

## Section 3.14

### Effects Found Not to Be Significant

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California Public Resources Code Section 21003(f) states, “It is the policy of the state that...all persons and public agencies involved in the environmental review process be responsible for carrying out the process in the most efficient, expeditious manner in order to conserve the available financial, governmental, physical, and social resources with the objective that those resources may be better applied toward the mitigation of actual significant effects on the environment.” This policy is reflected in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15126.2(a), which states that “an EIR [environmental impact report] shall identify and focus on the significant environmental impacts of the proposed project,” and Section 15143, which states that “the EIR shall focus on the significant effects on the environment.” State CEQA Guidelines Section 15128 requires that an EIR contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR.

This section is based on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) dated March 26, 2018 (see **Appendix A** of this EIR). The NOP was prepared consistent with the State CEQA Guidelines to identify the potentially significant effects of the proposed project and was circulated for public review between March 26, 2018, and April 26, 2018. Comments received during public scoping were considered in the process of identifying issue areas that should receive attention in the EIR.

In the course of evaluation, certain impacts were found not to be significant (no impact) or to be less than significant because the characteristics of the proposed project would not create such impacts. This section briefly describes such effects, based on the NOP. A number of individual impacts found to be less than significant are addressed in the various EIR sections (Sections 3.1 through 3.13) to provide a more comprehensive discussion as to why impacts are less than significant, in order to better inform decision-makers and the general public.

### **MINERAL RESOURCES**

a) *Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?*

Most mining activities are focused in the County’s Desert Planning Area, in which the proposed project site is located. According to the US Geological Survey (USGS) (2018), a site recorded in 1991 by the name of Oro Treasure and New Year (Record ID 10140797), located at Minneola Road and Silver Valley Road and contiguous to the proposed project area, was considered a Prospect or Occurrence site. However, according to the USGS, this site is not a mine and/or an

active mine. The USGS identification information of the site indicates that the Prospect or Occurrence site is not of significant economic importance. For these reasons, loss of availability of mineral resources that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state would not occur. No impact would occur.

*b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?*

Refer to response a), above. No portion of the project site is delineated as a locally important mineral resource recovery site in the County General Plan. Therefore, the project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. No impact would occur.

## **POPULATION AND HOUSING**

*a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?*

It is anticipated that the project would create a small number of highly specialized job positions such as a plant manager, maintenance manager, solar technicians, and environmental specialists. Employment rates in San Bernardino County suggest that an approximately 1.3 percent change was occurring as of 2015 and will continue from 2015 to 2040, or approximately 299,000 new jobs will be created in the region (SCAG 2016). As previously mentioned, the proposed project would create a small number of highly specialized jobs, which would not significantly alter the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) housing projections for unincorporated San Bernardino County. Further, SCAG (2016) projected an increase in the number of household units in the unincorporated county, from 94,200 units in 2012 to 11,300 in 2040. In the event that homes are necessary to house project employees, it is anticipated that housing would be available in Barstow or adjacent communities, based on SCAG's projected growth. It is anticipated that most workers would commute to the site from nearby communities such as Barstow, with some traveling from more distant areas such as Victorville, Hesperia, and San Bernardino. Construction would generally occur during daylight hours, though exceptions may arise due to need for nighttime work. Workers would reach the site using existing roads.

Additionally, the project does not propose the development of residential uses that would require the construction of new homes, businesses, or infrastructure (e.g., provision of new water or wastewater services). The proposed project would enable generated electricity to be delivered to the grid to serve existing electrical demands; it is not anticipated to spur new growth in areas that would not have otherwise been developed. Additionally, the project would result in

local infrastructure improvements in the form of access roads but would not impede existing access routes or facilitate new access to lands that were previously inaccessible, thereby allowing for future development.

Lastly, the Daggett Solar Power Facility would not by itself induce growth because it would be a replacement for the Coolwater Generating Station. Power generated by the project would be supplied to existing customers and would service existing demand. Development of the project would not remove any impediments that currently inhibit growth. Obstacles to population growth in the region surrounding the project site are primarily due to the feasibility of development, economic constraints, permitting, and other development restrictions and regulations promulgated by local agencies. The project would not modify land use or zoning designations to allow for more residential growth and therefore would not foster growth, remove direct growth constraints, or add a direct stimulus to growth. Therefore, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly induce substantial population growth. Impacts would be less than significant.

*b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

The proposed project site is undeveloped and although there are very few residences on the site, they belong to land owners participating in the project. Therefore, the proposed project would not displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. No impact would occur.

*c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

As discussed in responses a) and b) above, the project would not require the removal of any existing housing or residents which are not affiliated with the project property, as the affected lands are undeveloped and no residential uses are present on-site who are not participating landowners in the project. Therefore, there would be no potential displacement of substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing. No impact would occur.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES**

- a) *Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services?*

## **FIRE PROTECTION**

Fire protection services for the project area are provided by the Daggett Fire Department. The department's fire station is approximately 1.5 miles to the west of the project site at 33702 Second Street in Daggett. Additionally, the Barstow Fire Protection District station is approximately 12 miles west of the project site at 861 Barstow Road in Barstow and would be available to back up the Daggett Fire Department if necessary. The project would be designed and operated in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local worker safety and fire protection codes and regulations to minimize the potential for occurrence of fire. The project would not result in development that would generate new population in the area which would potentially increase demand for fire protection, as no residential uses are proposed. Project construction activities would be short term and due to the nature of the proposed improvements, would not substantially increase the risk of fire to occur or the need for fire protection services. Over the long term, project operation and maintenance could introduce potential ignition sources such as transformers, capacitors, electric transmission lines (including the gen-tie line), substations, maintenance vehicles, and gas- or electric-powered machinery used for maintenance of the facilities. Additionally, the proposed inverters and solar panels may represent a potential ignition source; however, the potential for fire risk for these components is considered low. All battery components for the proposed energy storage component would be installed on concrete pads and contained within an enclosure to minimize the potential for sparks or ignition to occur. Further, all such enclosures would be equipped with a fire suppression system.

The project would be designed and constructed in conformance with San Bernardino County Fire Department requirements (e.g., as conditions of approval). Additionally, the project applicant would be required to pay Public Safety Services Impact Fees in conformance with San Bernardino County Development Code Section 84.29.040(d) for solar facilities to ensure the project would not adversely affect the provision of fire protection services in the area.

Therefore, the proposed solar power facility project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which

could cause significant environmental impacts, to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for fire protection services. Impacts would be less than significant.

## **POLICE PROTECTION**

The project site is served by the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. The nearest sheriff's station is in Barstow, approximately 12 miles west of the project site. The project would not result in development which would generate new population that could potentially increase demand for police protection, as no residential uses are proposed. Due to the nature of the proposed land use, project construction and/or operation activities would not substantially increase demand for police protection services in the area. The facility would be secured with chain-link fencing with 1 foot of barbed wire at the top along the perimeter of the site. Access gates would be provided at each site entry point. Substation sites and/or battery storage sites may be separately fenced. Controlled security lighting would be installed, and the site would be monitored remotely. 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. No other type of lighting is planned. Additionally, the applicant would be required to pay Public Safety Services Impact Fees to ensure the project does not adversely affect police protection services in the area.

With implementation of such measures, the proposed project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for police protection services. Impacts would be less than significant.

## **SCHOOLS**

Schools in the project vicinity include the following: Alternative Education (grades K–12), 33525 Ponnay, Daggett; Silver Valley High School (grades 9–12), 35484 Daggett-Yermo Road, Yermo; Yermo School (grades TK–8), 38280 Gleason Street, Yermo; and Newberry Elementary School (grades TK–4), 33713 Newberry Road in Newberry Springs. All these schools are located within a 5- to 6-mile radius of the perimeter of the project site.

The need for permanent housing for project employees would not be necessary. It is not anticipated that construction workers would permanently relocate to the local area with their families. Rather, they would be sourced from surrounding communities. Additionally, due to the number of schools in the project vicinity and the nature of the proposed project, it is not

anticipated that population growth would be generated in the area, and no new school-aged children would trigger an increased demand for school services.

Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a substantial adverse physical impact associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for schools. No impact would occur.

### **PARKS**

Refer to the response in the Schools subsection, above. As previously stated, project construction may result in a temporary increase in construction workers in the area; however, construction workers would not be anticipated to permanently relocate locally and would likely be sourced from other areas of San Bernardino County. Further, although the proposed facilities would be manned, the project site would be minimally staffed, with highly specialized staff on-site. The small number of permanent jobs created by the project is not anticipated to generate sufficient population growth to increase demand for park facilities or other recreational services in the area.

Therefore, the proposed project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any park services. No impact would occur.

### **OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES**

The project is not anticipated to increase the population in the area. If it does occur, any increase in population would be negligible. It is not anticipated that area demand on other public facilities (e.g., libraries or parks) would be created. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any other public facilities. No impact would occur.

## RECREATION

- a) *Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?*

Refer to the responses in the Parks and Other Public Facilities subsections, above. No residential uses are proposed. Consequently, population growth is not anticipated and an increase in the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks and or other recreational facilities is not anticipated.

During the construction phase, a temporary increase in construction workers in the area may occur; however, it is anticipated that construction workers would be sourced from surrounding communities in relative proximity to the project site. Therefore, the project would not substantially increase the use of local or regional recreational parks or facilities such that substantial physical deterioration would occur or be accelerated. No impact would occur.

- b) *Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?*

Please refer to response a), above. The project would result in the construction of a solar power facility and would not include any type of residential development that would require recreational facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in development of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. No impact would occur.

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