboards]; Beryt, Elizabeth@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=75c35107bf304d26b328080b370a750c-Waterboards]
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project - RWQCB Additional Information Needed
Attachments: Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) - Request for Regional Water Board Comments Response_16AUG2024.pdf

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Lisa and James,

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Christina Guerra, P.G. 9475
Senior Engineering Geologist (Supervisor)

Land Disposal/401/Stormwater Unit
15095 Amargosa Road Bldg. 2, Ste 210
Victorville, CA 92394
Direct - (760) 241-7333, Cell - (760) 713-1380
christina.guerra@waterboards.ca.gov

CALIFORNIA
Water Boards

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

From: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 3:37 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

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- TN261605_Appendix J Water Supply Report – February 2025 – Revision 1

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Contact me if you have any questions.

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From:	Guerra, Christina@Waterboards
To:	Worrall, Lisa@Energy; McCann, Lisa@Waterboards; White, Adam@Energy; Crader, Phillip@Waterboards; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy; Knight, Eric@Energy
Cc:	Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards
Subject:	Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) - Request for Regional Water Board Comments
Date:	Friday, August 16, 2024 11:32:46 AM
Attachments:	SodaMountain_MOU Agencies Notice of Application Receipt.pdf image002.png

CEC team, in response to email notification of receipt of an Opt-in application for Soda Mountain Solar Project, dated August 2, 2024, I am your primary point of contact for coordination with the Regional Board for this project.

Lahontan Regional Board staff have reviewed relevant portions of the Opt-in application for Soda Mountain Solar Project. Based on the MOA between the Regional Board and CEC, we are providing our initial comments on the project with respect to water quality, what permitting requirements might be applicable, and the additional information we need to complete our evaluation. Once the additional information we outline below has been provided, we respectfully request 30 days to complete our review and evaluation.

1. We request the Applicant provide specific end use/disposal for all liquid and solid waste streams, including but not limited to excavated soil, solar panel waste, battery energy storage system waste, sanitary waste, process water, panel wash water, waste oil, solvents, and fuels. Additionally, we request the Applicant provide a full characterization (chemical composition) of all liquid waste streams. This information is necessary to determine whether we would request the Applicant to submit a Report of Waste Discharge.
2. The Opt-in application states an onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS) septic system is proposed to support employee sanitary needs. Information is not provided on the OWTS. We request the Applicant provide information on the OWTS including but not limited to project description, flow sources, average, daily, and annual volumes and, system type. The Opt-in application also states any wastewater that cannot be treated by the septic system would be collected and treated or disposed of off-site. We request the Applicant provide information on how this wastewater would be identified and the determination made that the OWTS cannot treat it. This information is necessary to determine whether we would request the Applicant to submit a Report of Waste Discharge.
3. In order for the Lahontan Water Board to be able to issue our permits in line with the CEC we will need the applicant to complete a 401 Water Quality Certification/Dredge and Fill application which can be found here - https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/water_issues/programs/clean_water_act_401/as.
4. Please provide a copy of construction plans that are at least 90% complete. This ensures that we've evaluated the final design and identified all significant permitting

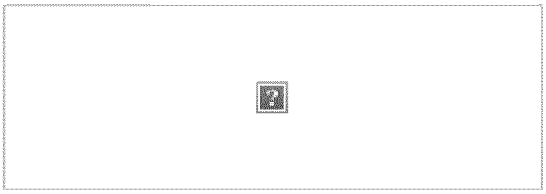
requirements with respect to water quality, including any additional impacts to surface waters.

5. The Water Boards preliminary mitigation ratio for this project is 3 to 1. This ratio assumes no temporal loss, in-kind mitigation, and loss of waters. We request the Applicant provide the compensatory mitigation plan. Additionally, we will need a restoration plan for temporary impacts.
6. The Jurisdictional Delineation report does not include maps of sufficient scale to identify waters of the state onsite or in the vicinity. We request the Applicant update this report to include appropriately scaled maps and supporting documentation. This information is necessary to determine whether waters of the state that may be present on site are included in the delineation as the Lahontan Water Board asserts jurisdiction over all channelized flow.
7. We request the Applicant provide a draft Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. This plan will help us better understand stormwater flow paths and capture for reuse and/or percolation, and aid in our determination of whether a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit or an individual stormwater permit would be appropriate for this project.
8. Will the project include stormwater infiltration ponds? If so, please include those design plans that and ensure they show the capacity and where the pond would discharge should they overflow.
9. We request the Applicant provide a full characterization (chemical composition) of the process water and panel wash water. We request the Applicant provide a process water flow diagram and panel wash water management plan, to include wash frequencies and estimated volumes of water generation. This information is necessary to determine whether sufficient mitigations are in place and whether we would request the Applicant submit a Report of Waste Discharge.
10. The Opt-in application states the disposal method for process water and panel wash water is evaporation. Information is not provided as to how process water and panel wash water will be evaporated (e.g., evaporation pond). We request the Applicant provide information on how process water and panel wash water will be evaporated. This information is necessary to determine whether a waste management unit (pond) is needed, which would require the Applicant submit a Report of Waste Discharge for an evaporation pond. This pond must be constructed, maintained, monitored, and closed in accordance with California Code of Regulations, title 27.

Please pass this information request to the Applicant. And please, let me know if you have any questions.
Thank you.

Christina Guerra, P.G. 9475
Senior Engineering Geologist (Supervisor)

Land Disposal/401/Stormwater Unit
15095 Amargosa Road Bldg. 2, Ste 210
Victorville, CA 92394
Direct - (760) 241-7333, Cell - (760) 713-1380
christina.guerra@waterboards.ca.gov



From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, August 2, 2024 8:39 AM
To: Crader, Phillip@Waterboards <Phillip.Crader@waterboards.ca.gov>; Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>; McCann, Lisa@Waterboards <Lisa.McCann@waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: White, Adam@Energy <Adam.White@Energy.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>; Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Waterboards Notification of Receipt of Opt-in application for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) per MOU

Caution: External Email. Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact DIT or use the Phish Alert Button.

Hello,

This email serves as notification of receipt of an Opt-in application under Public Resources Code 25519 for the proposed Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03). This project is proposed in San Bernardino County, California. The attached letter outlines project information and your responsibilities under Assembly Bill 205.

Adam White will be your technical staff contact for Water Resources. He will reach out to you to discuss the data completeness worksheet and data request format. We will include any data requests you have of the applicant in our Data Completeness Letter that will be posted to the proceeding's docket. Abdel-Karim (Karim) Abulaban is the unit supervisor.

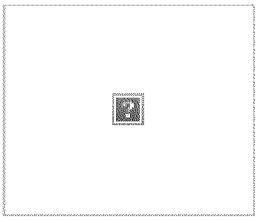
If you have any technical questions, please contact Adam and Karim. If you have questions about the project in general or about the Opt-in process, please contact me.

This information should be provided within 15-days per the MOU, which falls on

Friday August 16, 2024.
We appreciate your timely responses and look forward to coordinating with you as the evaluation moves forward.

Thank you,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov



From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Sent: 4/11/2025 9:46:29 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3c08929c117e4da5bfb45f48fa749c0a-Waterboards]; Ackerman, James@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3cc35de240cf4253af9cc7d3d2cbb643-Ackerman, J]; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c1ff1d38281a4068b2708271d22c0d94-Abulaban, A]
CC: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6a535479ac2448c29afb308a1cd6fede-Waterboards]; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=fdbc9163bf404f4d84f0a53c6ed84ab0-Waterboards]; Beryt, Elizabeth@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=75c35107bf304d26b328080b370a750c-Waterboards]
Subject: Re: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project - RWQCB Additional Information Needed

Thank you very much Christina. I will have James incorporate these data requests into this next data request latter for the applicant to address.

From: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 11, 2025 2:26 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>; Beryt, Elizabeth@Waterboards <Elizabeth.Beryt@waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project - RWQCB Additional Information Needed

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Christina Guerra, P.G. 9475
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christina.guerra@waterboards.ca.gov

California Water Boards
Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

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Direct: (530) 878-4966
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From: Ackerman, James@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=3CC35DE240CF4253AF9CC7D3D2CBB643-ACKERMAN, J]
Sent: 4/11/2025 9:30:05 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards [Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov]
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project - RWQCB Additional Information Needed

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James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 11, 2025 2:27 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>; Beryt, Elizabeth@Waterboards <Elizabeth.Beryt@waterboards.ca.gov>
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7. Please review the Legally Responsible Person information on the application. The entity listed in section one under Applicant Information is who the permit will be issued to. The Duly Authorized Representative is for the consultant information.
8. Please submit an Application that is signed by the Legally Responsible Person (Section 12).

The Lahontan Water Board 401 Water Quality Certification/Dredge and Fill application can be found at - https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/water_issues/programs/clean_water_act_401/as.

Christina Guerra, P.G. 9475
Senior Engineering Geologist (Supervisor)

Land Disposal/401/Stormwater Unit
15095 Amargosa Road Bldg. 2, Ste 210
Victorville, CA 92394
Direct - (760) 241-7333, Cell - (760) 713-1380
christina.guerra@waterboards.ca.gov

CALIFORNIA
Water Boards

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

From: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 3:37 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

Caution: External Email. Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact DIT or use the Phish Alert Button.

Christina & Tiffany: It looks like we have received a majority of data responses to the CEC's determination of incompleteness (9-3-2024).

Here is a list of revised documents in our docket that I believe would be of interest to LRWQCB:

- TN261668_ CEC Data Request Response Set #2
- TN261595_Chapter 2_Project Description – February 2025 – Revision 1-1
- TN261597_Section 3.4 Biological Resources – February 2025 – Revision 1
- TN261601_Section 3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality – February 2025 – Revision 1
- TN261670_Appendix BB1 - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- TN261671_Appendix BB - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- TN261589_Appendix D3 – Restoration and Revegetation Plan for Temporary Impact Areas
- TN261604_Appendix E-1 Aquatic Resources Delineation
- TN261606_Appendix E-3 Request for Jurisdictional Determination
- TN261592_Appendix E-4 Waste Discharge Requirements
- TN261605_Appendix J Water Supply Report – February 2025 – Revision 1

Here is a link to the Soda Mountain Solar Project docket:
https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-03

Please review the available applicant response and revised documents and inform us of any omissions or deficiencies.

BTY: Could you provide the email or document with LRWQCB staff comments regarding the initial Soda Mountain application.

Some Items that have changed with the project:

- There will be no brine pond.
- The facility will be run remotely, so there will be no septic system or need for potable water supply.

Contact me if you have any questions.

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Ackerman, James@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=3CC35DE240CF4253AF9CC7D3D2CBB643-ACKERMAN, J]
Sent: 4/8/2025 8:08:28 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3c08929c117e4da5bfb45f48fa749c0a-Waterboards]
Subject: Applicant Response to DR-2, Dredge and Fill Items, Soda Mountain Solar Project

Christina: I reviewed the docket and the applicant's response to Data Request set 2, and there have not been any "dredge & fill' related documents posted since DRR2

I wanted to check if you are aware of the following documents referenced in DRR2 by the applicant that might be of assistance:

- TN 261597, Section 3.4 Biological Resources – Revision 1 (introduction of MM BIO-03 Construction Impact Minimization)
- TN 261589, Appendix D-3, Restoration and Revegetation Plan for Temporary Impact Areas
- TN 261604, Appendix E-1, Aquatic Resources Delineation
- TN 261606, Appendix E-3, Request for Jurisdictional Determination
- TN 261592, Appendix E-4, Waste Discharge Requirements
- TN 259697, Appendix W, BLM Record of Decision

Let me know if you have any further questions.

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Patrovsky, Joan E [jpatrovs@blm.gov]
Sent: 4/14/2025 11:30:43 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
CC: Donnell, Julie A [jdonnell@blm.gov]; Samples, Portia J [psamples@blm.gov]; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) [zkaufman@blm.gov]
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: brief meeting w/CEC Soda Mtn

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Hello Lisa,

The BLM understands the CEC wishes to consult with the BLM assigned biologist, Chris Otahal.
It would be best to submit an advance written summary of the questions and needs from your team for him to prepare responses. Mr. Otahal's schedule is extremely busy with priorities and spring surveys.
He is not open to have specific ongoing calls except briefly when needed during our future CEC-BLM coordination monthly meetings.

Our team is open to have a teams meeting on Wednesday May 7 3pm-4pm.
Tentatively, the first wednesday of the month may work from 3-4pm.
Kindly send a draft agenda of items for discussion.
However, routine monthly dedicated day/time meetings requires a firmer internal decision by management with our team. Calendars are ever changing and filling from projects ahead in our queue.

FYI.. we did receive an updated POD but staff have not reviewed it to determine IF our prior comments were adequately addressed and it meets needs towards our NEPA analysis.

One critical item pending is the Bighorn Sheep buffer requirement and how Soda Mountain Solar LLC will address it. The project cannot be built into the designated congressional Special Recreation Management Area- Rasor. This may lead to delay from a revised POD and layout schematics.

We are looking to have a call with the holder in the coming weeks and may share results from our discussions.

Thanks,
Joan Patrovsky, PMP
Project Manager
U.S. Department of the Interior - Region 8 and 10
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office

"What you do today can improve all your tomorrows."- Ralph Marston

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From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 11, 2025 3:47 PM
To: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: brief meeting w/CEC Soda Mtn

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi Joan,

We would like to consult with Chris Otahal. I know we will also want to meet with him. Also, I would like to get a 30 minute reoccurring meeting scheduled.
For this regular meeting, I think Kaycee Chang, my supervisor, and I only need to attend from the CEC.

As concerns come up, we can use one of the set meeting times to bring in appropriate staff, or if they are not available, set a specific meeting at a time that works.

Mondays are never a good day to meet due to other reoccurring meetings we have scheduled. I thought I could look at dates for the first week of May. Here are the days and times that Kaycee and I can meet:

Tuesday May 6 9-10:00, 11-12, 1-2
Wednesday May 7 9-10, 1-2, 3-4
Thursday May 8 9-10, 11-12, 1-4

Can you let me know if any of these work for you and any staff you would like to regularly meet.

Thanks,

Lisa

From: Patrovsky, Joan E
Sent: Sunday, March 30, 2025 7:32 PM
To: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>
Cc: Chris Huntley <chuntley@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>; Jamison Miner <jminer@aspeneg.com>; Donnell, Julie A <jdonnell@blm.gov>
Subject: brief meeting w/CEC Soda Mtn

When: Wednesday, April 2, 2025 3:00 PM-3:30 PM.
Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

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Hi Lisa,

Please let Joan know we would like to start coordination with Chris Otahal.

Thanks!

Ann

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov> on behalf of Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 9:55 AM
To: Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>; Chris Huntley <chuntley@aspeneg.com>; Jamison Miner <jminer@aspeneg.com>; Justin Wood <jwood@aspeneg.com>
Subject: FW: brief meeting w/CEC Soda Mtn
When: Wednesday, April 2, 2025 3:00 PM-3:30 PM.
Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Please attend if you can. I would like to bring up big horn sheep with BLM.

From: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>
Sent: Sunday, March 30, 2025 7:32:06 PM (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)
To: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Donnell, Julie A <jdonnell@blm.gov>
Subject: brief meeting w/CEC Soda Mtn
When: Wednesday, April 2, 2025 3:00 PM-3:30 PM.
Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Brief check in with California Energy Commission on Opt in for Soda Mtn Solar

---

Microsoft Teams Need help?

Join the meeting now

Meeting ID: 217 820 323 321

Passcode: jf7Xt2Q8

For organizers: Meeting options

From: Otahal, Christopher D [cotahal@blm.gov]
Sent: 5/8/2025 6:29:56 PM
To: Chris Huntley [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=018948a34a3149c4a3833144594ae8b3-ff2eee5c-df]
CC: Patrovsky, Joan E [jpatrovs@blm.gov]; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) [zkaufman@blm.gov]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Crisp, Ann@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b89c4de7ece742679d19e1e3ee713dc2-Crisp, Ann@]
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Biology Follow-up from 05-07-25 Call
Attachments: BRTR_030613.pdf

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Morning Chris -

As further follow-up to our call, you were interested in receiving biological information regarding the original Soda Mountain Project which includes surveys of the area north of Interstate 15. I have attached a Biological Technical Report for the original project which summarizes 11 technical reports which were conducted in 2009. I have copies of most of those 11 original reports, but have not included them here in the interest of not bogging us down with multiple reports. If you do need any of the original reports, let me know and I can try to track them down for you.

Thank You,
Chris

Chris Otahal
Wildlife Biologist
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Field Office
2601 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311
Office (760) 252-6033
Cell (760) 577-8778
BFO Website: https://www.blm.gov/barstow

From: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 8, 2025 7:51 AM
To: Otahal, Christopher D <cotahal@blm.gov>
Cc: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Lisa@Energy Worrall <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <ann.crisp@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Soda Mountain Biology Follow-up from 05-07-25 Call

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Chris,

Thank you for sharing this data, I know it will be helpful. I also look forward to working with you again. Great to catch up and spend some time in the field.

Best regards,

Chris

Chris Huntley
Executive Vice President
Biological Resources Director
www.aspeneg.com

5020 Chesebro Road, Suite 200
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
Cell: 818-292-2327

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From: Otahal, Christopher D <cotahal@blm.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 4:47 PM
To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Lisa@Energy Worrall <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain Biology Follow-up from 05-07-25 Call

This is the first email you've received from this external sender.
Do not click links or open attachments unless it is an email you expected to receive.

Hi Chris -

Wanted to follow-up on a couple of things from today's call.

You requested data regarding potential Golden Eagle in the vicinity of the Soda Mountain Project. Here is a data set that was created for the DRECP. It looks like there are no BLM records of Golden Eagle nests in the vicinity:

https://drecp.databasin.org/datasets/9e7e4a80961f468887322ddd8e840777/

> Golden Eagle Nest Occurrences, DRECP | DRECP Gateway
>
> Golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos) nest occurrences within 12 km of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan area.This dataset was created by merging the DRAFT_BRC_EagleNest_Data and Golden_Eagle_DFG layers, which were provided by the BLM. These data represent nest locations recorded by various California State agencies and their contractors during 2008, 2010, 2012 and potentially other ...
>
> drecp.databasin.org

Also, you wanted information regarding the timing of the installation of the overcrossing. The best contact for any updates on this project would be Carrie Woods at the Desert District Office: cwoods@blm.gov

Looking forward to working with you on this project!

Chris

Chris Otahal
Wildlife Biologist
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Field Office
2601 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311
Office (760) 252-6033
Cell (760) 577-8778
BFO Website: https://www.blm.gov/barstow

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=E4BBC7048B38485084BDB03FB494B25B-WORRALL, LI]
Sent: 5/16/2025 10:25:23 PM
To: Hannah Gbeh [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Subject: Soda Mountain Appendix N Public Notice Package - October 2024 - Revision 1 (TN 259694)

Hi Hannah,

Can we get this in a table, excel preferred. of the information in Appendix N Public Notice Package - October 2024 - Revision 1 (TN 259694)

That would be very helpful. Thanks.

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

From: Ackerman, James@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=3CC35DE240CF4253AF9CC7D3D2CBB643-ACKERMAN, J]
Sent: 4/4/2025 6:33:49 PM
To: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=fdbc9163bf404f4d84f0a53c6ed84ab0-Waterboards]; Guerra, Christina@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3c08929c117e4da5bfb45f48fa749c0a-Waterboards]
CC: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c1ff1d38281a4068b2708271d22c0d94-Abulaban, A]; Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6a535479ac2448c29afb308a1cd6fede-Waterboards]
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

Tiffany: 25 calendar days from the day (3/20/25) I asked my PM about the schedule would be 4/14/25.

Is that still correct Lisa?

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 4, 2025 10:31 AM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>; Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>; Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

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Hi James,

Apologies, can you clarify the schedule for me? I saw that you said 25 days, but from what date?

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road

Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

- 760-241-7305
- 760-241-6583 Front Desk

tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov
Home Page | Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (ca.gov)

***Please submit all 401 Certification/Dredge & Fill documentation to the Lahontan email box at lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov. If your Project has been assigned to a staff person please include their name ***

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 2:59 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>; Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>; Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

Hi James,

Here is that email with our request for information.

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road
Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

- 760-241-7305
- 760-241-6583 Front Desk

tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov
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From: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 5:02 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

I spoke with the PM and she informed me it is 25 days.

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 4:23 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

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Hi James,

Can you please provide us a timeline by which you need our response.

Thanks

Christina Guerra, P.G. 9475
Senior Engineering Geologist (Supervisor)

Land Disposal/401/Stormwater Unit
15095 Amargosa Road Bldg. 2, Ste 210
Victorville, CA 92394
Direct - (760) 241-7333, Cell - (760) 713-1380
christina.guerra@waterboards.ca.gov

Water Boards

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 4:01 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

Hi James,

Yes. Are you looking for the email that I first sent out requesting the application? If so, it is in the docket somewhere because I saw it there.

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road
Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

760-241-7305
760-241-6583 Front Desk
tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov
Home Page | Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (ca.gov)

***Please submit all 401 Certification/Dredge & Fill documentation to the Lahontan email box at lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov. If your Project has been assigned to a staff person please include their name ***

From: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 4:00 PM
To: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

Tiffany: For my information, is this the dredge and fill permit?

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 3:55 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>; Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi James,

Thanks for the list. This will help me find the items I need for the permit.

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road
Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

760-241-7305
760-241-6583 Front Desk
tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov
Home Page | Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (ca.gov)

***Please submit all 401 Certification/Dredge & Fill documentation to the Lahontan email box at lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov. If your Project has been assigned to a staff person please include their name ***

From: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 3:37 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

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Christina & Tiffany: It looks like we have received a majority of data responses to the CEC's determination of incompleteness (9-3-2024).

Here is a list of revised documents in our docket that I believe would be of interest to LRWQCB:

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- TN261597_Section 3.4 Biological Resources – February 2025 – Revision 1
- TN261601_Section 3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality – February 2025 – Revision 1
- TN261670_Appendix BB1 - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- TN261671_Appendix BB - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- TN261589_Appendix D3 – Restoration and Revegetation Plan for Temporary Impact Areas
- TN261604_Appendix E-1 Aquatic Resources Delineation
- TN261606_Appendix E-3 Request for Jurisdictional Determination
- TN261592_Appendix E-4 Waste Discharge Requirements

- TN261605_Appendix J Water Supply Report – February 2025 – Revision 1

Here is a link to the Soda Mountain Solar Project docket:
https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-03

Please review the available applicant response and revised documents and inform us of any omissions or deficiencies.

BTY: Could you provide the email or document with LRWQCB staff comments regarding the initial Soda Mountain application.

Some Items that have changed with the project:

- There will be no brine pond.
- The facility will be run remotely, so there will be no septic system or need for potable water supply.

Contact me if you have any questions.

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Patrovsky, Joan E [jpatrovs@blm.gov]
Sent: 3/31/2025 3:06:01 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Samples, Portia J [psamples@blm.gov]; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) [zkaufman@blm.gov]
CC: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Set up regular BLM/CEC meetings for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)
Attachments: Outlook-cid_image0

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Hi Lisa,
I sent you an invite for a 30 min meeting on April 2.
Talk soon.

Joan Patrovsky, PMP
Project Manager
U.S. Department of the Interior - Region 8 and 10
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office

"What you do today can improve all your tomorrows."- Ralph Marston

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From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2025 3:04 PM
To: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>
Cc: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Set up regular BLM/CEC meetings for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)

Hi Joan,

I apologize I have taken a while to get back to you. It has been so crazy here. We just hosted our first Staff Assessment public meeting to take comments on our environmental document for the Darden Clean Energy Project, the first of our Opt-In Certification projects to get this far.
If April 2nd, between 3pm and 4pm for 30 minutes is available, we can meet then. I would like to make this a monthly reoccurring meeting.

Let me know if any of these times work for you. My supervisor is out the week of April 7th and I would like her to be able to join us.

I can send out an invitation if these times work for you all.

Thanks,

Lisa

From: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>
Sent: Friday, March 14, 2025 12:14 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Set up regular BLM/CEC meetings for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)

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Hello Lisa,

The BLM is open to scheduling routine monthly coordination meetings with the California Energy Commision.
For these meetings is CEC expecting full team attendance or specific leads?

We may as needed have our lead biologist and archaeologist attend IF required, they are extremely busy with workloads. Advance agenda items are helpful when planning for these conversations.

Currently, the BLM is working with the holder to refine their Plan of Development and address facility layout changes. The applicable NEPA compliant document has not yet been confirmed. However, there is potential for an environmental assessment being selected based upon changes to the Rasor SRMA access road and the BESS additions.

Based upon calendars, April 2 or 9 are available after 1:00pm.
Kindly send invitations to the following team members:

BLM Soda Mtn. Solar Team
Portia Samples, Realty Specialist psamples@blm.gov
Zoey (Caroline) Kaufman, NEPA and Deputy PM zkaufman@blm.gov
Joan Patrovsky, Project Manager jpatrovs@blm.gov

Best,
Joan Patrovsky, PMP
Project Manager
U.S. Department of the Interior - Region 8 and 10
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office

"What you do today can improve all your tomorrows."- Ralph Marston

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From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 3:11 PM
To: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>
Cc: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Set up regular BLM/CEC meetings for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)

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Hi Joan,

I would like to set up regular meetings with BLM so we can coordinate our efforts. We can change the frequency as needed.

The applicant has filed their last batch of responses to our data requests and staff are reviewing them. I would like to know where things stand for the BLM.

I don't anticipate calling the project data complete for a few months yet.

We are really busy the rest of this month, but I am hoping we can meet in early April. For now, we can do monthly check ups. Mondays are not very good for us. Tuesdays through Thursdays are better.

Thanks,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Sent: 4/4/2025 5:36:54 PM
To: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=fdbc9163bf404f4d84f0a53c6ed84ab0-Waterboards]; Ackerman, James@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3cc35de240cf4253af9cc7d3d2cbb643-Ackerman, J]; Guerra, Christina@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3c08929c117e4da5bfb45f48fa749c0a-Waterboards]
CC: Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c1ff1d38281a4068b2708271d22c0d94-Abulaban, A]; Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6a535479ac2448c29afb308a1cd6fede-Waterboards]
Subject: Re: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

From March 20th. We would need your comments by April 14th.

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 4, 2025 10:31 AM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>; Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>; Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

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Hi James,

Apologies, can you clarify the schedule for me? I saw that you said 25 days, but from what date?

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road
Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

- 760-241-7305
- 760-241-6583 Front Desk

tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov
Home Page | Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (ca.gov)

***Please submit all 401 Certification/Dredge & Fill documentation to the Lahontan email box at lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov. If your Project has been assigned to a staff person please include their name ***

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 2:59 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>; Guerra, Christina@Waterboards

<Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>; Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

Hi James,

Here is that email with our request for information.

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road
Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

- 760-241-7305
- 760-241-6583 Front Desk

tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov
Home Page | Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (ca.gov)

***Please submit all 401 Certification/Dredge & Fill documentation to the Lahontan email box at lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov. If your Project has been assigned to a staff person please include their name ***

From: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 5:02 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

I spoke with the PM and she informed me it is 25 days.

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 4:23 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>

Cc: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

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Hi James,

Can you please provide us a timeline by which you need our response.

Thanks

Christina Guerra, P.G. 9475
Senior Engineering Geologist (Supervisor)

Land Disposal/401/Stormwater Unit
15095 Amargosa Road Bldg. 2, Ste 210
Victorville, CA 92394
Direct - (760) 241-7333, Cell - (760) 713-1380
christina.guerra@waterboards.ca.gov

CALIFORNIA
Water Boards

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 4:01 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

Hi James,

Yes. Are you looking for the email that I first sent out requesting the application? If so, it is in the docket somewhere because I saw it there.

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road
Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

- 760-241-7305
- 760-241-6583 Front Desk

tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov
Home Page | Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (ca.gov)

***Please submit all 401 Certification/Dredge & Fill documentation to the Lahontan email box at lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov. If your Project has been assigned to a staff person please include their name ***

From: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 4:00 PM
To: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

Tiffany: For my information, is this the dredge and fill permit?

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 3:55 PM
To: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>; Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

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Hi James,

Thanks for the list. This will help me find the items I need for the permit.

Tiffany Steinert
Engineering Geologist

15095 Amargosa Road
Building 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92394

- 760-241-7305
- 760-241-6583 Front Desk

tiffany.steinert@waterboards.ca.gov
Home Page | Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (ca.gov)

***Please submit all 401 Certification/Dredge & Fill documentation to the Lahontan email box at lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov. If your Project has been assigned to a staff person please include their name ***

From: Ackerman, James@Energy <james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 3:37 PM
To: Guerra, Christina@Waterboards <Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov>; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards <Tiffany.Steinert@Waterboards.ca.gov>
Cc: Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards <jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov>; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy <Abdel-Karim.Abulaban@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: ata Request Responses for the Soda Mountain Solar Project

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Christina & Tiffany: It looks like we have received a majority of data responses to the CEC's determination of incompleteness (9-3-2024).

Here is a list of revised documents in our docket that I believe would be of interest to LRWQCB:

- TN261668_ CEC Data Request Response Set #2
- TN261595_Chapter 2_Project Description – February 2025 – Revision 1-1
- TN261597_Section 3.4 Biological Resources – February 2025 – Revision 1
- TN261601_Section 3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality – February 2025 – Revision 1
- TN261670_Appendix BB1 - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- TN261671_Appendix BB - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- TN261589_Appendix D3 – Restoration and Revegetation Plan for Temporary Impact Areas
- TN261604_Appendix E-1 Aquatic Resources Delineation
- TN261606_Appendix E-3 Request for Jurisdictional Determination
- TN261592_Appendix E-4 Waste Discharge Requirements
- TN261605_Appendix J Water Supply Report – February 2025 – Revision 1

Here is a link to the Soda Mountain Solar Project docket:
https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-03

Please review the available applicant response and revised documents and inform us of any omissions or deficiencies.

BTY: Could you provide the email or document with LRWQCB staff comments regarding the initial Soda Mountain application.

Some Items that have changed with the project:

- There will be no brine pond.
- The facility will be run remotely, so there will be no septic system or need for potable water supply.

Contact me if you have any questions.

James Ackerman, PG #6493
Engineering Geologist
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
Direct: (530) 878-4966
Email: james.ackerman@energy.ca.gov

From: Crisp, Ann@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=B89C4DE7ECE742679D19E1E3EE713DC2-CRISP, ANN@]
Sent: 5/19/2025 4:21:45 PM
To: Otahal, Christopher D [cotahal@blm.gov]; Chris Huntley [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=018948a34a3149c4a3833144594ae8b3-ff2eee5c-df]
CC: Patrovsky, Joan E [jpatrovs@blm.gov]; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) [zkaufman@blm.gov]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Biology Follow-up from 05-07-25 Call

Hi Chris,

Thank you for all of this, we look forward to coordinating with BLM on this project. Would you be able to join our regularly scheduled CDFW meeting next week on 5/27 at 9 AM?

If not, we can come up with an alternate time to meet?

Thanks!

Ann

Ann Crisp
Biological Resources Unit Supervisor
Siting and Environmental Branch
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
916-352-0543

California Energy Commission
Website: www.energy.ca.gov

From: Otahal, Christopher D <cotahal@blm.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 8, 2025 11:29 AM
To: Chris Huntley <chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <Ann.Crisp@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Biology Follow-up from 05-07-25 Call

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Good Morning Chris -

As further follow-up to our call, you were interested in receiving biological information regarding the original Soda Mountain Project which includes surveys of the area north of Interstate 15. I have attached a Biological Technical Report for the original project which summarizes 11 technical reports which were conducted in 2009. I have copies of most of those 11 original reports, but have not included them here in the interest of not bogging us down with multiple reports. If you do need any of the original reports, let me know and I can try to track them down for you.

Thank You,
Chris

Chris Otahal
Wildlife Biologist
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Field Office
2601 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311
Office (760) 252-6033
Cell (760) 577-8778
BFO Website: https://www.blm.gov/barstow

From: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 8, 2025 7:51 AM
To: Otahal, Christopher D <cotahal@blm.gov>
Cc: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Lisa@Energy Worrall <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <ann.crisp@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Soda Mountain Biology Follow-up from 05-07-25 Call

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Chris,

Thank you for sharing this data, I know it will be helpful. I also look forward to working with you again. Great to catch up and spend some time in the field.

Best regards,

Chris

Aspen environmental group

Chris Huntley
Executive Vice President
Biological Resources Director
www.aspeneg.com

5020 Chesebro Road, Suite 200
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
Cell: 818-292-2327

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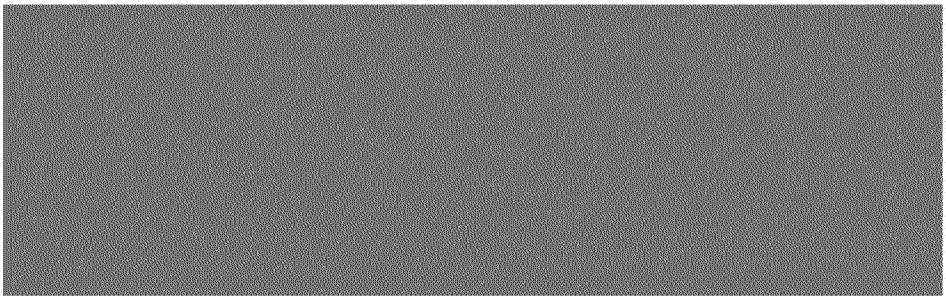
From: Otahal, Christopher D <cotahal@blm.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 4:47 PM
To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Lisa@Energy Worrall <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain Biology Follow-up from 05-07-25 Call



This is the first email you've received from this external sender.

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Hi Chris -

Wanted to follow-up on a couple of things from today's call.

You requested data regarding potential Golden Eagle in the vicinity of the Soda Mountain Project. Here is a data set that was created for the DRECP. It looks like there are no BLM records of Golden Eagle nests in the vicinity:

https://drecp.databasin.org/datasets/9e7e4a80961f468887322ddd8e840777/

Golden Eagle Nest Occurrences, DRECP | DRECP Gateway

Golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos) nest occurrences within 12 km of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan area.This dataset was created by merging the DRAFT_BRC_EagleNest_Data and Golden_Eagle_DFG layers, which were provided by the BLM. These data represent nest locations recorded by various California State agencies and their contractors during 2008, 2010, 2012 and potentially other ...

drecp.databasin.org

Also, you wanted information regarding the timing of the installation of the overcrossing. The best contact for any updates on this project would be Carrie Woods at the Desert District Office: cwoods@blm.gov

Looking forward to working with you on this project!

Chris

Chris Otahal
Wildlife Biologist
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Field Office
2601 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311
Office (760) 252-6033
Cell (760) 577-8778

BFO Website: https://www.blm.gov/barstow

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=E4BBC7048B38485084BDB03FB494B25B-WORRALL, LI]
Sent: 5/22/2025 10:49:00 PM
To: Hannah Gbeh [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
CC: Kerr, Steven@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=d0d5a66bed2249fca830918f58b3b921-Kerr, Steve]
Subject: Soda Mountain- request for high resolution images for TN 261602

Hi Hannah,

Can you send me the full resolution images for all the KOPs existing views and simulations that are in TN 261602?

Let me know if you need me to send a kiteworks request.

Thanks,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=E4BBC7048B38485084BDB03FB494B25B-WORRALL, LI]
Sent: 5/20/2025 5:16:24 PM
To: Neal Desai [ndesai@npca.org]; Crisp, Ann@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b89c4de7ece742679d19e1e3ee713dc2-Crisp, Ann@]; Chris Huntley [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=018948a34a3149c4a3833144594ae8b3-ff2eee5c-df]; Jamison Miner [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e9a371186e0e402a994145a67d6e7684-546eb26e-f8]; Justin Wood [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=86ee559cfc814439b69a025b0961d2a2-536cef40-79]
CC: Luke Basulto [lbasulto@npca.org]
Subject: Re: Request to talk re: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in

Great timing Neal. We have been wanting to meet with you on Soda Mountain, especially our biological resources staff.

Over the next two weeks, Ann Crisp, Biological Resources Unit Supervisor and I can meet:

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2025 10:15 AM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Luke Basulto <lbasulto@npca.org>
Subject: Request to talk re: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in

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Hi Lisa,
Hope you're doing well. Writing to request a virtual meeting to discuss Soda Mountain Solar, including the current status of it. Could you please let us know if you have availability over the next week or two, and if you want to suggest any date/time options? I can coordinate schedules on my end with my colleague Luke (cc'd and who is our desert program manager based in Joshua Tree) to confirm something.
Thank you,
Neal

==========

Neal Desai
Senior Director, Pacific Region | National Parks Conservation Association
Mobile: 510.368.0845 |ndesai@npca.org

From: Neal Desai
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 12:15 PM
To: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

Hi Lisa,
Do you happen to know the status of application? Also, for this type of opt-in process, is commenting publicly during the noticed comment periods the only way for organizations/individuals to participate in this process, or are there other levels of engagement like requesting to be a "party" in the proceeding etc.?

Thank you,
Neal

From: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2024 4:00 PM
To: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Cc: Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

Hi Neal –

The applicant told us this week of their intention to file supplemental application materials in mid-October in response to the CEC's incompleteness determination here https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=258896&DocumentContentId=94970. The CEC has 30 days to review the supplemental information so I would agree, a determination of completeness would be issued no earlier than mid-November. This webpage here has the general timeframes for the Opt-in process Opt-in Certification Program

I've copied CEC's project manager for the Soda Mountain Solar Project, Lisa Worrall.

Regards,
Eric

Eric Knight
Manager
Siting & Environmental Branch
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
(916) 591-9931

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2024 12:40 PM
To: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

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Hi Eric,
The project proponent informed us last month that they don't expect the CEC to determine the application as being complete until November 2024 at the earliest. Is that the current timeframe from CEC's perspective?
Thank you,
Neal

From: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2024 3:37 PM

To: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Cc: Luke Basulto <lbasulto@npca.org>; Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>
Subject: FW: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

Hi Neal,

That is correct, the applicant intends on filing an opt-in application with the CEC by July 22nd. Those signed up for the CEC subscription "Siting Division General List" California Natural Resources Agency (govdelivery.com) – see 4th subscription under Power Plant Licensing Projects – will receive an email alert that the docket has been opened for this proceeding. That alert will recommend signing up for the Soda Mountain Solar subscription to continue to receive email alerts about the project. That subscription will appear in the list under "Project Under Review Topics".

Similar to the other 4 projects filed under the Opt-in program Power Plant Listing (ca.gov), Soda Mountain Solar will have its own webpage on the CEC's website where you can access its docket log, sign up for the subscription, access the e-comment and e-filing feature, etc. The docket is where the applicant will upload their application materials. Once CEC has confirmed that we've received all files associated with their application, we'll initiate our 30-day completeness review – there will be an announcement of that in the docket.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Eric

Eric Knight
Manager
Siting & Environmental Branch
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
(916) 591-9931

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2024 8:36 AM
To: Energy - STEP Siting <STEPsiting@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Luke Basulto <lbasulto@npca.org>
Subject: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Eric,
Writing to check-in on a project called Soda Mountain Solar that we heard has abandoned its review process under CDFW and is seeking approval via CEC, I believe through the opt-in process under AB 205. Is this correct and if yes, could you share with us where things are at (eg pre application stage?, application submitted?, etc). If any materials have been submitted by the applicant, would you be able to please share them with us?
Thank you,
Neal

==========

Neal Desai
Senior Program Director, Pacific Region | National Parks Conservation Association
Mobile: 510.368.0845 |ndesai@npca.org
(Pronouns: he/him/his)

Preserving Our Past. Protecting Our Future.
Speak up for national parks. Join us at npca.org

From: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Sent: 5/27/2025 6:42:45 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Subject: Appendix N Public Notice Package - October 2024 - Revision 1 (TN 259694) in excel.
Attachments: TN259694_20241025T153401_Appendix N Public Notice Package.xlsx

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Hi Lisa,

Attached is Appendix N Public Notice Package - October 2024 - Revision 1 (TN 259694) in excel.

If you need anything else, please let me know!

Thanks,
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Chris Huntley [Chuntley@aspeneg.com]
Sent: 5/27/2025 5:53:42 PM
To: Otahal, Christopher D [cotahal@blm.gov]
CC: Patrovsky, Joan E [jpatrovs@blm.gov]; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) [zkaufman@blm.gov]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Crisp, Ann@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b89c4de7ece742679d19e1e3ee713dc2-Crisp, Ann@]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Biology Follow-up from 05-27-25 Call
Attachments: Outlook-Aspen Logo

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Chris,

Many thanks for sharing this data.

Best regards,

Chris

Aspen environmental group

Chris Huntley
Executive Vice President
Biological Resources Director
www.aspeneg.com

5020 Chesebro Road, Suite 200
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
Cell: 818-292-2327

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From: Otahal, Christopher D <cotahal@blm.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 27, 2025 10:52 AM
To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Cc: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Lisa@Energy Worrall <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <ann.crisp@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain Biology Follow-up from 05-27-25 Call

Good Morning Chris -

During this mornings call, we had some discussions regarding potential new access roads roads being proposed by the Soda Mountain Applicant.

There needs to be a distinction made between "existing routes" and "designated open routes". The following link is to a map which shows the designated open routes in the Soda Mountain area: https://www.blm.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2023-02/WEMO_Afton_Canyon_and_North_Mojave_Trails_508.pdf

For access, the Applicant should use designated open routes (the green routes on the map) to the greatest extent possible. There are many "existing routes" in the area that do not show up on this map - these are unauthorized

routes which develop over time. All of these "existing" but unauthorized routes are subject to being restored, and therefore should not be utilized as access routes.

Let me know if you would like to discuss further.

Thank You,
Chris

Chris Otahal
Wildlife Biologist
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Field Office
2601 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311
Office (760) 252-6033
Cell (760) 577-8778
BFO Website: https://www.blm.gov/barstow

From: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 8, 2025 7:51 AM
To: Otahal, Christopher D <cotahal@blm.gov>
Cc: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Lisa@Energy Worrall <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Crisp, Ann@Energy <ann.crisp@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Soda Mountain Biology Follow-up from 05-07-25 Call

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Chris,

Thank you for sharing this data, I know it will be helpful. I also look forward to working with you again. Great to catch up and spend some time in the field.

Best regards,

Chris

Aspen environmental group

Chris Huntley
Executive Vice President
Biological Resources Director
www.aspeneg.com

5020 Chesebro Road, Suite 200
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
Cell: 818-292-2327

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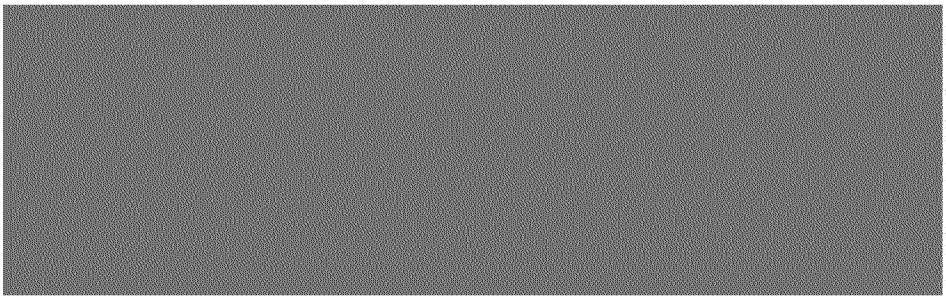
From: Otahal, Christopher D <cotahal@blm.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 4:47 PM
To: Chris Huntley <Chuntley@aspeneg.com>

Cc: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Lisa@Energy Worrall <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain Biology Follow-up from 05-07-25 Call



This is the first email you've received from this external sender.

Do not click links or open attachments unless it is an email you expected to receive.

Hi Chris -

Wanted to follow-up on a couple of things from today's call.

You requested data regarding potential Golden Eagle in the vicinity of the Soda Mountain Project. Here is a data set that was created for the DRECP. It looks like there are no BLM records of Golden Eagle nests in the vicinity:

https://drecp.databasin.org/datasets/9e7e4a80961f468887322ddd8e840777/

Golden Eagle Nest Occurrences, DRECP | DRECP Gateway

Golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos) nest occurrences within 12 km of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan area.This dataset was created by merging the DRAFT_BRC_EagleNest_Data and Golden_Eagle_DFG layers, which were provided by the BLM. These data represent nest locations recorded by various California State agencies and their contractors during 2008, 2010, 2012 and potentially other ...

drecp.databasin.org

Also, you wanted information regarding the timing of the installation of the overcrossing. The best contact for any updates on this project would be Carrie Woods at the Desert District Office: cwoods@blm.gov

Looking forward to working with you on this project!

Chris

Chris Otahal
Wildlife Biologist
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Field Office
2601 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311
Office (760) 252-6033
Cell (760) 577-8778
BFO Website: https://www.blm.gov/barstow

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Sent: 5/27/2025 11:06:28 PM
To: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
CC: Kerr, Steven@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=d0d5a66bed2249fca830918f58b3b921-Kerr, Steve]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain- request for high resolution images for TN 261602

Thanks Hannah. I was able to download them.

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 27, 2025 11:40 AM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Kerr, Steven@Energy <Steven.Kerr@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain- request for high resolution images for TN 261602

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Hi Lisa,

I have sent a link with the high-resolution photos. If you have any issues accessing it, please let me know.

I hope you both had a nice holiday weekend!

-Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2025 3:49 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: Kerr, Steven@Energy <Steven.Kerr@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain- request for high resolution images for TN 261602

Hi Hannah,

Can you send me the full resolution images for all the KOPs existing views and simulations that are in TN 261602?

Let me know if you need me to send a kiteworks request.

Thanks,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner

California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

From: Neal Desai [ndesai@npca.org]
Sent: 6/12/2025 1:40:55 AM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
CC: Luke Basulto [lbasulto@npca.org]
Subject: Re: Request to talk re: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in

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Hi Lisa,
If you're back, could we please find time Fri or Mon for a few mins? On Friday, I'm free after 9:30am. Anything work for you? Thank you,
Neal

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Monday, June 2, 2025 8:58 AM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Luke Basulto <lbasulto@npca.org>
Subject: Re: Request to talk re: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in

Hi Lisa,
Writing to bump this meeting request up. Please let us know if you have availability this week to meet. Thank you,
Neal

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2025 10:15 AM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Luke Basulto <lbasulto@npca.org>
Subject: Request to talk re: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in

Hi Lisa,
Hope you're doing well. Writing to request a virtual meeting to discuss Soda Mountain Solar, including the current status of it. Could you please let us know if you have availability over the next week or two, and if you want to suggest any date/time options? I can coordinate schedules on my end with my colleague Luke (cc'd and who is our desert program manager based in Joshua Tree) to confirm something.
Thank you,
Neal

==========

Neal Desai
Senior Director, Pacific Region | National Parks Conservation Association
Mobile: 510.368.0845 |ndesai@npca.org

From: Neal Desai
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 12:15 PM
To: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

Hi Lisa,
Do you happen to know the status of application? Also, for this type of opt-in process, is commenting publicly during the noticed comment periods the only way for organizations/individuals to participate in this process, or are there other levels of engagement like requesting to be a "party" in the proceeding etc.?
Thank you,
Neal

From: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2024 4:00 PM
To: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Cc: Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

Hi Neal –

The applicant told us this week of their intention to file supplemental application materials in mid-October in response to the CEC's incompleteness determination here https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=258896&DocumentContentId=94970. The CEC has 30 days to review the supplemental information so I would agree, a determination of completeness would be issued no earlier than mid-November. This webpage here has the general timeframes for the Opt-in process Opt-in Certification Program

I've copied CEC's project manager for the Soda Mountain Solar Project, Lisa Worrall.

Regards,
Eric

Eric Knight
Manager
Siting & Environmental Branch
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
(916) 591-9931

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2024 12:40 PM
To: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

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Hi Eric,
The project proponent informed us last month that they don't expect the CEC to determine the application as being complete until November 2024 at the earliest. Is that the current timeframe from CEC's perspective?
Thank you,

Neal

From: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2024 3:37 PM
To: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Cc: Luke Basulto <lbasulto@npca.org>; Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>
Subject: FW: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

Hi Neal,

That is correct, the applicant intends on filing an opt-in application with the CEC by July 22nd. Those signed up for the CEC subscription "Siting Division General List" California Natural Resources Agency (govdelivery.com) – see 4th subscription under Power Plant Licensing Projects – will receive an email alert that the docket has been opened for this proceeding. That alert will recommend signing up for the Soda Mountain Solar subscription to continue to receive email alerts about the project. That subscription will appear in the list under "Project Under Review Topics".

Similar to the other 4 projects filed under the Opt-in program Power Plant Listing (ca.gov), Soda Mountain Solar will have its own webpage on the CEC's website where you can access its docket log, sign up for the subscription, access the e-comment and e-filing feature, etc. The docket is where the applicant will upload their application materials. Once CEC has confirmed that we've received all files associated with their application, we'll initiate our 30-day completeness review – there will be an announcement of that in the docket.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Eric

Eric Knight
Manager
Siting & Environmental Branch
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
(916) 591-9931

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2024 8:36 AM
To: Energy - STEP Siting <STEPsiting@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Luke Basulto <lbasulto@npca.org>
Subject: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

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Hi Eric,
Writing to check-in on a project called Soda Mountain Solar that we heard has abandoned its review process under CDFW and is seeking approval via CEC, I believe through the opt-in process under AB 205. Is this correct and if yes, could you share with us where things are at (eg pre application stage?,

application submitted?, etc). If any materials have been submitted by the applicant, would you be able to please share them with us?
Thank you,
Neal
==========

Neal Desai
Senior Program Director, Pacific Region | National Parks Conservation Association
Mobile: 510.368.0845 |ndesai@npca.org
(Pronouns: he/him/his)

Preserving Our Past. Protecting Our Future.
Speak up for national parks. Join us at npca.org

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=DD3D2FC8670840BDA4ACDC455903E787-CHANG, KAYC]
Sent: 6/13/2025 4:49:37 PM
To: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
CC: Evelyn Langsdale [elangsdale@rinconconsultants.com]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain PM check in

Hello Hannah, hope you had a nice week. I wanted to circle back on the timeline. We got division approval of the package and are now moving on to the next level of approval and briefing. We are targeting June 18 to file the package to the docket.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Book time to meet with me

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 3:22 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Evelyn Langsdale <elangsdale@rinconconsultants.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain PM check in

Hi Hannah,

Great, appreciate the flexibility. We are working on getting approvals on the package - so timeline within 1-1.5 weeks may be more accurate.

Thank you,
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Book time to meet with me

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 1:13 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Evelyn Langsdale <elangsdale@rinconconsultants.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain PM check in

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Hi Kaycee,

No problem, thank you for letting me know. We can just skip this meeting and pick them back up on the 17th. Do you happen to know when we will be issued the next Data Request letter? My understanding was that Soda Mt. should be receiving this letter sometime this week. Is that timeline still accurate?

Thank you!
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 1:07 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: Evelyn Langsdale <elangsdale@rinconconsultants.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain PM check in

Hi Hannah and Evelyn,

I just realized we have this meeting on the calendar but Lisa is out, returning June 10. I have a conflict, and can meet on Friday instead if you'd like, but I am thinking the meeting would be most productive on or after June 12. If you are ok with the latter, we can kindly ask Lisa to schedule that when she is back in the office.

Thank you,
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Book time to meet with me

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2025 2:31 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Evelyn Langsdale <elangsdale@rinconconsultants.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain PM check in
When: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 2:00 PM-2:30 PM.
Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Microsoft Teams Need help?

Join the meeting now

Meeting ID: 258 157 365 578

Passcode: vN6Mg9qK

Dial in by phone

+1 916-562-1816,,244247857# United States, Sacramento

Find a local number

Phone conference ID: 244 247 857#

For organizers: Meeting options | Reset dial-in PIN

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=E4BBC7048B38485084BDB03FB494B25B-WORRALL, LI]
Sent: 6/19/2025 5:05:17 PM
To: Hannah Gbeh [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
CC: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]; Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]
Subject: Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) Second Incompleteness Letter

Hi Hannah,

In reviewing the Data Requests again, I see under Worker Safety, the "preamble" to REV 1 DR WS-1 includes asks for site plans to include the following:

"Provide a detailed project site plan of the BESS facility including setback distances, road width dimensions, location of hydrants and water tanks, and any other structures/equipment relevant to fire protection and suppression."

"Provide how the locations of hydrants and permanent water tanks integrate with the fire protection measures outlined in the O&M Fire Protection and Prevention Plans. Provide more details on the dry pipe fire suppression system for fire cessation via displacement of oxygen with an inert gas and its effectiveness during a thermal runaway event. Clarify if deflagration panels would be provided or if other explosion prevention features are incorporated into the overall container design as a backup to the ventilation system."

Please treat these as requests for information and you may want to provide this information as you respond to REV 1 DR WS-1.

When you and your staff have had a chance to review the data requests, let me know if you would like clarification or a discussion with our technical staff. I would like to get any meetings set up.

Thanks,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

From: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) [zkaufman@blm.gov]
Sent: 6/20/2025 7:11:17 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Patrovsky, Joan E [jpatrovs@blm.gov]
CC: Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]; Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Soda Mountain- need to talk
Attachments: Outlook-cid_image0; Outlook-cid_image0

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Lisa,

Thank you for reaching out and my apologies for the delayed response. Can we meet from 9:30-10 on Tuesday, the 24th? I will send out an invite and you can let me know if that time is no longer available for anybody on your end.

Thanks!

Caroline Kaufman
Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office
Work Cell: 509-999-7404
zkaufman@blm.gov

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 10:52 AM
To: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>
Cc: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Soda Mountain- need to talk

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi Joan and Caroline,

We have the following availability for a quick (30 minute) call:
Thursday June 19th 10:30 to 11
Tuesday June 24th 9:30 to 10, 11:30 to 12, 2:30 to 3, 4 to 4:30
Wednesday June 25th 9 to 10, 1-2:30, 4 to 4:30
Thursday June 26th 9 to 9:30, 2 to 2:30, 3 to 4:30

Let me know if any of these dates and times can work with you.

Thanks,

Lisa

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 5:10 PM
To: Joan Patrovsky, PMP <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>
Cc: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain- need to talk

Hi Joan and Caroline,

We need to talk with you about Soda Mountain and application timing. I will gather some dates and times of availability and follow up with you. I wanted to get this request out in the meanwhile.

We need to meet sooner rather than later.

Thanks so very much,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
ENERGY COMMISSION

From: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Sent: 6/16/2025 3:06:50 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
CC: Evelyn Langsdale [elangsdale@rinconconsultants.com]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain PM check in

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Great, thank you very much Kaycee!

-Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, June 13, 2025 9:49 AM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Evelyn Langsdale <elangsdale@rinconconsultants.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain PM check in

Hello Hannah, hope you had a nice week. I wanted to circle back on the timeline. We got division approval of the package and are now moving on to the next level of approval and briefing. We are targeting June 18 to file the package to the docket.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Book time to meet with me

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 3:22 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Evelyn Langsdale <elangsdale@rinconconsultants.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain PM check in

Hi Hannah,

Great, appreciate the flexibility. We are working on getting approvals on the package - so timeline within 1-1.5 weeks may be more accurate.

Thank you,
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Book time to meet with me

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 1:13 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Evelyn Langsdale <elangsdale@rinconconsultants.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain PM check in

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Kaycee,

No problem, thank you for letting me know. We can just skip this meeting and pick them back up on the 17th. Do you happen to know when we will be issued the next Data Request letter? My understanding was that Soda Mt. should be receiving this letter sometime this week. Is that timeline still accurate?

Thank you!
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 1:07 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: Evelyn Langsdale <elangsdale@rinconconsultants.com>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain PM check in

Hi Hannah and Evelyn,

I just realized we have this meeting on the calendar but Lisa is out, returning June 10. I have a conflict, and can meet on Friday instead if you'd like, but I am thinking the meeting would be most productive on or after June 12. If you are ok with the latter, we can kindly ask Lisa to schedule that when she is back in the office.

Thank you,
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division

Book time to meet with me

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2025 2:31 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Evelyn Langsdale <elangsdale@rinconconsultants.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain PM check in
When: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 2:00 PM-2:30 PM.
Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Microsoft Teams Need help?

Join the meeting now

Meeting ID: 258 157 365 578

Passcode: vN6Mg9qK

Dial in by phone

+1 916-562-1816,,244247857# United States, Sacramento

Find a local number

Phone conference ID: 244 247 857#

For organizers: Meeting options | Reset dial-in PIN

From: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) [zkaufman@blm.gov]
Sent: 6/24/2025 5:45:41 PM
To: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]; Dustin Thaler [dut@vcrenewables.com]; Thomas Zale [tzale@zglobal.biz]; tzale@prodigy.net
CC: Samples, Portia J [psamples@blm.gov]; Patrovsky, Joan E [jpatrovs@blm.gov]; Cordes, Isabeau J [icordes@blm.gov]; Ziad Alaywan [ziad@zglobal.biz]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated POD March 2024
Attachments: Scope of Work for BLM Contractor for Soda Mountain Solar 2025.docx

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi All,

I am still tracking that we are awaiting a final update to the POD before we go over the project schedule and issue the request for proposals in response to our statement of work (SOW). I have attached the SOW for your review in the meantime, so that when the POD is ready, we can quickly move forward with that.

Additionally, could you please create a short summary of updates (just a few paragraphs maximum) when you send the POD over? The CEC has requested this, and I believe it will be helpful for the BLM as well.

Thank you!

Caroline Kaufman
Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office
Work Cell: 509-999-7404
zkaufman@blm.gov

From: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 3:11 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Thomas Zale <tzale@zglobal.biz>; tzale@prodigy.net <tzale@prodigy.net>
Cc: Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>; Ziad Alaywan <ziad@zglobal.biz>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated POD March 2024

Thank you, Hannah!

Upcoming Out of Office 4/29-5/6

Caroline Kaufman
Project Manager

Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office
Work Cell: 509-999-7404
zkaufman@blm.gov

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 3:09 PM
To: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Thomas Zale <tzale@zglobal.biz>; tzale@prodigy.net <tzale@prodigy.net>
Cc: Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>; Ziad Alaywan <ziad@zglobal.biz>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated POD March 2024

Hi Caroline,

I just resent the links, if you have any additional issues please let me know.

Thanks!
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 2:42 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Thomas Zale <tzale@zglobal.biz>; tzale@prodigy.net <tzale@prodigy.net>
Cc: Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>; Ziad Alaywan <ziad@zglobal.biz>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated POD March 2024

Hi Hannah,

We are having some access issues with the POD right now.

Can you send it out to us again?

Upcoming Out of Office 4/29-5/6

Caroline Kaufman
Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office
Work Cell: 509-999-7404
zkaufman@blm.gov

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 17, 2025 12:41 PM
To: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Thomas Zale <tzale@zglobal.biz>; tzale@prodigy.net <tzale@prodigy.net>
Cc: Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>; Ziad Alaywan <ziad@zglobal.biz>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated POD March 2024

Hi Caroline,

Thank you for your email. Thursday 4/24 from 1-2pm would be great.

Thank you!
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>
Sent: Thursday, April 17, 2025 12:08 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Thomas Zale <tzale@zglobal.biz>; tzale@prodigy.net <tzale@prodigy.net>
Cc: Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>; Ziad Alaywan <ziad@zglobal.biz>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated POD March 2024

Hi All,

We have taken a look at the updated POD and would like to schedule a meeting with you all **next Thursday (4/24) from 1-2pm.** Does that time work for you?

Please let us know.

Thank you!

Caroline Kaufman
Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office
Work Cell: 509-999-7404
zkaufman@blm.gov

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2025 8:24 AM

To: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Thomas Zale <tzale@zglobal.biz>
Cc: Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>; Ziad Alaywan <ziad@zglobal.biz>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated POD March 2024

Thank you Caroline! I made sure to also update the POD to be consistent with any project changes requested by the CEC during their concurrent project review. If you have any additional questions on any of the project updates, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Best,
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2025 3:31 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Thomas Zale <tzale@zglobal.biz>
Cc: Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>; Ziad Alaywan <ziad@zglobal.biz>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated POD March 2024

Hannah,

I just wanted to confirm that I have received this. We will review the updates and aim to let you know sometime next week if they are sufficient. After we have determined that the POD meets our current information needs we will need to schedule a meeting with you all to discuss the path forward.

Thanks!

Caroline Kaufman
Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office
Work Cell: 509-999-7404
zkaufman@blm.gov

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2025 4:34 PM
To: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Thomas Zale <tzale@zglobal.biz>
Cc: Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Cordes, Isabeau J

<icordes@blm.gov>; Ziad Alaywan <ziad@zglobal.biz>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated POD March 2024

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Hi Caroline,

Thank you for your assistance with the Soda Mt. Solar Project. We have reviewed and addressed all BLM comments and I have shared a link with the documents via a separate email. If you have any issue accessing these files, please let me know. Below is a list of our resubmittal deliverables.

Soda Mt. Solar BLM March 2025 POD Resubmittal

1. Response to BLM comments (excel file)
2. Revised POD (clean pdf and redline word)
3. Revised Appendix 1. Summary of Changes (clean pdf)
4. Revised Appendix 3. Restoration and Revegetation Plan (clean pdf and redline word)
5. Revised Appendix 5 Worker Safety Plan (clean pdf)
6. Revised Appendix 11. Traffic Control Plan (clean pdf and redline word)

If you have any questions or would like to set up a meeting to discuss, please let me know.

Best,

Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>
Sent: Friday, March 14, 2025 11:17 AM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Thomas Zale <tzale@zglobal.biz>
Cc: Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated SF-299 and POD - 12/20/24

Hi Hannah,

When can we anticipate these comments to be addressed? We appreciate you all's work on this as well.

Have a great weekend!

Caroline Kaufman
Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office
Work Cell: 509-999-7404
zkaufman@blm.gov

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 5, 2025 5:04 PM
To: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Thomas Zale <tzale@zglobal.biz>
Cc: Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated SF-299 and POD - 12/20/24

Thank you all! We will review and reach out with any questions. We appreciate your efforts related to this project.

Best,
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 5, 2025 3:00 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Thomas Zale <tzale@zglobal.biz>
Cc: Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated SF-299 and POD - 12/20/24

Hi All,

We met today with the Barstow IDT to discuss Soda Mountain. Attached you will find our comments on the POD and its attachments.

There are some major questions/comments on the POD that may impact level of analysis. Please work to address and incorporate these.

Let us know if there are any questions.

Thank you!

Caroline Kaufman
Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office
Work Cell: 509-999-7404
zkaufman@blm.gov

From: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 4:59 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>; Thomas Zale <tzale@zglobal.biz>; Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated SF-299 and POD - 12/20/24

Hi Hannah,

Joan and I met today to go over everything. We are scheduled to discuss this project during the Barstow IDT meeting next Wednesday (3/5). During that meeting, we will cover the POD, our NEPA path forward, and assess the need for a site visit. If you don't hear from us after that meeting, please feel free to reach out.

It's likely that we will need to schedule a meeting with you and the larger group after Wednesday.

Thanks!

Caroline Kaufman
Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office
Work Cell: 509-999-7404
zkaufman@blm.gov

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 9:04 AM
To: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>; Thomas Zale <tzale@zglobal.biz>; Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated SF-299 and POD - 12/20/24

Hi Caroline,

I hope you are doing well. I wanted to check in and see if there are any updates regarding your review of the Soda Mt. Solar POD and an associated site visit? Do you happen to have any dates you anticipate wanting to perform a site visit or when we might receive comments back on the POD?

Thank you!
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 10:05 AM
To: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>; Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated SF-299 and POD - 12/20/24

Hi Hannah,

I apologize for not getting back to you sooner. We are currently in the midst of a 30-day internal review of the updated POD and its attachments. After this review period, we will hold an internal meeting to discuss the level of analysis, which is scheduled for after our Realty specialists return from lands school on February 17th.

Thank you for your understanding!

Caroline Kaufman
Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office
Work Cell: 509-999-7404
zkaufman@blm.gov

From: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 9:35 AM
To: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>; Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated SF-299 and POD - 12/20/24

Hi Zoe,

Thank you for your response! If you require any additional information to move your review forward, please let me know. Also, I spoke to the CEC yesterday and they do not need to complete another site visit. So, unless your team would like to complete a site visit with our team, we can remove that request moving forward.

Thank you!
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 11:47 AM
To: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>; Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated SF-299 and POD - 12/20/24

Hi Hannah,

I was able to access the SharePoint with all of the December submissions, and I haven't heard from anyone indicating they couldn't access it, so that's great news!

Regarding the next steps, I want to let you know that both of our realty specialists assigned to this project are at lands school until mid-February, so scheduling something before then might be challenging.

I will continue to look into this and provide you with more information early next week.

Thank you and have a great weekend!

Caroline Kaufman
Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office
Work Cell: 509-999-7404
zkaufman@blm.gov

From: Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 11:00 AM
To: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>; Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Cordes, Isabeau J <icordes@blm.gov>; Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated SF-299 and POD - 12/20/24

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hello Ms. Patrovsky,

Happy New Year! I wanted to check in and confirm your team was able to receive the documents below, transmitted on December 20th, 2024. If you require any of these files to be submitted in hard copy form, please let me know. Our team is eager to set up a pre-application meeting and a site visit, so please let us know when you are able to determine what dates work best for your team. We look forward to working with you and your team this year to move this project forward.

Thank you,
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>
Sent: Friday, December 20, 2024 2:05 PM
To: Patrovsky, Joan E <jpatrovs@blm.gov>
Cc: Samples, Portia J <psamples@blm.gov>; icordes@blm.gov <icordes@blm.gov>; Donnell, Julie A <jdonnell@blm.gov>; Kaufman, Zoe (Caroline) <zkaufman@blm.gov>; Hannah Gbeh <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>; Thomas Zale <tzale@zglobal.biz>; Mia Fares <onf@vcrenewables.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain Solar, LLC updated SF-299 and POD - 12/20/24

Dear Ms. Patrovsky:

Thank you for your continued coordination on the Soda Mountain Solar Project. Our team has reviewed all BLM comments and has updated our SF-299 and Plan of Development accordingly. Below is an inventory of files we transmitted to your team in a separate email due to file size. Table 1 identifies where major additions/revisions have been made to address specific BLM comments. If you require any of these documents in hardcopy form, please let us know.

In a prior email, we also provided your team with the complete solar facility and ancillary GIS for the entire project. We'd also like to inform you that we are actively coordinating with Caltrans and Brightline West regarding the required encroachment permits and the proposed rail project along the I-15.

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out. We look forward to your review of this POD and scheduling a site visit in January 2025.

Thank you and Happy Holidays to all.

December 2024 Soda Mountain Solar POD Submittal Contents

- Updated SF 299
- December 2024 Plan of Development, including the following Appendices:

1. 2024 POD Summary of Changes
2. Legal Description
3. Revegetation Plan
4. Engineering and Generation Facility Description, Design and Operation *(3 separate files)*

5. Worker Safety Plan
6. Wildfire Analysis
7. Visual Simulations

8. Waste Management Plan
9. Dust Control Plan
10. Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
11. Traffic Control Management Plan
12. Decommissioning and Reclamation Plan
13. BIO-MM-28 Construction Technology

Table 1. Summary of POD Updates	
BLM Request	**December 2024 POD**
A summary of the currently proposed Action under the 2024 POD Amendment	Section 2.0
Detailed comparison of the 2024 proposal when compared to the currently approved project	Appendix 1
A full description of what VCR intends to build, operate and maintain	Section 3
Project Objectives for the 2024 Amendment	Section 2.1 and Section 2.2
Clarification regarding project surface disturbance	Section 4.0
Detailed information on the proposed Battery Storage Energy Facility	Section 2.4.1
Clarification on powering the O&M Building	Section 3.7
Updated Legal Land Description	Appendix 2
Traffic Control Plan	Appendix 11
Comprehensive Fire Plan	Appendix 5 and 6
Visual Simulations	Appendix 7
Streamlined Project History Section	Section 1.3
Details on the proposed solar arrays energy generation capacity, allowing for a reduced solar array footprint while concurrently providing an increase in MW generation	Section 2.4.6 and Appendix 4

Dustin Thaler

VC Renewables
110 Edison Place, Suite 312
Newark, NJ 07102
M: 201-275-4862
E: dut@vcrenewables.com

IMPORTANT: This email (including all attachments) is confidential and may be privileged. It may be read, copied and used only by the intended recipients, and must not be re-transmitted in any form without our consent. If you have received it in error, please contact us immediately by return email. Please then delete it and do not disclose its contents to any other person.

Security and reliability of email is not guaranteed, Communications should be verified from a mailed or faxed copy. All emails to anyone @vcrenewables.com are communications to the firm and are not private or confidential to any named individual.

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=E4BBC7048B38485084BDB03FB494B25B-WORRALL, LI]
Sent: 7/2/2025 5:51:51 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Crisp, Ann@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b89c4de7ece742679d19e1e3ee713dc2-Crisp, Ann@]; Chris Huntley [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=018948a34a3149c4a3833144594ae8b3-ff2eee5c-df]; Jamison Miner [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e9a371186e0e402a994145a67d6e7684-546eb26e-f8]; Justin Wood [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=86ee559cfc814439b69a025b0961d2a2-536cef40-79]; Rodriguez, Magdalena@Wildlife [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=0649923a609244e786680e9482857847-315f40b0-c1]; Sharma, Shankar@Wildlife [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e450028f8260453286a3618dc16e2c37-9cb4eddf-37]; Ackerman, James@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3cc35de240cf4253af9cc7d3d2cbb643-Ackerman, J]; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c1ff1d38281a4068b2708271d22c0d94-Abulaban, A]; Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6a535479ac2448c29afb308a1cd6fede-Waterboards]; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=fdbc9163bf404f4d84f0a53c6ed84ab0-Waterboards]; lisa.mccann@waterboards.ca.gov; brandy.wood@wildllife.ca.gov; Hannah Gbeh [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]; Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]
CC: Evelyn Langsdale [elangsdale@rinconconsultants.com]; Guerra, Christina@Waterboards [Christina.Guerra@waterboards.ca.gov]; Cano, Lorenzo@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=0e34c6eb717e49ef951f1089c0ccdaf4-98021d95-c2]

Subject: Soda Mountain PM check in
Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Start: 7/14/2025 4:00:00 PM
End: 7/14/2025 5:00:00 PM
Show Time As: Tentative

Recurrence: Weekly
Occurs on Tuesday every other week from 2:00 PM to 2:30 PM effective 4/8/2025 until 9/30/2025.
Required Attendees: Crisp, Ann@Energy; Chris Huntley; Jamison Miner; Justin Wood; Rodriguez, Magdalena@Wildlife; Sharma, Shankar@Wildlife; Ackerman, James@Energy; Abulaban, Abdel-Karim@Energy; Zimmerman, Jan@Waterboards; Steinert, Tiffany@Waterboards; lisa.mccann@waterboards.ca.gov; brandy.wood@wildllife.ca.gov; Hannah Gbeh; Chang, Kaycee@Energy
Optional Attendees: Evelyn Langsdale; Guerra, Christina@Waterboards

Including CDFW and Regional Water Quality Control Board plus affected CEC staff to this meeting.

The applicant would like to discuss the following in advance of their planned double submittal on July 17th of their responses to our REV 1 data requests (from the second incompleteness letter).

Bio Resource impact and mitigation. Precision grading (bio mitigation 3). Providing refined impact numbers.

General topic for the meeting: vegetation, waters, and big horn sheep

Updated big horn sheep info will be provided in advance of the meeting.

Microsoft Teams Need help?

Join the meeting now

Meeting ID: 258 157 365 578

Passcode: vN6Mg9qK

Dial in by phone

+1 916-562-1816,,244247857# United States, Sacramento

Find a local number

Phone conference ID: 244 247 857#

For organizers: Meeting options | Reset dial-in PIN

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=DD3D2FC8670840BDA4ACDC455903E787-CHANG, KAYC]
Sent: 7/9/2025 8:34:08 PM
To: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
CC: Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain - Follow-Up and Potential Venue Question

Hi Hannah,

Thank you for your responses. Very helpful.

Regarding the venue, our team will handle outreach but if you have any direct contacts that you can provide now, those are appreciated. You mention a venue not being large enough - do you have a sense of anticipated attendance we should plan for, like 100 people or less, more than that, etc.?

Thank you,
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Book time to meet with me

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 1:30 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain - Follow-Up and Potential Venue Question

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Kaycee,

Thank you for your email! Here are my responses:

1. Yes, I am working on getting some details and a statement from the applicant ASAP.
2. Below are some ideas for venues to host a scoping meeting. We haven't contacted the venues yet to get details on costs/timing/capacity/date reservation, but we can do that now, if it would help!
3. - Baker High School Gymnasium
4. - Baker Community Center (Does not look like it is large enough)
5. - Barstow Community College
6. - Barstow Unified School District Gymnasium
7.
8. Yes, we have been in contact with the BLM and are planning to submit the updated POD documents July 17th. We do not believe the BLM will require any new or additional information that will affect the CEC process.

If you have any additional questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you!
Hannah

4.
5.

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 1:02:27 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain - Follow-Up and Potential Venue Question

Hi Hannah,

I hope you are well. Lisa will be out of the office for most of the remainder of this week, so I am sending this email on her behalf.

1. May we ask how the meeting with the applicant went? Last week during our call, you mentioned touching base with your applicant about funding, timelines, potentially something written from them about the financial implications of the schedule(?).
2. Lisa mentioned you might have some ideas or contacts for a nearby meeting venue we could potentially host the scoping meeting? We want to start scoping locations so we can be ready; as you know, the environmental scoping/informational public meeting happens within 30 days of an application being deemed complete.
3. Have you had any luck getting in contact with BLM?

We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
CEQA Project Management
Siting and Environmental Branch
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Work: 1-916-232-6319
Cell: 1-916-208-6545

California Energy Commission
Website: www.energy.ca.gov

Book time to meet with me

From: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Sent: 7/10/2025 3:48:33 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]
CC: Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain - Follow-Up and Potential Venue Question

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Kaycee,

I apologize for the inconvenience, but I would like to suggest we cancel our Monday meeting with the CEC/RWQCB/CDFW. Our team won't have the deliverables ready to distribute prior to the meeting, so I don't think it will be an efficient use of anyone's time to have this meeting. However, I do want to mention that we are still on track for docketing the items on July 17th. Additionally, based on my understanding of the information our consultants will be providing in our responses to the CEC data requests, I believe the information we will be providing will be very clear and straightforward, and won't warrant much additional questions or discussions.

Since I was the one who requested this meeting, I wanted to make sure I communicated that my side does not need it any longer. However, if you feel like meeting would still benefit the CEC team in processing our application, my team is still ready and available to meet and discuss any items.

Thank you!
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 10, 2025 8:13 AM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain - Follow-Up and Potential Venue Question

Thank you, Hannah!

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 1:39 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain - Follow-Up and Potential Venue Question

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Hi Kaycee,

I think if we try to find a venue for 75-100 people, that will be more than sufficient. The two Baker venues are listed because they are the only 2 options we found in the community closest to the project. Given there are not many venues in Baker, we suggest going to Barstow (if Baker High School isn't available). I genuinely do not think we will have anywhere near 100 people attending a meeting for our project, but we thought it best to plan conservatively.

Thanks!
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 1:34:08 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
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Regarding the venue, our team will handle outreach but if you have any direct contacts that you can provide now, those are appreciated. You mention a venue not being large enough - do you have a sense of anticipated attendance we should plan for, like 100 people or less, more than that, etc.?

Thank you,
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Book time to meet with me

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 1:30 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain - Follow-Up and Potential Venue Question

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6. - Barstow Unified School District Gymnasium
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8. Yes, we have been in contact with the BLM and are planning to submit the updated POD documents July 17th. We do not believe the BLM will require any new or additional information that will affect the CEC process.

If you have any additional questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you!
Hannah

4.
5.

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 1:02:27 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain - Follow-Up and Potential Venue Question

Hi Hannah,

I hope you are well. Lisa will be out of the office for most of the remainder of this week, so I am sending this email on her behalf.

1. May we ask how the meeting with the applicant went? Last week during our call, you mentioned touching base with your applicant about funding, timelines, potentially something written from them about the financial implications of the schedule(?).
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3. Have you had any luck getting in contact with BLM?

We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
CEQA Project Management
Siting and Environmental Branch
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Work: 1-916-232-6319
Cell: 1-916-208-6545

California Energy Commission
Website: www.energy.ca.gov

Book time to meet with me

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
Sent: 7/10/2025 4:07:15 PM
To: Neal Desai [ndesai@npca.org]
CC: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]
Subject: Re: Request to talk re: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in

Hi Neal,

Thank you for your question, We are looking into this and will get back to you.

Thanks,

Lisa

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 9:38 AM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Request to talk re: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in

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Hi Lisa and Kaycee,
Thank you for following up. I was planning to email you today about my question, which is slightly different than what is noted in your email:

- In the AB 205 process, does CEC allow an applicant use an interconnection agreement (which, factually, is negotiated with a third party and not the CEC) as reasoning (e.g. substantial evidence) to not adopt mitigation measures due to claims of economic infeasibility?

Could you please provide me with a response to that question? The answer to this question informs whether there is a previously unknown backdoor loophole in the AB 205 process for applicants to evade adopting mitigation measures by **first** securing an interconnection agreement and **then** using that agreement to prevent project modifications (e.g. mitigation measures) in the AB 205 process. I believe this is a yes or no type of answer, meaning the CEC either categorically allows for the interconnection agreement to be used as reasoning (e.g. substantial evidence) or it doesn't. If there is grey area, then we would like to know what that is and the objective criteria used to assess if an interconnection agreement is substantial evidence or not.

Thank you,
Neal

==========

Neal Desai
Senior Pacific Regional Director
National Parks Conservation Association
Mobile: 510.368.0845 |ndesai@npca.org

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 8:21 AM
To: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>

Cc: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Request to talk re: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in

Hi Neal,

We internally discussed your question about whether the applicant's claim that the ¼ mile buffer would conflict with their interconnection agreement with LADWP to provide 300 MW of capacity.

The applicant's claim that the buffer would conflict with the agreement with LADWP may be insufficient to claim economic infeasibility. The applicant's claims need to be supported by substantial evidence in the record.

Thanks,

Lisa

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Friday, June 13, 2025 11:45 AM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Energy - STEP Siting <STEPsiting@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Request to talk re: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Lisa,
Just left you a voice message at the 8367 number and including here the email address listed on the project webpage in hopes of hearing back and talking Monday (or today). thanks,
Neal
510-368-0845

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Wednesday, June 11, 2025 6:41 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Luke Basulto <lbasulto@npca.org>
Subject: Re: Request to talk re: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in

Hi Lisa,
If you're back, could we please find time Fri or Mon for a few mins? On Friday, I'm free after 9:30am. Anything work for you? Thank you,
Neal

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Monday, June 2, 2025 8:58 AM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Luke Basulto <lbasulto@npca.org>
Subject: Re: Request to talk re: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in

Hi Lisa,
Writing to bump this meeting request up. Please let us know if you have availability this week to meet. Thank you,
Neal

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2025 10:15 AM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Luke Basulto <lbasulto@npca.org>
Subject: Request to talk re: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in

Hi Lisa,
Hope you're doing well. Writing to request a virtual meeting to discuss Soda Mountain Solar, including the current status of it. Could you please let us know if you have availability over the next week or two, and if you want to suggest any date/time options? I can coordinate schedules on my end with my colleague Luke (cc'd and who is our desert program manager based in Joshua Tree) to confirm something.
Thank you,
Neal

==========

Neal Desai
Senior Director, Pacific Region | National Parks Conservation Association
Mobile: 510.368.0845 |ndesai@npca.org

From: Neal Desai
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 12:15 PM
To: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

Hi Lisa,
Do you happen to know the status of application? Also, for this type of opt-in process, is commenting publicly during the noticed comment periods the only way for organizations/individuals to participate in this process, or are there other levels of engagement like requesting to be a "party" in the proceeding etc.?
Thank you,
Neal

From: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2024 4:00 PM
To: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>

Cc: Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>; Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

Hi Neal –

The applicant told us this week of their intention to file supplemental application materials in mid-October in response to the CEC's incompleteness determination here https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=258896&DocumentContentId=94970. The CEC has 30 days to review the supplemental information so I would agree, a determination of completeness would be issued no earlier than mid-November. This webpage here has the general timeframes for the Opt-in process Opt-in Certification Program

I've copied CEC's project manager for the Soda Mountain Solar Project, Lisa Worrall.

Regards,
Eric

Eric Knight
Manager
Siting & Environmental Branch
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
(916) 591-9931

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2024 12:40 PM
To: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Eric,
The project proponent informed us last month that they don't expect the CEC to determine the application as being complete until November 2024 at the earliest. Is that the current timeframe from CEC's perspective?
Thank you,
Neal

From: Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2024 3:37 PM
To: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Cc: Luke Basulto <lbasulto@npca.org>; Vorters, Dian@Energy <Dian.Vorters@Energy.ca.gov>
Subject: FW: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

Hi Neal,

That is correct, the applicant intends on filing an opt-in application with the CEC by July 22nd. Those signed up for the CEC subscription "Siting Division General List" California Natural Resources Agency (govdelivery.com) – see 4th subscription under Power Plant Licensing Projects – will receive an email alert that the docket has been opened for this proceeding. That alert will recommend signing up for the Soda Mountain Solar subscription to continue to receive email alerts about the project. That subscription will appear in the list under "Project Under Review Topics".

Similar to the other 4 projects filed under the Opt-in program Power Plant Listing (ca.gov), Soda Mountain Solar will have its own webpage on the CEC's website where you can access its docket log, sign up for the subscription, access the e-comment and e-filing feature, etc. The docket is where the applicant will upload their application materials. Once CEC has confirmed that we've received all files associated with their application, we'll initiate our 30-day completeness review – there will be an announcement of that in the docket.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Eric

Eric Knight
Manager
Siting & Environmental Branch
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division
California Energy Commission
(916) 591-9931

From: Neal Desai <ndesai@npca.org>
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2024 8:36 AM
To: Energy - STEP Siting <STEPsiting@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Luke Basulto <lbasulto@npca.org>
Subject: Soda Mountain Solar opt-in process

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Eric,
Writing to check-in on a project called Soda Mountain Solar that we heard has abandoned its review process under CDFW and is seeking approval via CEC, I believe through the opt-in process under AB 205. Is this correct and if yes, could you share with us where things are at (eg pre application stage?, application submitted?, etc). If any materials have been submitted by the applicant, would you be able to please share them with us?
Thank you,
Neal

==========

Neal Desai
Senior Program Director, Pacific Region | National Parks Conservation Association
Mobile: 510.368.0845 |ndesai@npca.org
(Pronouns: he/him/his)

Preserving Our Past. Protecting Our Future.
Speak up for national parks. Join us at npca.org

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=DD3D2FC8670840BDA4ACDC455903E787-CHANG, KAYC]
Sent: 7/15/2025 11:57:41 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]; Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]; Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Hannah Gbeh [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
CC: Vorters, Dian@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=2c5604e712a74c029e412542e0db72ac-Vorters, Di]; Dustin Thaler [dut@vcrenewables.com]; Thomas Zale [tzale@zglobal.biz]

Subject: Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) - Schedule (CEC/Soda Mountain project team)
Attachments: Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) - urgency
Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Start: 7/18/2025 6:00:00 PM
End: 7/18/2025 6:50:00 PM
Show Time As: Tentative

Recurrence: (none)
Required Attendees: Knight, Eric@Energy; Worrall, Lisa@Energy; Hannah Gbeh
Optional Attendees: Vorters, Dian@Energy; Dustin Thaler; Thomas Zale

Meeting request from project applicant (VC Renewables and consultant Resolution Environmental) to discuss the project schedule, with focus on new treasury deadlines. Please also see attached an email from Dustrin Thaler outlining specifics around the Soda Mountain Solar Project's urgency.

Hannah — please feel free to forward this invite to the appropriate folks on the applicant and consultant side. Thank you!

Microsoft Teams Need help?

Join the meeting now

Meeting ID: 277 561 573 545 8

Passcode: jD7n6j9W

Dial in by phone

+1 916-562-1816,,918298386# United States, Sacramento

Find a local number

Phone conference ID: 918 298 386#

For organizers: Meeting options | Reset dial-in PIN

From: Dustin Thaler [dut@vcrenewables.com]
Sent: 7/10/2025 8:59:09 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]; Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]; Huber, Elizabeth@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=93f40660c3d446578d63390926fd5e5a-Huber, Eliz]
CC: Michael Cocchimiglio [mci@vcrenewables.com]; hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com
Subject: Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) - urgency

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Dear CEC team:

The Soda Mountain Solar Project 24-OPT-03 (SMSP) team was requested to express the urgency of a deemed complete application. Deemed complete status is crucial to maintaining project schedule and meeting critical milestones. In recent days, federal actions have significantly raised the stakes on renewable energy projects. Now, further delays could completely jeopardize our ability to deliver much-needed renewable energy and storage capacity to California's grid, in alignment with the State's clean energy and reliability goals. Below is a discussion of the specifics around SMSP's urgency.

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Offtake
SMSP has been submitted into the recent Southern California Public Power Authority (SCPPA) RFP with a guaranteed commercial operation date (GCOD) of December 31, 2028. We have previously received positive feedback from SCPPA and believe our proposal is promising so we want to ensure we are making adequate progress to meet this GCOD. Permitting delays would throw the schedule to meet the GCOD off track.

Site Control
SMSP has an executed U.S. Bureau of Land Management Right-of-Way lease. Any permitting or schedule delays eat further into this ongoing lease term. Prompt permitting turnaround is important to maximizing SMSP's lifetime.

Interconnection
SMSP is in the process of amending its Interconnection Agreement with Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Having permitting in place on time will be vital to our ability to deliver the interconnection facilities on-time and on-schedule, particularly with respect to the high-voltage project substation, gen-tie line and switching station construction. These are 500kV facilities and the lead-time for procurement of this type of equipment is amongst the highest in the industry. We cannot make such major, non-fungible procurement decisions without some level of permitting certainty.

Labor Commitments
SMSP has executed three Project Labor Agreements covering the solar facility, the BESS, and the outside line work, demonstrating our commitment to union labor and local workforce engagement. Permitting delays would postpone construction and defer local economic and community benefits.

The urgency in achieving deemed complete status for SMSP is not only a matter of schedule, but also essential to preserving the project's viability and ensuring we can deliver on California's clean energy and reliability goals. We would appreciate if we could set up a call to further discuss, and we appreciate your attention and efforts on this very essential project.

Thank you,

Dustin Thaler

VC Renewables
110 Edison Place, Suite 312
Newark, NJ 07102
M: 201-275-4862
E: dut@vcrenewables.com

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Security and reliability of email is not guaranteed, Communications should be verified from a mailed or faxed copy. All emails to anyone @vcrenewables.com are communications to the firm and are not private or confidential to any named individual.

From: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Sent: 7/15/2025 7:48:36 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]
CC: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]; Knight, Eric@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=be42548337f44852a291a9845f226f62-Knight, Eri]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) - urgency

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Thank you Kaycee! 11am on Friday works for our team. - Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 10:31 AM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) - urgency

Hello Hannah,

Of course. Would Thursday, 7/17, 1pm or 4pm work for your team?
If not, perhaps Friday, 7/18 11am or 1pm?

Please let me know and I can send a calendar invite.

Thank you,
Kaycee

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division

Book time to meet with me

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 9:18 AM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Fw: Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) - urgency

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Hi Kaycee,

I hope you are doing well! VC Renewables wanted me to check in and see if we could schedule a conversation to discuss the project schedule, per the email below. Particularly the new treasury deadlines.

Also - We are still on track to docket all our responses on Thursday.

Thanks!
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Dustin Thaler <dut@vcrenewables.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 10, 2025 1:59 PM
To: Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>; elizabeth.huber@energy.ca.gov <elizabeth.huber@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Michael Cocchimiglio <mci@vcrenewables.com>; Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
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Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) - urgency

Thank you, Hannah. I sent the invite for this Friday at 11am. Can you please forward around?

Thank you, and look forward to catching up this week.

Kaycee Chang (she, her, hers)
Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division
Book time to meet with me

From: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 12:48 PM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Knight, Eric@Energy <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>
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Supervisor
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division

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Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 9:18 AM
To: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Fw: Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) - urgency

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To: Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>; Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov <Eric.Knight@energy.ca.gov>; kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>; elizabeth.huber@energy.ca.gov <elizabeth.huber@energy.ca.gov>
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M: 201-275-4862
E: dut@vcrenewables.com

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From: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Sent: 7/17/2025 10:33:11 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
CC: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain response to Second Incompleteness letter
Attachments: Outlook-cid_image0

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Hi Lisa,

Yes, I am planning to docket the majority of our responses today. Our team is finalizing everything and I should be able to start uploading in an hour.

Thank you!
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2025 3:28:49 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain response to Second Incompleteness letter

Hi Hannah,

I am mindful that you thought today might be the day we receive all the responses to our Second Incompleteness letter. Can you let me know if you are on schedule for submittal today.

Thanks,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
California Energy Commission
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
Direct: (916) 661-8367
Email: lisa.worrall@energy.ca.gov

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
ENERGY COMMISSION

From: Tony Brunello [tbrunello@calstrat.com]
Sent: 7/29/2025 1:01:22 PM
To: Tony Brunello [tbrunello@calstrat.com]; Huber, Elizabeth@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=93f40660c3d446578d63390926fd5e5a-Huber, Eliz]; Hannah Arken [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Subject: Soda Mountain check in
Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting
Start: 7/29/2025 10:00:00 PM
End: 7/29/2025 10:30:00 PM
Show Time As: Tentative

Recurrence: (none)

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Microsoft Teams Need help?

Join the meeting now

Meeting ID: 261 494 315 599 1

Passcode: zD9D8CC3

Dial in by phone

+1 916-573-1788,,192279867# United States, Sacramento

Find a local number

Phone conference ID: 192 279 867#

For organizers: Meeting options | Reset dial-in PIN

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=E4BBC7048B38485084BDB03FB494B25B-WORRALL, LI]
Sent: 7/23/2025 1:35:22 AM
To: Hannah Gbeh [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
CC: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]; Fooks, Brett@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=870df74143964b71ada0039bf13c5a9a-Fooks, Bret]; Paul Miller [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=4d4ce365f8bd442a8cb7d479381e2476-8906af8e-0e]; Daniel Jones [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=352cfed2f4d849749d3d8f98a9563279-082cef18-97]
Subject: Fw: Soda Mountain Completeness Review

Hi Hannah,

Our Worker Safety have a question on your response. Please see email below.

Thanks,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
CEQA Project Management Unit
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division (STEP)

715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
1-916-661-8367

California Energy Commission
Website: www.energy.ca.gov

From: Daniel Jones <Djones@therchgroup.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 22, 2025 6:33 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Fooks, Brett@Energy <Brett.Fooks@energy.ca.gov>; Paul Miller <pmiller@therchgroup.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain Completeness Review

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Hello Lisa,

In reviewing the REV 1 data request responses for Worker Safety we have the following informal data request question for the applicant:

- Please confirm the following statement in Appendix Q Worker Safety – July 2025 Update (page 24) is incorrect: "An approximately 22,500-gallon tank would be located near the operation and maintenance building to provide storage of fire suppression water." It is staff's understanding that three 10,000-gallon water tanks would be located throughout the site as specified in the Updated Project Description (July 2025 update) and shown on the Site Plan provided in the Confidential Worker Safety Data Responses.

Thank you,

Dan Jones

RCH GROUP
planning & environmental consulting

(916) 764-0295 (cell)
DJones@TheRCHGroup.com

From: Hannah Arkin [hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com]
Sent: 7/23/2025 2:09:05 AM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e4bbc7048b38485084bdb03fb494b25b-Worrall, Li]
CC: Chang, Kaycee@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd3d2fc8670840bda4acdc455903e787-Chang, Kayc]; Fooks, Brett@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=870df74143964b71ada0039bf13c5a9a-Fooks, Bret]; Paul Miller [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=4d4ce365f8bd442a8cb7d479381e2476-8906af8e-0e]; Daniel Jones [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=352cfed2f4d849749d3d8f98a9563279-082cef18-97]
Subject: Re: Soda Mountain Completeness Review

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Hi Lisa,

Yes, any reference to one 22,500-gallon water is incorrect and out of date.

The correct information is that three 10,000-gallon water tanks would be located throughout the site as specified in the Updated Project Description (July 2025 update) and shown on the Site Plan provided in the Confidential Worker Safety Data Responses.

Thank you!
Hannah

Hannah Arkin
CEO
Resolution Environmental
262 B Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118
760-504-4109

From: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 22, 2025 6:35 PM
To: Hannah Arkin <hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com>
Cc: Chang, Kaycee@Energy <kaycee.chang@energy.ca.gov>; Fooks, Brett@Energy <Brett.Fooks@energy.ca.gov>; Paul Miller <pmiller@therchgroup.com>; Daniel Jones <djones@therchgroup.com>
Subject: Fw: Soda Mountain Completeness Review

Hi Hannah,

Our Worker Safety have a question on your response. Please see email below.

Thanks,

Lisa Worrall
Senior Environmental Planner
CEQA Project Management Unit
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division (STEP)

715 P Street, MS-40, Sacramento, CA 95814
1-916-661-8367

California Energy Commission
Website: www.energy.ca.gov

From: Daniel Jones <Djones@therchgroup.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 22, 2025 6:33 PM
To: Worrall, Lisa@Energy <Lisa.Worrall@energy.ca.gov>
Cc: Fooks, Brett@Energy <Brett.Fooks@energy.ca.gov>; Paul Miller <pmiller@therchgroup.com>
Subject: Soda Mountain Completeness Review

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Hello Lisa,

In reviewing the REV 1 data request responses for Worker Safety we have the following informal data request question for the applicant:

- Please confirm the following statement in Appendix Q Worker Safety – July 2025 Update (page 24) is incorrect: "An approximately 22,500-gallon tank would be located near the operation and maintenance building to provide storage of fire suppression water." It is staff's understanding that three 10,000-gallon water tanks would be located throughout the site as specified in the Updated Project Description (July 2025 update) and shown on the Site Plan provided in the Confidential Worker Safety Data Responses.

Thank you,

Dan Jones

RCHGROUP
planning & environmental consulting

(916) 764-0295 (cell)
DJones@TheRCHGroup.com

From:	Paul Miller [pmiller@therchgroup.com]
Sent:	8/22/2025 5:57:58 PM
To:	CMarkloff@SBCFire.org; JAllen@SBCFire.org; pfleckenstein@sbcfire.org
CC:	Collin Crawford [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ebc874e994df437ba78978627476586f-c7d37eff-0f]; Daniel Jones [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=352cfed2f4d849749d3d8f98a9563279-082cef18-97]; Fooks, Brett@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=870df74143964b71ada0039bf13c5a9a-Fooks, Bret]
Subject:	Soda Mountain Solar Project - Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting -- August 29 2025 at 1 PM
Attachments:	TN265719_20250820T111412_Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting for the Proposed So (1).pdf

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Assistant Fire Marshall Markloff, Captain Allen, and Engineer Fleckenstein,

Please be advised of the Soda Mtn Solar Project Scoping meeting scheduled next Friday.
All comments and recommendations by the SBCFD would be greatly appreciated, the CEC seeks your input

I expect there will be a 30-45 minute project introduction and then an opportunity for government agencies to comment
You should be able to comment within the first hour (either in-person or via the Zoom meeting)

Written comments can also be submitted, in addition to oral comments at the meeting.

Written comments may be submitted to the Docket Unit by 5:00 p.m. on September 3, 2025.
More details on the meeting and project are in the attached PDF file.

I have been updated on your emails and discussions with Collin Crawford and Dr. Greenberg related to fire protection socioeconomic impacts.

Dan Jones and I, supervised by Brett Fooks will be leading the impacts analysis in the upcoming CEC staff assessment for Worker Safety/ Fire Protection.
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Through those meeting(s) we can also keep you updated on any questions you have related to the environmental staff assessment.
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Please reach out to me or Dan Jones if you have any questions, we will act as a point of contact to the CEC project team.

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August 29, 2025
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
In-person at:
Holiday Inn Express – Conference Room
2700 Lenwood Road
Barstow, CA 92311

Thanks,

Paul Miller
Managing Principal
pmiller@TheRCHGroup.com
(916) 212-9600 Cell
(916) 782-4427 (All RCH Staff)

RCH GROUP
planning & environmental consulting

From: Markloff, Curtis [CMarkloff@SBCFire.org]
Sent: 8/26/2025 11:49:16 PM
To: Paul Miller [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=4d4ce365f8bd442a8cb7d479381e2476-8906af8e-0e]; Allen, Jeffrey [JAllen@SBCFire.org]; Fleckenstein, Pat [PFleckenstein@SBCFire.org]
CC: Collin Crawford [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ebc874e994df437ba78978627476586f-c7d37eff-0f]; Daniel Jones [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=352cfed2f4d849749d3d8f98a9563279-082cef18-97]; Fooks, Brett@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=870df74143964b71ada0039bf13c5a9a-Fooks, Bret]; Ronchetti, Monica [mronchetti@SBCFire.org]; Strong, Tom [TStrong@SBCFire.org]
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar Project - Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting -- August 29 2025 at 1 PM

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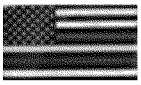
Please let me know if you need anything else.

Curtis Markloff
Assistant Fire Marshal
Planning and Engineering Office
San Bernardino County Fire Protection District
909-918-2201



From: Paul Miller <pmiller@therchgroup.com>
Sent: Friday, August 22, 2025 10:58 AM
To: Markloff, Curtis <CMarkloff@SBCFire.org>; Allen, Jeffrey <JAllen@SBCFire.org>; Fleckenstein, Pat <PFleckenstein@SBCFire.org>
Cc: Collin Crawford <ccrawford@aspeneg.com>; Daniel Jones <Djones@therchgroup.com>; Brett Fooks <brett.fooks@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain Solar Project - Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting -- August 29 2025 at 1 PM

Assistant Fire Marshall Markloff, Captain Allen, and Engineer Fleckenstein,

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Hopefully we can set up a meeting(s) soon to further the discussions related to Fire Protection impacts of this project.

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Barstow, CA 92311

Thanks,

Paul Miller
Managing Principal
pmiller@TheRCHGroup.com
(916) 212-9600 Cell
(916) 782-4427 (All RCH Staff)

RCHGROUP
planning & environmental consulting

From: Paul Miller [pmiller@therchgroup.com]
Sent: 8/27/2025 2:22:24 AM
To: Markloff, Curtis [CMarkloff@SBCFire.org]; Allen, Jeffrey [JAllen@SBCFire.org]; Fleckenstein, Pat [PFleckenstein@SBCFire.org]
CC: Collin Crawford [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ebc874e994df437ba78978627476586f-c7d37eff-0f]; Daniel Jones [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=352cfed2f4d849749d3d8f98a9563279-082cef18-97]; Fooks, Brett@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=870df74143964b71ada0039bf13c5a9a-Fooks, Bret]; Ronchetti, Monica [mronchetti@SBCFire.org]; Strong, Tom [TStrong@SBCFire.org]
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar Project - Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting -- August 29 2025 at 1 PM

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Good evening Curtis,

Thanks for responding to our recent email.

You are correct regarding preliminary status as this project goes through environmental review. Supervisor Brett Fooks of CEC would like to convene another meeting with you as soon as possible.
This would be to inform you of the CEC process and get as much feedback as possible. Your comments will be valuable going forward.

We can also make sure you have updated information on the project, as there have been some changes (perhaps you have the updates). We can try to meet any time before the presentation this Friday or early next week before the written comments are due. Tough timing with the Holiday weekend, but we are following an expedited process that has to keep moving.

If there are any times available for you – please let us know and we will try to accommodate.

Thanks,

Paul Miller
Managing Principal
pmiller@TheRCHGroup.com
(916) 212-9600 Cell
(916) 782-4427 (All RCH Staff)

RCH GROUP
planning & environmental consulting

From: Markloff, Curtis <CMarkloff@SBCFire.org>
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2025 4:49 PM
To: Paul Miller <pmiller@therchgroup.com>; Allen, Jeffrey <JAllen@SBCFire.org>; Fleckenstein, Pat

<PFleckenstein@SBCFire.org>
Cc: Collin Crawford <ccrawford@aspeneg.com>; Daniel Jones <Djones@therchgroup.com>; Brett Fooks <brett.fooks@energy.ca.gov>; Ronchetti, Monica <mronchetti@SBCFire.org>; Strong, Tom <TStrong@SBCFire.org>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar Project - Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting -- August 29 2025 at 1 PM

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Please let me know if you need anything else.

Curtis Markloff
Assistant Fire Marshal
Planning and Engineering Office
San Bernardino County Fire Protection District
909-918-2201

From: Paul Miller <pmiller@therchgroup.com>
Sent: Friday, August 22, 2025 10:58 AM
To: Markloff, Curtis <CMarkloff@SBCFire.org>; Allen, Jeffrey <JAllen@SBCFire.org>; Fleckenstein, Pat <PFleckenstein@SBCFire.org>
Cc: Collin Crawford <ccrawford@aspeneg.com>; Daniel Jones <Djones@therchgroup.com>; Brett Fooks <brett.fooks@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain Solar Project - Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting -- August 29 2025 at 1 PM

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Barstow, CA 92311

Thanks,

Paul Miller
Managing Principal
pmiller@TheRCHGroup.com
(916) 212-9600 Cell
(916) 782-4427 (All RCH Staff)

RCHGROUP
planning & environmental consulting

From: Markloff, Curtis [CMarkloff@SBCFire.org]
Sent: 8/27/2025 3:49:54 PM
To: Paul Miller [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=4d4ce365f8bd442a8cb7d479381e2476-8906af8e-0e]; Allen, Jeffrey [JAllen@SBCFire.org]; Fleckenstein, Pat [PFleckenstein@SBCFire.org]
CC: Collin Crawford [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ebc874e994df437ba78978627476586f-c7d37eff-0f]; Daniel Jones [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=352cfed2f4d849749d3d8f98a9563279-082cef18-97]; Fooks, Brett@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=870df74143964b71ada0039bf13c5a9a-Fooks, Bret]; Ronchetti, Monica [mronchetti@SBCFire.org]; Strong, Tom [TStrong@SBCFire.org]
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar Project - Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting -- August 29 2025 at 1 PM

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Good morning, I am available anytime today before 1400.

Curtis Markloff
Assistant Fire Marshal
Planning and Engineering Office
San Bernardino County Fire Protection District
909-918-2201

From: Paul Miller <pmiller@therchgroup.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2025 7:22 PM
To: Markloff, Curtis <CMarkloff@SBCFire.org>; Allen, Jeffrey <JAllen@SBCFire.org>; Fleckenstein, Pat <PFleckenstein@SBCFire.org>
Cc: Collin Crawford <ccrawford@aspeneg.com>; Daniel Jones <Djones@therchgroup.com>; Brett Fooks <brett.fooks@energy.ca.gov>; Ronchetti, Monica <mronchetti@SBCFire.org>; Strong, Tom <TStrong@SBCFire.org>
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(916) 212-9600 Cell
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Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2025 4:49 PM
To: Paul Miller <pmiller@therchgroup.com>; Allen, Jeffrey <JAllen@SBCFire.org>; Fleckenstein, Pat <PFleckenstein@SBCFire.org>
Cc: Collin Crawford <ccrawford@aspeneg.com>; Daniel Jones <Djones@therchgroup.com>; Brett Fooks <brett.fooks@energy.ca.gov>; Ronchetti, Monica <mronchetti@SBCFire.org>; Strong, Tom <TStrong@SBCFire.org>
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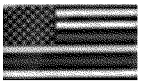

From: Paul Miller <pmiller@therchgroup.com>
Sent: Friday, August 22, 2025 10:58 AM
To: Markloff, Curtis <CMarkloff@SBCFire.org>; Allen, Jeffrey <JAllen@SBCFire.org>; Fleckenstein, Pat <PFleckenstein@SBCFire.org>
Cc: Collin Crawford <ccrawford@aspeneg.com>; Daniel Jones <Djones@therchgroup.com>; Brett Fooks <brett.fooks@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain Solar Project - Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting -- August 29 2025 at 1 PM

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Thanks,

Paul Miller
Managing Principal
pmiller@TheRCHGroup.com
(916) 212-9600 Cell
(916) 782-4427 (All RCH Staff)

RCHGROUP
planning & environmental consulting

From: Collin Crawford [CCrawford@aspeneg.com]
Sent: 8/27/2025 8:58:27 PM
To: Markloff, Curtis [CMarkloff@SBCFire.org]; Paul Miller [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=4d4ce365f8bd442a8cb7d479381e2476-8906af8e-0e]; Allen, Jeffrey [JAllen@SBCFire.org]; Fleckenstein, Pat [PFleckenstein@SBCFire.org]
CC: Daniel Jones [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=352cfed2f4d849749d3d8f98a9563279-082cef18-97]; Fooks, Brett@Energy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=870df74143964b71ada0039bf13c5a9a-Fooks, Bret]; Ronchetti, Monica [mronchetti@SBCFire.org]; Strong, Tom [TStrong@SBCFire.org]; John Carrier [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=d823054932c444d18fdb316ac77c6d07-b2cf4468-54]
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar Project - Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting -- August 29 2025 at 1 PM
Attachments: TN264913_20250718T164954_Updated Project Description and Responses to REV 1 DR BIO-2 and REV 1 DR ES (1).pdf; TN264954_20250721T152810_Appendix Q Worker Safety - July 2025 Update (1).pdf

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Hi Curtis,

Again, thank you for taking the time to talk with us today. I'm attaching some of the updated information that the applicant has uploaded onto the project's docket.

Here's the link for the docket:
https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-03

As soon as we get the updated site plans, we'll send them your way.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Paul or myself. Have a great rest of your week and we'll hopefully see you on Friday!

Best,

Collin Crawford-Martin
Environmental Scientist
Aspen Environmental Group
(916) 379-0357

From: Markloff, Curtis <CMarkloff@SBCFire.org>
Sent: Wednesday, August 27, 2025 8:50 AM
To: Paul Miller <pmiller@therchgroup.com>; Allen, Jeffrey <JAllen@SBCFire.org>; Fleckenstein, Pat <PFleckenstein@SBCFire.org>
Cc: Collin Crawford <CCrawford@aspeneg.com>; Daniel Jones <Djones@therchgroup.com>; Brett Fooks <brett.fooks@energy.ca.gov>; Ronchetti, Monica <mronchetti@SBCFire.org>; Strong, Tom <TStrong@SBCFire.org>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar Project - Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting -- August 29 2025 at 1 PM

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If suspicious, do not click links, open attachments, or provide credentials.

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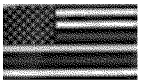
Curtis Markloff
Assistant Fire Marshal
Planning and Engineering Office
San Bernardino County Fire Protection District
909-918-2201



From: Paul Miller <pmiller@therchgroup.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2025 7:22 PM
To: Markloff, Curtis <CMarkloff@SBCFire.org>; Allen, Jeffrey <JAllen@SBCFire.org>; Fleckenstein, Pat <PFleckenstein@SBCFire.org>
Cc: Collin Crawford <ccrawford@aspeneg.com>; Daniel Jones <Djones@therchgroup.com>; Brett Fooks <brett.fooks@energy.ca.gov>; Ronchetti, Monica <mronchetti@SBCFire.org>; Strong, Tom <TStrong@SBCFire.org>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar Project - Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting -- August 29 2025 at 1 PM

Good evening Curtis,

Thanks for responding to our recent email.

You are correct regarding preliminary status as this project goes through environmental review. Supervisor Brett Fooks of CEC would like to convene another meeting with you as soon as possible.
This would be to inform you of the CEC process and get as much feedback as possible. Your comments will be valuable going forward.

We can also make sure you have updated information on the project, as there have been some changes (perhaps you have the updates). We can try to meet any time before the presentation this Friday or early next week before the written comments are due. Tough timing with the Holiday weekend, but we are following an expedited process that has to keep moving.

If there are any times available for you – please let us know and we will try to accommodate.

Thanks,

Paul Miller
Managing Principal
pmiller@TheRCHGroup.com
(916) 212-9600 Cell
(916) 782-4427 (All RCH Staff)

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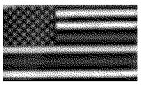
planning & environmental consulting

From: Markloff, Curtis <CMarkloff@SBCFire.org>
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2025 4:49 PM
To: Paul Miller <pmiller@therchgroup.com>; Allen, Jeffrey <JAllen@SBCFire.org>; Fleckenstein, Pat <PFleckenstein@SBCFire.org>
Cc: Collin Crawford <ccrawford@aspeneg.com>; Daniel Jones <Djones@therchgroup.com>; Brett Fooks <brett.fooks@energy.ca.gov>; Ronchetti, Monica <mronchetti@SBCFire.org>; Strong, Tom <TStrong@SBCFire.org>
Subject: RE: Soda Mountain Solar Project - Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting -- August 29 2025 at 1 PM

Good afternoon sir, nothing has been submitted to us by the applicant and everything I have seen so far seems preliminary so I wouldn't be positive on conditioning everything for this project such as fire protection, access roads, etc. We are currently in talks with a group that is going to assist us with creating an ordinance much like Fresno County completed for a fair share contribution for facilities such as this. I am sure you are aware that the location of this proposed facility is roughly 12 miles as the crow flies from our local station in Baker that has limited staffing and resources due to the area. Our next closest unit is roughly 62 miles away in the Community of Helendale that also has limited resources and staffing.

Please let me know if you need anything else.

Curtis Markloff
Assistant Fire Marshal
Planning and Engineering Office
San Bernardino County Fire Protection District
909-918-2201



From: Paul Miller <pmiller@therchgroup.com>
Sent: Friday, August 22, 2025 10:58 AM
To: Markloff, Curtis <CMarkloff@SBCFire.org>; Allen, Jeffrey <JAllen@SBCFire.org>; Fleckenstein, Pat <PFleckenstein@SBCFire.org>
Cc: Collin Crawford <ccrawford@aspeneg.com>; Daniel Jones <Djones@therchgroup.com>; Brett Fooks <brett.fooks@energy.ca.gov>
Subject: Soda Mountain Solar Project - Notice of Information and Environmental Scoping Meeting -- August 29 2025 at 1 PM

Assistant Fire Marshall Markloff, Captain Allen, and Engineer Fleckenstein,

Please be advised of the Soda Mtn Solar Project Scoping meeting scheduled next Friday.
All comments and recommendations by the SBCFD would be greatly appreciated, the CEC seeks your input

I expect there will be a 30-45 minute project introduction and then an opportunity for government agencies to comment
You should be able to comment within the first hour (either in-person or via the Zoom meeting)

Written comments can also be submitted, in addition to oral comments at the meeting.

Written comments may be submitted to the Docket Unit by 5:00 p.m. on September 3, 2025.
More details on the meeting and project are in the attached PDF file.

I have been updated on your emails and discussions with Collin Crawford and Dr. Greenberg related to fire protection socioeconomic impacts.

Dan Jones and I, supervised by Brett Fooks will be leading the impacts analysis in the upcoming CEC staff assessment for Worker Safety/ Fire Protection.
Hopefully we can set up a meeting(s) soon to further the discussions related to Fire Protection impacts of this project.

Through those meeting(s) we can also keep you updated on any questions you have related to the environmental staff assessment.
The Draft Staff Assessment is due to be published before the end of this year – so, the project is now on a very fast track.

Please reach out to me or Dan Jones if you have any questions, we will act as a point of contact to the CEC project team.

Notice of Information
and Environmental Scoping Meeting
for the Proposed Soda Mountain Solar Project
Hybrid Meeting In-Person and via Zoom
August 29, 2025
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
In-person at:
Holiday Inn Express – Conference Room
2700 Lenwood Road
Barstow, CA 92311

Thanks,

Paul Miller
Managing Principal
pmiller@TheRCHGroup.com
(916) 212-9600 Cell
(916) 782-4427 (All RCH Staff)

RCHGROUP
planning & environmental consulting

DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	24-OPT-03
Project Title:	Soda Mountain Solar
TN #:	264913
Document Title:	Updated Project Description and Responses to REV 1 DR BIO-2 and REV 1 DR ES-1
Description:	1. Revised Project Description – 7.18.2025 2. Gen-Tie Overhead I-15 Crossing Visual Simulation 3. Access Road Figures (REV 1 DR BIO-2) 4. Executive Summary Figure 1-1 (REV 1 DR ES-1)
Filer:	Hannah Arkin
Organization:	Resolution Environmental
Submitter Role:	Applicant Representative
Submission Date:	7/18/2025 4:50:05 PM
Docketed Date:	7/18/2025

Contents

1. Revised Project Description – 7.18.2025
2. Gen-Tie Overhead I-15 Crossing Visual Simulation
3. Access Road Figures (REV 1 DR BIO-2)
4. Executive Summary Figure 1-1 (REV 1 DR ES-1)

Revised Project Description – 7.18.2025

CHAPTER 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Introduction

Soda Mountain Solar, LLC (applicant), proposes to construct, operate, and maintain a utility-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) electrical generating and storage facility and associated infrastructure to generate and deliver renewable electricity to the statewide electricity transmission grid. The project also includes future decommissioning, which is anticipated to occur after 40 years of operation. This project is known as the Soda Mountain Solar Project (proposed project or project).

The project is located on approximately 2,670 acres of land administered by the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California Desert District, within the jurisdiction of the Barstow Field Office in San Bernardino County. As described in Section 2.1, the BLM performed a separate review of the project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The project would disturb approximately 2,059 acres overall. The project would generate up to 300 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy and include up to 300 MW/1,200 MW-hours (MWh) of battery storage. The power produced by the project would be conveyed to the regional electrical grid through an interconnection with the existing Mead-Adelanto 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line operated by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP).

2.2 Description of the Proposed Project

2.3 Project Location

The project is located entirely on federally owned land managed by the BLM. The 2,670-acre project site is located approximately 7 miles southwest of the community of Baker in unincorporated San Bernardino County, California (Figure 2-1, 2-2, and 2-3), approximately 50 miles northeast of Barstow. The project site is in portions of Sections 1 and 11–14, Township 12 North, Range 7 East; Sections 25, Township 13 North, Range 7 East; Sections 6, 7, and 18, Township 12 North, Range 8 East; Sections 17 – 21, 29-32, Township 13 North, Range 8 East, San Bernardino Meridian, California.

The project is 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 (OHV) Recreation Area at the southeast corner. Interstate 15 (I-15), the former Arrowhead Trail Highway, runs along the western boundary of the project site. The Rasor Road Services Shell Oil gas station is located off I-15 southwest of the project site, along the access road to the project site. A residence is next to the gas station, roughly 260 feet southwest of the proposed boundary. There are no other sensitive receptors within 1,500 feet of the project site. Approximately four storm drain culverts run under I-15 adjacent to the project site. Primary access to the project site is from the Rasor Road northbound exit off I-15.

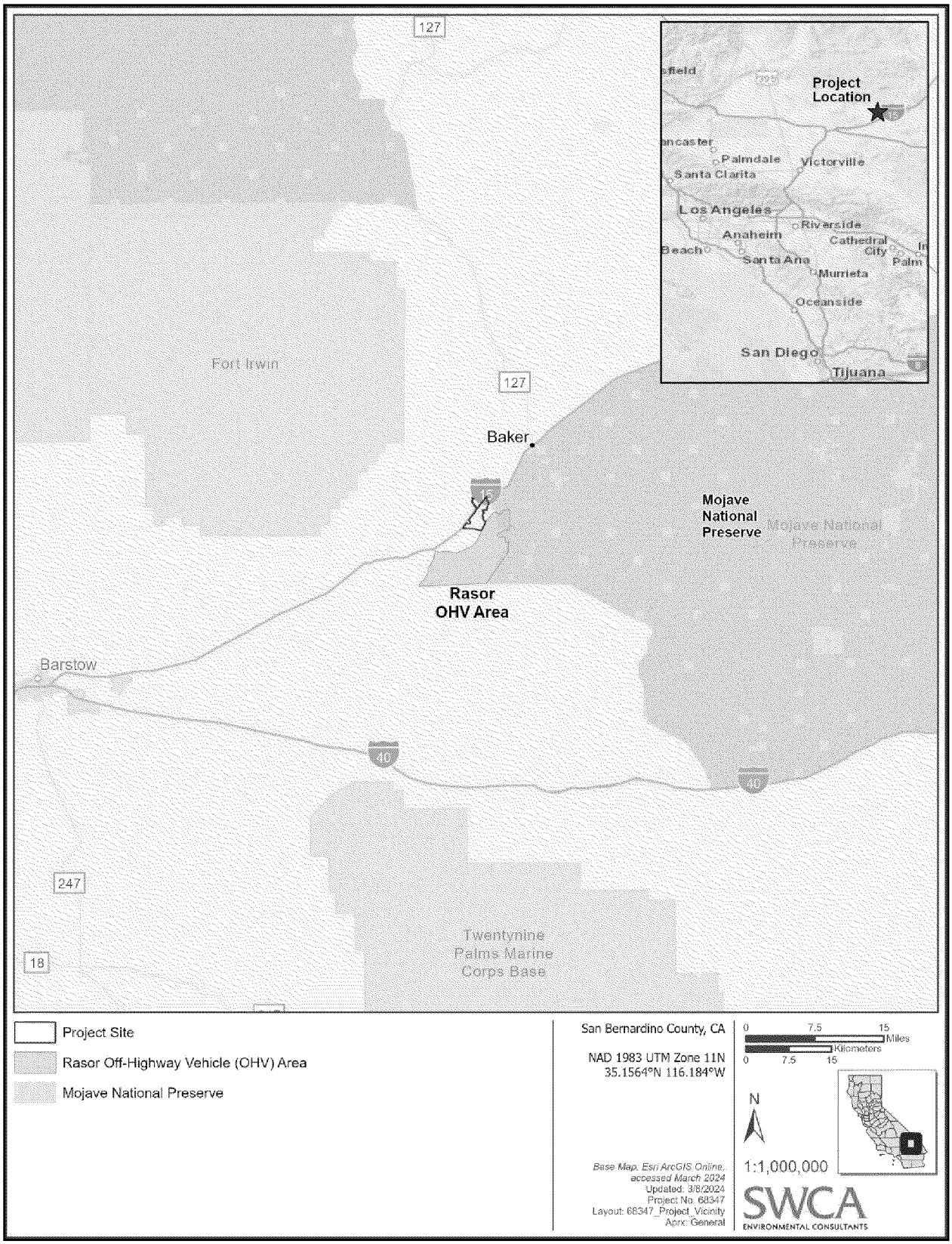


Figure 2-1. Project site vicinity.

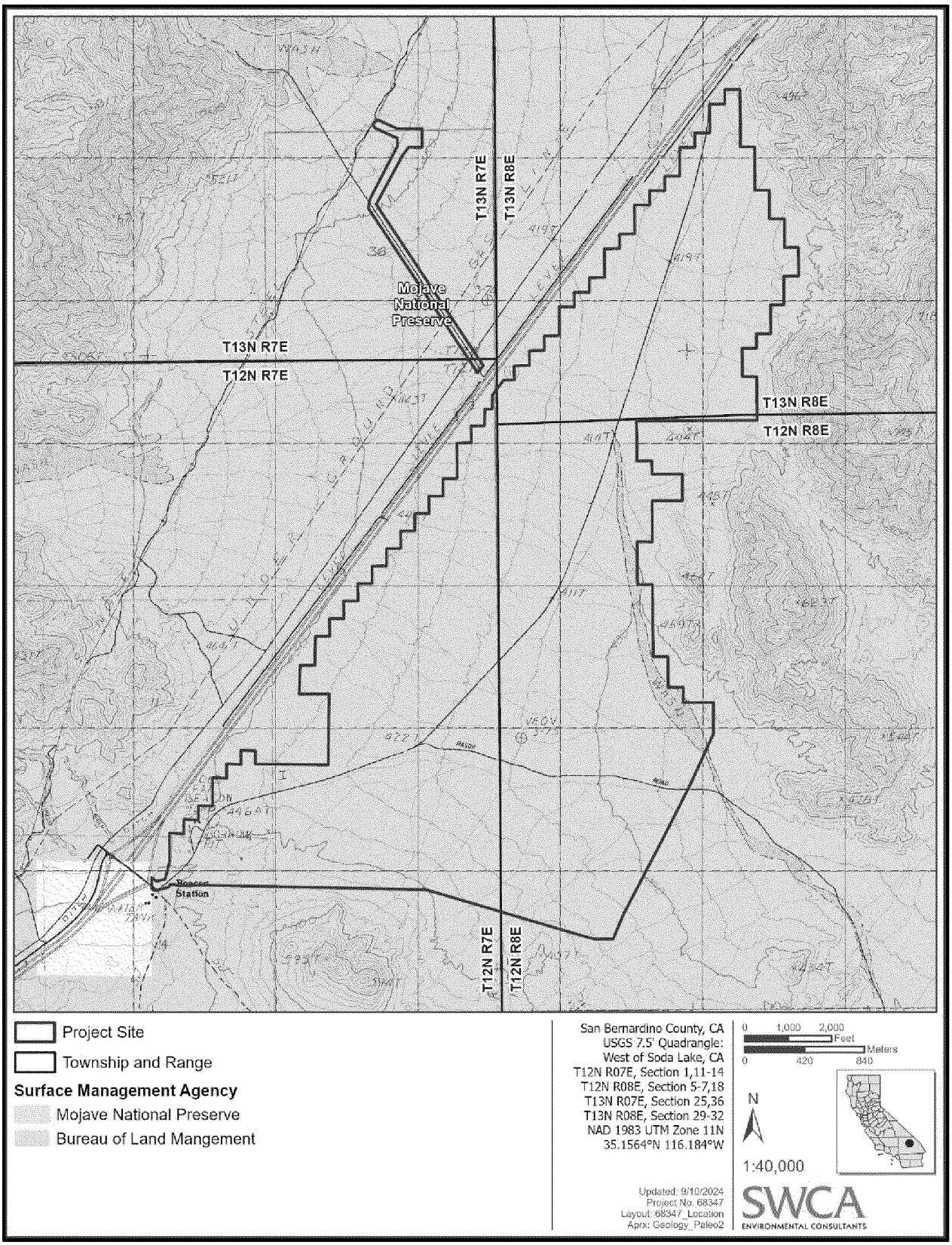


Figure 2-2. Public Land Survey location.

2.3.1.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The project would occupy the alluvial valley dividing the northern and southern portions of the Soda Mountains in the Mojave Desert. The project site is composed of rural desert land and is almost entirely undeveloped (Figure 2-4). Rasor Road, an unimproved BLM public access road, runs from the site's southwest corner and splits into two forks after approximately 1.4 miles. The Rasor Road fork continues from west to east, to the Rasor OHV recreation area. Arrowhead Trail, the other fork, continues northward through the project site. Figure 2-4. Project site location and existing conditions. show the current existing conditions of the project site.

Based on a review of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map, unnamed tributaries are located east of the project site and flow from west to east (FEMA 2023). On-site runoff primarily drains to the southeast side of the project site. FEMA Zone D floodplains, which represent areas of undetermined flood hazards, are located within the project site. Additionally, the project is not located within the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) 100-year DWR Awareness floodplain. The project site is located in the Mojave Desert Air Basin and within a Soda Lake Valley Groundwater Basin sub-basin.

There are no existing overhead or underground transmission lines on the project site that would be affected by the proposed project. The infrastructure surrounding the site includes the four-lane I-15, two high-voltage electric transmission lines, an electrical distribution line, wireless cellular telephone towers, two fiber-optic cables, and two fuel pipelines. The location of the fiber-optic cables is not publicly available. The two high-voltage electrical transmission lines to the west of I-15 are the Kramer 115-kV sub-transmission line operated by Southern California Edison (SCE) and the Mead-Adelanto 500-kV transmission line operated by the LADWP, as shown in Figure 2-3. The project would cross the I-15 in one underground bore or overhead to connect the gen-tie to the Mead-Adelanto transmission line. The Mead-Adelanto Transmission Project is a 202-mile-long, 500-kV alternating current (AC) transmission line that extends between a southwest terminus at the Adelanto substation in Southern California and a northeast terminus at Marketplace Substation approximately 17 miles southwest of Boulder City, Nevada.

2.3.1.2 LAND USE AND ZONING

As shown in Figure 2-3, the project site is located within the BLM's California Desert District, within the jurisdiction of the Barstow Field Office, and the planning boundary of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan and the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP). The BLM signed its Record of Decision (ROD) approving the DRECP Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA) to the CDCA Plan in September 2016 (BLM 2016). The DRECP is a landscape-level plan established by the California Energy Commission, the BLM, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) which plan covers 22.5 million acres of public land in seven California counties. The DRECP LUPA includes land use allocations to replace the multiple-use classes established in the CDCA Plan. The project is within lands classified as General Public Land for management. However, given the BLM signed the ROD for the project in March 2016, before the BLM approved the DRECP LUPA, neither the BLM process for project review and approval nor the Conservation and Management Actions (CMAs) outlined in the DRECP are applicable to this project.

The generation-tie line (gen-tie line) west of I-15 would be located within an Area of Critical Environmental Concern and a designated federal Section 368 Energy Corridor adjacent to I-15 (corridor number 27-225).

2.3.1.3 SITE SELECTION

The project site was selected given the BLM's issuance of a ROD and associated amendment to the CDCA Plan in March 2016. The site is located within a designated federal Section 368 Energy Corridor adjacent to I-15 (Corridor number 27-225). Additionally, an existing SCE-owned 115-kV sub-transmission line and an LADWP-operated 500-kV transmission line run parallel to and adjacent to the western perimeter of the project site. The project site is located immediately adjacent to existing roadways that provide readily available access for construction and operations. The project site was selected based on consideration of the project objectives, engineering constraints, site geology, environmental impacts, water, waste and fuel constraints, and electric transmission constraints, among other factors.

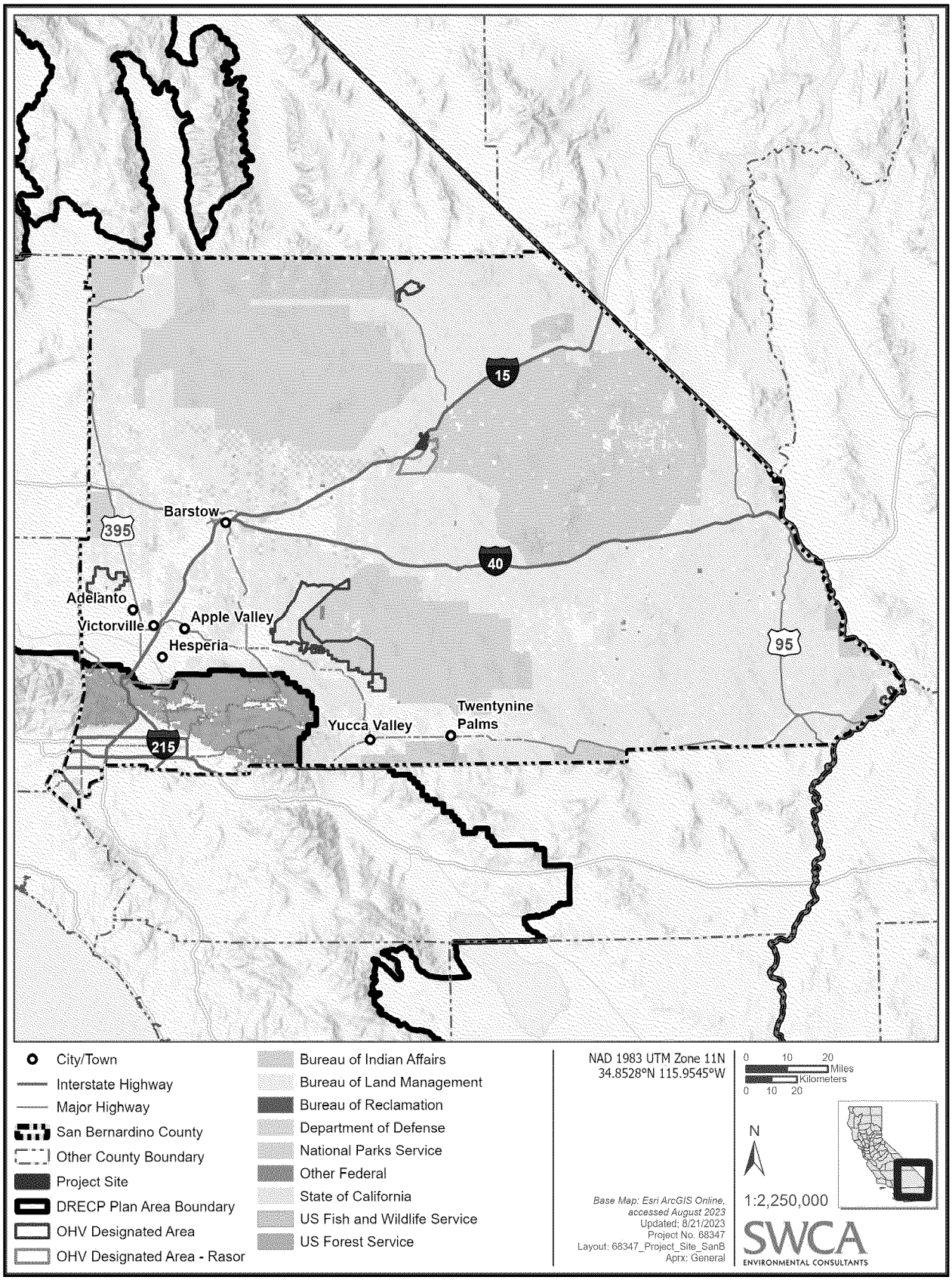


Figure 2-3. Land use management in San Bernardino County.

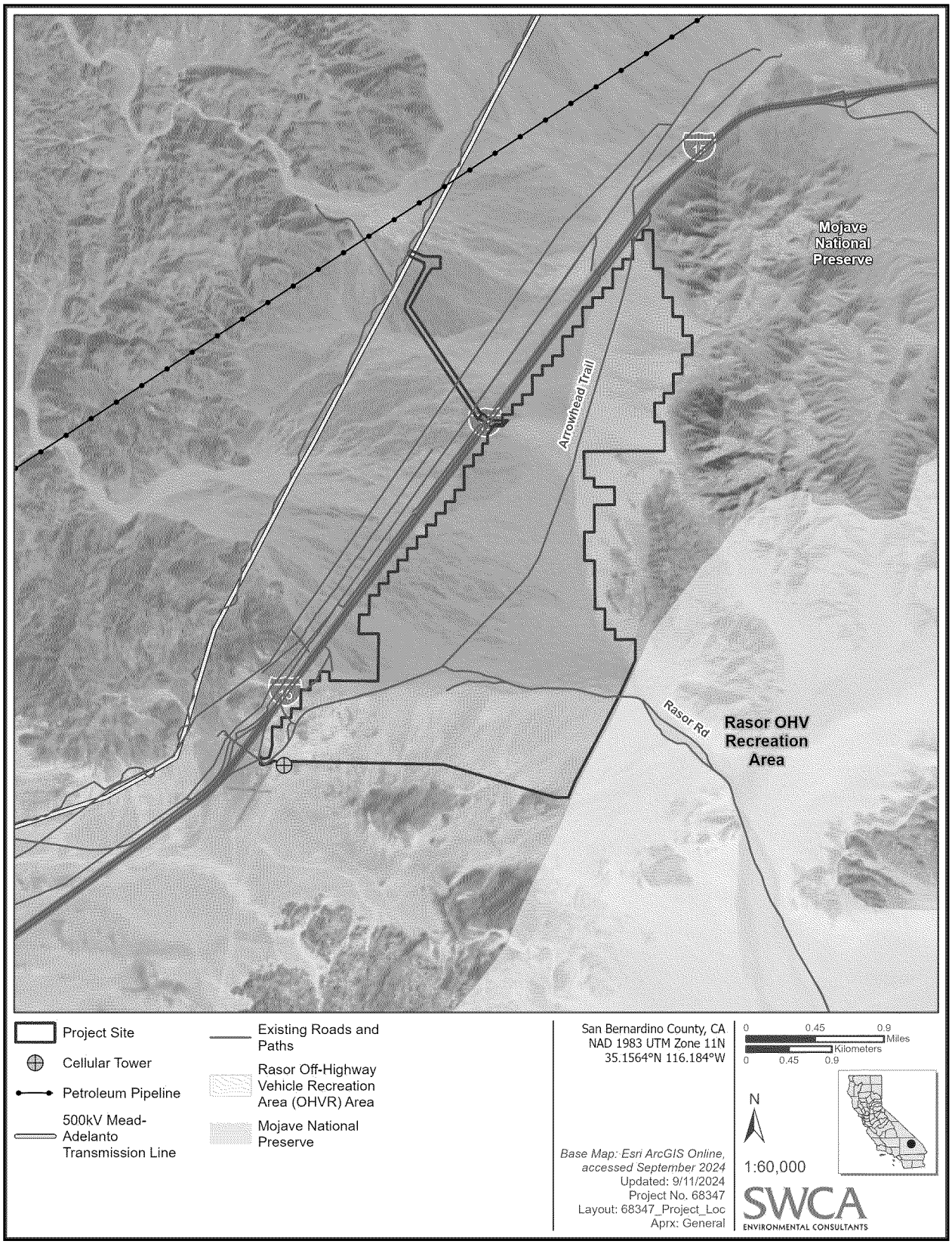


Figure 2-4. Project site location and existing conditions.

Figure 2-5. Existing view from west, facing east toward I-15 and project site.

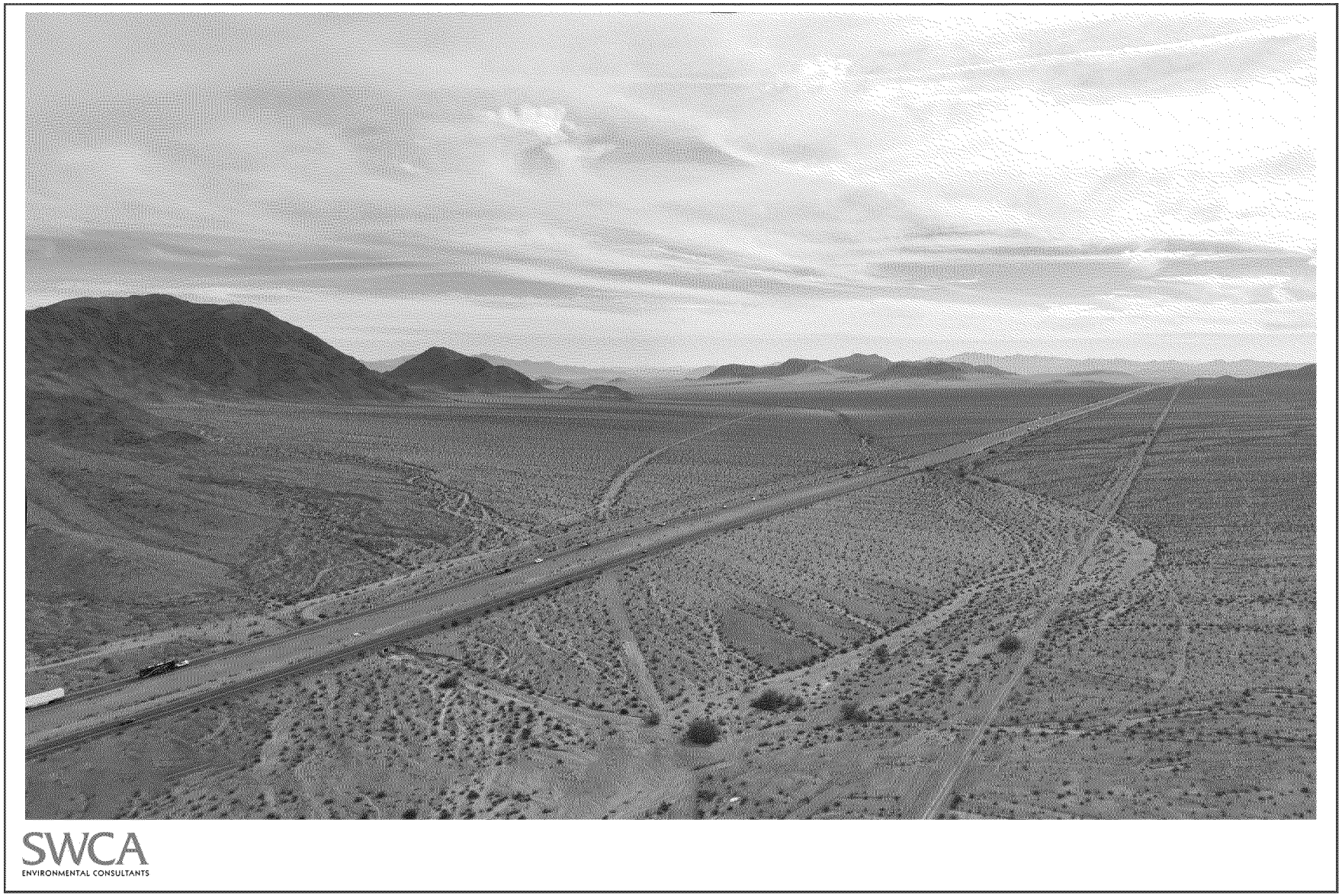


Figure 2-6. Existing view from northwest, facing east across I-15 to project site.

2.4 Generating Facility Description and Design

The project proposes to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission a proposed 300-MW PV solar facility located on approximately 2,670 acres. The approximate disturbance acreage for the project would be 2,059 acres. As shown in Figure 2-7 through Figure 2-10, the 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 the East Array and South Arrays 1, 2, and 3), 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 would operate 24 hours per day year-round and would generate electricity during daylight hours when the sun is shining. The project would generate and deliver solar-generated power to the regional electrical grid through an interconnection with the existing Mead-Adelanto 500-kV transmission line operated by LADWP and to the project's BESS. During final design, the configuration and number of components may vary as a result of micro-siting but all components would occur within the project footprint analyzed within this Opt-In Application.

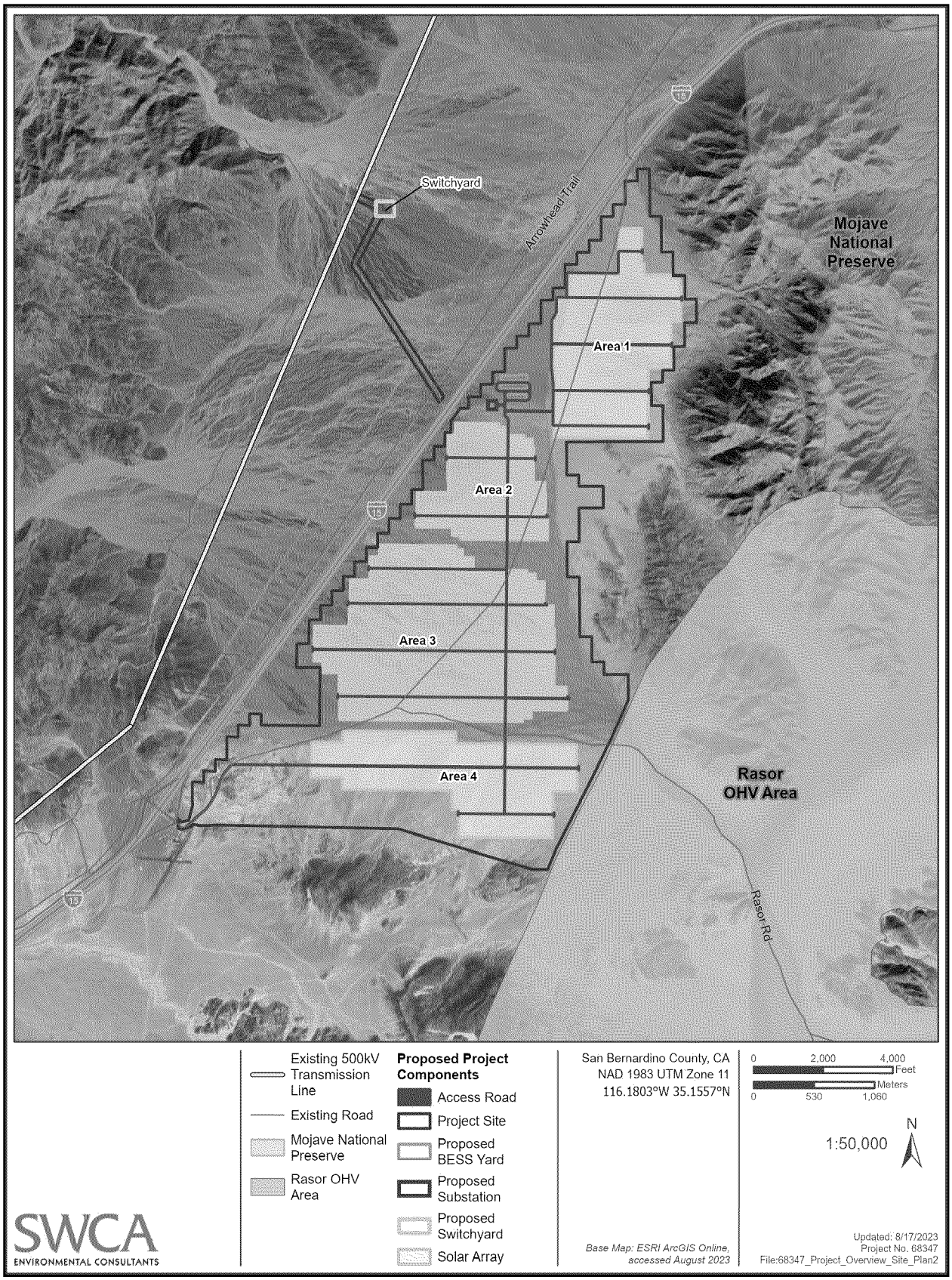


Figure 2-7. Project overview site plan.

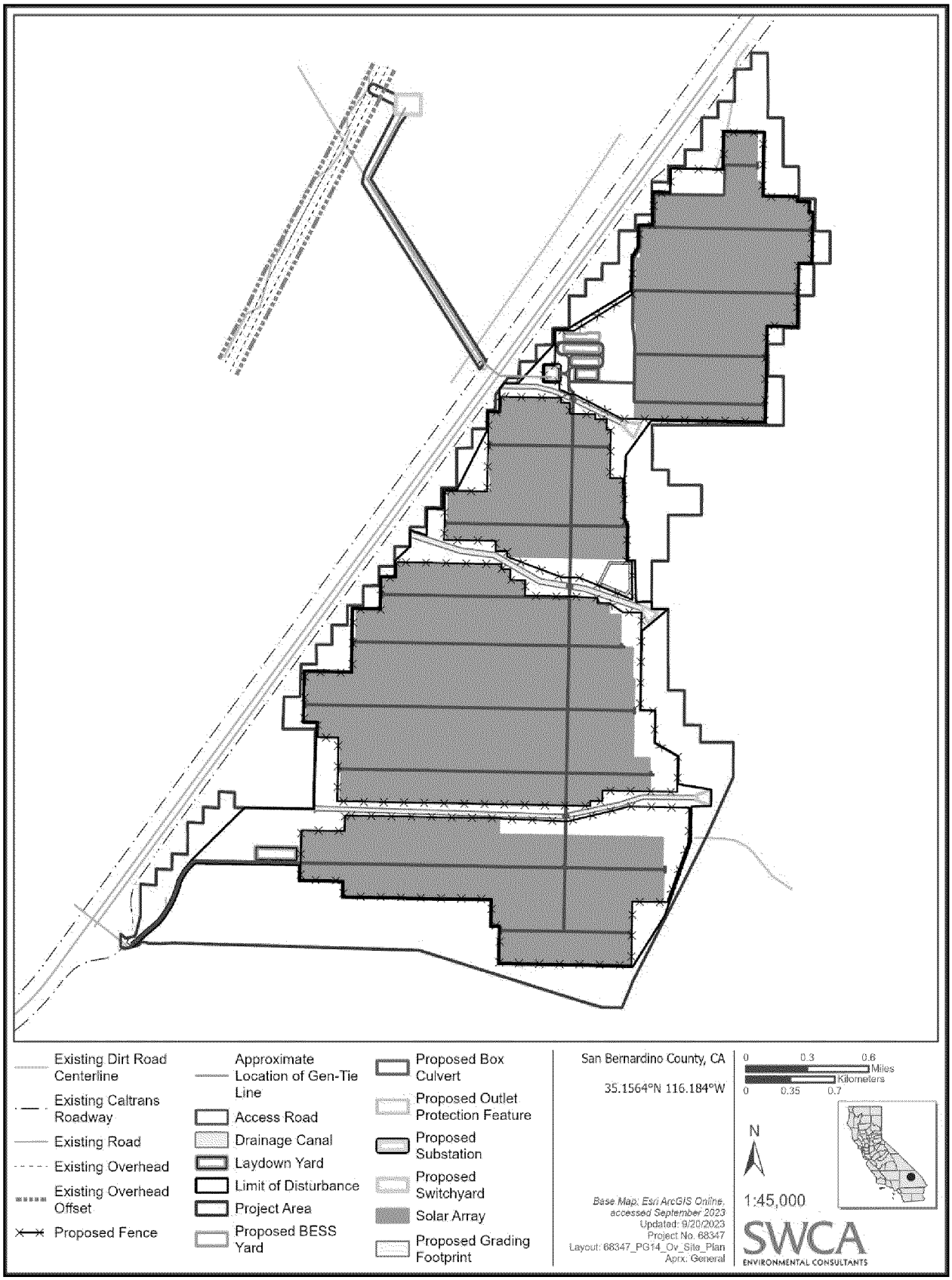


Figure 2-8. Existing and proposed conditions.

Figure 2-9. Simulated view from west looking east at I-15 and constructed project.