

COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

LAND USE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

FROM: San Bernardino County/ Land Use Services Department/ Planning Division,
385 N. Arrowhead Avenue, First Floor, San Bernardino, CA 92415-0182

TO: Interested Agencies, Organizations and Individuals

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and a
Draft Environmental Impact Report

The County of San Bernardino will act as the Lead Agency for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), in cooperation with the federal Bureau of Land Management, will prepare a joint Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIS/EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the probable environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. An Initial Study has not been included as it is obvious that a project of this scope and magnitude would require an EIR. The attached analysis is based on the numerous preliminary studies that have been prepared for the project.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than **September 23, 2011**.

Please send your response to Mr. Doug Feremenga at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

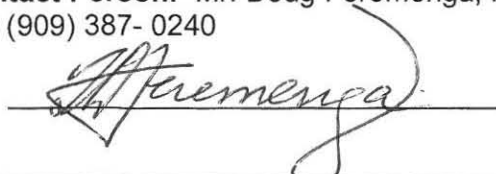
Project Title: Stateline Solar Farm

Project Applicant: Desert Stateline, LLC

Project Description: The proposed Stateline Solar Farm (Project), located in the unincorporated Ivanpah Valley area of San Bernardino County, is a 300-megawatt alternating current (MWac) solar photovoltaic (PV) energy generating facility that includes an on-site substation, a 220 kV gen-tie line, and an access road, all entirely on approximately 2,200 acres of public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Project would connect to the Southern California Edison (SCE) regional transmission grid.

County Contact Person: Mr. Doug Feremenga, Planner, Planning Division
Telephone: (909) 387- 0240

Signature:



Date: August 20, 2011

NOTICE OF PREPARATION



DATE: August 20, 2011

FROM: San Bernardino County Land Use Services Department, Planning Division,
385 N. Arrowhead Avenue, First Floor, San Bernardino, CA 92415-0182

TO: Interested Agencies, Organizations and Individuals

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and a Draft
Environmental Impact Report

PROJECT TITLE: STATELINE SOLAR FARM PROJECT

An environmental review of the proposed project must be conducted under both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Implementation of the project will require discretionary approvals from federal, state, and local agencies, and therefore, this project is subject to the environmental review requirements of both NEPA and CEQA. As Lead Agency for CEQA, the County of San Bernardino (County) issues this Notice of Preparation for the proposed Stateline Solar Farm Project (Project).

To ensure coordination between the NEPA and CEQA processes, and to avoid duplication of effort, the lead agencies will prepare a joint EIR/EIS as recommended by 40 CFR 1506.2 and CEQA Guidelines 15222. The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will be the NEPA Lead Agency and the County will be the CEQA Lead Agency, for preparation of the EIS/EIR. As the federal lead agency, the BLM issued a separate Notice of Intent (NOI) for the proposed Project. The BLM and the County will evaluate whether potentially significant environmental effects will result from the Project. The EIS/EIR will assess the effects of the proposed Project on the environment, identify potentially significant impacts, identify feasible mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate potentially significant environmental impacts, and discuss potentially feasible alternatives to the proposed Project that may accomplish basic project objectives, while reducing or eliminating any potential significant project impacts.

This Notice of Preparation provides a description of the proposed Project and solicits comments on the scope and content of the environmental document to be prepared to analyze the environmental impacts of the proposed Project. Comments are solicited from responsible agencies, trustee agencies, federal, state and local agencies and the general public. Comments received in response to this Notice of Preparation will be reviewed and considered by the lead agencies in determining the scope of the EIS/EIR. Due to time limits, as defined by CEQA, your response should be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than thirty (30) days after publication of this Notice of Preparation. We need to know the views of your agency

as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is pertinent to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed Project.

Please include the name, phone number, and address of the contact person in your comment letter. Comments and questions may be directed to:

Doug Feremenga, Planner
County of San Bernardino Land Use Services Department
Planning Division
385 North Arrowhead Avenue, First Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0182.
Telephone (909) 387-0240
E-mail: dferemenga@lusd.sbcounty.gov

Project description

Desert Stateline, LLC, (Applicant) a wholly owned subsidiary of First Solar Development, Inc. (First Solar) proposes to construct and operate a 300-megawatt alternating current (MWac) solar photovoltaic (PV) energy generating project known as the Stateline Solar Farm (Project). The Project will include PV modules, an on-site substation, a 2.3-mile 220 kV gen-tie line, fencing, lighting, a maintenance facility, guard shack, and access roads. The PV modules will be thin film CdTe arranged in rectangular arrays and will be in a fixed position with a maximum height of approximately 6-feet. The Project will ultimately connect to the Southern California Edison regional transmission grid. In addition, the Project will require approximately 1,900 acre-feet of water for construction over a 2-to-4 year construction period. During operation of the proposed Project minimal water will be required to wash the PV modules.

Environmental Setting

The PV generating facility (Solar Farm), the corridor for the Project's 220-kilovolt (kV) generation interconnection (gen-tie) transmission line, and the access road will be located on Federal lands managed by the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Needles Field Office. The Solar Farm site is approximately 2 miles south of the California-Nevada border and 0.5 mile west of Interstate 15 (I-15) in eastern San Bernardino County (Refer to Figure 1 *Regional Location Map*).

The Project study area is largely vacant, undeveloped, and relatively flat land in the Ivanpah Valley, along the western flank of the Ivanpah Dry Lake in the Mojave Desert in eastern San Bernardino County, California. The Primm Valley Golf Club is adjacent to the southeast corner of the Project study area. The Golf Club is accessed via the Yates Well Road exit from Interstate-15, which is also the southern access for the Project study area. There are no known residences within 0.5 mi of the boundary of the Project study area.

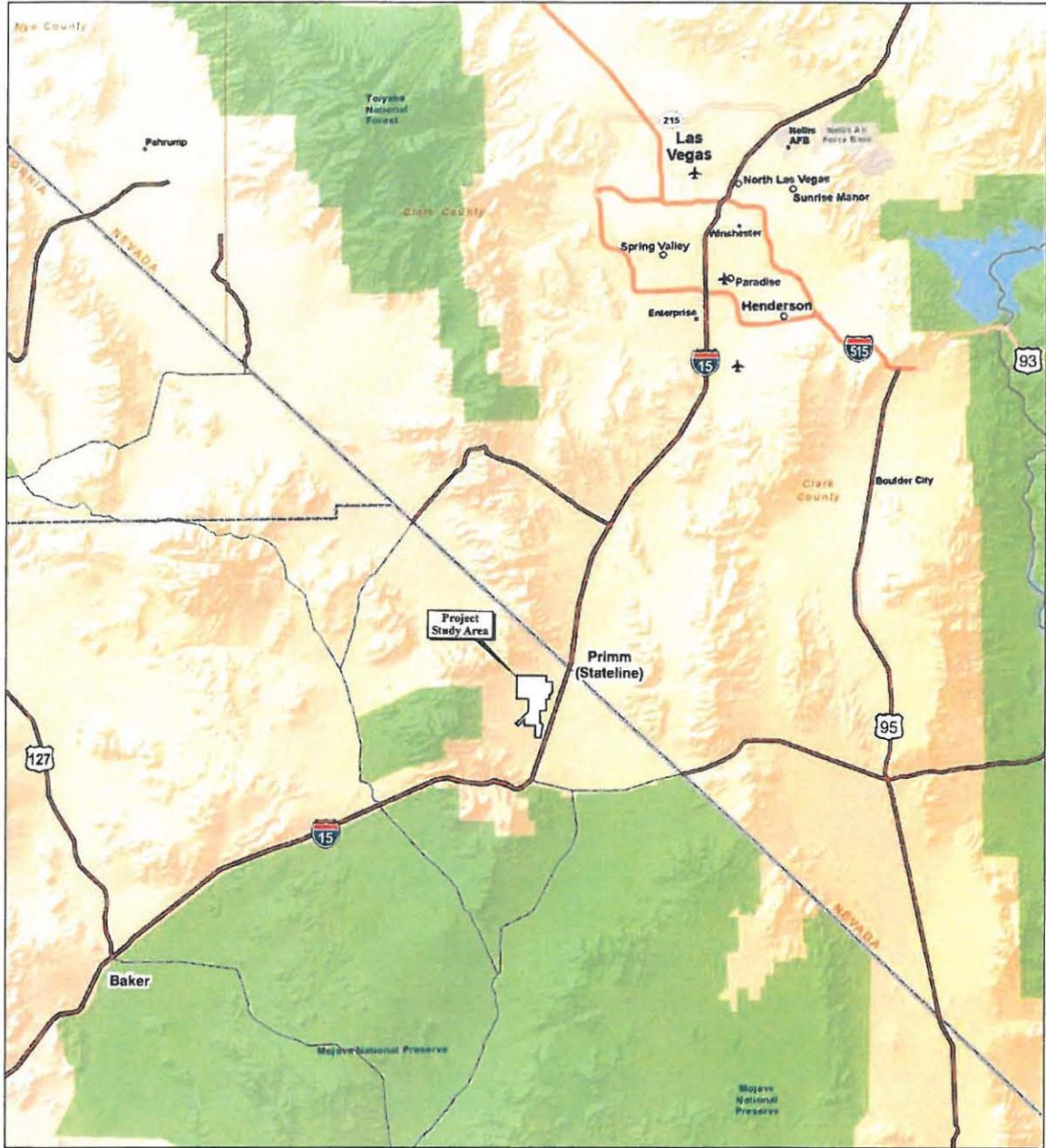


Figure 1: Regional Location Map

There is a major natural gas power plant approximately 1.5 mi east of Primm, NV. The Union Pacific railroad tracks are approximately 1.25 to 1.5 mi east of the Project site. The Project study area is crossed by two major power transmission corridors, one along the northern border, and the other crossing the southeast portion of the Project study area. The Project study area is also crossed by a major gas pipeline parallel to and just south of the northern power line corridor. Other existing uses crossing or within the Project study area and/or the Project site include transmission corridors, improved and unimproved roads, wells, and locatable mineral sites.

Project Activity

Two Project site plans – Proposed Project (Alternative B) and Alternative B1 are currently being considered (Refer to Figures 2, 2B and 2C). Both alternatives, where electricity will be generated, encompass between 1,900 (Alternative B1) and 2,150 ac (Alternative B) and will consist of the following components:

- Main generation area, which includes the PV arrays, combining switchgear, overhead lines, and access corridors;
- Monitoring and maintenance facility'
- On-site substation site security and fencing; and
- Access roads

The Project will use First Solar's thin film CdTe PV modules arranged in rectangular arrays and in a fixed position, with a maximum height of approximately 6-feet. The voltage of the electricity generated on site will be stepped up to 220 kilovolts (kV), the voltage of the gen-tie line, at the on-site substation. The 220 kV gen-tie line will transmit the electricity generated at the Project to the regional transmission system. The gen-tie line will exit the southwestern part of the Project site and follow a 150-foot wide transmission right-of-way to the Ivanpah Substation, approximately 2.3 miles south of the Project site. The gen-tie line will be mounted on either single or double circuit, galvanized or painted, lattice steel tower (LST) or tubular steel pole (TSP) structures. The transmission of the stepped-up 220 kV power produced by the Project will use overhead construction. Under this method of construction, the transmission conductor will be strung overhead on the supporting transmission structures. The heights of these structures will vary widely, depending on the electrical clearances required but will be less than 200 feet tall in all cases.

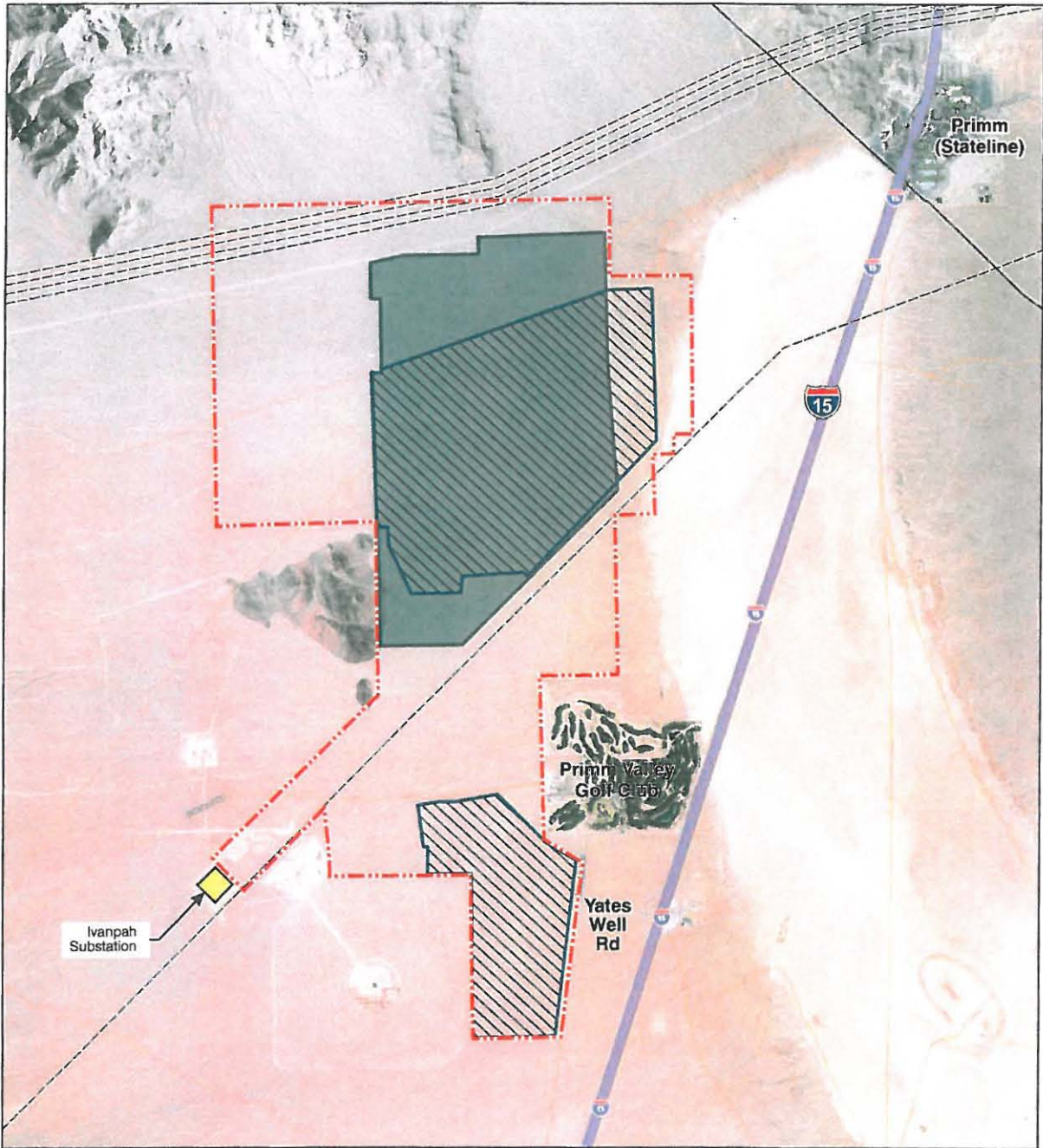


FIGURE 2

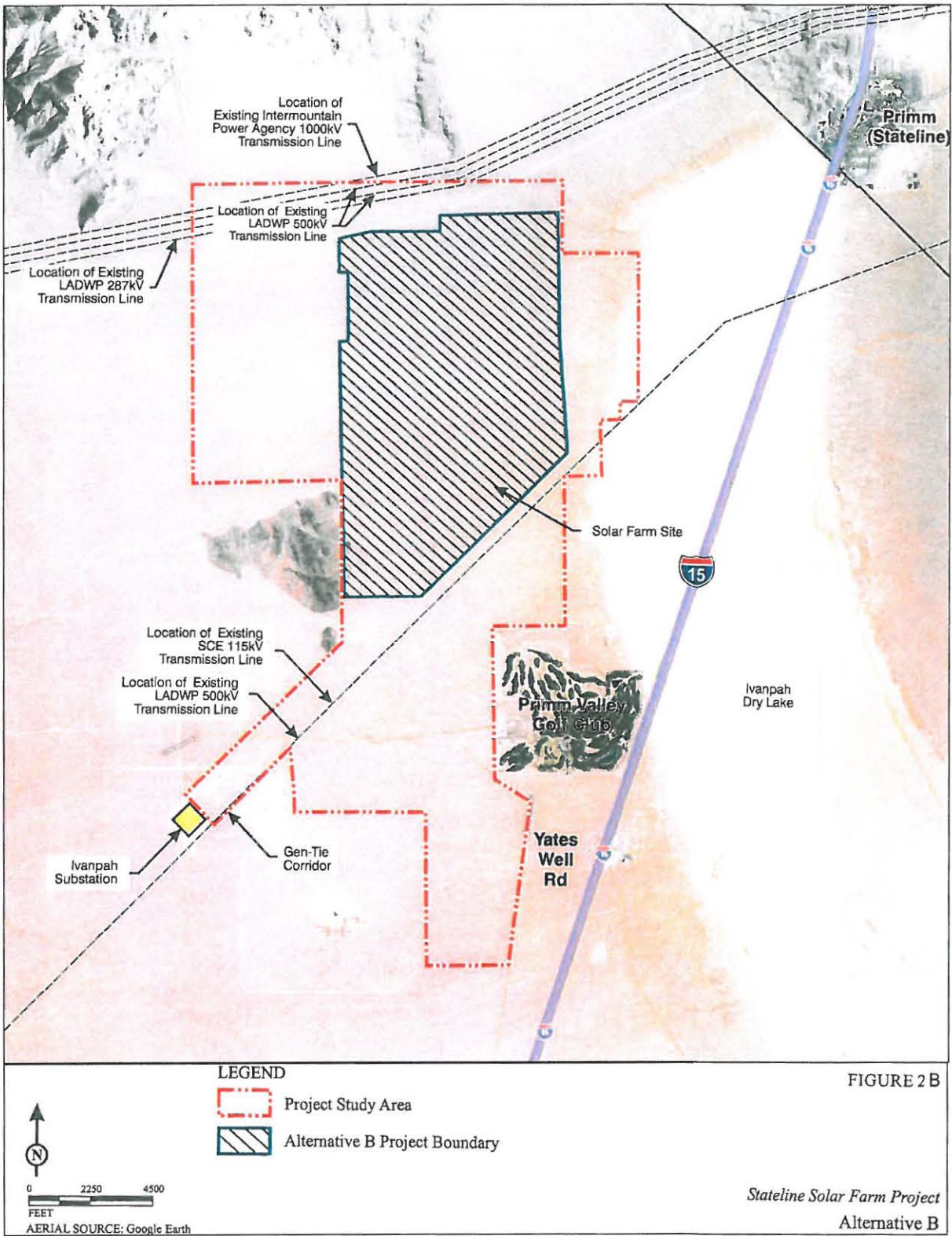
LEGEND

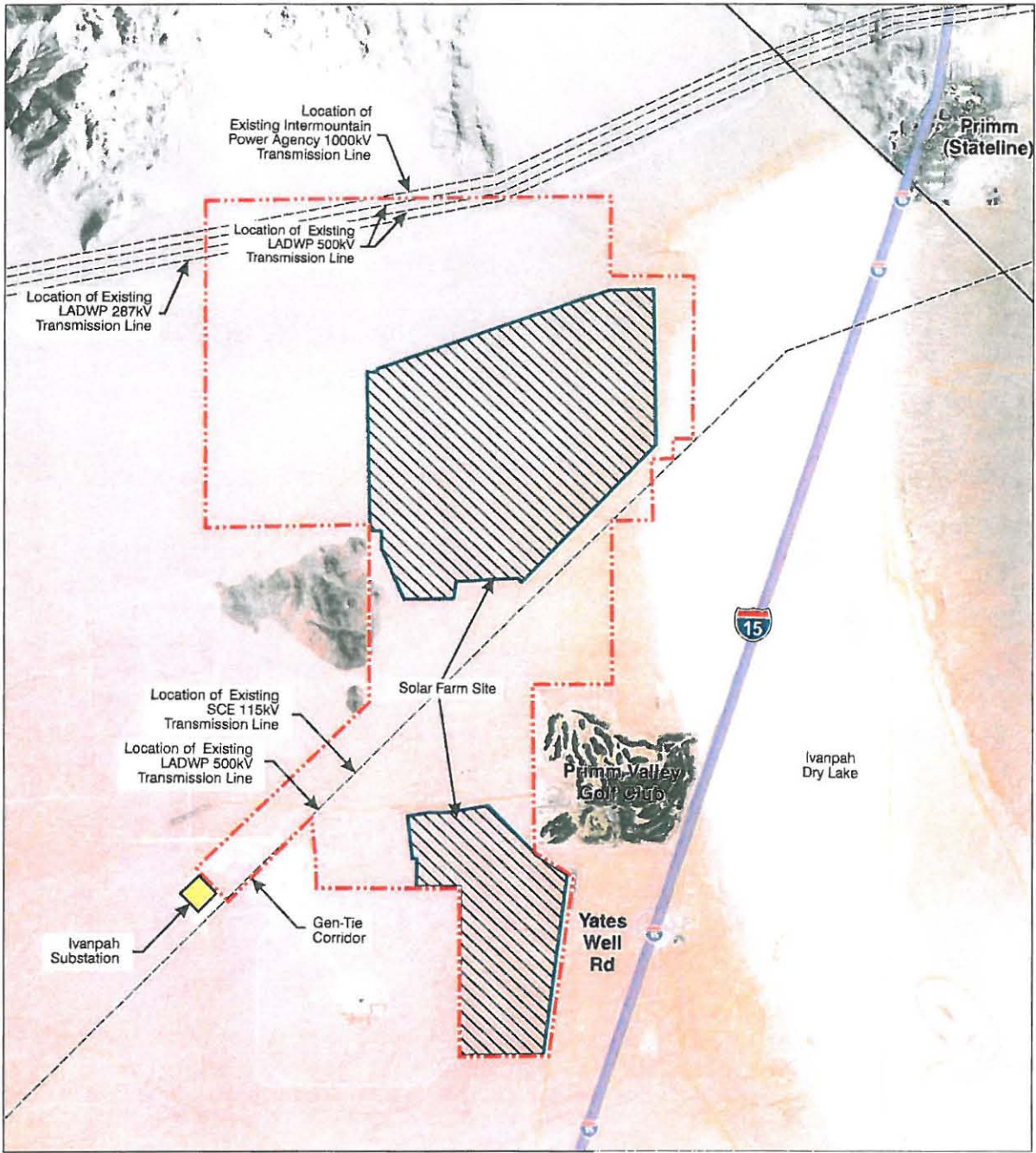
- Project Study Area
- Alternative B
- Alternative B1



0 2250 4500
FEET
AERIAL SOURCE: Google Earth

Stateline Solar Farm Project
Project Study Area with Alternatives B and B1





LEGEND

- Project Study Area
- Alternative B1 Project Boundary

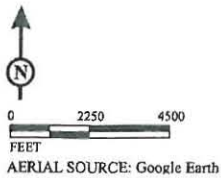


FIGURE 2 C

Stateline Solar Farm Project
Alternative B1

Project Construction

Construction of the Project will not begin until after all applicable approvals and permits have been obtained. The Applicant estimates that it will take approximately 2–4 years from initial construction mobilization to completion of construction. Construction of the Project will occur in two basic phases: (i) construction mobilization and (ii) construction and installation of the solar modules, electrical components, and gen-tie line. Construction mobilization includes preconstruction surveys; mobilization of personnel and equipment (including construction of access roads, and installation of trailers, laydown, and materials storage areas); and site preparation. After construction mobilization, construction of the PV arrays and gen-tie line will begin. Construction of the PV arrays is expected to take place at a pace of approximately one (1)-MW per day after an initial ramp up period.

Project Operation and Maintenance

The Project will be in operation for approximately 30 years. The Project is designed to have essentially no moving parts, no thermal cycle, and no water use for electricity generation. As a result, the Project will require only limited maintenance throughout its lifetime. Project maintenance activities will generally include all-weather road maintenance; vegetation restoration and management; scheduled maintenance of inverters, transformers, and other electrical equipment; and occasional replacement of faulty modules or other site electrical equipment. The all-weather access roads will be regularly inspected, and any degradation due to weather or wear and tear will be repaired. The Applicant will apply a dust palliative on dirt access roads, as needed, approximately once every 2–5 years.

The workforce for operations and maintenance and security purposes is estimated to be 7 to 10 full-time workers. Typical work schedules are expected to be during daylight hours only, with the exception of some limited maintenance work, required after dark when PV modules are not live, and 24-hour on-site security. Only limited deliveries will be necessary for replacement PV modules and equipment during Project operation. Daily traffic at the Project site during operations is expected to be approximately 20–30 daily round trips (total for employees and deliveries).

Government Agency Reviews and Permits

The BLM will be the lead Federal agency for approving the Project and will issue a Right of Way (ROW) grant authorizing the Project's construction, operation, and use of Federal lands. The decision regarding the issuance of the ROW grant will be based in part on an evaluation of the Project's potential environmental effects through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process and the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan. This project will require an amendment to the CDCA Plan. As noted above, the NEPA process will involve the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will detail the Project's expected environmental impacts and mitigation measures to avoid or minimize identified impacts. BLM will prepare an EIS to comply with NEPA. BLM will issue the necessary ROW grant through its Record of Decision (ROD) following completion of

the Final EIS. The CDCA Plan Amendment required for the Project will also be addressed through the FLPMA and NEPA process.

The Applicant has submitted three well construction permits to the County. The well permit is a discretionary action, warranting CEQA review. As noted above, the CEQA process will involve the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that will detail the proposed Project's expected environmental impacts and mitigation measures to avoid or minimize identified impacts. The County will coordinate with the BLM in preparing a joint EIS/EIR, in order to comply with CEQA.

The Applicant is currently in the process of working with other applicable Federal, State, and local permitting agencies. These include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District, and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), the County of San Bernardino and other agencies with jurisdiction over the Project in conjunction with the BLM's ROW grant approval process.

Potential Environmental Impacts

The lead agencies have determined that this project could result in significant environmental impacts and/or have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. As such, preparation of a joint EIS/EIR is appropriate. Accordingly, the Lead Agencies did not prepare an Environmental Assessment or Initial Study for the project. However, the lead agencies have identified the following environmental considerations as potential significant effects of the project:

- Aesthetics/Visual
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Grazing/Wild Burros
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise/Vibration
- Population and Housing
- Public Health/Safety
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Social Economics/Environmental Justice
- Special Designations
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wilderness and Recreation
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

Scoping Meetings

The BLM and the County will host a scoping meeting to provide the opportunity for the public to learn about the project and to share any concerns or comments they may have about the project. Additionally, the public may submit information and identify issues to

be addressed during the EIS/EIR process. The scoping meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 31, 2011 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the following location:

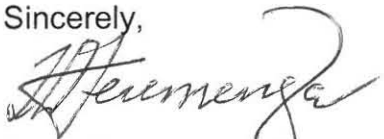
**Primm Valley Golf Club
1 Yates Well Road,
Nipton, California, 92364
(702) 679-5509**

The meeting is an open house format to allow the public to visit with County and BLM representatives.

Comments Due Date

Due to the time limit of 30 days mandated by State law, your comments must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than **September 23, 2011**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Feremenga". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Doug Feremenga, Planner