

DOCKETED	
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June 10, 2026

Notice of Receipt of Opt-In Application for Seahawk Battery Energy Storage System project (26-OPT-02) / Request for Comments and Information

This notice is provided under Public Resources Code sections 25519 and 25545.8 that the California Energy Commission (CEC) has received an Opt-In application for the Seahawk Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (project). Sequoia Energy Storage 1, LLC (applicant), a subsidiary of New Leaf Energy, Inc. proposes to construct, operate, and eventually decommission a 200-megawatt (MW) BESS in an unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County. The approximately 16-acre project site is within a portion of Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 051-101-77 and 051-101-78, which are approximately one mile north of the city of Watsonville and east of the intersection of Minto Road and Green Valley Road (90 Minto Road).

The primary components of the proposed project include an up to 800-megawatt-hour BESS facility, an operations and maintenance (O&M) building, a project substation, a 115-kilovolt (kV) interconnection transmission (gen-tie) line, and interconnection facilities. The project would be composed of lithium-iron phosphate or similar technology batteries, with proven safety and performance records, available at the time of procurement. The proposed project would provide a service to the regional electric grid by receiving and storing electrical energy (charging) from the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) electric transmission system, and then later delivering energy (discharging) back to the PG&E Green Valley Substation when the stored energy is needed. The Part 1 of the Opt-In Application containing the Project Description (TN 270250) can be accessed directly at the following link: [Link to project description information](#).

In 2022, Assembly Bill 205 (later amended by Senate Bills 254 and 283 in 2025) established the Opt-In Certification Program to allow project proponents to seek certification from the CEC for eligible non-fossil-fueled power plants, energy storage, and manufacturing and assembly facilities. Upon receipt of an application, the CEC has the exclusive authority to certify the site and related facility. With certain exceptions, the issuance of a certificate by the CEC is in lieu of any permit, certificate, or similar document required by any state, local, or regional agency, or federal agency to the extent permitted by federal law, and supersedes any applicable statute, ordinance, or regulation of any state, local, or regional agency, or federal agency to the extent permitted by federal law. The CEC is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act and is required to prepare an environmental impact report, mitigated negative declaration, or negative declaration for any facility that elects to opt into the CEC's jurisdiction.

Note that the CEC staff does not expect the local jurisdiction to develop exhaustive analysis on the application or to procure expertise to review an application. Local jurisdictions generally focus their comments on topical areas of local concern and identify local laws that the jurisdiction wants to highlight for staff such as noise ordinances, local methods of calculating vehicle miles traveled, or local architectural standards. For samples of prior comment letters from local jurisdictions, see:

- Willow Rock Energy Center, 21-AFC-02 (previously Gem Energy Storage Center)

Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department Comments - Agency Participation in Review of AFC for GEM Energy Storage Center Project, TN 243152

Link to example comment letter.

Kern County's Additional Comments, TN 245911

Link to example comment letter.

- Huntington Beach Energy Project, 12-AFC-02

City of Huntington Beach's Comment Letter Re Proposed Project, TN 68804

Link to example comment letter.

Pursuant to Title 20, section 1877(f) of the California Code of Regulations currently in effect, Opt-In applications include economic information for review and comment by local governments. While Public Resources Code section 25545.9 now establishes a rebuttable presumption of overall net positive economic benefit, staff will continue to provide the submitted information to the local government for comment consistent with section 1877(f) until the regulation is updated.

For reference, the CEC has organized the application documents via the links below:

The CEC webpage for the project can be found at the following link:

<https://www.energy.ca.gov/powerplant/battery-storage-system/seahawk-battery-energy-storage-system-bess>.

The documents which comprise the Opt-In application can be found in the project docket, which is accessible via the project webpage or directly at the following link: Link to CEC project web page..

Santa Cruz County is invited to provide comments pursuant to Public Resources Code sections 25519(f) and 25519(k), and California Code of Regulations, title 20, section 1877(f) at your earliest convenience.

The CEC also wishes to make Santa Cruz County aware that Public Resources Code section 25538 applies to an Opt-In application. The language from Public Resources Code section 25538 is as follows:

Upon receiving the commission's request for review under subdivision (f) of Section 25519 and Section 25506, the local agency may request a fee from the commission to reimburse the local agency for the actual and added costs of this review by the local agency. The commission shall reimburse the local agency for the added costs that shall be actually incurred by the local agency in complying with the commission's request.

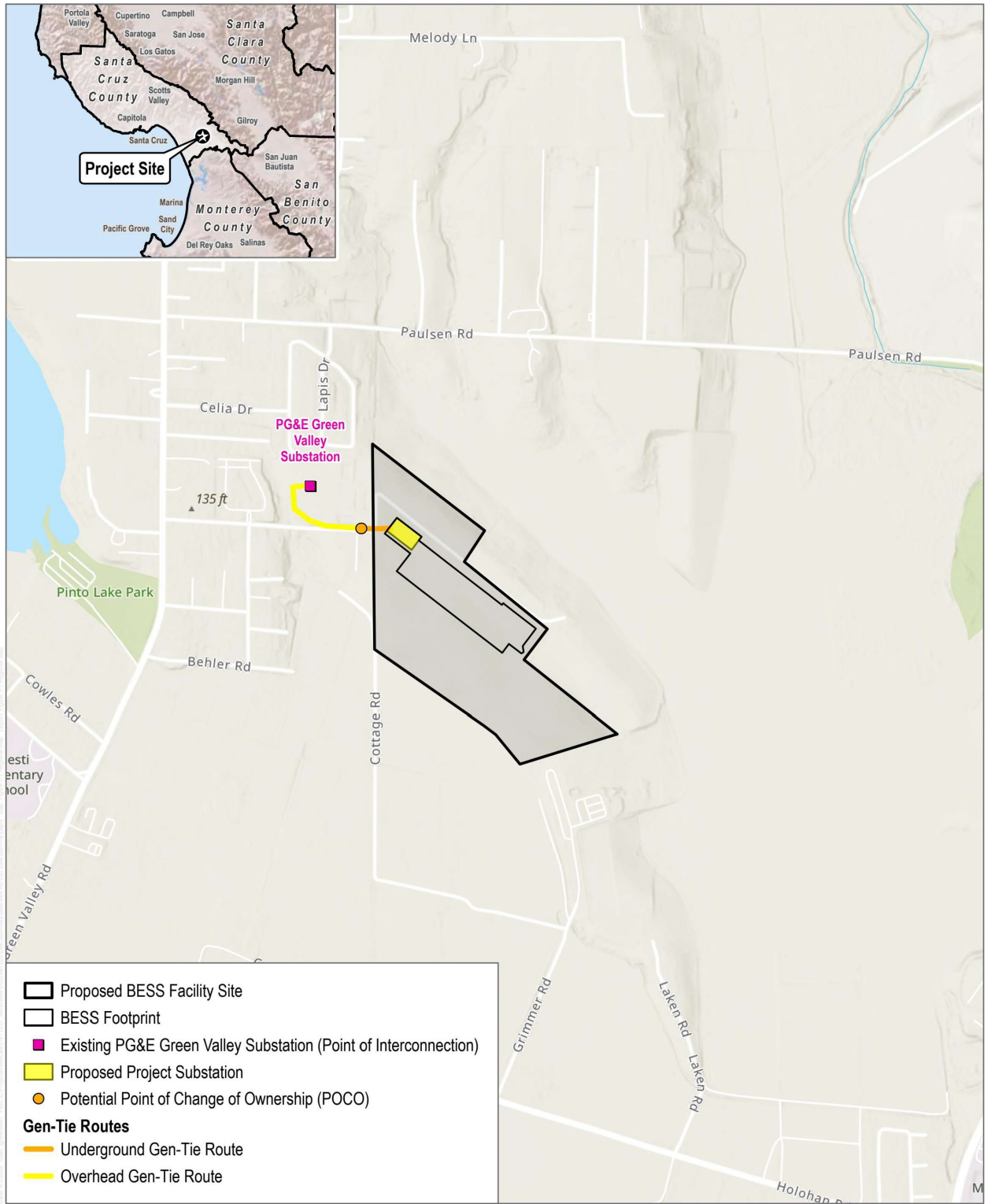
To stay informed about this project and receive notice of upcoming public meetings, sign up to the project subscription, which can be accessed on the project webpage. Once enrolled, automatic email notifications are sent via govDelivery when documents and notices are posted to the project docket.

Feel free to reach out to us directly via email if you have any questions about this notice. Thank you.

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CC: Santa Cruz County
City of Watsonville

Enclosures: Figure 1-1 Regional Map (from application, TN 270250)



SOURCE: Esri 2025; World Topographic Map

FIGURE 1-1

Regional Map



