Lorelei H. Oviatt, AICP, Director
2700 "M" Street, Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93301-2323
Phone: (661) 862-8600
Fax: (661) 862-8601 TTY Relay 1-800-735-2929
Email: planning@co.kern.ca.us
Web Address: http://pcd.kerndsa.com/

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Planning
Community Development
Administrative Operations

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

DATE: July 12, 2017

TO: See Attached Mailing List

FROM: Kern County Planning and
Natural Resources Department
Attn: Janice Mayes
2700 "M" Street, Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93301
(661) 862-8793; mayesj@co.kern.ca.us

RE: NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department, as Lead Agency, Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act, (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15052) has determined that preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15161, is necessary for the project identified below. The Planning and Natural Resources Department solicits the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval of projects.

Due to the limits mandated by State law, your response must be received by **August 11, 2017 at 5pm.** In addition, comments can also be submitted at a **scoping meeting** that will be held at the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department on **July 21, 2017 at 1:30pm** at the address shown above.

PROJECT TITLE: EIR JKM 02-17; RB Inyokern Solar Project Phase 1 & 2, by R&L Capital, Inc.; SPA 4, Map 47; CUP 23, Map 47; CUP 6, Map 47-29; (PP16109).

PROJECT LOCATION The project site is located in the eastern high desert region of Kern County, in the unincorporated community of Inyokern, on approximately 237.43 acres of 16 parcels, along US Hwy 395 to the east and Brown Road to the west. The site is located within Sections 19, 20, 29, and 30 in Township 26 South, Range 39 East, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian (Sec. 19, 20, 29, 30, T26S, R39E, M.D.B.&M.).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project includes a request for land use entitlements necessary to facilitate the future construction and operation of a solar facility and associated infrastructure to generate a combined 32 megawatts of renewable electrical energy and/or energy storage capacity on 237.43 acres of privately-owned land. Implementation of the project as proposed would require: a) an Amendment to the Inyokern Specific Plan circulation element and b) processing of Conditional Use Permit 23 for the approximately 143 acre, 20 megawatt, Phase I project site; and c) processing of Conditional Use Permit 6 for the approximately 94 acre, 12 megawatt, Phase II project site. The proposed project would encompass approximately 237.43 acres of the 248.28 acres of land owned by the project proponent. Water for the project is proposed to be trucked from an offsite water purveyor and/or pumped from onsite wells.

Signature: Janice Mayes

Name: Janice Mayes, Planner

SPA #4; CUP #23 & 6, Map #47
WO #PP16109 (EIR 02-17)
I:\Planning\WORKGRPS\WP\LABELS\eir02-17jkm.ec.doc
Sc 03/17/17

Supervisor Mick Gleason
1st District

Inyo County Planning Dept
P.O. Drawer "L"
Independence, CA 93526

Kings County Planning Agency
1400 West Lacey Blvd, Bldg 6
Hanford, CA 93230

Los Angeles Co Reg Planning Dept
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

San Bernardino Co Planning Dept
385 North Arrowhead Avenue, 1st Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0182

Santa Barbara Co Resource Mgt Dept
123 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Tulare County Planning & Dev Dept
5961 South Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, CA 93291

Ventura County RMA Planning Div
800 South Victoria Avenue, L1740
Ventura, CA 93009-1740

U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Ridgecrest Field Office
300 South Richmond Road
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

China Lake Naval Weapons Center
Tim Fox, RLA - Comm Plans & Liaison
429 E Bowen, Building 981
Mail Stop 4001
China Lake, CA 93555

Edwards AFB, Sustainability Office
412 TW/XPO, Bldg 2750, Rm 204-38
195 East Popson Avenue
Edwards AFB, CA 93524

Federal Aviation Administration
Western Reg Office/
Airport Div - Room 3000
15000 Aviation Boulevard
Lawndale, CA 90261

Federal Communications Comm
18000 Studebaker Road, #660
Cerritos, CA 90701

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
777 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Suite 208
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Eastern Kern Resource Cons Dist
300 South Richmond Road
Ridgecrest, CA 93555-4436

Environmental Protection Agency
Region IX Office
75 Hawthorn Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

U.S. Dept of Agriculture/NRCS
5000 California Avenue, Ste 100
Bakersfield, CA 93309-0711

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 997
Lake Isabella, CA 93240

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Regulatory Division
1325 "J" Street, #1350
Sacramento, CA 95814-2920

U.S. Postal Service
Address Management Systems
28201 Franklin Parkway
Santa Clarita, CA 91383-9321

State Air Resources Board
Stationary Resource Division
P.O. Box 2815
Sacramento, CA 95812

So. San Joaquin Valley Arch Info Ctr
California State University of Bkfd
9001 Stockdale Highway
Bakersfield, CA 93311

Caltrans/Dist 6
Planning/Land Bank Bldg.
P.O. Box 12616
Fresno, CA 93778

Caltrans/Dist 9
Planning Department
500 South Main Street
Bishop, CA 93514

Caltrans/
Division of Structures
Attn: Jim Roberts
P.O. Box 1499
Sacramento, CA 95807

State Clearinghouse
Office of Planning and Research
1400 - 10th Street, Room 222
Sacramento, CA 95814

State Dept of Conservation
Director's Office
801 "K" Street, MS 24-01
Sacramento, CA 95814-3528

State Dept of Conservation
Division of Oil & Gas
4800 Stockdale Highway, Ste 108
Bakersfield, CA 93309

California State University
Bakersfield - Library
9001 Stockdale Highway
Bakersfield, CA 93309

California Energy Commission
James W. Reed, Jr.
1516 Ninth Street
Mail Stop 17
Sacramento, CA 95814

California Fish & Wildlife
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, CA 93710

California Highway Patrol
Planning & Analysis Division
P.O. Box 942898
Sacramento, CA 94298-0001

Public Utilities Comm Energy Div
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

California Regional Water Quality
Control Board/Lahontan Region
15095 Amargosa Road - Bld 2, Suite 210
Victorville, CA 92392

State Lands Commission
100 Howe Avenue, Ste 100-South
Sacramento, CA 95825-8202

State Dept of Toxic Substance Control
Environmental Protection Agency
1515 Tollhouse Road
Clovis, CA 93612

State Dept of Water Resources
San Joaquin Dist.
3374 East Shields Avenue, Room A-7
Fresno, CA 93726

Kern County
Agriculture Department

Kern County Airports Department

Kern County Administrative Officer

Kern County Public Works Department/
Building & Development/Floodplain

Kern County Public Works Department/
Building & Development/Survey

Kern County
Env Health Services Department

Kern County Fire Dept
Brian Marshall, Fire Chief

Kern County Fire Dept
Cary Wright, Fire Marshall

Kern County Library/Beale
Local History Room

Kern County Library/Beale
Director

Kern County Library
Ridgecrest Branch
131 East Las Flores
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Kern County Parks & Recreation

Kern County Sheriff's Dept
Administration

Kern County Public Works Department/
Building & Development/Development
Review

Kern County Public Works
Department/Operations &
Maintenance/Regulatory Monitoring &
Reporting

Kern County Public Works Department/
Building & Development/Code
Compliance

Mojave Town Council
Bill Deaver, President
P.O. Box 1113
Mojave, CA 93502-1113

Sierra Sands Unified School Dist
113 Felspar
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Kern County Superintendent of Schools
Attention Mary Baker
1300 17th Street
Bakersfield, CA 93301

KernCOG
1401 19th Street - Suite 300
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Local Agency Formation Comm/LAFCO
5300 Lennox Avenue, Suite 303
Bakersfield, CA 93309

Indian Wells Valley Water Dist
P.O. Box 1329
Ridgecrest, CA 93556

Kern County Water Agency
P.O. Box 58
Bakersfield, CA 93302-0058

East Kern Air Pollution
Control District

Inyokern Community Serv Dist
P.O. Box 1418
Inyokern, CA 93527

Inyokern Airport
P.O. Box 634
Inyokern, CA 93527

Adams, Broadwell, Joseph & Cardozo
Attention: Janet M. Laurain
601 Gateway Boulevard, Suite 1000
South San Francisco, CA 94080

Kern Audubon Society
Attn: Harry Love, President
13500 Powder River Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93314

Los Angeles Audubon
926 Citrus Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90036-4929

Center on Race, Poverty
& the Environment
Attn: Marissa Alexander
1999 Harrison Street – Suite 650
San Francisco, CA 94612

Center on Race, Poverty
& the Environmental/
CA Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
1012 Jefferson Street
Delano, CA 93215

Defenders of Wildlife/
Kim Delfino, California Dir
980 - 9th Street, Suite 1730
Sacramento, CA 95814

California Farm Bureau
2300 River Plaza Drive, NRED
Sacramento, CA 95833

Native American Heritage Council
of Kern County
Attn: Gene Albitre
3401 Aslin Street
Bakersfield, CA 93312

Pacific Gas & Electric Co
Land Projects
650 "O" Street, First Floor
Fresno, CA 93760-0001

Sierra Club/Kern Kaweah Chapter
P.O. Box 3357
Bakersfield, CA 93385

Southern California Edison
Planning Dept.
510 S. China Lake Blvd.
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Verizon California, Inc.
Attention Engineering Department
520 South China Lake Boulevard
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Chumash Council of Bakersfield
2421 "O" Street
Bakersfield, CA 93301-2441

David Laughing Horse Robinson
P.O. Box 20849
Bakersfield, CA 93390

Kern Valley Indian Council
Attn: Robert Robinson, Chairperson
P.O. Box 401
Weldon, CA 93283

Kern Valley Indian Council
Historic Preservation Office
P.O. Box 401
Weldon, CA 93283

Santa Rosa Rancheria
Ruben Barrios, Chairperson
P.O. Box 8
Lemoore, CA 93245

Tejon Indian Tribe
Kathy Morgan, Chairperson
1731 Hasti-acres Drive, Suite 108
Bakersfield, CA 93309

Kitanemuk & Yowlumne Tejon Indians
Chairperson
115 Radio Street
Bakersfield, CA 93305

Tubatulabals of Kern County
Attn: Robert Gomez, Chairperson
P.O. Box 226
Lake Isabella, CA 93240

Tule River Indian Tribe
Neal Peyron, Chairperson
P.O. Box 589
Porterville, CA 93258

Matthew Gorman
The Gorman Law Firm
1346 E. Walnut Street, Suite 220
Pasadena, CA 91106

Matthew Gorman
The Gorman Law Firm
1346 E. Walnut Street, Suite 220
Pasadena, CA 91106

Carol Vaughn
509 West Ward
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

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P.O. Box 6003
Bakersfield, CA 93386

LIUNA
Attn: Arthur Izzo
2201 "H" Street
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Mojave Foundation
Attn: Todd Quelet
16922 Airport Boulevard
Mojave, CA 93501

Raymond Kelso/
Pleistocene Foundation
2362 Lumill Street
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Lozeau Drury LLP
410 – 12th Street, Suite 250
Oakland, CA 94607

U.S. Army
Attn: Tim Kilgannon, Region 9 Coordinator
Office of Strategic Integration
721 - 19th Street, Room 427
Denver, CO 80202

Congentrix Sunshine, LLC
Rick Neff
9405 Arrowpoint Blvd
Charlotte, NC 28273

Wind Stream, LLC
Albert Davies
1275 - 4th Street, No. 107
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

PG&E
Steven Ng, Manager
Renewal Dev, T&D Intercon
77 Beal Street, Room 5361
San Francisco, CA 94105

Recurrent Energy
Seth Israel
300 California Street, 8th Floor
San Francisco, CA 92109

Kelly Group
Kate Kelly
P.O. Box 868
Winters, CA 95694

David Walsh
22941 Banducci Road
Tehachapi, CA 93561

National Public Lands News
941 E. Ridgecrest Blvd
Inyokern, CA 93555

Indian Wells Water
Management Committee
P.O. Box 1329
Ridgecrest, CA 93556

Indian Wells Valley Airport Dist
P.O. Box 634
Inyokern, CA 93527

U.S. Navy
Attn: Steve Chung
Regional Community & Liaison Officer
1220 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Terra-Gen
Randy Hoyle, Sr. Vice Pres
11512 El Camino Real, Suite 370
San Diego, CA 92130

Fotowatio Renewable Ventures
Sean Kiernan
44 Montgomery Street, Suite 2200
San Francisco, CA 94104

Darren Kelly, Sr. Business Mgr
Terra-Gen Power, LLC
1095 Avenue of the Americas, 25th Floor, Ste A
New York, NY 10036-6797

Wayne Mayes, Dir Tech Serv
Iberdrola Renewables
1125 NW Couch St, Ste 700, 7th Fl
Portland, OR 97209

Tehachapi Area Assoc of Realtors
Carol Lawhon, Assoc Exe, IOM
803 Tucker Road
Tehachapi, CA 93561

T.T Case
P.O. Box 2416
Tehachapi, CA 93581

Pleistocene Foundation
2362 Lumill Street
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

U.S. Army
Attn: Philip Crosbie, Chief
Strategic Plans, S3, NTC
P.O. Box 10172
Fort Irwin, CA 92310

U.S. Marine Corps
Attn: Patrick Christman
Western Regional Environmental Officer
Building 1164/Box 555246
Camp Pendleton, CA 92055-5246

U.S. Air Force
Attn: Steve Arenson
Western Regional Environmental Officer
50 Fremont Street, Suite 2450
San Francisco, CA 94105-2230

Renewal Resources Group
Holding Company
Rupal Patel
113 South La Brea Avenue, 3rd Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90036

EDP Renewables Company
53 SW Yamhill Street
Portland, OR 97204

Bill Barnes, Dir of Asset Mgt
AES Midwest Wind Gen
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Palm Springs, CA 92263-2190

Michael Strickler, Sr Project Mgr
Iberdrola Renewables
1125 NW Couch St, Ste 700, 7th Fl
Portland, OR 97209

EcoPlexus, Inc.
Marcus V. daCunha, VP of Dev
650 Townsend Street, Suite 310
San Francisco, CA 94103

Beyond Coal Campaign/Sierra Club
Sarah K. Friedman
1417 Calumet Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90026

Robert Burgett
9261 - 60th Street, West
Mojave, CA 93501

Structure Cast
Larry Turpin, Sales Mgr
8261 McCutchen Road
Bakersfield, CA 93311

Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal

Mail to: State Clearinghouse, P. O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 (916) 445-0613
For Hand Delivery/Street Address: 1400 Tenth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

SCH # _____

Project Title: EIR JKM 02-17; RB Inyokern Solar Project by R & L Capital, Inc.

Lead Agency: Kern County Planning Department | Contact Person: Janice Mayes
Mailing Address: 2700 "M" Street Suite 100 | Phone: (661) 862-8793
City: Bakersfield | Zip: 93301-2323 | County: Kern

Project Location: County: Kern | City/Nearest Community: Inyokern
Cross Streets: US Hwy 395 and West Inyokern Road | Zip Code: 92537
Lat. / Long.: 35° 13'37.2076 N / 118° 58'25.2369 W | Total Acres: 237
Assessor's Parcel No.: Multiple | Section: Multiple | Twp.: Multiple | Range: Multiple | Base: MDB&M
Within 2 Miles: State Hwy #: N/A | Waterways: N/A
Airports: Inyokern Airport | Railways: N/A | Schools: Inyokern Elementary

Document Type:

CEQA: ☒ NOP ☐ Early Cons ☐ Neg Dec ☐ Mit Neg Dec ☐ Draft EIR ☐ Supplement/Subsequent EIR (Prior SCH No.) _____ ☐ Other _____
NEPA: ☐ NOI ☐ EA ☐ Draft EIS ☐ FONSI
Other: ☐ Joint Document ☐ Final Document ☐ Other _____

Local Action Type:

☐ General Plan Update ☐ General Plan Amendment ☐ General Plan Element ☐ Community Plan
☒ Specific Plan ☐ Master Plan ☐ Planned Unit Development ☐ Site Plan
☐ Rezone ☐ Prezone ☒ Use Permit ☐ Land Division (Subdivision, etc.)
☐ Annexation ☐ Redevelopment ☐ Coastal Permit ☐ Other _____

Development Type:

☐ Residential: Units _____ Acres _____
☐ Office: Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____
☒ Commercial: Sq.ft. 0 Acres 237 Employees 50
☐ Industrial: Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____
☐ Educational _____
☐ Recreational _____
☐ Water Facilities: Type _____ MGD _____
☐ Transportation: Type _____
☐ Mining: Mineral _____
☒ Power: Type Solar MW 32
☐ Waste Treatment: Type _____ MGD _____
☐ Hazardous Waste: Type _____
☐ Other: _____

Project Issues Discussed in Document:

☒ Aesthetic/Visual
☒ Agricultural Land
☒ Air Quality
☒ Archeological/Historical
☒ Biological Resources
☐ Coastal Zone
☒ Drainage/Absorption
☐ Economic/Jobs
☐ Fiscal
☒ Flood Plain/Flooding
☒ Forest Land/Fire Hazard
☒ Geologic/Seismic
☒ Minerals
☒ Noise
☐ Population/Housing Balance
☒ Public Services/Facilities
☐ Recreation/Parks
☐ Schools/Universities
☐ Septic Systems
☐ Sewer Capacity
☒ Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading
☐ Solid Waste
☒ Toxic/Hazardous
☒ Traffic/Circulation
☒ Vegetation
☒ Water Quality
☒ Water Supply/Groundwater
☐ Wetland/Riparian
☒ Wildlife
☐ Growth Inducing
☒ Land Use
☒ Cumulative Effects
☐ Other _____

Present Land Use/Zoning/General Plan Designation:

Undeveloped Land. *Zoning:* M-2 (Medium Industrial) and M-2 PD (Heavy Industrial, Precise Development); Inyokern Specific Plan: 7.2 (Medium Industrial); 2.5 (Steep Slope)

Project Description: *(please use a separate page if necessary)* The project includes a request for land use entitlements necessary to facilitate the future construction and operation of a solar facility and associated infrastructure to generate a combined 32 megawatts of renewable electrical energy and/or energy storage capacity on 237.43 acres of privately-owned land. Implementation of the project as proposed would require: a) an Amendment to the Inyokern Specific Plan circulation element and b) processing of Conditional Use Permit 23 for the approximately 143 acre, 20 megawatt, Phase I project site; and c) processing of Conditional Use Permit 6 for the approximately 94 acre, 12 megawatt, Phase II project site. The proposed project would encompass approximately 237.43 acres of the 248.28 acres of land owned by the project proponent. Water for the project is proposed to be trucked from an offsite water purveyor and/or pumped from onsite wells.

Reviewing Agencies Checklist

Lead Agencies may recommend State Clearinghouse distribution by marking agencies below with and "**X**".
If you have already sent your document to the agency please denote that with an "**S**".

S	Air Resources Board		Office of Emergency Services
	Boating & Waterways, Department of		Office of Historic Preservation
S	California Highway Patrol		Office of Public School Construction
	CalFire		Parks & Recreation
S	Caltrans District # 6 & 9		Pesticide Regulation, Department of
	Caltrans Division of Aeronautics	S	Public Utilities Commission
	Caltrans Planning (Headquarters)	S	Regional WQCB # Lahontan
	Central Valley Flood Protection Board		Resources Agency
	Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy		S.F. Bay Conservation & Development Commission
	Coastal Commission		San Gabriel & Lower L.A. Rivers and Mtns Conservancy
	Colorado River Board		San Joaquin River Conservancy
S	Conservation, Department of		Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
	Corrections, Department of	S	State Lands Commission
	Delta Protection Commission		SWRCB: Clean Water Grants
	Education, Department of		SWRCB: Water Quality
S	Energy Commission		SWRCB: Water Rights
S	Fish & Game Region # Fresno		Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
S	Food & Agriculture, Department of	S	Toxic Substances Control, Department of
	General Services, Department of	S	Water Resources, Department of
	Health Services, Department of		
	Housing & Community Development		Other
x	Integrated Waste Management Board		Other
S	Native American Heritage Commission		

Local Public Review Period (to be filled in by lead agency)

Starting Date July 12, 2017 Ending Date August 11, 2017

Lead Agency (Complete if applicable):

Consulting Firm: Kern County Planning & Natural Resources Dept
Address: 2700 M Street, Suite 100
City/State/Zip: Bakersfield, CA 93301
Contact: Janice Mayes
Phone: 661-862-8793

Applicant: R & L Capital, Inc. Attn: Robbie Barker
Address: P.O. Box 907
City/State/Zip: Trona, CA 93592
Phone: 760-372-4729

Signature of Lead Agency Representative: Janice Mayes **Date:** 7/12/17

Authority cited: Section 21083, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21161, Public Resources Code.

INITIAL STUDY/NOTICE OF PREPARATION

RB Inyokern Solar Project
by R&L Capital Inc.

Specific Plan Amendment 4, Map 7
Conditional Use Permit 23, Map 47
Conditional Use Permit 6, Map 47-29

(PP16109)

LEAD AGENCY:

Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department
2700 M Street, Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93301-2370

Contact: Ms. Janice Mayes
(661) 862-8793
mayesj@co.kern.ca.us

July 2017

Table of Contents

Figures

Tables

1. Project Description

1.1 Project Location

The proposed RB Inyokern Solar Project (proposed project) would develop a photovoltaic (PV) solar facility and associated infrastructure necessary to generate a combined 32 megawatts (MW) of renewable electrical energy and/or energy storage capacity on 237.43 acres of privately-owned land. The project site is broken into two separate phases. The site may be combined and constructed at the same time as a single, 32 MW alternating current (AC) solar facility, or alternatively, could be developed as two independent solar facilities; 1) Phase I: a 20 MW solar facility on approximately 143 acres and 2) Phase II: a 12 MW solar facility on approximately 94.43 acres. Phasing is dependent upon market conditions. The proposed project would interconnect to an existing Southern California Edison (SCE) 33-kilovolt (kV) electrical distribution line to an existing SCE Inyokern Substation approximately 0.5 mile to the east. The distribution line is located within an existing transmission corridor directly adjacent to the project site.

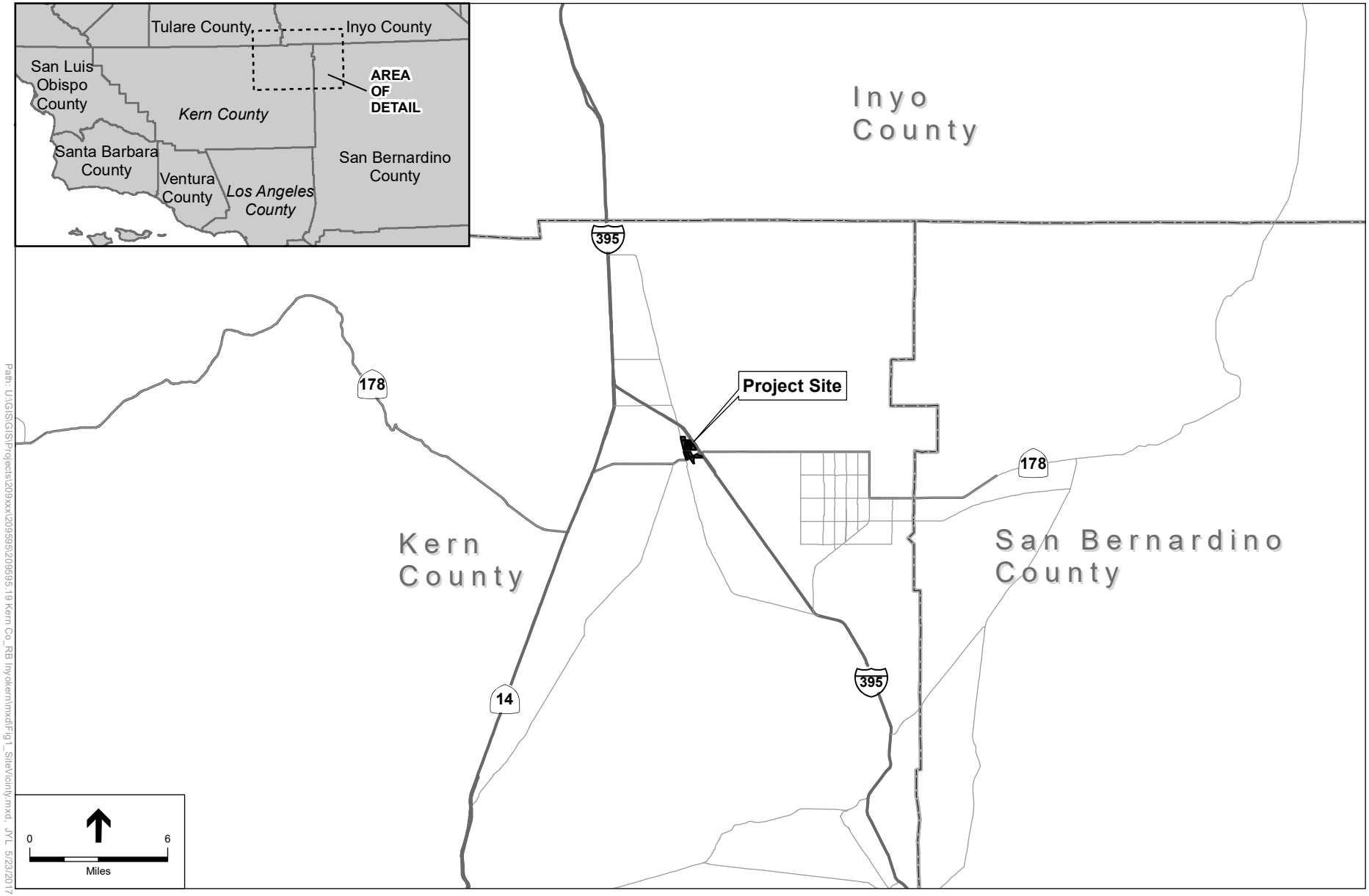
The project site is located within Sections 19, 20, 29, and 30 Township 26 South, Range 39 East, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian (MDB&M). The project site is in the eastern high desert region of Kern County, in the unincorporated community of Inyokern. The proposed project is located along United States Highway (U.S. Highway) 395 to the east and Brown Road to the west. Phase I is located north of Inyokern Road, between Brown Road and U.S. Highway 395. Phase II is comprised of two irregular parcels, and is bisected by Inyokern Road (SR 178). The Phase 2 extends south to Sunset Avenue. A wastewater treatment plant is located adjacent on the northeastern portion of the project site. The Inyokern Airport is located west of the project site. An existing 4.2 acre borrow pit is located on the southeast corner of the Phase I portion of the site, which was originally used to build a roadway overpass. The pit is fenced around its perimeter and would not be developed or disturbed during project construction activities, and is not included as part of the project site footprint. The entire site consists of 16 parcels; the Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) are summarized in **Table 1a** (Phase I) and **Table 1b** (Phase II). **Figure 1** shows the regional location of the proposed project.

Table 1a. Project Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) RB Inyokern Phase I

APN	Acres (approx.)	Zoning	Inyokern Specific Plan
352-085-13	10.05	M-2	7.2/2.5
352-085-05	29.69	M-2	7.2/2.5
352-085-06	3.10	M-2	7.2/2.5
352-501-05	12.49	M-2	7.2/2.5
352-501-01	3.00	M-2	7.2/2.5
352-501-02	3.00	M-2	7.2/2.5
352-501-03	3.00	M-2	7.2/2.5
352-501-06	12.52	M-2	7.2/2.5
352-501-07	13.41	M-2	7.2/2.5
352-501-09	41.63	M-2	7.2/2.5
352-501-10	11.11	M-2	7.2/2.5
Total	**143.00**		

Table 1b. Project Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) RB Inyokern Phase II

APN	Acres (approx.)	Zoning	Inyokern Specific Plan
084-010-45	12.09	M2 PD	7.2/2.5
084-010-44	20.55	M2 PD	7.2/2.5
084-010-43	19.18	M2 PD	7.2/2.5
084-010-48	19.43	M2 PD	7.2/2.5
081-010-47	23.28	M2 PD	7.2/2.5
Total	**94.43**		



Path: U:\GIS\GIS\Projects\209xxx\209595\209595.19 Kern Co_RB Inyokern\mxd\Fig1_SiteVicinity.mxd, JYL 5/23/2017

Figure 1: SITE VICINITY

1.2 Environmental Setting

The project site is located on approximately 237.43 acres of undeveloped privately-owned land located at the northeast corner of Inyokern Road (State Route [SR] 178) and Brown Road in the community of Inyokern. A wastewater treatment plant is located immediately north of the project site. The Inyokern Airport is located approximately 0.5 miles west of the project site, across Brown Road. Immediately south of the Phase 1 portion of the site is undeveloped open space (federal land) and south of that is undeveloped land zoned as Service Industrial by the Inyokern Specific Plan. The nearest residential structures in proximity to the project site are located east of U.S. Highway 395 east of the project site, and along Brown Road to the west, and along Inyokern Road and Reeves Avenue, southwest of the project site.

The project site is not located within the boundaries of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan. Forest, parkland, and preserve areas in the vicinity of the project site include the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks located approximately 15 miles west and the Kern River Preserve located approximately 30 miles to the west.

The project site is located within Flood Zones A as designated by the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) (06029C1020E and 06029C1018E) as issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Flood Zone A is an identified area where no base flood elevations are determined. There are no identified state-designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones on the project site. The nearest active fault is the Little Lake Fault, which is located approximately 7 miles northeast of the project site. The project site is relatively flat, with an approximate elevation ranging between 2,300 feet and 2,400 feet above the mean sea level (msl) (USGS 2015). The community of Inyokern typically experiences an annual high temperature of 80.8ºFarenheit (F) and an annual low temperature of 47.3ºF (U.S. Climate Data 2017). The project area usually receives an annual precipitation (rainfall) average of 4.82 inches per year. **Table 2** shows the average high and low temperatures in the community of Inyokern by month.

Table 2: Average High and Low Temperature by Month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Avg. High	60	66	71	79	87	97	103	101	94	83	69	60
Avg. Low	31	35	39	45	53	60	66	65	58	48	37	30

Source: U.S Climate Data, 2017.

The project would be served by the Kern County Sheriff's Office for law enforcement and public safety. The closest sheriff station is the Ridgecrest Substation, located approximately 10 miles from the project site, at 128 East Coso Avenue in the City of Ridgecrest. The Kern County Fire Department (KCFD) provides fire protection and emergency medical and rescue services for the project area. The closest KCFD fire station is Station #73, located approximately 0.7 mile west of the project site at 6919 Monache Mountain Avenue in the community of Inyokern. The closest school to the project site is Inyokern Elementary School, located approximately 0.5 mile southwest of the project site in the community of Inyokern.

The project site is not located within an area that is designated by the California Department of Conservation (CDC) as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland. No lands within the project boundary or in the vicinity are subject to a Williamson Act Land Use contract.

The project site is located within the boundaries of the Inyokern Airport Influence Area as identified in the Kern County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP). The China Lake Naval Weapons Station (NAWS) is located 6.5 miles northeast of the project site. However, the project is outside the NAWS China Lake North Range sphere of influence, as designated by the Air Installations Compatible Use Zones Study.

The project site is located within the boundaries of the Inyokern Specific Plan, and is designated at 7.2/2.5 (Service Industrial/Flood Hazard) and within the M-2 (Medium Industrial) and M-2-PD (Medium Industrial/Precise Development Combining) Zone Districts. The existing land use designations as specified by the Kern County General Plan and Inyokern Specific Plan are listed in **Table 3**, below, and depicted in **Figure 2**. The entire project site is also subject to the provisions of the Kern County Zoning Ordinance and is zoned as specified in Table 3 below. Zoning designations are shown in **Figure 3**. The project proposed to amend to the Inyokern Specific Plan Circulation Element to eliminate future road reservations along the midsection lines of Sections 19, 20, and 29; this amendment is shown in **Figure 4**

Table 3. Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses

	Existing Land Use	Existing Map Code Designation	Existing Zoning Classification
Project Site	Undeveloped, Partially Disturbed Land	7.2/2.5 (Service Industrial/Flood Hazard	M-2 (Medium Industrial) M-2-PD (Precise Development Combining)
North	Largely Undeveloped, Industrial, Wastewater Treatment Plant	7.2/2.5	M-2
South	Sparse residential and undeveloped land	5.2/2.5 (16 Dwelling Units/Net Acre/ Flood Hazard) 5.6/2.5 (Minimum 2.5 Gross Acres/Unit)	A-1 MH (Limited Agriculture Mobile Home Combining) M-2 PD FPS (Medium Industrial Precise Development Combining Floodplain Secondary Combining) C-2 PD (General Commercial Precise Development Combining) E (2.5) RS MH, E(5) RS MH
East	Undeveloped, Scattered residences	5.6 (Minimum 2.5 Gross Acres/Unit); 7.2/2.5	OS, E (2.5) RS MH, E (20) RS MH and A-1 MH (Limited Agriculture Mobile Home Combining Airport Approach Height)
West	Undeveloped, Inyokern Airport	7.2/2.5	M-2 and CH (Highway Commercial)

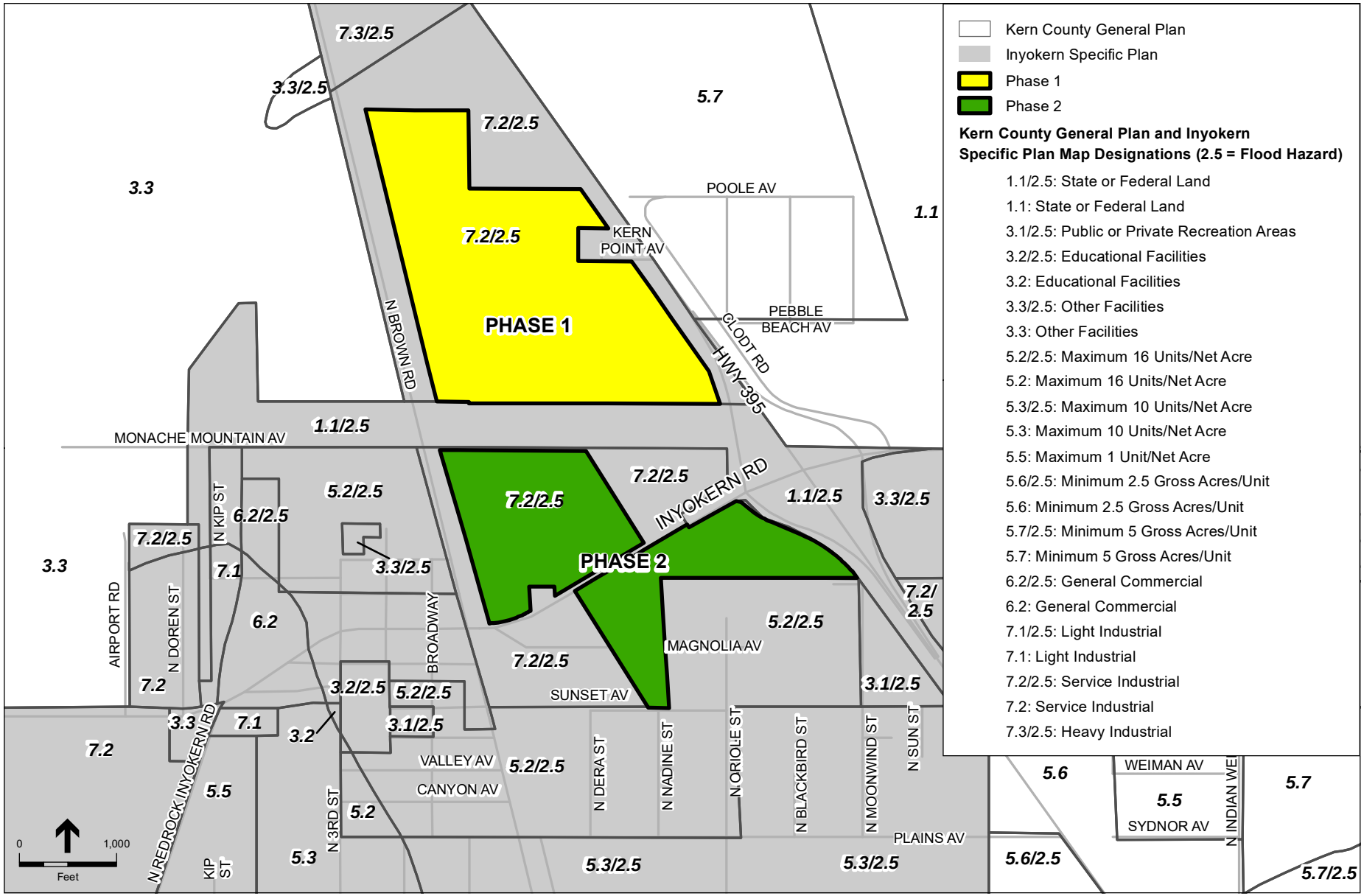


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Figure 2: EXISTING GENERAL PLAN AND INYOKERN SPECIFIC PLAN DESIGNATIONS

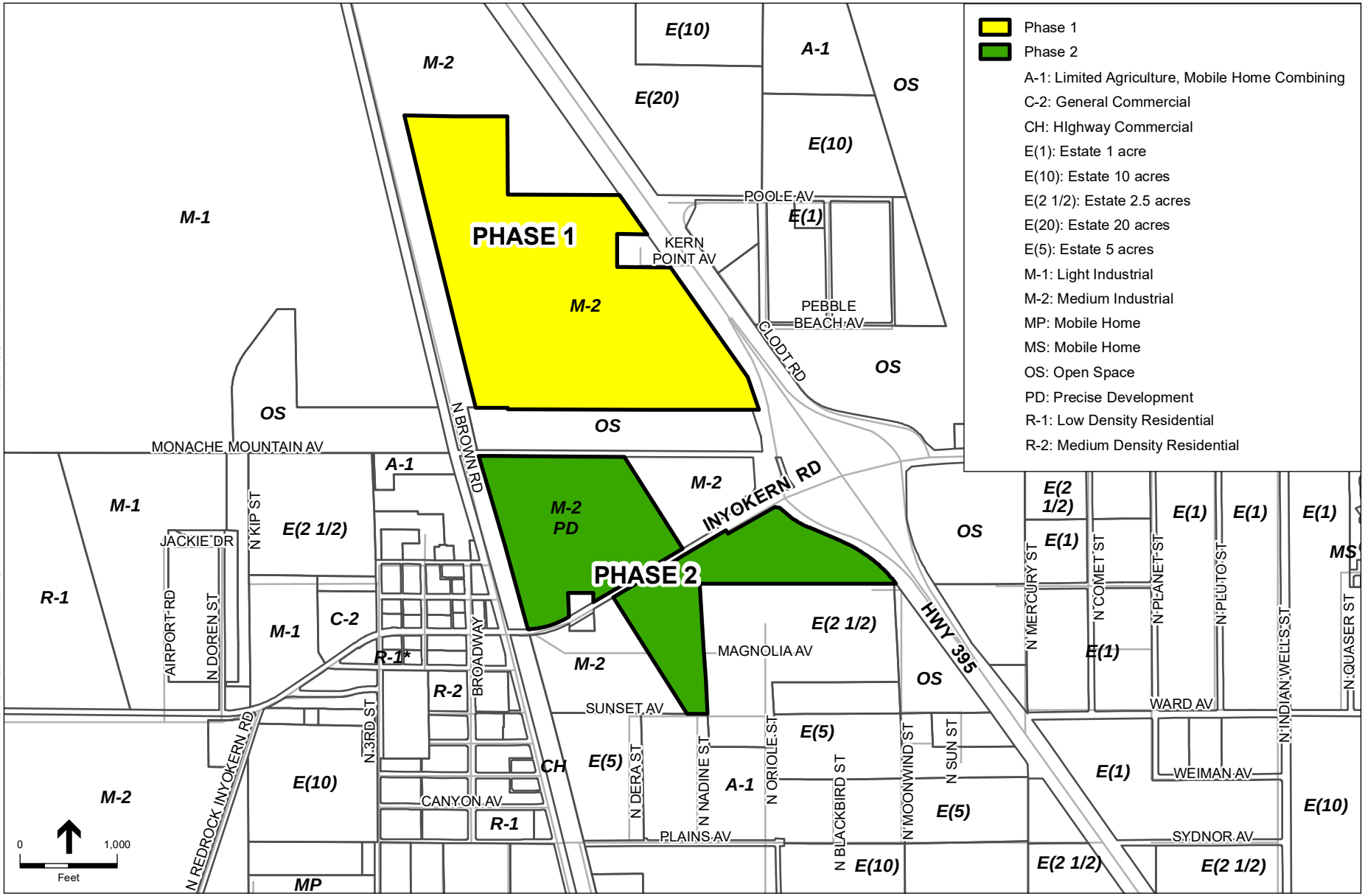

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Figure 3: EXISTING ZONING

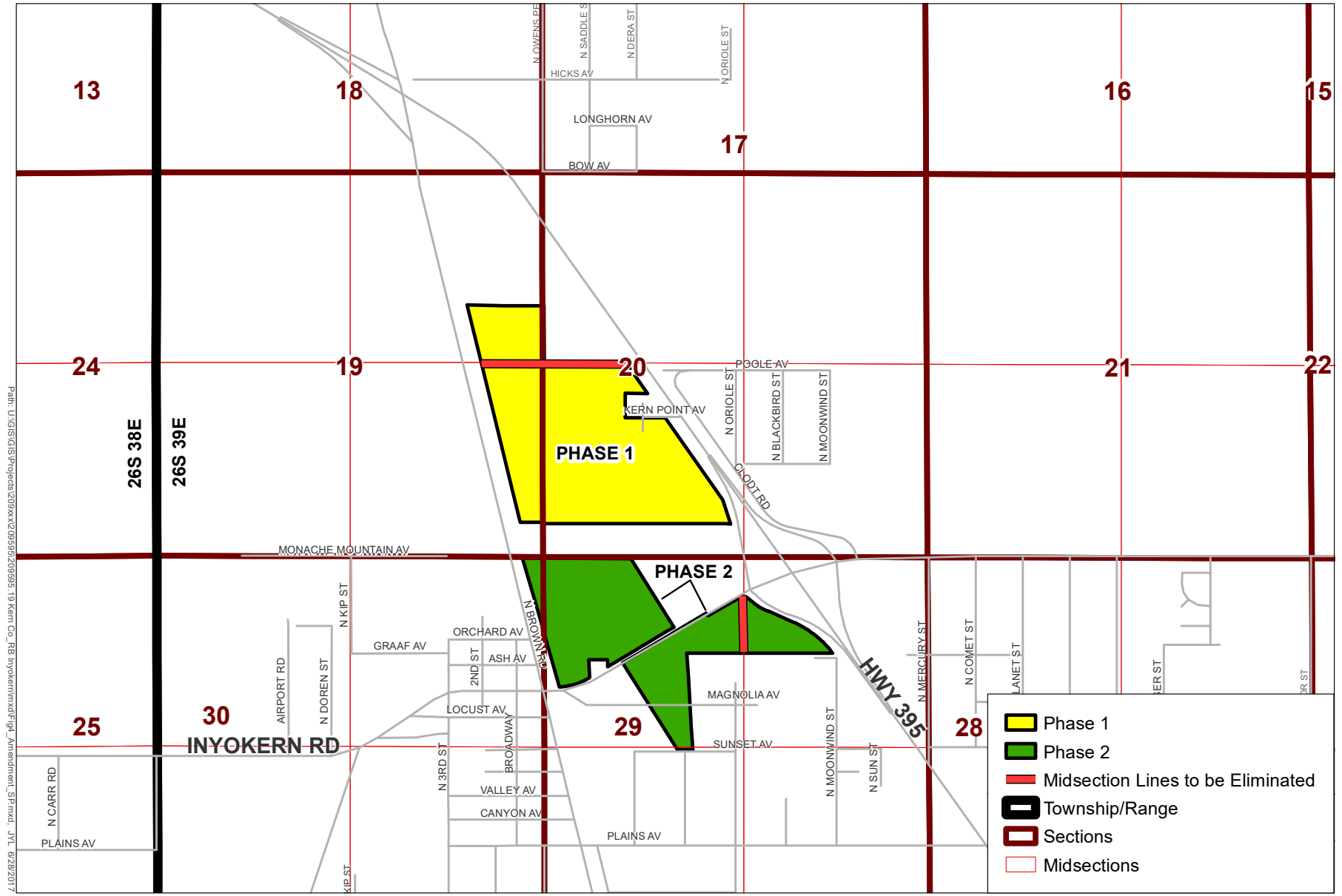

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Figure 4: AMENDMENT TO INYOKERN SPECIFIC PLAN CIRCULATION ELEMENT

1.3 Project Description

The proposed project would develop a PV solar facility and associated infrastructure necessary to generate a combined 32 MW of renewable electrical energy and/or energy storage capacity on 237.43 acres of privately-owned land in northeastern Kern County. The project site consists of 16 parcels, built in two phases: Phase 1: an independent 20 MW solar facility and associated structures on approximately 143 acres and Phase 2: an independent 12 MW solar facility and associated structures on approximately 94.43 acres. The Phase 1 and Phase 2 sites are shown in **Figure 5**. The proposed project would interconnect to an existing SCE 33- kV electrical distribution line that connects to the existing SCE Inyokern Substation, located approximately 0.5 mile east of the site. The distribution line is located within an existing transmission corridor director adjacent to the project site. The gen-tie termination point for the 20 MW project would be located on the eastern border of the proposed project's property line and the gen-tie termination point for the 12 MW project would be located on the northern border of the 12 MW project's property line.

The proposed project would consist of approximately 112,140 solar panels arranged in a grid-pattern over the project site. Power generated by the proposed project would be transferred directly to SCE's Inyokern 33 kV line. The PV solar generating facilities would consist of solar arrays mounted on either fixed or tracking structures mounted to vertical posts. The proposed solar facilities are intended to operate year-round, and would generate electricity during daylight hours when electricity demand is at its peak.

The combined project facilities would cover approximately 237 acres and would include the following components:

- Installation of up to a combined 32 MW of solar PV modules made of thin film or crystalline silicon material covered by glass, mounted on a galvanized metal fixed tilt or single axis tracking systems embedded into the ground:
    - Phase I (20 MW): 70,308 modules
    - Phase II (12 MW): 41,832 modules
- Solar tracking system consisting of drive motors, drive arms, and hydraulic systems that allow for rotation of solar panels from east to west, tracking the suns position over the course of the day
- Underground and aboveground medium voltage collections systems throughout the project
- Medium voltage inverters and step-up transformers
- Two onsite pole mounted breaks, switches with remote terminal units and telecommunication equipment, to connect to SCE's Sawmill circuit
- Onsite switchyard(s)
- Onsite access roads
- Site security would consist of 8-foot high chain link fence with three-strand barbed wire installed around the perimeter of the facility and would be in compliance with wildlife agency requirements
- Concrete pads sized and installed to accommodate the associated equipment (inverters, switchgear, transformers, etc.)
- Meteorological data collection systems and supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA)

- Two unmanned operations and maintenance (O&M) buildings
- Two battery energy storage units (one each for Phase 1 and Phase II)
- Telecommunication equipment including underground and overhead fiber optics and wireless communications infrastructure such as cell, satellite, or microwave tower
- One or two onsite electrical generation tie lines (33 kV) from the proposed project transformer(s) to the existing 33 kV Sawmill circuit located along the proposed project's northern (12 MW) and eastern (20 MW) boundaries, including one to three poles, insulator/hardware assemblies, conductors, pole-top breakers, and fiber optic cable.
- Upgrades to the existing SCE system including:
    - Re-conductor approximately 3,500 feet of the existing Sawmill 33 kV circuit from 1/0 ACSR to 653 ACSR to accommodate both the 20 MW and 12 MW project
    - Re-conductor up to an additional 2,600 feet of the existing Sawmill 33 kV circuit from 1/0 ACSR to 653 to accommodate the 12 MW project
    - Transformer bank LTC replacement at the existing Inyokern substation
    - Replace an existing one-way watt transducer with a bidirectional transducer
    - RTU point additions for the transducer

The following discretionary actions are proposed as a part of the project: (1) Specific Plan Amendment for the Inyokern Specific Plan circulation element to eliminate future road reservations along the midsection lines of Sections 19, 20, and 29 (shown on Figure 4) and (2) approval of two Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) to allow for the operation of a commercial solar facilities on each phase of the project sites. .

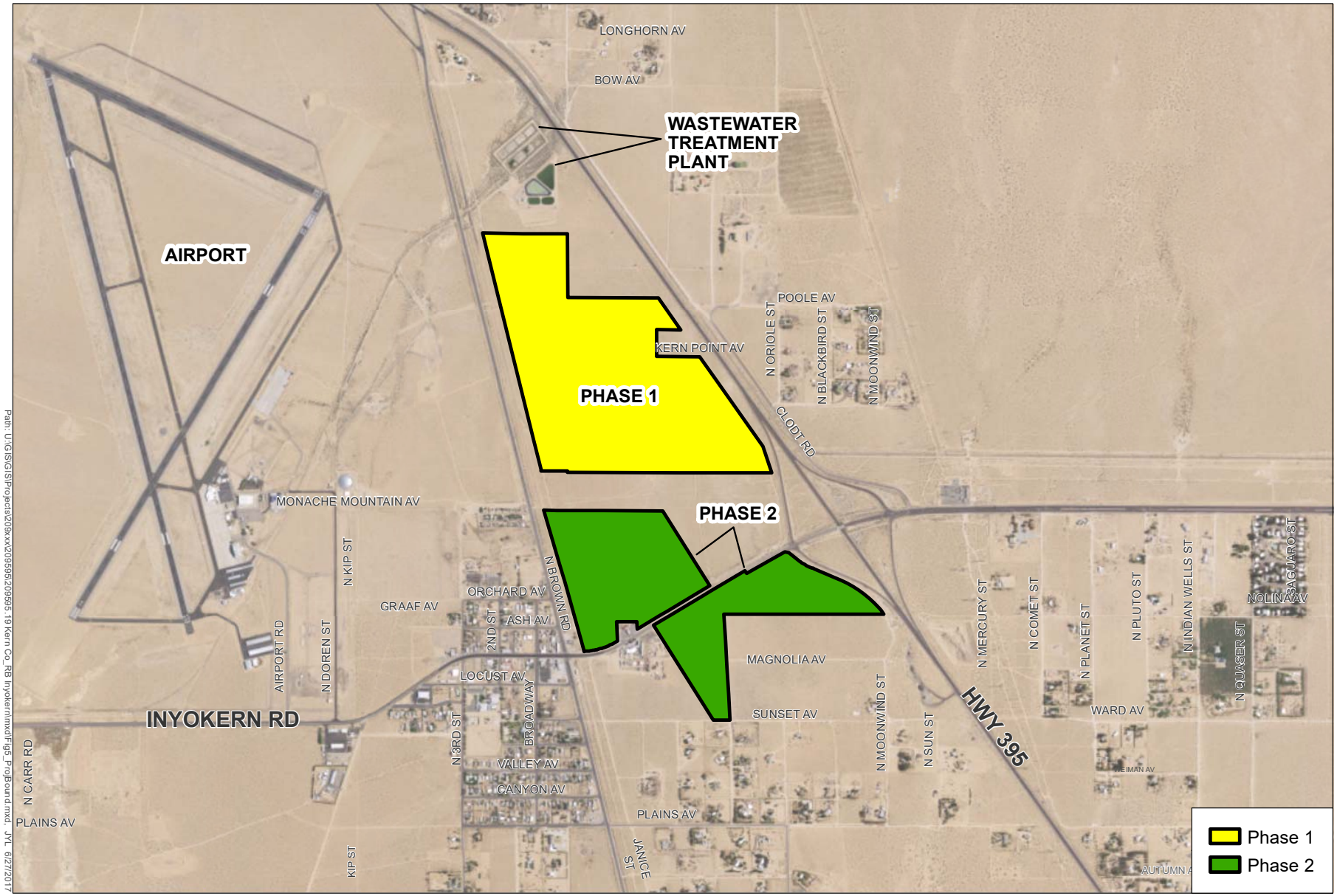

Figure 5: PROJECT BOUNDARY

Project Facilities

Solar PV Panels

Solar energy would be captured by PV panels, of which an estimated 112,140 individual panels would be installed onsite. The layout of the single axis tracker solar panels would be aligned in rows in the north-south direction (or in an east-west direction if a fixed tilt racking system were used instead). The maximum height of the single axis tracker solar panels would be up to 12 feet above grade at the beginning and end of each day. Each solar panel would be attached to embedded piers using a support structure. Module layout and spacing is typically optimized to balance energy production versus peak capacity, and depends on the sun angles and shading due to the surrounding horizon of the site. If a tracking system is used, the modules would typically be mounted with the longer side oriented east to west across the tracker system's north-south axis. Individual arrays of modules would be combined to generate the total plant capacity.

Solar Trackers

The PV module rows would be oriented north-to-south if single-axis trackers are used. A solar tracking mechanism is used to maximize the solar energy conversion efficiency by keeping the modules perpendicular to the sun's energy rays throughout the day. This completed assembly of PV modules mounted on a framework structure is called a "tracker" as it tracks the sun from east to west. If used, single-axis trackers would increase the efficiency of energy production from the arrays.

If the use of trackers is incorporated into the final project design, there are two types of tracker systems that may be selected for the proposed project; a centralized system or a decentralized system. A centralized tracker system uses one motor to control multiple rows of PV modules through a series of mechanical linkages and/or gearboxes. A decentralized system utilizes a single motor and/or gearbox for each row of PV modules. The exact tracker manufacturer and model would be determined in the final design. All trackers are intended to function identically in terms of following the motion of the sun.

Module layout and spacing is optimized to balance energy production versus peak capacity and would depend on the sun angles and shading caused by the horizon surrounding the project site. The spacing between the rows of trackers is dependent on site-specific features and would be identified in the final design. The final configuration would allow for sufficient clearance for maintenance vehicles and panel access.

Fixed Tilt Racking System

The PV module rows would be oriented east-to-west if a fixed tilt racking system is used. The solar panels would be in a fixed tilt position that allows for the most sunlight specific to the geography of the project site. The fixed-tilt structures would be supported either by vertical steel posts driven into the ground, or other embedded foundation design. The fixed-tilt PV modules would be positioned to receive optimal solar energy over the course of a year. The exact manufacturer and model would be determined in the final design should this system be chosen for the Project.

Electrical Collector System and Inverters

The AC-DC electrical collection system includes all cables and combiners that collect electricity from the panels, delivers it to the inverters, collects it from the inverters, and ultimately delivers it to the project switching station(s). The collection system would likely be installed along internal access roads to collect power from the rows of modules and deliver it to the switching station. This collection system would likely be installed in subsurface trenches, though in some areas of the site, part or all of the collection

system may be housed in above-grade raceways mounted on supports approximately 24-36 inches above ground level. The collection system would be rated at between 1,000-2,000 volts DC until it reached the inverters and a 33 kV AC intermediate voltage system between the inverters and the project switching station.

The project would consist of two unmanned O&M buildings, utilizing an automated field control system. The controls generally include a field supervisory controller in a central location and local microprocessor controllers connected to each tracker, if trackers are to be used. The field control system monitors solar insolation, wind velocity, and tracker performance and status, and communicates with all of the local microprocessor controllers. When the appropriate conditions exist, the field supervisory controller initiates the trackers' daily tracking of the sun, and at the end of the day stows the trackers in the solar array.

The DC electricity produced by the solar panels is converted to three-phase alternating current by a series of inverters. The two facilities would require up to 40 inverters. Alternating current is the type of electricity usable by the electric utility and is the form required to connect to the transmission system. The inverter pad equipment includes a transformer that steps up the electricity in its new form to an output voltage of 33 kV. This electricity is then transmitted via the medium voltage collection system to the switching station.

Energy Storage System

The Project may have up to two onsite Energy Storage System (ESS) (one for each facility developed). Each ESS will be able to provide approximately four hours of energy storage capacity. Each ESS will occupy approximately a 65 by 150 foot area within the project site and will consist of battery storage modules placed in multiple prefabricated enclosures or containers near the on-site substation. The final ESS design will be completed after the completion of the facility. The final location is dependent on final design and may require construction of a vault or other form of supporting foundation similar to other structures on site.

Generation-Tie Line and Interconnection to the Statewide Grid

The project will construct an one or two on-site 33 kV electrical generation tie lines from the proposed project transformers to the existing 33 kV Sawmill circuit located along the project's northern 12 MW and eastern 20 MW boundaries, including one to three poles, insulator hardware assemblies, conductors, pole-top breakers and fiber optic cable. As mentioned above, power generated by the proposed project would be transferred directly to Southern California Edison's (SCE's) Inyokern 33 kV line. Construction will include appropriate environmental monitoring.

Operation and Maintenance Facilities

As discussed above, the project also would include two unmanned O&M buildings measuring approximately 25 feet by 25 feet, two unmanned communications building measuring approximately 20 feet by 30 feet, as well as two battery energy storage units measuring approximately 65 feet by 150 feet to provide for grid stabilization and increased power quality. The O&M buildings would include storage space for spare parts and materials for the day-to-day operations and maintenance of the facility. Communications would be provided by the local utility.

Onsite Meteorological Station

The project would include one onsite solar meteorological station located near the O&M building at the Phase I 20 MW facility and Phase II 12 MW facility, which would consist of solar energy (irradiance)

meters, as well as an air temperature sensor and wind anemometer. This equipment, specifically the wind anemometer, would have an estimated height of approximately 15 feet.

Site Access and Security

During operation, the project would be accessed from Inyokern Road and/or Brown Road. An additional site access point for emergency vehicles would also be available. All road improvements would be completed per Caltrans and/or County code and regulations. Typical site access would be approximately 20 feet wide, accommodating a 56 foot turning radii in both directions. The rows of solar panels would be separated by access ways. Internal site circulation would include approximately 20-foot-wide perimeter roads consisting of crushed stone and approximately 16-foot-wide operations and maintenance roads among the solar arrays consisting of crushed stone or native soil.

Chain-link security fencing would be installed around the site perimeter and other areas requiring controlled access, in order to restrict public access during construction and operations. The security fence would be approximately 7 to 8 feet high. The fence posts would be set in concrete. Fencing would be designed to comply with the wildlife agency requirements. Additional security may be provided through the use of closed circuit video surveillance cameras and intrusion systems. Signs would be installed to achieve appropriate safety and security as expected in a solar power facility. Proposed signage would include signs specifying high voltage danger, site under surveillance, caution electric shock, etc. Any signs as required by the National Electrical Code would also be installed.

The project's lighting system would provide operation and maintenance personnel with illumination for both normal and emergency conditions. Lighting would be designed to provide the minimum illumination needed to achieve safety and security objectives. Lighting would be directed downward and shielded to focus illumination on the desired areas only and to avoid light spillage on adjacent properties. Light fixtures would be mounted at the entrance and each inverter station. Lighting would be no brighter than required to meet safety and security requirements, and lamp fixtures and lumens would be selected accordingly. All project lighting would be switched and without timer.

Construction Activities

The construction activities for the project generally fall into three main categories: (1) site preparation; (2) system installation; and (3) testing, commissioning, cleanup. The entire process is estimated to take up to 7 to 10 months. Site grading and earthwork is anticipated to begin during the first quarter of 2019, with operations beginning in the fourth quarter of 2019. For the purpose of analysis and discussion in this document, construction would be analyzed for the worst-case scenario, which assumes all construction would be conducted concurrently.

Construction Workers, Hours

Construction would primarily occur during daylight hours, Monday through Friday, between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Additional hours/days may be necessary to facilitate the schedule. Any construction work performed outside of the normal work schedule would be coordinated with the appropriate agencies and would conform to the Kern County Noise Ordinance (Chapter 8.36).

The onsite construction workforce for the project is expected to peak at 50 individuals; however, the average workforce is expected to be 25 construction, supervisory, support and construction management personnel onsite during construction. It is anticipated that the construction workforce would commute to the site each day from local communities. Construction staff not drawn from the local labor pool would stay in local hotels in Inyokern or Ridgecrest, or other local communities.

Site Grading and Earthwork

Beginning work on the project would involve preparing the land for installation of arrays, energy storage facility, related infrastructure, access driveways, and temporary construction staging areas. Prior to initial construction mobilization, preconstruction surveys would be performed and sediment and erosion controls would be installed in accordance with an approved Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Stabilized construction entrances and exits would be installed at driveways to mitigate tracking of sediment onto adjacent public roadways.

Site preparation would involve the removal and proper disposal of existing vegetation and debris that would unduly interfere with project construction or the health and safety of onsite personnel. Dust minimizing techniques would be employed, such as maintaining natural vegetation where possible, utilizing "mow-and-roll" vegetation clearance strategy, placement of wind control fencing, application of water, and application of dust suppressants. Conventional grading would be minimized to the maximum extent possible to reduce unnecessary soil movement that may result in dust. As the site is relatively flat, minimal, if any grading is anticipated. Land-leveling equipment, such as a smooth steel drum roller, would be used to even the surface of the ground and to compact the upper layer of soil to a value recommended by a geotechnical engineer for structural support. Access roads may be additionally compacted to 90 percent or greater, as required, to support construction and emergency vehicles. Certain access roads may also require the use of aggregate to meet emergency access requirements. Soil movement from grading would be balanced on the site, and it is anticipated that no import or export of soils would occur.

Trenching would be required for placement of underground electrical and communications lines, and may include the use of trenchers, backhoes, excavators, haul vehicles, compaction equipment and water trucks. After preparation of the site, the pads for structures, equipment enclosures and equipment vaults would be prepared per geotechnical engineer recommendations.

Solar Array Assembly

Erection of the solar arrays would include support structures and associated electrical equipment. First, steel piles would be driven into the soil using pneumatic techniques, similar to a hydraulic rock hammer attachment on the boom of a rubber-tired backhoe excavator. If shallow bedrock, or other obstructions are encountered, the pile locations would be predrilled and then grouted in place with concrete. The piles are typically spaced approximately 10-20 feet apart. Once the piles have been installed, the horizontal array support structures would be installed. The final design of the horizontal array support structures may vary, depending on the final selection of the PV technology, as well as whether a fixed tilt or tracking system is selected. Once the support structures are installed, workers would begin to install the solar modules. Solar array assembly and installation would require trenching machines and excavators, compactors, concrete trucks and pumpers, vibrators, forklifts, boom trucks, graders, pile drivers, drilling machines, and cranes.

Concrete may be required for portions of the footings, and pads for the medium voltage transformers, inverters, O&M buildings, battery storage and communications building. Concrete may also be required for pile foundation support depending on the proposed mounting system chosen for installation and whether or not obstructions are encountered when trying to drive piles. Final concrete specifications would be determined during detailed design engineering. Concrete may be produced on the project site and would be poured throughout the sites by truck, or purchased from an offsite supplier and trucked into the project.

During this work, there would be multiple crews working on the site with vehicles, including special vehicles for transporting the modules and other equipment. As the solar arrays are installed, the solar switchyard would be constructed and the electrical collection and communication systems would be

installed. Within the solar fields, the electrical and communication wiring would be installed in underground trenches, although some of the mid-voltage collection runs and communications may be on overhead lines. Collection trenches would likely be mechanically excavated, though in some cases targeted shallow trench blasting may be required as a construction technique due to near-surface bedrock. If explosives are to be used, the project proponent would be required to obtain all necessary permits and approvals through the Kern County Fire Department's Hazardous Materials Division (HMD).

The electrical and communication wiring would connect to the appropriate electrical and communication terminations and the circuits would be checked and electrical service would be verified. Additionally, if a tracker system is utilized, the motors would be checked and control logic verified. Once all of the individual systems have been tested, the overall project would be ready for testing under fully integrated conditions.

Electrical Interconnection to Transmission Owner Infrastructure

The proposed project would connect with an existing SCE 33- kV electrical distribution line via two approximately 100-foot-long lines from SCE's circuit on the border of the project boundary from each phase to a pole and pole-top mounted breaker onsite.

Construction Water Use

The overall construction water usage is anticipated to be less than 100 acre-feet. Water needed for construction is expected to be trucked from an offsite water purveyor and/or pumped from onsite wells.

Initial construction water usage would be in support of site preparation and grading activities. During earthwork for grading of access road foundations, equipment pads and project components, the main use of water would be for compaction and dust control. Smaller quantities would be required for preparation of the concrete required for foundations and other minor uses. Subsequent to the earthwork activities, water usage would be used for dust suppression and normal construction water requirements that are associated with construction of the building, internal access roads, and solar arrays.

Project Operation and Maintenance

The proposed project would include two onsite unmanned O&M buildings that would be monitored remotely 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Maintenance personnel are expected to visit the project site several times per year for routine maintenance and the PV modules may be cleaned up to four times a year. Proposed project traffic volumes are expected to be minimal during facility operations.

The PV panel surfaces may be washed seasonally to increase the average optical transmittance of the flat panel surface. Panel washing is expected to take up to 10 days to complete per wash, up to four times per year or a total of 40 days per year to complete. Additional staff of two to five people would be required during panel washing and are expected to be hired from the local community.

Long-term operational water demand is not expected to be more than 1 to 2 acre-feet per year, primarily to support PV panel washing activities. Water for panel washing is expected to come from a local purveyor or an onsite well.

The facility's regular maintenance program would be largely conducted onsite during daytime hours as a safety precaution. Equipment repairs would typically take place in the early morning or evening when the plant is producing the least amount of energy. Key program elements include:

- Responding to plant failures and emergencies in a timely manner;
- Maintaining and managing a pre-qualified group of routine maintenance and repair firms who can address the operational and maintenance needs throughout the life of the facility;

- Creating an optimized cleaning schedule to be more responsive to location and type of installation;
- Maintaining an inventory of spare parts to facilitate timely repairs to maintain plant output;
- Using trouble-ticketing to effectively record, track and escalate all maintenance problems;
- Conducting onsite maintenance as required to clear weeds, grass and ground cover for ground-mount systems; and
- Maintenance of ground cover under solar panels to a maximum height of 6 inches.

Prudent security measures would be taken to ensure the safety of the public and facility. The proposed project would be fenced along all borders with locking gates at the specified points of ingress and egress. As proposed, the fence is anticipated to be 7 to 8 feet high. Offsite security personnel may be dispatched during nighttime hours or be onsite depending on security risks and operating needs. The project site would provide illumination for both normal and emergency conditions. Lighting would be designed to provide the minimum illumination needed to achieve safety and security and would be downward-facing and shielded to focus illumination on the desired areas only.

The project site would produce a small amount of waste associated with maintenance activities. PV solar system wastes typically include broken and rusted metal, defective or malfunctioning modules, electrical materials, and empty containers and other miscellaneous solid materials, including typical household refuse generated by workers. These materials would be collected and delivered back to the manufacturer for recycling. Trash would be disposed of by a local waste hauler service.

Project Decommissioning

The project proponent expects to sell the renewable energy produced by the project under the terms of a long-term Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) or directly into the wholesale market. The life of the solar facility is anticipated to be up to 35 years; however, the project proponent may, at its discretion, choose to extend the life of the facility, update technology and re-commission, or decommission and remove the system and its components. If and when a decommissioning event occurs, the solar site could then be converted to other uses in accordance with applicable land use regulations in effect at that time.

It is anticipated that during decommissioning, project structures would be removed from the site. Aboveground equipment that would be removed would include module posts and support structures, onsite transmission poles that are not shared with third parties and the overhead collection system within the project site, inverters, transformers, electrical wiring, equipment on the inverter pads, and related equipment and concrete pads. The substation would be removed if it is owned by the project, however if a public or private utility assumes ownership of the substation, the substation may remain onsite to be used as part of the utility service to supply other applications. Project roads would be restored to their pre-construction condition unless the landowner elects to retain the improved roads for access throughout that landowner's property. The area would be thoroughly cleaned and all debris removed. As discussed above, most materials would be recycled to the extent feasible, with minimal disposal to occur in landfills in compliance with all applicable laws.

A collection and recycling program would be executed to promote recycling of project components and minimize disposal of project components in landfills. All decommissioning and restoration activities would adhere to the requirements of the appropriate governing authorities and in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and County regulations. The project proponent expects a secondary market for PV modules to develop over time. Although energy output may diminish, PV modules are expected to continue to have a productive life and can be decommissioned from a prime location or re-commissioned in another location.

Relationship of the Project to Other Solar Projects

The project is being developed independently of other approved or proposed solar projects in the County. If approved, the RB Inyokern Solar Project, Phase 1 and II facilities, would be subject to their own use permits, conditions of approval, interconnection agreements, and power purchase agreements. The County understands that the RB Inyokern Solar Project, Phase I and II, facilities would be built and operated independently of any other solar project, and, if approved, would not depend on any other solar project for economic viability. The proposed project will involve constructing a new gen-tie line to deliver energy to the existing Southern California Edison Inyokern Substation located approximately 0.5 mile to the east via connection to an existing SCE 33 kV electrical distribution line for the Inyokern Substation.

1.4 Project Objectives

The project proponent has defined the following objectives for the project:

- Minimize the network upgrade costs borne to the consumer by locating the project on a transmission line that does not require major upgrades to accommodate the new facility;
- Maximize the use of existing transmission infrastructure;
- Ensure that the distance of the point of interconnection is less than 0.5 mile, which would minimize the cost on the generator interconnection tie-line;
- Develop a site with an excellent solar resources with an average insolation value of 6 kilowatt-hours per square meter per day ($kWh/m^2/day$) or greater;
- Ensure that the project can be constructed in a technologically feasible manner and operated in a manner that allows electricity to be provided at a competitive price; and
- Locate the facility on land that is zoned for industrial use with no agricultural value, or soil quality conducive to agriculture.

1.5 Proposed Discretionary Actions/Required Approvals

The Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department, the lead agency for the project, has discretionary responsibility for the RB Inyokern Solar Project Phase I and II. The proposed project is owned by R & L Capital, Inc. To implement this project, the project proponent may need to obtain the following discretionary and ministerial permits/approvals:

Federal

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

State

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
- Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
- California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

Local

Kern County Board of Supervisors/Kern County Planning Commission

- Certification of Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- Adoption of Mitigation Monitoring Program
- Adoption of 15091 and 15093 Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations
- Approval of Kern County Specific Plan Amendment 4, Map 47
- Approval of Kern County Conditional Use Permit 23, Map 47
- Approval of Kern County Conditional Use Permit 6, Map 47-29

Kern County Public Works – Building and Development – Roads, Flood Plain & Survey

- Approval of Kern County Grading Permits
- Approval of Kern County Building Permits
- Approval of Kern County Access Road Design and Encroachment Permits

Kern County Fire Department

- Fire Safety Plan

Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District (EKAPCD)

- Fugitive Dust Control Plan
- Any other permits as required

The preceding discretionary actions/approvals are potentially required and do not necessarily represent a comprehensive list of all possible discretionary permits/approvals required. Other additional permits or approvals from responsible agencies may be required for the proposed project.

2. Kern County Environmental Checklist Form

2.1 Environmental Factors Potentially Affected:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "potentially significant impact" as indicated by the Kern County Environmental Checklist on the following pages.

☒ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources	☒ Air Quality
☒ Biological Resources	☒ Cultural Resources	☒ Tribal Cultural Resources
☒ Geology and Soils	☒ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☒ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
☒ Hydrology and Water Quality	☒ Land Use and Planning	☒ Mineral Resources
☒ Noise	☐ Population and Housing	☒ Public Services
☐ Recreation	☒ Transportation and Traffic	☒ Utilities and Service Systems

☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance

2.2 Determination (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect (a) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (b) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENT IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Janice Mayes
Signature

7/12/17
Date

Janice Mayes
Printed Name

RB Inyokern Solar Project
For:

3. Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

(1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

(2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including offsite as well as onsite, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

(3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

(4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measure and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from Section XVII, "Earlier Analyses," may be cross-referenced).

(5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration, Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

   (a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.

   (b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist where within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.

   (c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less Than Significant With Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

(6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.

(7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

(8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.

(9) The explanation of each issue should identify:

   (a) The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and

   (b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
3.1 AESTHETICS				
Would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☒	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

(a) **No Impact.** The project site is located in a sparsely developed, rural area of Kern County. The aesthetic features of the existing visual environment in the project boundaries are relatively uniform, with broad, dry, flat landscapes. Outside of the project boundaries include sparsely scattered residential and commercial uses, and distant mountains to the west and northwest. Due to the flat topography of the project site and height of the panels, visual impacts would most likely be limited to the small number of persons traveling along U.S. Highway 395, SR 178 and Brown Road. Views of the project would also be visible from the scattered rural residences and commercial uses in the project vicinity. In addition, the project site is not located within an area designated for or identified as having a scenic vista or scenic views. Therefore, project impacts to scenic vista or scenic view would not occur, and will not be evaluated in the EIR.

(b) **No Impact.** According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) California Scenic Highway Mapping System, the closest eligible scenic highway is SR 14, which is approximately 3.5 miles west of the project site. Because of this distance, the PV solar facilities would not be visible from SR 14. Therefore, project impacts to scenic resources within a state scenic highway would not occur, and will not be evaluated in the EIR.

(c) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The project site is in a rural area. Surrounding land uses include undeveloped properties, scattered residences and commercial uses. The Inyokern Airport is located approximately 0.5 mile west of the project site. Placement of PV solar panels and associated structures on the project site would alter the character of the area. Residents and travelers on adjacent

roads would observe alterations to the existing landscape. Changes to the visual quality and character of the project site may be significant, and impacts will be further evaluated in the EIR.

(d) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The project site is located in area that contains residential and commercial uses nearby. The Inyokern Airport is located approximately 0.5 mile west of the project site, with the Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects both located within the C (Common Traffic Pattern) airport compatibility zone, and the Phase 1 site abutting the B1 zone (Approach/Departure Zone and Adjacent to Runway). The PV modules are designed to absorb sunlight to maximize electrical output; therefore, they would not create significant reflective surfaces or the potential for glint/glare during the day. The nighttime lighting at the proposed solar facilities would be designed to provide the minimum illumination needed to achieve safety and security objectives, and would be directed downward and shielded to focus illumination on the desired areas only and minimize light trespass. However, further analysis of the specific lighting and effects of nighttime light and glare from the project will be provided in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact

3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Productions (as defined in Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. Result in the cancellation of an open space contract made pursuant to the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 or Farmland Security Zone Contract for any parcel of 100 or more acres (Section 15206(b)(3) Public Resources Code?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

(a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** There is no designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance within the project area (CDC, 2014; CDC, 2013). The California Department of Conservation (CDC) designates the project site as grazing land, non-agricultural and natural vegetation, and vacant or disturbed lands. As such, the project site is not considered to be prime, unique, or important farmland. Therefore, construction and/or operation of the project would not result in the conversion of designated Farmland to a nonagricultural use; however, this issue will be further evaluated in the EIR.

(b) **No Impact.** None of the parcels included as part of the proposed project or property in the vicinity of the project are subject to a Williamson Act Land Use contract (CDC, 2013). The Kern County zone classifications for the project site are M-2 (Medium Industrial) and M-2 PD (Medium Industrial Precise Development Combining). The existing and proposed M-2 zoning is consistent with the Inyokern Specific Plan land use designation of 7.2 (Service Industrial). According to the Kern County Zoning Ordinance, a commercial solar facility is a compatible use in the Medium Industrial zone district. The construction and operation of a solar energy generating facility on the site would require the approval of CUPs (Kern County Ordinance 19.12.030.G). The proposed discretionary actions are consistent with the Kern County Zoning Ordinance regulations for industrial uses. Therefore, the potential for conflicts with Williamson Act Land Use contract are not anticipated and are considered to have no impact, therefore no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

(c)-(d) **No Impact.** The project site is not situated on forest or timberland with areas that are currently under production. There is no land in the vicinity of the project site that is zoned as forest land, timberland, or lands zoned for timberland production. Therefore, there would be no impacts related to the rezoning of forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned for timberland production and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

(e) **No Impact.** The project consists primarily of a largely undeveloped desert land site that is zoned for industrial uses. The surrounding properties are not zoned for agricultural use, and are either undeveloped, or developed with scattered residential and commercial uses. The project site is comprised of non-agricultural uses, no agricultural uses are adjacent to the project site. Therefore, there would be no impacts related to farmland or forest, and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

(f) **No Impact.** As noted in response (b), above, the project site is not under a Williamson Act Contract and implementation of the project would not result in the cancellation of an open space contract made pursuant to the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 or Farmland Security Zone Contract for any parcel of 100 or more acres (Public Resources Code Section 15206(b)(3)). Therefore, no impacts are anticipated, and no further discussion is warranted in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact

3.3 AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b. Violate any air quality standard as adopted in (c)i or (c)ii, or as established by EPA or air district or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)? Specifically, would implementation of the project exceed any of the following adopted thresholds:	☒	☐	☐	☐
i. San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District:				
Operational and Area Sources:				
Reactive Organic Gases (ROG) 10 tons per year.	☐	☐	☐	☒
Oxides of Nitrogen (NO_x) 10 tons per year.	☐	☐	☐	☒
Particulate Matter (PM_{10}) 15 tons per year.	☐	☐	☐	☒
Stationary Sources as Determined by District Rules:				
Severe Nonattainment 25 tons per year.	☐	☐	☐	☒
Extreme Nonattainment 10 tons per year.	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
ii. Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District:				
Operational and Area Sources:				
Reactive Organic Gases (ROG) 25 tons per year.	☒	☐	☐	☐
Oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) 25 tons per year.	☒	☐	☐	☐
Particulate Matter (PM_{10}) 15 tons per year.	☒	☐	☐	☐
Stationary Sources as Determined by District Rules: 25 tons per year.	☒	☐	☐	☐
d. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☒	☐	☐	☐
e. Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

(a) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The project site is located entirely within the jurisdiction of the Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District (EKAPCD), in the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). EKAPCD is designated as a nonattainment area for both the State and federal ozone standards and the state particulate matter (PM_{10}) standard. Project construction would generate emissions of reactive organic gases (ROG) and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), both of which are known as ozone precursors, and PM_{10} that could result in significant impacts to air quality in the area. EKAPCD's most recently adopted air quality management plan as its Ozone Air Quality Attainment Plan (AQAP). As the project would generate emissions of ozone precursors (along with PM_{10}) during construction, the project could potentially conflict with EKAPCD's Ozone AQAP. Thus, further analysis of the project's air quality impacts is warranted to determine whether the project would conflict with or obstruct implementation of EKAPCD's applicable air quality plan for attainment and, if so, to determine the reasonable and feasible mitigation measures that could be imposed. These issues will be evaluated in the EIR.

(b) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The project encompasses approximately 237.43 acres; the Phase 1, 20 MW solar facility includes approximately 143acres and Phase 2, 12 MW solar facility includes 94.43 acres. The project would interconnect to an existing Southern California Edison (SCE) 33-kV electrical distribution line to an existing SCE Inyokern Substation approximately 0.5 mile to the east. The solar facilities would include two unmanned O&M buildings onsite, two battery energy storage units, and telecommunication equipment including underground and overhead fiber optics and wireless communications infrastructure such as cell, satellite, or microwave tower. Project operational emissions are anticipated to be minimal. However, the short-term construction emissions

generated at the project site could significantly contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation of criteria pollutant (ROG, NOx, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$) standards established by EKAPCD, requiring the consideration of mitigation measures. The sources of construction emissions at the project site would include off-road heavy equipment (e.g., graders, loaders, backhoes, dozers, etc.) used during the various construction phases for the project and on-road motor vehicles for equipment and material deliveries and workers commuting to and from the project site. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated further in the EIR.

(c) **Potentially Significant Impact.** EKAPCD is designated as a nonattainment area for the State and federal ozone standards and the state PM_{10} standard. As such, the emissions of ozone precursors (ROG and NOx) and PM_{10} during construction and operation of the project could result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of these criteria pollutants in the MDAB. Thus, the project's contribution to cumulative air quality impacts in the MDAB could be potentially significant. The project's contribution of construction and operational emissions to the MDAB will be analyzed in the EIR.

(d) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The land uses surrounding the project site consists primarily of undeveloped and scattered residential and commercial uses. The nearest sensitive receptors to the project site include scattered residential structures located approximately 0.15 mile to the east across U.S. Highway 395, southwest across Brown Road, and south along Reeves Avenue. Nearby sensitive receptors could be exposed to pollutant emissions during construction of the project. The project's construction-related activities would result in diesel exhaust emissions and dust that could adversely affect air quality for the nearest sensitive receptors.

Exposure to Valley Fever from fugitive dust generated during construction is a potentially significant impact. There is the potential that cocci spores could be stirred up during excavation, grading, and earth-moving activities, exposing construction workers and nearby sensitive receptors to these spores and thereby to the possibility of contracting Valley Fever. Thus, impact to sensitive receptors via pollutant concentrations is potentially significant and will be evaluated further in the EIR.

(e) **No Impact.** The project would not have any stationary sources or equipment located onsite that would generate objectionable odors. During construction activities, only short-term, temporary odors from vehicle exhaust and construction equipment engines would occur. However, these odors would be temporary and would be dispersed rapidly. Therefore, it is anticipated that there would be no impact and further analysis is not warranted in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES Would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☒	☐	☐	☐
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

(a) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The project is located in the eastern high desert region of unincorporated Kern County in the Mojave Desert, within the community of Inyokern. The project site is comprised of desert scrub and grassland habitat with a minimal level of anthropogenic

disturbances. The project site may contain sensitive or special-status species. There is a potential for special-status plants and wildlife species to be present in project vicinity. The proposed project's potential to have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans or regulations by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will be evaluated in the EIR.

(b) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The project site is undeveloped and comprised of relatively undisturbed, desert scrub and grassland habitat. The site does not appear to support any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities as may be defined by local or regional plans, policies, or regulations. Field surveys for sensitive natural communities will be completed for the proposed project, and the results included in the EIR.

The USFWS does not identify any critical habitats on or near the project site (USFWS, 2016). The nearest critical habitat is located approximately 30 miles west of the site, in the Scodie Mountains, for Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*).

A biological assessment, soils characterization, and hydrology analysis will be prepared for the project. These studies will be used to evaluate potential project-related impacts to sensitive natural communities in the EIR.

(c) **No Impact.** The project site is in the high desert region of Kern County. It does not contain any federally protected wetlands, marshes or vernal pools, or other protected waterways, as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act; therefore, project implementation would not result in impacts related to wetlands. As noted above, the project site would not contain jurisdictional waters of the State, and therefore, no federally protected waters would be affected by the project. Further analysis of this issue is not warranted in the EIR.

(d) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The project site and surrounding areas may be used for migration or dispersal by some avian species. Project construction and operation could remove foraging habitat. This impact may be significant and will be evaluated in the EIR.

(e) **No Impact.** There is no local policy or ordinance protecting biological resources. Additionally, the project site and the proposed gen-tie 100-foot wide easement corridor are devoid of trees. There would be no impacts and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

(f) **No Impact.** The project site is not located within a local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan boundary. There would be no impacts and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES				
Would the project:				
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in *CEQA Guidelines* §15064.5?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource as defined in Public Resources Code 21074	☒	☐	☐	☐
c. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* §15064.5?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☒	☐	☐	☐
e. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion:

(a) - (c) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The project site consists of undeveloped, undisturbed and previously disturbed land. Development of the project would require some ground disturbance for grading, installation of the solar arrays, gen-tie line, and placement of underground electrical and communications lines, which could impact archaeological resources. A cultural resources survey will be conducted for the project. Further evaluation in the EIR is warranted to identify potential impacts to historical, archaeological resources and tribal cultural resources and to formulate avoidance or mitigation measures, if applicable.

(d) **Potentially Significant Impact.** Kern County is rich in paleontological resources. If paleontologically sensitive formations are located under the project, ground disturbance could result in potentially significant impacts to paleontological resources. Thus, a paleontological study for the project will be performed. Further evaluation in the EIR is warranted to identify potential impacts and to formulate avoidance or mitigation measures, if applicable.

(e) **Less Than Significant Impact.** There is no evidence that the project site is located within an area likely to contain human remains and discovery of human remains during earthmoving activities is not anticipated. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant. However, the potential for human remains to be encountered will be further analyzed in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact

3.6 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii. A resource determined by the lead agency in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 52024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 52024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American Tribe.	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion:

(a)(i–ii) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The potential for impacts on tribal cultural resources is considered less than significant. All tribes with possible cultural background within the project area were notified on February 3, 2017, per SB18 and AB52. However, the site is zoned for industrial uses and has not been previously developed or used as farmland so it may yield cultural items. The potential for locating tribal cultural resources will be evaluated further in EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
3.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS				
Would the project:				
a. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

(a) (i) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Primary ground rupture is ground deformation that occurs along the surface trace of the causative fault during an earthquake. The project site is not

transected by known active or potentially active faults. The Little Lake fault zone, located approximately 7 miles northeast of the project is the closest fault. The project is not located in an Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone. Due to the distance from the nearest active fault to the project site, the potential for surface fault rupture at the project site is considered negligible.

In addition, construction of the project would be subject to all applicable ordinances of the Kern County Building Code (Chapter 17.08). Kern County has adopted the California Building Code (CBC), 2016 Edition (CCR Title 24) effective January 1, 2017, which imposes substantially the same requirements as the International Building Code (IBC), 2015 Edition, with some modifications and amendments. Adherence to all applicable regulations would mitigate any potential impacts associated with the project. As a result, project related impacts from surface rupture of a known earthquake fault would be less than significant; however, further analysis in the EIR is warranted.

(ii) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Due to the location of active faults in the region, strong seismic ground shaking could occur at the project site, resulting in damage to structures that are not properly designed to withstand strong ground shaking. The project would include the construction of a field of solar PV panels, transmission lines, two battery energy storage units, and other associated infrastructure. As described above, the project would include the construction of two unmanned O&M buildings for operational activities. Should strong seismic ground shaking occur at the project site, damage to the PV modules and other ancillary facilities (e.g., energy storage units and O&M buildings) could result. However, construction of the project would be subject to all applicable ordinances of the Kern County Building Code (Chapter 17.08), and IBC and CBC earthquake construction standards, including those relating to soil characteristics. Adherence to all applicable regulations would mitigate any potential impacts associated with seismic ground shaking at the project site. Although, the project site would potentially be subject to moderate to strong ground shaking from regional earthquakes, the project would not expose substantial numbers of people to adverse impacts as a result. Potential impacts for this issue area are anticipated to be less than significant; nevertheless, further analysis in the EIR is warranted.

(iii) **No Impact.** Seismically induced liquefaction occurs when loose, water-saturated sediments of relatively low density are subjected to cyclic shaking that causes soils to lose strength or stiffness, because of increased pore water pressure. Liquefaction generally occurs when the depth to groundwater is less than 50 feet. Based on review of available groundwater data in the site vicinity, groundwater in the area is reported to be approximately 255 feet below ground surface. Thus, the potential for liquefaction at the surface is low. Furthermore, the project site is not located within a current, mapped California Liquefaction Hazard Zone. Structures constructed as part of the project would be required by State law to be constructed in accordance with all applicable IBC and CBC earthquake construction standards, including those relating to soil characteristics. Adherence to all applicable regulations would avoid any potential impacts to structures resulting from liquefaction at the project site. Potential impacts for this issue area would not be anticipated, and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

(iv) **No Impact.** The project site is located in a relatively flat-lying plain, does not contain any steep slopes, and the likelihood of landslides is very low. Therefore, impacts related to

landslides are not anticipated to occur or pose a hazard to the project or surrounding area and further analysis of this issue is not warranted in the EIR.

(b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Removal of vegetation and excavation would be required for array foundations at the project site, and trenching would be required for the installation of underground cables and circuits. The project would employ disk-and-roll grading, micrograding, and land-leveling equipment for soil compaction. As a result, project construction would have the potential to result in erosion, sedimentation, and discharge of construction debris from the site. Vegetation clearing and grading activities, for example, could lead to exposed or stockpiled soils susceptible to peak stormwater runoff flows and wind forces. The compaction of soils by heavy equipment may reduce the infiltration capacity of soils (exposed during construction) and increase runoff or erosion potential. The presence of large amounts of raw materials for construction, including aggregate base course material, may lead to stormwater runoff contamination. However, the project proponent would be required to obtain a Kern County NPDES permit because the project would disturb more than 1 acre of soil. As required, a SWPPP would be developed to specify best management practices (BMPs) to prevent construction pollutants, including erosion of soils (such as topsoil), from moving offsite. Although impacts are anticipated to be less than significant with implementation of the requirements, impacts related to soil erosion or the loss of topsoil will be evaluated in the EIR.

(c) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The proposed project is not expected to result in substantial adverse effects due to landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, and/or collapse. However, future development associated with the proposed project may result in exposure of people or structures to substantial adverse effects due to landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse, and will be evaluated in the EIR.

(d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Expansive soils are fine-grained soils (generally high plasticity clays) that can undergo a significant increase in volume with an increase in water content and a significant decrease in volume with a decrease in water content. Changes in the water content of a highly expansive soil can result in severe distress to structures constructed on or against the soil. The expansion potential of onsite soils may be classified as very low to low, and special design is not necessary. Nevertheless, the project would be designed to comply with applicable building codes and structural improvement requirements to withstand the effects of expansive soils. The implementation of Kern County Building Code requirements, as applicable, would minimize the potential impact of expansive soils. Impacts related to expansive soils would be less than significant and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

(e) **No Impact.** The project includes construction of two unmanned O&M buildings, which will not require any permanent employees onsite. Although maintenance workers would visit the project site sporadically throughout the year for routine maintenance of the facility, the O&M buildings will not include septic systems or wastewater disposal facilities for these employees. Therefore no further evaluation in the EIR is warranted.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact

3.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☒	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

(a) **Potentially Significant Impact.** Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions emitted by human activity are implicated in global climate change or global warming. The principal GHGs are CO_2, methane (CH_4), NO_x, ozone, water vapor, and fluorinated gases. The temporary construction activities associated with the project, which would involve operation of heavy off-road equipment, on-road trucks (for deliveries and hauling), and construction worker commute trips, would generate GHGs. However, as a solar facility, the project is expected to displace traditional sources of electricity production that involves combustion energy sources (e.g., burning coal, fuel oil, or natural gas). As such, the provision of solar energy by the project would produce GHG-free electricity that is anticipated to offset GHGs that would otherwise be generated by traditional sources of electricity. Overall, given the long-term GHG offsets provided by operation of the project, impacts associated with GHGs from implementation of the project is anticipated to be less than significant. Nonetheless, the potential impacts associated with GHG emissions generated during construction of the project and the potential GHG offsets from operation of the project will be further evaluated in the EIR.

(b) **Potentially Significant Impact.** California has passed several bills and the governor has signed at least three executive orders regarding GHGs. Assembly Bill (AB) 32 (the Global Warming Solutions Act) was passed by the California legislature on August 31, 2006 that require the State's global warming emissions to be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. The reduction will be accomplished through an enforceable statewide cap on GHG emissions that was phased in starting in 2012. In 2002, California established its Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) Program, with the goal of increasing the percentage of renewable energy in the state's electricity mix to 20 percent renewable energy by 2017. In 2006, under SB 107, the RPS Program codified the 20 percent goal. The RPS Program requires electric utilities and providers to increase procurement from eligible renewable energy resources by at least one percent of their retail sales annually until they reach 20 percent by 2017. On November 17, 2008, the governor signed Executive Order S-14-08, requiring California utilities to reach the 33 percent renewable goal by 2020. The project is intended to: (1) reduce importation of power from fossil fuel power plants; and (2) contribute to a reduction in GHGs. Nevertheless, the project's consistency with the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Climate Change Scoping Plan will be assessed in the EIR to determine whether the project is consistent with the goals of AB 32.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact

3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e. For a project located within the adopted Kern County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☒	☐	☐	☐
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g. Impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☐	☒	☐

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
i. Would implementation of the project generate vectors (flies, mosquitoes, rodents, etc.) or have a component that includes agricultural waste? Specifically, would the project exceed the following qualitative threshold: The presence of domestic flies, mosquitoes, cockroaches, rodents, and/or any other vectors associated with the project is significant when the applicable enforcement agency determines that any of the vectors:				
i. Occur as immature stages and adults in numbers considerably in excess of those found in the surrounding environment; and	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii. Are associated with design, layout, and management of project operations; and	☐	☐	☐	☒
iii. Disseminate widely from the property; and	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv. Cause detrimental effects on the public health or well-being of the majority of the surrounding population.	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

(a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project would not involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials as defined by the Hazardous Materials Transportation Uniform Safety Act and is not expected to create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. During construction, the project would include the transport of general construction materials (i.e., concrete, wood, metal, fuel, etc.) as well as materials necessary to construct the proposed PV arrays. Project-related infrastructure would not emit hazardous materials, or be constructed of acutely hazardous materials or substances that could adversely impact the public or onsite workers. The majority of wastes to be generated during construction of the project would also be non-hazardous, and would consist of cardboard, wood pallets, copper wire, scrap steel, common trash, and wood wire spools. However, the project could generate small quantities of hazardous waste during project construction, including waste paint, spent construction solvents, waste cleaners, waste oil, oily rags, waste batteries, and spent welding materials. Although field equipment used during construction activities could contain various hazardous materials (i.e., hydraulic oil, diesel fuel, grease, lubricants, solvents, adhesives, paints, etc.), these materials are not considered to be acutely hazardous and would be used in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and all applicable regulations. In addition, although it is unlikely that large quantities will be stored on site, hazardous fuels and lubricants used on field equipment would be subject to a Material Disposal and Solid Waste Management Plan, and

a Spill Prevention Containment and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plan, as required. Impacts resulting from the transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials during construction of the project would be less than significant; however, the EIR will include an evaluation of potential hazardous materials impacts.

The project would be subject to all local, State, and federal laws pertaining to the use of hazardous materials onsite and would be subject to review by the Kern County Environmental Health Services Division/Hazardous Materials Section. Through the review process, the project would be required to submit hazardous materials business plan, which would include a complete list of all materials used onsite, an explanation of how the materials would be transported, and a discussion on the chemical forms in which the materials would be used in order to maintain safety and prevent possible environmental contamination or worker exposure. During construction of the project, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all applicable materials present at the site would be made readily available to onsite personnel. During construction of the facilities, non-hazardous construction debris would be generated and disposed of in approved facilities. Also, during construction of the facility, sanitary waste would be managed using portable toilets located at reasonably accessible onsite locations. Therefore, construction of the project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

The PV panels may include solid materials that are considered hazardous, such as cadmium telluride. While in operation, the solar panels are solid and non-leachable; however, broken panels could result in a slight hazard. To dispose of properly, the project would use the manufacturer's collection and recycling program to ensure the proper collection and recycling of PV panels, as needed. While it is not anticipated that transport and disposal of such panels would result in a significant hazard, this issue will be considered in the EIR.

Concern over electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure generally pertains to human-made sources of electromagnetism and the degree to which they may have adverse biological effects or interfere with other electromagnetic systems. Commonly known human-made sources of EMF are electrical systems, such as electronics and telecommunications, as well as electric motors and other electrically powered devices. Radiation from these sources is invisible, non-ionizing, and of low frequency. Generally, in most environments, the levels of such radiation when added to natural background sources are low. Electric voltage (electric field) and electric current (magnetic field) from transmission lines create EMFs, dangers associated with high-voltage electrical transmission lines (including EMF hazards), though anticipated to be less than significant, will be discussed in the EIR as well.

Dust palliatives and herbicides, if used, may be transported to and stored at the project site. These materials would be stored in appropriate containers that would prevent their accidental release at the site. There are no designated routes for the transport of hazardous materials located within or adjacent to the project site; however, SR 14 and US Highway 395 are designated routes for the transport of hazardous materials. SR 14 is located approximately 4 miles west of the project site, while US Highway 395 bounds the project site on the east . These roadways are equipped to handle the transport of hazardous materials and both SR 14 and US Highway 395 would provide regional access to the site. Because operation of the project would not involve the routine use of materials defined as hazardous, operation of the project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials during either construction or operation. Nevertheless, this impact will be analyzed further in the EIR.

(b) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The project site is not located within or near a Department of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) identified oil field. Additionally, the site contains no known active or abandoned oil wells and there are no known active or abandoned oil wells in the site's immediate vicinity.

Construction and operation of the project may include the accidental release of hazardous materials, such as cleaning fluids and petroleum products including lubricants, fuels, and solvents. The project would be subject to all local, state, and federal laws pertaining to the use of hazardous materials onsite and would be subject to review by the Kern County Environmental Health Services Division/Hazardous Materials Section. Through the review process, the project proponent would be required to submit a hazardous materials business plan, which would include a complete list of all materials used onsite, how the materials would be transported, and in what form they would be used. This would be recorded to maintain safety and prevent possible environmental contamination or worker exposure. This would also include submission of Materials Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all applicable materials present at the site. The MSDS would be made readily available to onsite personnel. It is anticipated that adherence to regulations and standard protocols during foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment would avoid significant impacts. However, potential impacts will be evaluated further in the EIR.

(c) **No Impact.** The project site is located within the community of Inyokern, and the closest school to the project site is Inyokern Elementary School located approximately 0.6 mile southwest of the project site. The next closest school is Faller Elementary School, which is located approximately 6.5 miles east of the project in the City of Ridgecrest. No schools are proposed in the vicinity of the project site. The project consists of solar energy generation facilities that involve using PV panels to generate electricity. Project-related infrastructure would not emit hazardous materials or involve handling hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within a quarter mile of an existing or proposed school, and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

(d) **No Impact.** The project site is not identified in any of the California hazardous materials databases. Searches were completed for the subject parcels in the following hazardous materials lists: California Environmental Protection Agency's (CalEPA) Cortese List including the California Department of Toxic Substances and Control's EnviroStor database of hazardous substances release sites; and Geotracker, the California database of leaking underground storage tanks. Finally, as provided by CalEPA, there are no active Cease and Desist Orders or Clean Up and Abatement Orders for hazardous materials/facilities in the immediate project vicinity of the project site. Therefore, no significant impacts are anticipated, and further analysis is not warranted in the EIR.

(e) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The project area is located within a mile of the Inyokern Airport, and the project site is located within the B1 (Approach/Departure Zone and Adjacent to Runway) sphere of influence of the Kern County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) for the Inyokern Airport. Therefore, this impact will be evaluated in the EIR.

(f) **No Impact.** The project site is not located within 2 miles of a private airstrip. The closest private heliport is the Ridgecrest Community Hospital Heliport located approximately 8 miles east of the project site. Therefore, there are no anticipated safety hazards related to proximity to a private airstrip or heliport. No significant impacts are anticipated and no further analysis of this issue is warranted in the EIR.

(g) **No Impact.** The project would not physically impede the existing emergency response plan, emergency vehicle access, or personnel access to the project site. The project site is located in an

area with several alternative access roads allowing access in the event of an emergency. Access would be maintained throughout construction, and appropriate detours would be provided in the event of potential road closures. Therefore, no significant impacts related to impairment of the implementation of or physical interference with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan would occur. Further analysis of this issue is not warranted in the EIR.

(h) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project would not increase the potential for wildland fires or expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire), Kern County Fire Hazards Severity Zone Maps for the Local Responsible Areas, the project site is classified as Local Responsibility Area (LRA) Moderate. The project site is outside of areas identified by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection as having substantial or very high risk. Moderate zones are typically wildland supporting areas of low fire frequency and relatively modest fire behavior. The project site consists of undeveloped desert lands. The surrounding land is primarily undeveloped land with some rural residential and commercial development. Construction and operation of the project would not result in increased risk of wildfires in the area. The project would comply with all applicable wildland fire management plans and policies established by CalFire and the KCFD. Accordingly, the project is not expected to expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. Impacts are expected to be less than significant; however, further analysis of this issue will be discussed in the EIR.

(i) **No Impact.**

(i-iv) Project-related infrastructure is not expected to result in features or conditions (such as standing water, agricultural products, agricultural waste, or human waste) that would provide habitat for vectors such as mosquitoes, flies, cockroaches, or rodents. During construction and operation, workers would generate small quantities of solid waste (i.e., trash) that would be appropriately stored for permanent disposal. Construction and operation of the proposed solar arrays and associated facilities would not produce excessive wastes, standing water, or other features that would attract nuisance pests or vectors. Therefore, no impacts would occur, and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

3.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation onsite or offsite?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding onsite or offsite?	☒	☐	☐	☐
e. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f. Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g. Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h. Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
i. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	☐	☐	☐	☒
j. Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

(a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project site is within the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) jurisdiction. Project construction activities have the potential to result in erosion, sedimentation, and discharge of construction debris, and could result in the discharge of wastewater and urban runoff at the project site. If not properly managed, this wastewater could violate the water quality standards or waste discharge requirements of the RWQCB. However, as noted in Geology (b), above, in compliance with the Kern County NPDES permit requirements, appropriate BMPs would be implemented to reduce potential water quality impacts. Because the project would disturb more than 1 acre and at least two mapped drainages cross the project area, the project proponent would be required to prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP) that would include implementation of (Best Management Practices) BMP erosion-control measures to control stormwater runoff, including eroded soils, from causing a violation of any water quality standards. Therefore, impacts related to water quality during construction would be considered less than significant. Although no significant impacts related to water quality are anticipated during construction, a comprehensive hydrology and water quality impact analysis will be included in the EIR.

The project would develop impervious areas on the currently undeveloped project site, including foundation pads for a inverters, switchgear, transformers, battery storage units, as well as two O&M buildings with an unpaved a parking area. Implementation of project specific BMPs in the required Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) would ensure that surface water quality would meet applicable standards. Compliance with applicable regulations and the implementation of a WQMP are expected to reduce potential water quality impacts to a less than significant level; nevertheless, these impacts will be addressed further in the EIR.

(b) **Potentially Significant Impact.** Water use for the project would be needed primarily during construction activities, and non-potable water would be brought to the site for soil conditioning and dust suppression. It is anticipated that approximately to be less than 100 acre-feet of water would be required for the project during the construction phase, which would be trucked to the site or provided by an onsite groundwater well. Water use during operation of the project would be limited to use at the O&M buildings for panel washing. It is expected that operation of the project would require approximately 1 to 2 acre-feet of water per year. If calculated over the life of the project, this would average approximately 5 acre feet of water per year, inclusive of both construction water and water for operations. During construction, potable water would be brought to the site for drinking and domestic needs for construction workers. In addition, the project site consists of undeveloped desert land. Impacts related to groundwater supplies may occur and will be further analyzed in the EIR.

The project site is undeveloped, relatively flat, and covered with soils that allow for stormwater percolation. The impervious surfaces required for the inverters, transformers, and other infrastructure would be minimized as much as possible. However, impacts to the sites' drainage patterns, as well as the potential for increased erosion or siltation, will be evaluated in the EIR.

(c) **Potentially Significant Impact.** Construction of the concrete pads for the switchyard, inverters, transformers, O&M buildings, etc., as well as foundational supports for panel installation, soil compaction, and any grading may alter the existing drainage pattern of the site. As noted in item (a), above, a SWPPP and WQMP would be prepared for the project and the appropriate permits would be obtained from the Lahontan RWQCB. A hydrology study will be prepared for the project in accordance with Kern County requirements, and potential impacts to existing drainage patterns and flooding conditions on the project site will be analyzed in the EIR.

(d) **Potentially Significant Impact.** There are no streams or rivers that traverse the project site, and therefore, the proposed project would not result in an increase in the rate or amount of surface runoff that would cause the course alteration of a stream or river.

Construction and operational activities associated with the proposed project could result in an increase in the rate or amount of surface runoff, however, it is anticipated that most of the stormwater would infiltrate into the onsite soils similar to existing conditions. Although the project site is located within a Flood Zone A (no base flood elevations determined), it is in a predominantly rural area and the project is not anticipated to result in potentially significant impact in regards to flooding onsite or offsite. However, alterations of drainage patterns will be further evaluated in the EIR.

(e) **Less Than Significant Impact.** During construction and following installation of the solar arrays and other associated project infrastructure, the majority of the site would remain as pervious surface. The design of the project is such that stormwater would remain on the project site and infiltration would occur similar to existing conditions. No component of the project would concentrate runoff and exceed the capacity of existing onsite drainage and percolation. Similarly, no component of the project is anticipated to generate a substantial source of polluted runoff. The construction period SWPPP and the operational period WQMP would provide proper control and treatment, if necessary, of any stormwater prior to discharge. With adherence to site-specific BMPs, potential pollutants would be minimized to the extent practicable and should not exceed numeric thresholds for water quality protection. Impacts would be less than significant. Nevertheless, this impact will be discussed further in the EIR.

(f) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Project construction activities (such as grading) could potentially degrade water quality through erosion and subsequent sedimentation of drainage pathways. Additionally, accidental release of potentially harmful materials, such as engine oil, diesel fuel, and cement slurry could degrade the water quality of nearby streams. As mentioned above, implementation of a SWPPP would include BMPs during construction and a WQMP would provide BMPs for operation, which would reduce the impact of project activities on surrounding water quality. Therefore, construction and operation of the project would not substantially degrade water quality and impacts would be less than significant. Nevertheless, potential impacts to water quality will be evaluated further in the EIR.

(g) **No Impact.** The site is located within the Flood Hazard Zone A as identified by FEMA, which is defined as areas subject to inundation by the 1 percent change flood event generally determined using appropriate methodologies. As detailed hydraulic analyses have not been performed, no Base

Flood Elevations (BFEs) or flood depths are shown. However, the project does not include construction of housing. As a result, no impacts would occur and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

(h) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project is located within Flood Zone A as designated by the on the FIRM (06029C1020E and 0626C1018E) as issued by the FEMA. Flood Zone A indicates areas subject to inundation by the one percent chance flood event generally determined using appropriate methodologies. As detailed hydraulic analyses have not been performed, no Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) or flood depths are shown. The project would be reviewed by the Kern County Public Works Department for adherence to all floodplain management standards if deemed necessary. Although impacts are anticipated to be less than significant, further analysis is required in the EIR.

(i) **No Impact.** The project is not located within a 100-year flood hazard area or an area that is subject to flooding due to failure of a levee or dam. Isabella Lake Dam is located more than 35 miles west, and the project site is located outside of a flood inundation zone. Therefore, the project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death due to flooding from failure of a levee or dam and no impact is anticipated. No further analysis related to failure of a levee or dam is warranted in the EIR.

(j) **No Impact.** The project site is not located near an ocean or enclosed body of water, and therefore would not be subject to inundation by seiche or tsunami. Mudflows are a type of mass wasting or landslide, where earth and surface materials are rapidly transported downhill under the force of gravity, and are often triggered by heavy rainfall and soil that is not able to sufficiently drain or absorb water and the super-saturation results in soil and rock materials to become unstable and slide away. Due to the relatively flat topography of the project site and surrounding area, the potential to be inundated by mudflow is considered remote. Therefore, impacts are not anticipated and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact

3.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

a. Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c. Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

(a) **No Impact.** The project would be constructed on undeveloped desert lands, and existing and occupied residential structures are located to the east, southwest, and south of the project site. There are no residences or other structures on the project site. The nearest residence is approximately 150 feet south of the nearest project site boundary along Inyokern Road and Reeves Avenue and other scattered residential uses exist nearby, to the east across U.S. Highway 395. The project site is located within the community of Inyokern, bisected by Inyokern Road (SR 178), between Brown Road and U.S. Highway 395. The project would not physically divide or restrict access to the Inyokern community, or any other community, as the project site is located in an undeveloped area, with little to no residential development in the area. Therefore, impacts related to the physical division of an established community would not occur, and this issue will not be discussed further in the EIR.

(b) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The proposed project is located within the Inyokern Specific Plan area shown in Figure 3. The project sites have a land use designation of 7.2/2.5 (Service Industrial/Flood Hazard Area). According to the Kern County Zoning Ordinance Section 19.38.030 G, solar energy electrical generators are permitted within the M-2 (Medium Industrial) Zone District with approval of a CUP. The project proponent is requesting two CUPs to allow for the construction and operation of a 20 MW solar facility (Phase I) and a 12 MW solar facility (Phase II) within the M-2 Zoning District. The project proponent also requested a Specific Plan Amendment to amend the circulation element to eliminate future road reservations along the midsection lines of Sections 19, 20, and 29.

The property's zoning classification is consistent with its Specific Plan designations. The proposed project is consistent with current Inyokern Specific Plan, and Kern County Zoning Ordinance land use designations applicable to the project site, which allow solar development by conditional use permit on the portions of the project site proposed for development. Although it is anticipated that

the impacts would be less than significant, this will be analyzed further in the EIR. Therefore, with approval of the requested CUPs and Specific Plan Amendment, the project would not have the potential to conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

The Lead Agency notes that with the implementation of numerous renewable energy projects, cumulative effects of utility-sized solar power generation facilities, there is the potential for outside factors – such as the development of newer technology, changes in state or national policy that encourages the construction of such facilities, or other economic factors – to result in the abandonment of such facilities by the project proponent. Discussion of potential impacts associated with the abandonment of solar facilities will be discussed in the EIR. Additionally, the military has identified potential conflicts of users of the radio frequency spectrum located both on and off military installations as an area to be reviewed for compatibility issues. Operations of unmanned radio-controlled aircraft flights can have electronic interference from other sources of radio signals from telemetry equipment associated with the solar facility. Although the project would be consistent with the Inyokern Specific Plan and Kern County Zoning Ordinance, potential conflict with the Kern County ALUCP for the Inyokern Airport influence area will be further discussed in the EIR.

(c) **No Impact.** The project site is not located within the boundaries of any habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan; therefore, no impact would occur and no further analysis of this issue is warranted in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact

3.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion:

(a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project is not located within any designated mineral resources area or DOGGR identified oil field. Although construction and operation of the project is not anticipated to result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and residents of the State and, therefore, would have a less than significant impact. Nonetheless, this issue will be further analyzed in the EIR.

(b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project site does not contain locally important mineral resources recovery sites delineated in the Inyokern Specific Plan. According to the Inyokern Specific Plan, the area is urbanized to the extent that it has no natural resource qualities suitable for designation with Specific Map Codes. Land within the plan boundaries has limited value as agricultural land and no value as rangeland. Should mineral resources be discovered in the Inyokern Specific Plan area, this section shall be revised to provide goals, policy and standard of development that conforms to the overall Specific Plan. Impacts are anticipated to be less than significant; however, this issue will be analyzed further in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
3.13 NOISE				
Would the project result in:				
a. Exposure of persons to, or generate, noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Exposure of persons to, or generate, excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☒	☐	☐	☐
e. For a project located within the Kern County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☒	☐	☐	☐
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

(a) **Less than Significant Impact.** Land uses determined to be "sensitive" to noise as defined by the Inyokern Specific Plan include residential areas, schools, convalescent and acute care hospitals, parks and recreational areas, and churches. The Inyokern Specific Plan Noise Element sets a 65 dBA (A-weighted decibels) day-night average sound level (Ldn) limit on exterior noise levels for stationary sources (i.e., non-transportation) at sensitive receptors. The closest offsite noise sensitive receptors to the project site are residences located along and north of Inyokern Road and Reeves Avenue south of the project site that are approximately 150 feet from the nearest project boundary. With the proposed minimum 20-foot-wide perimeter interior to the project, these closest offsite noise sensitive receptors would be a minimum of 170 feet from the nearest PV panel construction. Noise generated by the project would occur primarily during the construction phase, as the long-term operation of the solar facility would be relatively quiet. There would not be any substantial noise-generating equipment located at the project site. The project proponent would be required to adhere to the provisions outlined in the Noise Control Ordinance in the Kern County Ordinance Code

Section 8.36.020 and the Inyokern Specific Plan Noise Element. Although the noise levels generated during project construction are anticipated to temporary in nature and less than significant, , this impact will be analyzed in the EIR.

(b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Groundborne vibration and groundborne noise could originate from the operation of heavy off-road equipment during the construction phase of the project. Erection of the solar arrays would include support structures that may potentially need to be driven into the soil using pneumatic techniques. As such, the installation of these support structures may cause localized vibration. However, significant vibration typically associated with activities such as blasting, would not be an activity associated with the project. Given the localized nature of vibration impacts and the rapid attenuation of vibration levels over short distances, the vibration impacts associated with the project during construction are anticipated to be less than significant. Nevertheless, this issue will be further analyzed in the EIR.

(c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project site is bounded by US Highway 395 on the east, and is bisected by SR 178; Inyokern Airport and the China Lake Air Weapons Center is in close proximity to the project site, as well. Due to the quiet nature of solar facilities, it is unlikely that long-term noise generated by the project will exceed existing ambient noise levels. Traffic on the project access roads would be for routine maintenance activities and would primarily consist of personal vehicles, and would only occur several times per year. Therefore, the majority of operations would not produce noise discernible above ambient conditions. Although general maintenance activities would be conducted, they would be subject to applicable Kern County Noise Control Ordinance requirements and comply with the Inyokern Specific Plan Noise Element, which would minimize impacts to receptors. Although impacts are anticipated to be less than significant, this issue will be evaluated further in the EIR.

(d) **Potentially Significant Impact.** Heavy equipment used during construction would cause a temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels and be considered a significant impact. Therefore, the potential for the project's construction activities to result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels at the nearest offsite sensitive receptors will be further evaluated in the EIR. Project-related construction noise levels will be quantified and evaluated in the EIR.

(e) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The project site is located within the Inyokern Airport sphere of influence as covered by the Kern County ALUCP. The Inyokern Airport is located 0.5 miles west of the project site, across Brown Road. The proposed project would temporarily expose the construction workers for the proposed project to excessive noise levels. However, the proposed project would not include the development of new residences and would not expose new residents to excessive noise. This impact will be evaluated further in the EIR.

(f) **No Impact.** The nearest private airstrip/heliport is the Ridgecrest Community Hospital Heliport, located approximately 8 miles east of the project site. The heliport is open for private, medical use only. Due to the relatively few aircraft that uses this facility and its distance from the project site, there would be no significant impact resulting from people residing or working in the vicinity of the private airport or heliport being exposed to excessive noise levels from the project. No impacts are expected and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact

3.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

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)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

(a) **No Impact.** Although the project would provide new employment, long-term employment opportunities would be minimal. The project would include the construction of two unmanned O&M buildings, so regular permanent employees would not be required. Maintenance personnel are expected to visit the project site several times per year for routine maintenance and PV modules may be cleaned up to four times a year. Temporary employment is expected to last up to 10 months during construction of the project. The average daily workforce is expected to consist of 25 construction, supervisory, support, and construction management personnel, with a peak workforce of 50 individuals for short periods of time. Construction workers are expected to travel to the site from various local communities, and the majority would likely come from the existing labor pool as construction workers travel from site to site as needed. The number of workers anticipated to relocate to the area is not expected to be substantial. If temporary housing should be necessary, it is expected that accommodations would be available in the nearby hotels in Inyokern, Ridgecrest, or other local cities. Therefore, the project would not directly or indirectly induce the development of any new housing or businesses. This issue will not be discussed further in the EIR.

Typically, established local thresholds of significance for housing and population growth pursuant to the State *CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15064.7, include effects that would induce substantial growth or concentration of a population beyond County projections, alter the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the population beyond that projected in the General Plan Housing Element, result in a substantial increase in demand for additional housing, or create a development that significantly reduces the ability of the County to meet housing objectives set forth in the General Plan Housing Element. The effects of the project in relation to these local thresholds are minimal. No impacts would occur, and further analysis of this is not warranted in the EIR.

Although the project would produce additional electricity, it is intended to meet the demand for energy that is already projected based on growth in communities around California. As such, the generation of electricity by the project would be considered growth-accommodating, rather than growth-inducing. In addition, state law requires utility companies to produce a certain percentage of electricity from green or renewable sources. Solar electricity is considered a renewable product and would help the utility companies meet this new State law. The project's electricity would replace electricity generated by fossil fuel-burning facilities, thereby contributing to California's renewable energy goals, and would not contribute to induced growth. No significant impacts related to population growth are expected from the project, and further analysis of this issue is not warranted in the EIR.

(b-c) **No Impact.** The project site is currently vacant and undeveloped. There are no existing houses located within the project site, and no households would be required to be relocated as a result of the proposed project. Further, there are no existing people residing on the project site. Therefore, no impact to displacement of existing housing would occur. This issue will not be discussed further in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact

3.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project:

a. 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 to other performance objectives for any of the public services:

i)	Fire protection?	☒	☐	☐	☐
ii)	Police protection?	☒	☐	☐	☐
iii)	Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv)	Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
v)	Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

(a) **Potentially Significant.** **Fire Protection**: Fire suppression and emergency medical services are provided by the Kern County Fire Department (KCFD). The project site is served by Fire Station #73, located approximately 0.7 mile to the west of the project site at 6919 Monache Mountain Avenue in the community of Inyokern. Adherence to all applicable regulations would reduce wildfire ignitions and prevent the spread of wildfires. However, project construction and operation activities may result in increased need for fire-fighting personnel and facilities. Given the location of the project site in the rural environment and KCFD's obligation to respond to all structure fires in their jurisdiction, fire-fighting capacity in the project area could result in potential impacts on fire services from construction and operation of the solar facilities. This will be evaluated in the EIR.

Potentially Significant. **Police Protection.** Police protection services are provided by the Kern County Sheriff's Office. The primary sheriff substation that would serve the project area is the Ridgecrest substation, located approximately 10 miles east of the project site at 128 East Coso Avenue in the City of Ridgecrest. Although the potential is low, the project may attract vandals or other security risks, and construction activities would result in increases in traffic volumes along surrounding roads, which could increase demand on law enforcement services. Access would be limited to the project site during construction and operation, thereby minimizing the need for police services; nonetheless, the project's impacts on sheriff services are potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR.

No Impact. **Schools:** During the approximate 10-month construction period of the project, an average of 25 daily construction workers and a peak workforce of 50 workers could be required. It is expected that most of these workers would live in the region and would commute to the project site from where their children are already enrolled in school. Even if these workers came from out of the area, they would likely return to their out-of-town residences once the facilities were built and would not take their children out of their current schooling situation. Therefore, substantial temporary increases in population that would adversely affect local school populations are not expected. Additionally, operation of the project would not require any permanent employees to operate the two O&M buildings. Maintenance personnel would be expected to visit the project site several times per year for routine maintenance. However, these employees would likely commute to the project site from their permanent residences, and would not take their children out of their schooling situation. However, even if the maintenance employees were hired from out of the area and had to relocate to eastern Kern County, the addition of up to then families to this area would not result in a substantial increase in the number users of local schools. No significant impacts would occur and further analysis of this issue is not warranted in the EIR.

No Impact. **Parks and Other Public Facilities:** The project would require an average of 25 daily workers and a peak workforce of 50 workers during the up to 10-month construction period. It is expected that most of these workers would live in the region and would commute to the project site. The temporary workers during construction would not result in a substantial additional demand for park facilities, nor would they adversely affect local public facilities, such as post office, courthouse, and library services. Operation of the project would not require any permanent onsite employees for maintenance and monitoring activities. Maintenance personnel would be expected to visit the project site several times per year for routine maintenance, but they would likely be drawn from the local labor force and would commute from their permanent residences to the project site during those times. However, even if the maintenance employees were hired from out of the area and had to relocate to eastern Kern County, the addition of up to then families to this area would not result in a substantial increase in the number users of local parks. As a result, no significant impacts to parks or other public services are anticipated to occur, and further analysis of this issue is not warranted in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact

3.16 RECREATION

Would the project:

a. 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

(a)-(b) **No Impact.** The project does not include new recreational facilities. The temporary increase in use of recreation facilities during construction that might be caused by an influx of workers would be minimal. Operation of the project would not require any permanent onsite employees for maintenance and monitoring activities. Maintenance personnel would be expected to visit the project site several times per year for routine maintenance, but they would likely be drawn from the local labor force and would commute from their permanent residences to the project site during those times. However, even if the maintenance employees were hired from out of the area and had to relocate to eastern Kern County, the addition of up to ten families to this area would not result in a substantial increase in the number of users at local parks. As a result, there would not be a detectable increase in the use of parks or other recreational facilities. No impacts would occur, and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
3.17 TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC				
Would the project:				
a. Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance, or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b. Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to, level of service (LOS) standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?				
i. Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan LOS "C"	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii. Kern County General Plan LOS "D"	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f. Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion:

(a) **Potentially Significant Impact.** Construction activities associated with the project could potentially affect traffic volumes on nearby roadways. During construction of the project, there would be an average daily construction workforce of 25 employees, with a peak construction workforce of

50 employees. Project operations would not require any permanent full-time staff onsite. Maintenance personnel would be expected to visit the project site several times per year for routine maintenance and PV modules may be cleaned up to four times a year. This trip generation would not result in a substantial increase in traffic along existing roadways or congestion at intersections. Nonetheless, this impact will be analyzed further in the EIR.

(b) (i) **No Impact.** The project site is not located in or near the metropolitan Bakersfield area. Therefore, no further analysis of this topic will be included in the EIR.

(ii) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Construction of the project would generate construction trips and may require roadway lane closures, which could temporarily increase the daily traffic volumes on local roadways and intersections. Operation of the project would also generate trips on local roadways. The potential impacts of these conditions on LOS of area roadways will be evaluated in the EIR.

(c) **Less Than Significant.** The nearest airport to the project site is the Inyokern Airport, a public use airport, located west of the project site across Brown Road. It is not anticipated that the project will interfere with airspace as the site is in Zone C of the Airport Land Use Compatibility map, which is identified as having a limited risk. The project is outside the NAWS China Lake North Range sphere of influence. The project would not interfere with airspace at the Inyokern airport, as the non-reflective surfaces used for the solar arrays would have about half the reflectance of standard residential and commercial glass. The project would not result in an increase in air traffic levels or a change in location of air traffic patterns that would result in substantial safety risks, because air traffic patterns would not be affected (i.e., the only mode of transport affected by the project is automobile/truck operations). Therefore, impacts related to a change in air traffic patterns would be less than significant, and however, further analysis of this issue is warranted in the EIR.

(d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Roadway modifications are not needed or proposed as part of the project. The project proposes access from Inyokern Road and/or Brown Road. The facilities would be surrounded by boundary fences and would require little maintenance upon full build-out.

Additionally, the project would not include the development of sharp curves, dangerous intersections or other hazardous design features. Therefore, the project would not substantially increase hazards due to a design feature or incompatible uses. Impacts would be less than significant and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

(e) **Less Than Significant Impact.** As described in item (a) above, construction of the project would generate traffic trips, which could temporarily increase the daily traffic volumes on local roadways and intersections. However, the project would not physically impede the existing emergency response plans, emergency vehicle access, or personnel access to the site. The project site and vicinity are accessible via a number of existing roads, with several alternative access roads allowing easy access in the event of an emergency. Therefore, no adverse impacts related to impairment of the implementation of or physical interference with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan is anticipated. Impacts would be less than significant and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

(f) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Operation of the project would not require any permanent onsite employees for maintenance and monitoring activities. Maintenance personnel would be expected to visit the project site several times per year for routine maintenance, but they would likely be drawn from the local labor force and would commute from their permanent residences to the project site

during those times. Due to the rural nature of the project area, bicycle traffic is limited and few bus stops exist on the roadways likely to be used during construction and operation. The project would not house residents or employees and therefore would not have characteristics that could influence alternative means of transportation. The proposed project would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation. Impacts would be less than significant. No additional analysis is warranted.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact

3.18 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

a. Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or would new or expanded entitlements be needed?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f. Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g. Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion:

(a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project would generate a minimal volume of wastewater. The average construction workforce for the project site is 25 workers (expected to peak at 50 individuals). Wastewater generated during construction would be contained within portable toilet facilities. The Kern County Environmental Health Services Division is responsible for monitoring the use of portable toilet facilities, and a condition of approval would require the project proponent to provide documentation of a portable toilet pumping contract.

As proposed, the project would include two unmanned O&M buildings, and no permanent onsite staff would be required. Maintenance personnel would be expected to visit the project site several times a year for routine maintenance. Therefore, the project would not exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the Lahontan RWQCB. Impacts would be less than significant and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

(b) **No Impact.** The project would not require new water or wastewater disposal systems to be constructed, as no permanent operation or maintenance staff would be required onsite. Potable water would be brought to the site for drinking and other domestic needs during construction. Water for panel washing would be brought in by trucks. The project is not proposing construction of any new or expanded water or wastewater treatment facilities, therefore no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

(c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project would create additional impervious surfaces on the project site and may require imported water for dust suppression during construction and panel washing. These changes would not substantially increase the amount of stormwater runoff. The project site does not rely on constructed stormwater drainage systems. The pattern and concentration of runoff could be altered by project activities, such as grading of the site and roads. However, the project must comply with the Lahontan RWQCB and NPDES requirements with approval of a SWPPP and a WQMP that include BMPs for runoff control. Additionally, a drainage plan would be required to be approved by the Kern County Public Works Department-Building & Development-Floodplain Division prior to issuance of building permits. With adherence to all applicable regulations, the project would not require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects. Although impacts would be less than significant, this issue will be further considered in the EIR.

(d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Water for construction and panel washing would be trucked in and potable water would be brought to the site for drinking and domestic needs during construction.. Construction of the project would require approximately 100 acre-feet of water. It is expected that operation of the project would require approximately 1 to 2 acre-feet of water per year. If calculated over the life of the project, this would average approximately 5 acre feet of water per year, inclusive of both construction water and water for operations. The project is not anticipated to impact water supplies and no new or expanded entitlements would be required. Although impacts are expected to be less than significant, further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

(e) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Wastewater services for the project area are provided by the Inyokern Community Service District (CSD). As noted in (a) and (b) above, the project is not expected to generate a significant amount of wastewater. Wastewater produced during construction would be collected in portable toilet facilities and disposed of at an approved facility. Portable toilets would be used for sanitary purposes at the O&M Buildings for the maintenance personnel that would provide routine maintenance and PV module cleaning several times a year. Therefore, no wastewater would be generated from the project and no further analysis is warranted in the EIR.

(f) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Solid waste generated within the Inyokern Specific Plan area is transported to a County operated landfill located in the City of Ridgecrest. The project is not expected to generate a substantial amount of waste that would exceed the capacity of local landfills. Materials brought to the project site would be used to construct facilities, and few residual materials are expected. Non-hazardous construction refuse and solid waste would be either collected and

recycled or disposed of at a local Class III landfill, while any hazardous waste generated during construction would be disposed of at an approved location. The closest Class III municipal landfill is the Ridgecrest Recycling and Sanitary Landfill (RSLF), which is located approximately 5.5 miles southeast of the project site. The Ridgecrest RSLF is an unlined, active public Class III sanitary landfill owned by the County of Kern and operated by the Kern County Waste Management Department. It is not anticipated that the amount of solid waste generated by the project would exceed the capacity of local landfills. Impacts are anticipated to be less than significant; however, further analysis of this issue will be included in the EIR.

(g) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project would generate solid waste during construction and operation, thus requiring the consideration of waste reduction and recycling measures. The 1989 California Integrated Waste Management Act (AB 939) requires Kern County to attain specific waste diversion goals. In addition, the California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Access Act of 1991, as amended, requires expanded or new development projects to incorporate storage areas for recycling bins into the project design. The project would comply with the 1989 California Integrated Waste Management Act and the 1991 California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Access Act of 1991, as amended. Therefore, impacts are anticipated to be less than significant but will be further analyzed in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact

3.19 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c. Does the project have environmental effects which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☒	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

(a) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The EIR's biological and cultural resources sections will discuss specific impacts from the project on plants and wildlife, and historical resources. The document will also evaluate the project's contribution to cumulative resource impacts and propose mitigation that is designed to reduce the impacts to less-than-significant levels, where feasible.

(b) **Potentially Significant Impact.** The project has the potential to cumulatively contribute to aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, and traffic impacts. The EIR will evaluate the project's contribution to cumulative impacts in these and other resource areas.

(c) **Potentially Significant Impact.** Although there may be significant air quality impacts during construction, the long-term air quality impacts could be beneficial if fossil fuel use is reduced. The short-term cumulative contribution to air quality impacts from the project will be evaluated in the EIR.