



## NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT EIR AND SCOPING MEETING

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**DATE:** March 26, 2018

**TO:** Responsible Agencies and Interested Parties

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Scoping Meeting

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the County of San Bernardino (County) must conduct a review of the environmental impacts of the Daggett Solar Power Facility Project (Project). Implementation of the Project will require discretionary approvals from state and local agencies, and therefore the Project is subject to the environmental review requirements of CEQA. As the lead agency under CEQA, and due to the involvement of potentially significant impacts to the environment, the County is therefore issuing this Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Project.

**PROJECT TITLE:** Daggett Solar Power Facility

**PROJECT NUMBER:** P201700679

**PROJECT APPLICANT:** Daggett Solar Power 1, LLC

**ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS:** 0515-011-03,-14,-15; 0515-021-06, -07; 0515-041-09,-15,-18,-21,-22,-28,-29; 0515-051-03,-04,-07,-09,-14,-15,-16,-17,-19,-22,-23,-24,-25,-31,-36,-37,-38; 0515-061-02,-19; 0515-071-12; 0515-111-05,-06,-07,-08,-09,-10,-12,-13,-14,-15,-16; 0515-131-11,-12,-13,-36; 0515-151-04,-09,-29,-30

Gen-Tie/Transmission Line Alternatives - **#1** 0515-061-17,-20,-21,-22; 0516-272-33; 0516-331-06; 0516-341-18; **#2** 0515-011-21; 0515-021-05; 0515-031-06; 0515-041-03; 0515-131-15; 0516-272-07,-16,-33; 0516-331-06; 0516-341-01; **#3** 0515-011-21; 0515-021-05,-06; 0515-041-03; 0515-131-15; 0516-272-33; 0516-331-06; 0516-341-18; **#4** 0515-031-06; 0515-041-03; 0515-051-30; 0515-131-15; 0516-272-33; 0516-331-06; 0516-341-18; **#5** 0516-272-33; 0515-061-17,-20,-21,-22; 0516-341-18,-19; 0516-331-05,-06

### PROJECT LOCATION

The Project site is located in unincorporated San Bernardino County; east of Barstow and Daggett, south of Interstate 15 and the Mojave River, and north of Interstate 40, and adjacent to Barstow-Daggett Airport (Figure 1). The Project area is situated within Township 9 North and within Ranges 1 East and 2 East. The sections are Sections 13, 23, and 24 in Range 1 East; Sections 7, 8, 15-19, 21, and 23 in Range 2 East (Figure 2). The Project site is located approximately within the latitudes of 34.83° and 34.90° and within the longitudes of -116.70° and -116.88°.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Daggett Solar Power 1 LLC, a subsidiary of NRG Renew, LLC, (Applicant) proposes six (6) Conditional Use Permits to construct and operate a solar energy generation and storage Project on approximately 3,500 acres east of Daggett, CA in San Bernardino County. The proposed Project would be a photovoltaic solar (PV) energy facility with associated on-site substations, inverters, fencing, roads and supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system of up to 650 Megawatts (MW). The Project would also include up to 450 MW of energy storage and an overhead power line, referred to as a generation tie line (gen-tie line), which would connect the Project to its points of interconnection which are the existing Southern California Edison-owned Coolwater substations, located approximately two miles west of the Project site. The Project would utilize existing electrical transmission infrastructure adjacent to the existing Coolwater Generating Station to deliver renewable energy to the electric grid.

The Project site is flat and is generally bounded by the town of Daggett approximately 0.5 mile to the west; the Mojave River, Yermo, and Interstate 15 to the north; Barstow Daggett Airport, Route 66, and Interstate 40 to the south; and Newberry Springs and Mojave Valley to the east.

The existing zoning designation for the Project site is Resource Conservation (RC). The RC zoning permits the development of renewable energy generation facilities with approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Other related permits/County approvals include, but are not limited to, a variance, which is required for the height of the transmission poles; road vacations, and/or a lot line adjustment/lot merger/subdivision map and/or tentative parcel map to merge parcels that comprise Project phases; encroachment permits; and airport land use compatibility approval. The Project is anticipated to be constructed in three phases and is seeking six separate CUPs to facilitate Project phasing and financing. The phases would share certain facilities, such as the on-site Project substations and generation tie (gen-tie) line. Development would occur on privately owned land.

The site will repurpose existing electrical transmission infrastructure previously used for fossil fuel-based electricity generation. The Project is being designed in accordance with the County's Solar Ordinance (an ordinance amending Chapter 84.29, Renewable Energy Generation Facilities) and the recently adopted General Plan's Renewable Energy and Conservation Element (August 8, 2017).

The Project area is also close to existing energy generation facilities, and other industrial uses. These include the existing non-operating Coolwater Generating Station, a 626 MW natural gas fired power plant, the 44 MW photovoltaic Sunray Solar Project, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) high voltage transmission corridor of approximately 1,000 feet in width, several high voltage substations and transmission lines owned by Southern California Edison (SCE), major highway and railroad infrastructure, and the Barstow Daggett Airport.

### Overview of the Solar Facility

The Project consists of PV solar panels, mounted on a single axis tracking system that tracks the sun. The tracking system is supported by steel piles and the panels are arranged into rows, which are grouped into solar arrays or blocks. The design also includes inverters and transformers mounted on small concrete pads and distributed across the site. Electricity produced by the arrays would be collected and routed to an on-site substation. Each phase would have its own on-site substation and battery storage system. From the on-site substations, each phase would include a segment of the overhead gen-tie line, which would connect the Project to the existing SCE-owned 115 and 230 kV Coolwater substations, which are adjacent to the Coolwater Generating

Station. The Project would also include security fencing for all phases and an O&M building to be constructed with the first phase.

#### Solar Array

Panels would be organized in rows in a uniform grid pattern, with each row separated by approximately 10-20 feet (from post to post). A fixed tilt racking system, which does not track the sun, also may be used if deemed suitable. Panels are proposed to be a maximum of 20 feet in height.

#### Inverters and Switchgear

Individual PV panels would be connected together in series to create a “string” to carry direct current (DC) electricity. Strings of DC electricity would be routed to inverters, which would take the DC output and convert it to alternating current (AC) electricity.

#### Substations

One new substation would be constructed as a part of each of the three Project phases. Each substation would occupy an area of approximately 300 feet by 300 feet and would be surrounded with security fence. From the new Project substations, a gen-tie line would be constructed to connect the solar facility to its point of interconnection at the two existing substations (115 and 230 kV) owned and operated by SCE. Work to facilitate the gen-tie connection will occur primarily inside the existing substations. Therefore, no expansion of the existing substations is anticipated.

#### Battery Storage

The Project is anticipated to include up to 450 MW of battery storage (on a total footprint of approximately 16 acres) to be constructed in three phases corresponding to the phased construction of the solar arrays. The battery storage systems are expected to be located either adjacent to each of the on-site Project substations or distributed throughout the solar arrays at the inverter equipment pads or tracker rows.

#### Gen-Tie Lines

The gen-tie poles are expected to be up to 120 feet in height and would be capable of accommodating both 115 and 230 kV electrical circuits. Each phase would share the gen-tie facilities. Five primary alternative routes are being considered for the Project gen-tie lines. These routes traverse the Project site from east to west and would be primarily along Silver Valley Road. Portions of some alternatives may be under ground, particularly in the area of the LADWP right-of-way. The gen-tie would be built out in sequences to match the phases of the solar Project.

#### Perimeter Fencing

Chain link fencing topped with one foot of barbed wire is proposed along the perimeter of the Project site. Access gates would be provided at each site entry point. Substation sites and/or battery storage sites may be separately fenced.

#### Lighting

Manual, timed, and motion sensor lights would be installed at equipment pads and substations for maintenance and security purposes. Remote-controlled cameras and other security measures would also be installed.

#### Other Infrastructure

An Operations and Maintenance (O&M) building of approximately 10,000 square feet would be constructed on approximately 1.5 acres within the Project footprint, during the first phase of the Project. The O&M building would serve to store spare parts, vehicles, and accommodate full and

part-time staff associated with the Project. Water would come from on-site wells

The solar and energy storage Project access road would be approximately 24 feet wide and composed of asphalt or native compacted material per County requirements.

Telecommunications equipment, such as fiber optic line, a SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) system, and auxiliary power, would be installed throughout the Project, at each inverter equipment pad, substation, and security system. Fire protection would also be included per applicable requirements.

## **EIR SCOPE**

As set forth in California Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq., and the CEQA Guidelines, codified in the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq, the County has determined, based on substantial evidence and in light of the whole record before the lead agency, that the Project may have a significant effect on the environment and that an Environmental Impact Report shall be prepared for the Project. (*PRC Sections 21080(d) and (e); 21082.2(d); 21083(b); CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(d) and 15081*)

The lead agency has initially identified the following environmental considerations as potentially significant effects of the Project:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Agriculture
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use/Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Traffic/Circulation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

The EIR will assess the effects of the 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 Project that may accomplish basic Project objectives while lessening or eliminating any potentially significant Project impacts.

## **RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES**

A responsible agency means a public agency other than the lead agency, which has permitting authority or approval power over some aspect of the overall Project. This Notice provides a description of the Project and solicits comments from responsible agencies, trustee agencies, federal, state and local agencies, and other interested parties on the scope and content of the environmental document to be prepared to analyze the environmental impacts of the Project. Comments received in response to this Notice will be reviewed and considered by the lead agency in determining the scope of the 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. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to you or to your agency's statutory responsibilities in

connection with the Project. Your agency may need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the Project.

## **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT**

The NOP is available for public review on the County's website:  
<http://cms.sbcounty.gov/lus/Planning/Environmental/Desert.aspx>.

Additionally, copy of the NOP is available for public review at the following locations:

San Bernardino County High Desert  
Government Center  
15900 Smoke Tree Street, Suite 1331  
Hesperia, CA 92345

San Bernardino County Library  
Barstow Branch  
304 E. Buena Vista Street  
Barstow, CA 92311

San Bernardino County Government Center  
385 North Arrowhead Avenue, Second  
Floor  
San Bernardino, CA 92415

Daggett Community Services District  
35277 Afton Street  
Daggett, CA 92327

We would like to hear what you think. Comments and questions should be directed as follows,  
**before 4:30 p.m. on April 26, 2018:**

County of San Bernardino  
Land Use Services Department  
Tom Nieves, Contract Planner  
385 N. Arrowhead Avenue, First Floor  
San Bernardino, CA 92415  
Phone: (909) 387-5036  
Email: [Tom.Nieves@lus.sbcounty.gov](mailto:Tom.Nieves@lus.sbcounty.gov)

Please include the name, phone number, and address of your agency's contact person in your response.

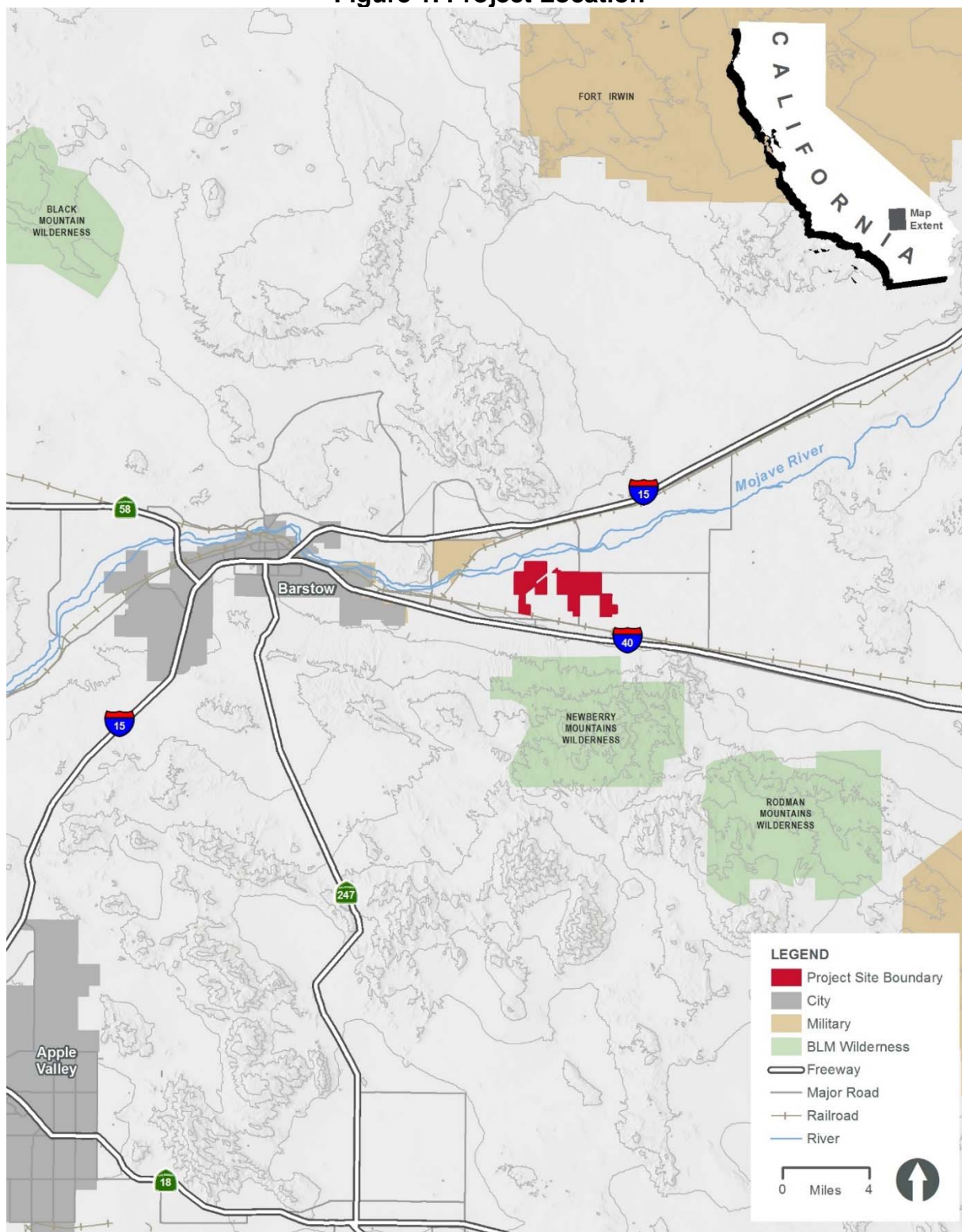
## **PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING**

The CEQA process encourages comments and questions from the public throughout the planning process. Consistent with Section 21083.9 of the CEQA statute, a Public Scoping Meeting will be held to solicit public comments on the scope and content of the EIR. The Public Scoping Meeting will be held on:

**Date and Time:** April 11, 2018 from 4:00 to 7:00 pm

**Place:** Daggett Community Services District  
35277 Afton Street  
Daggett, CA 92327

Figure 1. Project Location



**Figure 2. Project Site on USGS Quadrangles**

