

DOCKETED

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA
STATE ENERGY RESOURCES
CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF:

Sentinel Energy Center

Docket No.: 07-AFC-03C

**ORDER APPROVING THE
ADDITION OF BLACK START
CAPABILITY TO THE FACILITY**

I. BACKGROUND

On June 6, 2022, Sentinel Energy Center, LLC (Sentinel) filed a post certification petition (TN# 243444) with the California Energy Commission (CEC) requesting to amend the Sentinel Energy Center (SEC) CEC Final Decision (Decision) to add black start capability, which allows the facility to restart without external assistance from the electric system. On September 8, 2023, an amended petition was filed (TN# 252184-1 and TN# 252184-2).

The SEC is an 850-megawatt (MW) natural gas-fired, simple-cycle facility located near North Palm Springs, in Riverside County. The project was certified by the CEC on December 1, 2010, and began commercial operation on August 1, 2013.

A lithium iron phosphate (LFP) battery system would be used to provide auxiliary power needed to restart equipment and combustion turbines at the facility even if the facility is isolated from the grid.

Sentinel is proposing the following modifications:

- Add a 17.18-MW/34.36 megawatt-hours (MWh) LFP battery-based black start capability to the facility.
- Supporting modifications to the plant control system and electrical distribution system.

Sentinel would also request modifications to the California ISO Interconnection Agreement to reflect the addition of the black start system.

II. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the CEC approve the petition.

Consistent with the CEC's amendment process under California Code of Regulations, title 20, section 1769(a)(4), staff has reviewed the petition for potential environmental effects; consistency with applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards, (LORS); and existing conditions of certification. The addition of the battery system will introduce new potential impacts to Worker Safety and Fire Protection that were not previously evaluated in the Final Staff Assessment.

Staff concludes that, with the addition of new Worker Safety and Fire Protection conditions of certification there would be no significant impacts from the construction and operation of the battery black start system, and the changes would not cause the project to fail to comply with any applicable LORS. In addition, staff concludes that none of the findings specified in California Code of Regulations, title 20, section 1748(b) apply to the proposed changes. Lastly, staff concludes the proposed changes adding the battery black start system do meet the criteria requiring the production of a supplemental review pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21166 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15163 which staff details in its analysis.

A 45-day public comment period on staff's analysis ran from November 20, 2023, to January 5, 2024. No comments were received.

III. ENERGY COMMISSION FINDINGS

Based on the record, including staff's analysis, the CEC concludes that the proposed modifications will not result in any significant impacts to public health and safety, or to the environment. The CEC finds that:

- The petition meets all the filing criteria of California Code of Regulations, title 20, section 1769 (a), concerning post-certification project modifications;
- The modifications will not change the findings in the CEC's Final Decision, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 20, section 1748;
- The project will remain in compliance with all applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards, subject to the provisions of Public Resources Code section 25525;
- The addition of the black start system will improve regional grid reliability;
- Any environmental impacts from the addition of the black start system will be mitigated with the addition of new conditions of certification: Worker Safety-6, Worker-Safety-7, and Worker-Safety-8 with a correction replacing the current reference to the Palm Desert Fire Department (PDFD) with the correct fire department, the Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD);

- Notice of the staff assessment was mailed to the CEC’s list of interested parties and property owners of all parcels within 500 feet of any affected project linears and 1,000 feet of the project site as well as emailed to the project subscription list; and
- The staff assessment was subject to a 45-day comment period and no comments were received.

IV. CONCLUSION AND ORDER

The CEC hereby adopts staff’s recommendations and approves the petition and new conditions of certification to the Commission Decision as set forth in the staff analysis (TN# 253272) with a correction replacing the current reference to the Palm Desert Fire Department (PDFD) with the correct fire department, the Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD).

IT IS SO ORDERED.

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned Secretariat to the CEC does hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of an order duly and regularly adopted at a meeting of the CEC held on January 24, 2024.

AYE: Hochschild, Gunda, McAllister, Monahan, Gallardo
NAY: NONE
ABSENT: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE

Dated: January 25, 2024

SIGNED BY:

Ngoc Tran
Secretariat