

DOCKETED	
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Project Title:	Soda Mountain Solar
TN #:	259334
Document Title:	Courtesy Tribal Notification for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03) and Distribution List
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Subject: Opt-In Certification for Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03)

On August 1, 2024, California Energy Commission (CEC) staff confirmed receipt of an application from Soda Mountain Solar, LLC (applicant) for certification from the CEC through the Opt-In process for the Soda Mountain Solar Project (24-OPT-03). The project is located on approximately 2,670 acres of land administered by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management in San Bernadino County.

Project Description

The Soda Mountain Solar Project would generate up to 300 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy and include up to 300 MW of battery storage. The project also includes decommissioning, which is anticipated to occur after 30 years of operation.

The project components are as follows:

- A solar plant site including all facilities that create a footprint in and around the field of solar panels, including the solar field consisting of solar power arrays, operation and maintenance buildings and structures, stormwater infrastructure, and related infrastructure.
- A substation, switchyard, and 500-kilovolt (kV) generation tie line (gen-tie) for interconnection to the existing Marketplace-Adelanto 500-kV transmission line operated by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. The 500-kV gen-tie would be located within an existing Caltrans culvert and require boring under Interstate 15.
- A lithium-ion battery energy storage system of up to 300 MW storage capacity across 18 acres.

The Project Description (TN 257912) section of the application can be accessed directly at the following link:

<https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=257912&DocumentContentId=93845>.

CEC Jurisdiction and Opt-In Certification Program

The CEC was authorized to establish a certification program for eligible non-fossil fueled power plants, energy storage facilities, and related facilities to optionally seek certification from the CEC. (Pub. Resources Code, §§ 25545-25545.13.)

Under this new Opt-In Certification Program, among the types of facilities that CEC can certify are: (a) solar PV and terrestrial wind energy power plants of 50 MW or more, (b) energy storage facilities of 200 megawatt-hours (MWh) or more, and (c) electric transmission lines from these facilities to the first point of interconnection with the existing transmission grid.

The CEC is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is required to prepare an environmental impact report (EIR) for any facility that elects to opt-in to the CEC's jurisdiction. With exceptions, the issuance of a certificate by the CEC for an eligible facility is in lieu of any permit, certificate, or similar document required by any state, local, or regional agency. The CEC is required to make its decision on whether to certify the project within 270 days of receiving a *complete* application. The CEC is required to consult with all responsible and trustee agencies on the scope and content of the EIR. The CEC staff has begun its review of the application and transmitted the application to responsible and trustee agencies. The application has not been deemed complete at this time. Once the application is deemed complete, the CEC staff will evaluate the proposed project, consult with California Native American tribes, and host public meetings in the project area. No later than five days of deeming the application complete, the CEC staff will send formal letters to California Native American tribes inviting tribes to consult with the CEC about the project. Consultation between California Native American tribes and the CEC will proceed according to the requirements of Public Resources Code, sections 21080.3.1, 21080.3.2, 21082.3, and 25545.7.4 (CEQA and the Warren-Alquist Act).

The CEC will also host an informational and public scoping meeting during the development of the EIR, and a public meeting during the 60-day comment period on the Draft EIR, which will be included as part of the CEC's Staff Assessment of the application. After the conclusion of the public comment period, the CEC staff will publish an updated Staff Assessment (which will include a Final EIR), and the CEC's Executive Director's recommendation on whether the CEC should certify the EIR and issue a certificate for construction and operation of the proposed project. The updated Staff Assessment and Executive Director's recommendation will be published at least 30 days before the CEC's consideration at a public meeting.

At the final public meeting the CEC will formally decide whether to certify the EIR and grant a certification for construction and operation of the proposed project. Should the certification be granted, other agencies that retain their permitting authorities must take final action on any additional permits within 90 days of the CEC issuing a certificate.

General information about the Opt-In Certification Program can be found on the CEC website at <https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/topics/power-plants/opt-certification-program>.

Participation

The CEC welcomes public participation in the Opt-In review process. A copy of the Opt-In application as well as other project information, can be found on the

CEC website at <https://www.energy.ca.gov/powerplant/solar-photovoltaic-pv/soda-mountain-solar-project>. To stay informed about this project and receive notice of upcoming meetings and workshops, sign up to the project's email subscription, which can be accessed on the same project webpage. Once enrolled, automatic email notifications are sent when documents and notices are posted to the project webpage.

The CEC staff welcomes your comments and questions. Please do not hesitate to contact Assistant Tribal Liaison, Gabriel Roark, at (916) 237-2544 or by email at gabriel.roark@energy.ca.gov.

Enclosures:

Figure 2-1 Regional Map (from application, TN 258016)

Figure 2-3 Project Site Aerial (from application, TN 258016)



Figure 2-1. Project site vicinity.

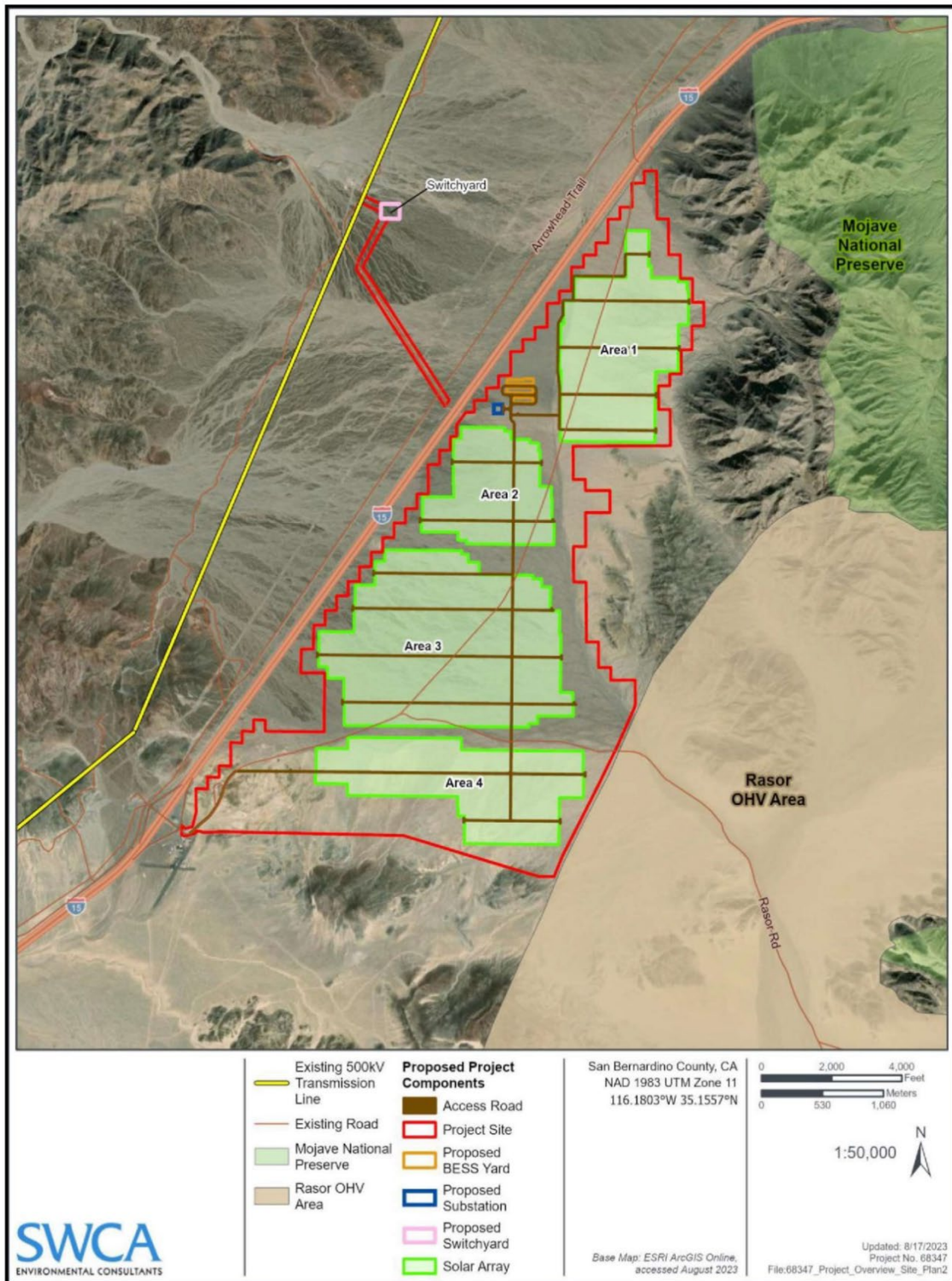


Figure 2-6. Project overview site plan.

List of Tribes Received Courtesy Notification

Kern Valley Indian Community
Morongo Band of Mission Indians
Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
Serrano Nation of Mission Indians
Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians