Final Environmental Impact Report

for the

Antelope North Solar Project

SCH# 2017061079
Conditional Use Permit (No. 17-10)

Prepared by

City of Lancaster
Planning Department

Technical Assistance
Provided By

Aspen Environmental Group

January 2018
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A. Introduction

After the publication, distribution, and public review of a Draft EIR, a Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) must be prepared to address comments received on the draft document. Section 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines identifies the contents of the Final EIR as the following:

- Draft EIR or a revision of the draft;
- Comments and recommendations received on the Draft EIR either verbatim or in summary;
- A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR;
- The responses of the Lead Agency to significant environmental points; and
- Any information added by the Lead Agency.

This Response Document has been prepared to document the comments and responses made on the Draft EIR for the proposed Antelope North Solar Project and to identify any revisions or additions needed to the EIR as a result of the comments received. This document provides supplementary information to the Draft EIR, and together with the draft document, constitutes the Final EIR for the proposed project.

A.1 Overview of the Proposed Project

The Antelope North Solar Project (proposed project), proposed by Sustainable Power Group LLC (sPower or applicant), would include the construction and operation of a 72 megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) solar electric generating facility on approximately 430 acres in the City of Lancaster, in northeastern Los Angeles County (Figure A-1). The facility would include onsite switchgear, battery storage, communication lines, and multiple 34-kV underground generation-tie (gen-tie) lines and up to 220-kV underground gen-tie lines. Communication lines would be co-located with the gen-tie lines. Solar electricity generated by the proposed project would be delivered by the gen-tie lines to previously approved collector substations located at approximately Avenue G-8 and 100th Street West and along 100th Street West and Avenue J. Electricity would ultimately be delivered to the existing Southern California Edison (SCE) Antelope Substation south of the proposed solar facility.

The proposed project would be constructed in phases including site preparation, facility installation, and commissioning. Its planned operational lifespan is 35 years. The proposed project would include a series of PV module arrays mounted onto racking systems. These systems are typically supported by a pile-driven foundation design. The foundation design would be determined based on a full geotechnical study to be completed by the applicant prior to construction and as part of final engineering. The module mounting system or racking system would be a fixed-tilt or tracker PV array configuration oriented to maximize the amount of incident solar radiation absorbed over the course of the year.

sPower has submitted a Conditional Use Permit application (CUP No. 17-10) to the City of Lancaster for review and decision. As Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City of Lancaster has prepared this EIR to evaluate the proposed project. CEQA requires the Lead Agency to consider the information contained in the EIR prior to taking any discretionary action on project-related applications. This EIR serves as a resource to the City and other permitting agencies during their respective permit processing of the proposed project.
A. INTRODUCTION

Figure A-1

- Potential Underground Gen-Tie and Communication Line Routes
  - Western Route
  - Avenue G Route
  - Eastern Route

Project Location

Solar Generating Facility
County Jurisdiction
City of Lancaster
Antelope Substation
Collector Substation
Project Location

Final EIR
January 2018
The project objectives are to:

- Develop a utility-scale solar energy generating facility and accompanying infrastructure that qualifies as an eligible renewable energy resource;
- Contribute to the diversification of State and local energy portfolios;
- Support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in California by providing renewable energy resources; and
- Create green jobs in California.

The applicant’s planning objectives are to minimize impacts to the environment and the local community by:

- Using disturbed land or land that has been previously degraded from prior use;
- Using existing electrical distribution facilities, rights-of-ways (ROWs), roads, and other existing infrastructure where possible to minimize the need for new electrical support facilities;
- Minimizing impacts to threatened or endangered species or their habitats, wetlands and waters of the United States, cultural resources, and sensitive land use; and
- Minimizing water use.

Section B (Project Description) of the Draft EIR provides a detailed description of the proposed project, including an overview of the project site conditions and surrounding land uses, project components, and detailed descriptions of the project’s construction activities and operation and maintenance requirements.

A.2 Summary of the Proposed Project’s Environmental Review Process

sPower submitted its Conditional Use Permit application for the proposed project to the City of Lancaster. Following review and preliminary assessment of the application, and acting as the lead agency under CEQA, the City of Lancaster Development Services Department prepared and transmitted a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for this EIR on June 30, 2017. The NOP was circulated for a 30-day public review period. The NOP was recirculated on September 25, 2017 to allow any individuals who wished to comment on the NOP additional time. The 30-day period associated with the updated NOP ended on October 27, 2017. Duplicate comment letters submitted during the second NOP period (SCAG, LA County Fire) were not included as they are identical except for the date.

A public scoping meeting was held on July 27, 2017 at the Lancaster City Hall, Council Chambers; two members of the public attended the scoping meeting. The City received a total of 21 comment letters during the two 30-day scoping periods. Appendix 1 of the Draft EIR contains a copy of the NOP, the newspaper notice, and copies of the letters received on the proposed project during scoping. A summary of the scoping process and comments received on the NOP is contained in Section A.4 of the Draft EIR.

The Draft EIR and its corresponding Notice of Availability (NOA) were released for public and agency review on November 16, 2017. The public and agency review and comment period on the Draft EIR was 45 days in length and ended at the close of the business day on January 3, 2018. During this period, an opportunity for the public to provide oral comments on the contents and conclusions of the Draft EIR was
offered at the City of Lancaster Planning Commission meeting held on December 18, 2017 at Lancaster City Hall. Two members of the public commented on the Draft EIR at the meeting.

The NOA was distributed to agencies, organizations, and property owners within 1,500 feet of the project site. A newspaper advertisement was also published to announce the release of the draft document and to notice the public hearing held on the proposed project. The NOA was published in the Antelope Valley Press on November 15, 2017. Appendix 1 has been updated to include the NOA and newspaper notice announcing publication of the Draft EIR.

This Final EIR has been prepared to meet all of the substantive and procedural requirements of the CEQA (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 1500 et seq.). The City of Lancaster Development Services Department has designed this Final EIR to be used in conjunction with the content of the Draft EIR, consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15132 and 15088(d). It contains all written comments received on the Draft EIR, responses to the comments received on the Draft EIR, and all revisions to the text of the Draft EIR that were undertaken as a result of consideration of the comments received on the Draft EIR. In addition, a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) was prepared, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15097. The proposed project and its related environmental review documentation (Draft and Final EIR) will be considered by the City of Lancaster Planning Commission at a noticed public hearing.

A.3 Availability, Organization, and Content of the Draft EIR

As noted in Section A.2 (Summary of the Proposed Project’s Environmental Review Process), this Final EIR is designed to be used in conjunction with its corresponding Draft EIR. The contents of the Draft EIR are incorporated by reference in this Final EIR and are not duplicated herein; only the Draft EIR text that has been revised as part of the finalization process is provided in this document, as further described in Final EIR Section C. A printed, bound copy of the Draft EIR is available for review at:

City of Lancaster
Development Services Department
44933 Fern Avenue
Lancaster, California 93534
Contact: Jocelyn Swain
jswain@cityoflancasterca.org

The Draft EIR and technical appendices can also be accessed electronically at:

http://www.cityoflancasterca.org/environmentalreview

The Draft EIR was organized into an Executive Summary, eight chapters, and six technical appendices, as follows:

Executive Summary: A summary description of the proposed project, alternatives, environmental impacts, and mitigation measures.

Section A (Introduction): A discussion of the intended use of the EIR, brief description of the proposed project, and general organization of the EIR.

Section B (Project Description): A complete description of the proposed project including project location, facilities/components, and objectives.
Section C (Environmental Setting, Analysis, and Mitigation Measures): A comprehensive analysis and assessment of potential impacts and recommended mitigation measures for the proposed project. This section describes the assessment methodology and addresses 12 environmental issue areas (e.g. Aesthetics, Agricultural Resources, etc.).

Section D (Alternatives): A description of the alternatives evaluation process, description of alternatives considered but eliminated from further analysis, and the rationale for eliminating alternatives from the analysis. This section includes an analysis of potential impacts for the retained alternatives, including consideration of No Project Alternatives to the proposed project.

Section E (Other CEQA Considerations): A summary of environmental effects found to be less than significant as described in the NOP, potential growth inducing effects, energy conservation, and other CEQA required issues.

Section F (References): A listing of references by environmental issue areas that were used in the analysis contained within this EIR.

Section G (Glossary, Acronyms, and Abbreviations): A list of terms, acronyms and abbreviations used throughout the document.

Section H (Preparers of the EIR): A list of City and consultant team members that contributed to the preparation of the EIR.

Appendices: Scoping materials, technical reports, data, and background information supporting the analyses and contents in the EIR.

A.4 Availability, Organization, and Content of the Final EIR

Printed and electronic versions of this Final EIR can be accessed at the same locations as indicated for the Draft EIR in Section A.3 (Availability, Organization, and Content of the Draft EIR). The organization and content of this Final EIR is as follows:

Section A (Introduction). Provides summary of the proposed project and its environmental documentation and review process.

Section B (Draft Environmental Impact Report Comments and Responses to Comments). Provides the written comments received on the Draft EIR and the City’s responses to these comments.

Section C (Revisions to the Draft Environmental Impact Report). Provides the revisions that have been made to the language of the Draft EIR for its finalization.

Appendices. This Final EIR adds the following revised EIR appendix.

- Appendix 1 (Notice of Preparation/Scoping and Notice of Availability). Updated to include the Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR and newspaper notice announcing the publication of the Draft EIR as well as the State Clearinghouse letter acknowledging compliance with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents. Additionally, Appendix 1 was updated to include a NOP comment letter from Thomas Chew that was accidently left out of the Draft EIR.
B. Draft Environmental Impact Report Comments and Responses to Comments

B.1 Introduction

The Draft EIR for the Antelope North Solar Project was available for review and comment from November 16, 2017 through January 3, 2018. During this period, five written comment letters on the Draft EIR were submitted to the City of Lancaster Development Services Department and two individuals presented oral comments at the Planning Commission meeting held on December 18, 2017 at Lancaster City Hall. The State Clearinghouse submitted a letter on January 3, 2018 acknowledging compliance with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents. This letter has been added to Appendix 1.

As the lead agency under CEQA, and consistent with Section 15088 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City has reviewed each of the comments received on the Draft EIR and has prepared responses to them. The commenters are listed in Table B-1, below, and comments letters and transcript of the Planning Commission meeting are provided in full along with the responses in Section B.3 (Responses to Comments Received on the Draft Environmental Impact Report).

The focus of the City’s responses to comments received on the Draft EIR is the disposition of environmental issues that are raised in the comments, as specified by Section 15088(b) of the CEQA Guidelines. CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commenters. When responding to comments, lead agencies need only respond to significant environmental issues and do not need to provide all information requested by reviewers, as long as a good faith effort at full disclosure is made in the Draft EIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15204(a)).

B.2 Summary of Comments Received on the Draft Environmental Impact Report

Parties that provided comments on the Draft EIR included local and State agencies and private citizens. Table B-1 lists these commenters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment Letter Designation</th>
<th>Commenter</th>
<th>Agency/Organization</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Michael Y. Takeshita, Acting Chief, Forestry Division, Prevention Services Bureau</td>
<td>County of Los Angeles Fire Department</td>
<td>December 19, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Tiffany Steinert, Engineering Geologist</td>
<td>Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board</td>
<td>December 22, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Betty J. Courtney, Environmental Program Manager I, South Coast Region</td>
<td>California Department of Fish and Wildlife</td>
<td>December 29, 2017 and January 2, 2018¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Merrylou Nelson</td>
<td>N/A – Private Citizen</td>
<td>January 2, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Linda Ford</td>
<td>N/A – Private Citizen</td>
<td>January 3, 2018</td>
</tr>
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Table B-1. Summary of Comments Received on the Draft EIR

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<td>F-1 through F-7</td>
<td>Virginia Stout</td>
<td>N/A – Private Citizen</td>
<td>December 18, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-8</td>
<td>Ryan Lanedale</td>
<td>N/A – Private Citizen</td>
<td>December 18, 2017</td>
</tr>
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B.3 Responses to Comments Received on the Draft Environmental Impact Report

This section provides a copy of the comment letters and meeting transcript and includes the Lead Agency responses to comments on the EIR. The responses follow each of the letters (and transcript), and if needed, identify any changes that have been made to the Draft EIR as part of the response to the specific comment. To facilitate review of specific comments and the City’s responses to them, each comment letter and the meeting transcript has been given a specific letter designation (A, B, etc.), as shown in Table B-1, and each individual comment within each letter and the transcript has been assigned a number (e.g., A-1, A-2, etc.).
Comment Letter A: County of Los Angeles Fire Department

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
FIRE DEPARTMENT
1220 NORTH EASTERN AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90063-3294

DARYL L. OSBY
FIRE CHIEF
FORESTER & FIRE WARDEN

December 19, 2017

Jocelyn Swain, Principal Planner
City of Lancaster
Planning Department
44933 Fern Avenue
Lancaster, CA 93534

Dear Ms. Swain:

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, "ANTELOPE NORTH SOLAR PROJECT," CONSISTS OF A 72 MEGAWATT SOLAR PV GENERATING FACILITY AND GEN-TIE LINE CONNECTION THE PROJECTS ELECTRICAL OUTPUT TO A COLLECTOR SUBSTATION, IT WOULD UTILIZE PV TECHNOLOGY ON EITHER FIXED-TILT OR TRACKER MOUNTING SUPPORTS, LANCASTER, FFER 201700150

The Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report has been reviewed by the Planning Division, Land Development Unit, Forestry Division, and Health Hazardous Materials Division of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department.

The following are their comments:

PLANNING DIVISION:

In the PUBLIC SERVICES section of C. 12.1 under Fire Prevention and Suppression Services, the first paragraph should be corrected for clarification. The City of Lancaster does not "contract" fire services with the Los Angeles County Fire Department but is within the jurisdiction, and is part of, the Consolidated Fire Protection District of Los Angeles County.

In addition, the address for Fire Station 84 should be corrected to 5030 West Avenue L-14.

Serving the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County and the Cities of:

AGUATA HILLS  BARDHUR  CUDARIY  MAWTHERINE  SAN SIMON  SIMI
ANTEJMA  CARALO  DIAMOND BAR  HIDDEN HILLS  LA HABRA  LYNWOOD
AZUSA  CARSON  EL MONTE  HUNTINGTON PARK  LA MIRADA  MAURY
Baldwin Park  Cerritos  GARDENA  INDUSTRY  LAKewood  MAYWOOD
BELL GARDENS  CIERMONT  GLENDALE  INGLEWOOD  LA VERNE  NORMAN
Bellflower  Commerce  GLENOMA  HUNTINGTON BEACH  LAWNDALE  PALMOS
Covina  Commerce  GRAND STATION  LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE  LOMITA  PARAMOUNT
Dell’Oro  Commerce  HUNTINGTON BEACH  LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE  LOS ANGELES
EL MONTE  Cerritos  HUNTINGTON BEACH  LA CANADA FLINT RIDGE  LOS ANGELES
HISPANIC  CARSON  HUNTINGTON BEACH  LA CANADA FLINT RIDE  LOS ANGELES
JANET  Cerritos  HUNTINGTON BEACH  LA CANADA FLINT RIDE  LOS ANGELES
ROBERTS  Cerritos  HUNTINGTON BEACH  LA CANADA FLINT RIDE  LOS ANGELES
SANTA CLARITA  CARSON  HUNTINGTON BEACH  LA CANADA FLINT RIDE  LOS ANGELES
SOUTH BAY  Cerritos  HUNTINGTON BEACH  LA CANADA FLINT RIDE  LOS ANGELES
VALLEYS  CARSON  HUNTINGTON BEACH  LA CANADA FLINT RIDE  LOS ANGELES
WEST COAST  Cerritos  HUNTINGTON BEACH  LA CANADA FLINT RIDE  LOS ANGELES
WHITTIER  Cerritos  HUNTINGTON BEACH  LA CANADA FLINT RIDE  LOS ANGELES

January 2018  B-3  Final EIR
LAND DEVELOPMENT UNIT:

Access Requirements:

1. All proposed solar array fields will require a minimum of one entry/exit location.
   a. A minimum of four (4) entry/exit locations is required for this project.

2. A perimeter interior roadway is required around the entire solar array field.

3. In addition to the interior perimeter Fire Department Access Road the design of the solar array field necessitates several interior on-site Fire Department Access Roads going in the directions north to south and east to west.

4. The Fire Apparatus on-site and off-site Access Roads shall be installed and maintained in a drivable condition for the duration of the solar project.

5. The Fire Apparatus on-site and off-site Access Roads shall be installed prior to occupancy or operation of the facility.

6. The minimum roadway width within the solar array field is 20 feet clear-to-the sky when there is no proposed or existing building onsite. Provide a minimum center-line turning radius of 32 feet with an inner radius of 22 feet and an outer radius of 42 feet for each turn in the solar array field.

7. The Fire Apparatus on-site and off-site Access Roads for the solar array field shall have a soil compaction of 90% OR the apparatus access road shall be excavated and re-compacted to 90%.

Gates:

1. The on-site ingress/egress gate shall be located on the address side of the property.

2. The on-site ingress/egress gate width shall be a minimum of 20 feet clear-to-sky with all gate hardware clear of the road way width when a building(s) is not proposed.

3. The location of the gate shall be located a minimum of 50 feet from the public right-of-way.
Jocelyn Swain, Principal Planner  
December 19, 2017  
Page 3

4. The facility emergency contact information shall be provided with each limited access device per County of Los Angeles Fire Department Regulation 5, and shall be clearly indicated with an appropriate placard at each ingress location. The minimum size of the placard shall be 12 inches X 12 inches.

5. All locking devices shall comply with the County of Los Angeles Fire Department Regulation 5, Compliance for Installation of Emergency Access Devices.

6. No interior gates permitted on the on-site access roads.

Water System Requirements:

1. A minimum of four (4) water tanks are required for the proposed solar array field. The water tank is to be located near the address side entry/exit gates and as indicated on the site plan.

2. This development requires the installation of one water tank with a minimum tank size of 10,000 gallons for Fire Department use only.

3. The water tanks shall be clearly identified for "Fire Department Use Only."

4. The water tanks shall be located near the ingress/egress gate.

5. The water tanks shall be in compliance with Fire Department standards.

6. The water tank shall have a low level water local alarm which shall be in compliance with all applicable codes and regulations. The low level water local alarm can be battery operated.

7. The water tank shall have a Fire Department supply outlet of 2 ¼ inches in diameter with National Standard threads. The supply outlet is to be located 14-24 inches above the finished grade and is required to be protected by approved barricades.

8. If the outlet is not provided directly off the tank provide a 6 inch underground pipe to a 4 inch upright pipe with an outlet of 2 ½ inches with National Standard threads which is required to be protected by barricades.
Jocelyn Swain, Principal Planner  
December 19, 2017  
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Additional Requirements:

1. Electrical Equipment:
   a. All electrical disconnect locations shall be clearly identified.
   b. All electrical shall be in compliance with all applicable state and local codes.

2. Vegetation Management:
   a. The clearance of vegetation shall be in compliance with the brush clearance regulation as defined by the Fire Code or as directed by the Fire Official.
   b. The vegetation shall be trimmed to a maximum height of 6 inches within the boundaries of the solar array.
   c. Electrical transformer vaults or structures shall have all vegetation cleared to mineral soil for a distance of 50 feet.

For any questions regarding the report, please contact FPEA Wally Collins at (323) 890-4243 or Wally.Collins@fire.lacounty.gov.

FORESTRY DIVISION – OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS:

The statutory responsibilities of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department’s Forestry Division include erosion control, watershed management, rare and endangered species, vegetation, fuel modification for Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones or Fire Zone 4, archeological and cultural resources, and the County Oak Tree Ordinance.

The County of Los Angeles Fire Department’s Forestry Division has no further comments regarding this project.

HEALTH HAZARDOUS MATERIALS DIVISION:

The Health Hazardous Materials Division of the Los Angeles County Fire Department has no comments or requirements for the project at this time.

If you have any additional questions, please contact this office at (323) 890-4330.
Responses to Comment Letter A

A-1. The requested revision has been made to Section C.12.1. See Section C (Revisions to the Draft Environmental Impact Report) of this Final EIR.

A-2. The requested revision has been made to Section C.12.1. See Section C (Revisions to the Draft Environmental Impact Report) of this Final EIR.

A-3. The requirements provided in this comment are standard Fire Department conditions for solar developments. These requirements have been incorporated into the site plan for the proposed project, and compliance with Fire Department requirements is a standard condition of approval associated with solar developments in the City.

A-4. Please see the response to Comment A-3.

A-5. Please see the response to Comment A-3.

A-6. Please see the response to Comment A-3.

A-7. Comments noted. This comment identifies the statutory responsibilities of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department’s Forestry Division, and indicates the Division has no further comments regarding the proposed project.
Comment Letter B: Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

December 22, 2017

Jocelyn Swain, Principal City Planner
City of Lancaster, Development Services
Community Development Division, Planning
44933 Fern Avenue
Lancaster, CA 93534
jswain@cityoflancasterca.org

Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report, Antelope North Solar Project, City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, State Clearinghouse Number 2017061079

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region (Water Board) staff received a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the above-referenced Project (Project) on November 20, 2017. The DEIR was prepared by the City of Lancaster Development Services (City) and submitted in compliance with provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Based on our review of the DEIR, we recommend the following: (1) natural drainage channels and flow paths should be maintained through the Project site to ensure no net loss of function and value of waters of the state; and (2) a site-specific Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) should be prepared that identifies a combination of sediment and erosion control best management practices (BMPs) to effectively treat storm water runoff during the life of the Project. Our comments are outlined below.

WATER BOARD’S AUTHORITY

All groundwater and surface waters are considered waters of the State. All waters of the State are protected under California law. State law assigns responsibility for protection of water quality in the Lahontan Region to the Lahontan Water Board. Some waters of the State are also waters of the United States. The Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) provides additional protection for those waters of the State that are also waters of the United States.

The Water Quality Control Plan for the Lahontan Region (Basin Plan) contains policies that the Water Board uses with other laws and regulations to protect the quality of waters of the State within the Lahontan Region. The Basin Plan sets forth water quality standards for surface water and groundwater of the Region, which include designated beneficial uses as well as narrative and numerical objectives which must be maintained.
or attained to protect those uses. The Basin Plan can be accessed via the Water Board’s website at:

WATER QUALITY CONCERNs

Our comments on the project are outlined below.

1. In general, the installation of Photovoltaic (PV) grid systems for these types of projects has the potential to hydrologically modify natural drainage systems. Of particular concern is the collection of onsite storm water runoff and the concentrated discharge of that storm water to natural drainage channels. Design alternatives that are compatible with low impact development (LID) should be considered. LID components include: maintaining natural drainage paths and landscape features to slow and filter runoff and maximize groundwater recharge; managing runoff as close to the source as possible; and maintaining vegetated areas for storm water management and onsite infiltration. We recommend natural drainage channels and flow paths be maintained through the Project site to avoid no net loss of function and value of waters of the state as a result of Project implementation.

2. A Project-specific SWPPP and implementation of site-specific erosion and sediment control BMPs is an effective way to reduce potentially significant water quality impacts to a less than significant level. To that end, we recommend the development and implementation of a Project-specific SWPPP during both the construction and post-construction phases of the Project. The SWPPP should be applicable to all areas of the Project site, including the solar fields, access roads to and through the site, and the gen-tie line. Please note that temporary BMPs need to be implemented for the Project until such time that vegetation has been restored to pre-Project conditions or permanent BMPs are in place and functioning.

3. The DEIR should identify post-construction storm water management as a significant Project component, and a variety of BMPs that effectively treat post-construction storm water runoff, particularly maintaining native vegetation, should be evaluated as part of the Project. Based on our experience with other solar developments in the Mojave Desert, native vegetation is the most efficient and cost-effective post-construction BMP to treat storm water runoff. Because revegetating disturbed soils in the desert is particularly challenging due to low rainfall, extreme climatic conditions, and relatively slow growth rates, we encourage Project proponents to maintain and mow existing vegetation rather than clear and grub the entire site during construction. For those projects where native vegetation is maintained, we have observed that the need to implement temporary BMPs is greatly minimized and the costs associated with implementation and maintenance of post-construction BMPs is significantly reduced.
4. The Project site is located within the Lancaster Hydrologic Area of the Antelope Hydrologic Unit (626.50), and groundwater beneath the Project site is contained within the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin (6-44). The beneficial uses of these water resources are listed either by watershed (for surface waters) or by groundwater basin (for groundwater) in Chapter 2 of the Basin Plan. We request that the DEIR identify and list the beneficial uses of the water resources within the Project area, and include an analysis of the Project’s potential impacts to water quality and hydrology with respect to those beneficial uses.

5. We find that the City’s cumulative impact analysis is lacking. The purpose of analyzing cumulative impacts is to assess adverse environmental change that may result when small incremental changes are summed for multiple but similar projects. A “less than significant” impact conclusion at the project level does not necessarily mean that the project’s contribution to a cumulative impact will be less than “cumulatively considerable.” Dozens of solar facilities have been constructed or are planned across the Antelope Valley, many of which are within the city of Lancaster, and most if not all of those projects have required mitigations for impacts associated with biological resources, soil erosion, and flooding. CEQA lead agencies are obligated to consider the sum of all of these impacts, regardless of whether an impact was determined to be less than significant at the project level, and make an independent finding substantiated by evidence that the project’s contribution to a cumulative impact is or is not cumulatively considerable. The cumulative impact analysis in the DEIR provides no evidence to support the conclusion that the Project’s contribution to cumulative impacts is not cumulatively considerable.

PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS

A number of activities associated with the proposed Project may have the potential to impact waters of the State and, therefore, may require permits issued by either the State Water Board or Lahontan Water Board. The required permits may include the following.

6. Streambed alteration and/or discharge of fill material to a surface water may require a CWA, section 401 water quality certification for impacts to federal waters (waters of the U.S.), or dredge and fill waste discharge requirements for impacts to non-federal waters, both issued by the Lahontan Water Board. All unavoidable permanent impacts to waters of the State must be mitigated to ensure no net loss of beneficial use and wetland function and value. Water Board staff coordinate mitigation requirements with staff from federal and other state regulatory agencies. In determining appropriate mitigation ratios for impacts to waters of the State, we consider Basin Plan requirements (minimum 1.5 to 1 mitigation ratio for impacts to wetlands) and utilize 12501-SPD Regulatory Program Standard Operating Procedure for Determination of Mitigation Ratios, published December 2012 by the US Army Corps of Engineers, South Pacific Division.
Responses to Comment Letter B

B-1. Please see the responses to Comments B-2 through B-4 regarding natural drainage channels and flow patterns, and a site-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) including Best Management Practices (BMPs) for stormwater runoff.

B-2. As described in Section C.9 (Hydrology) of the Draft EIR, because the project site occupies relatively flat terrain, and grading for the site will be minimal, it is not anticipated that the grading activities for the proposed project would result in substantial changes to drainage patterns. The small, unconsolidated ephemeral channels found crossing the solar array site in the jurisdictional delineation (Appendix 3b of the Draft EIR) are unlikely to be substantially altered, although minor local alterations are possible. The site would be prepared for PV panel installation by mowing and/or crushing vegetation, but would not entail large-scale grading. Grading would only occur along internal access roads and for electrical equipment pads. Storm water management is addressed in Mitigation Measure WQ-1, which requires the preparation of a site-specific SWPPP that includes a comprehensive suite of BMPs to minimize and control stormwater runoff, erosion,
and the mobilization of other potential contaminants. In addition, Mitigation Measure WQ-1 requires the following: “The SWPPP shall include construction site planning and management, including the preparation of a grading plan that minimizes the alteration of the natural drainage pattern and preserves to the maximum extent feasible the natural flow of water across the project site. Natural vegetation shall be preserved to the maximum extent feasible.” Therefore, the project design and Mitigation Measure WQ-1 would ensure that impacts to natural drainage patterns and flow paths, as well as onsite infiltration, are less than significant and no revisions to the Draft EIR are required.

B-3. Mitigation Measure WQ-1 requires a SWPPP for the proposed project, which includes site-specific erosion and sediment control BMPs. This measure also requires a monitoring program to ensure that the BMPs described in the SWPPP are implemented, regularly inspected, and properly maintained during all construction, operation, and maintenance activities. No revisions to the Draft EIR are required.

B-4. Please see the response to Comment B-3. Mitigation Measure WQ-1 requires a SWPPP for the proposed project, which includes site-specific stormwater management BMPs for all phases of the project, including operations. In accordance with City requirements, vegetation at the solar generating facility (SGF) would be rolled and/or mowed, which would allow for root structures and existing seed banks to remain intact. Trenching would occur as part of construction for the SGF to connect the solar arrays and from the arrays to the inverters and transformers. Trenching would also occur for the placement of the underground gen-tie and communication lines, which would be focused along existing disturbed earthen shoulders of paved roads or along the margins of dirt access roads. In the areas where trenching may occur within vegetated habitats, the disturbed area would be allowed to revegetate naturally. With the exception of access roads, the site would be allowed to revegetate, with mowing or animals used to control vegetation on site seasonally. No revisions to the Draft EIR are required.

B-5. Page C.9-2 of the Draft EIR states the following:

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board Lahontan Region (RWQCB, 2015) lists beneficial uses for minor surface waters in the Antelope Valley. These include Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN), Agricultural Supply (AGR), Groundwater Recharge (GWR), Freshwater Replenishment (FRSH), Water Contact Recreation (REC-1), Noncontact Water Recreation (REC-2), Commercial and Sportfishing (COMM), Cold Freshwater Habitat (COLD), Wildlife Habitat (WILD), Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species (RARE), and Spawning, Reproduction, and Development (SPWN). Not all of these would be strictly applicable to the waters on the project site due to the unconsolidated and ephemeral nature of these waters.

Impacts to beneficial uses are addressed on pages C.9-10 through C.9-11 of the Draft EIR, under Impact WQ-3 (Construction activity and excavation could degrade water quality and impact beneficial uses due to erosion and sedimentation) and Impact WQ-6 (Construction or operation of the proposed project could result in accidental releases of contaminants that could degrade water quality and beneficial uses). As described under Impact WQ-3, the project site is generally flat and arid, and contains no perennial waterbodies. The potential for water quality degradation due to erosion and sedimentation from project-related construction activity is negligible. Compliance with existing regulations, including implementation of a SWPPP in conformance with the Clean Water Act, would ensure impacts to beneficial uses from erosion and sedimentation would be less than significant (Class III).
Impact WQ-6 describes potential impacts from accidental releases of contaminants. Mitigation Measure WQ-1 would ensure that the project’s SWPPP includes BMPs to prevent and respond to accidental spills of hazardous or potentially hazardous materials during operation as well as during construction. With implementation of the recommended mitigation, potential impacts to beneficial uses associated with an accidental spill/release of hazardous materials would be less than significant (Class II). The recommended mitigation would ensure that procedures and materials are available for the quick and safe cleanup of accidental spills. No revisions to the Draft EIR are required.

B-6. Cumulative impacts are analyzed in the Draft EIR for each of the 12 environmental issue areas. Section C.9.4 (Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the Draft EIR analyzes cumulative impacts with respect to hydrology and water quality. As stated in the Draft EIR (page C.9-12):

*Construction and operation of past and present projects within the study area have resulted in substantial changes to the physical hydrology and water quality of the region. Although groundwater levels fluctuate over time, due in part to the amount of recharge entering the basin, residential and agricultural water use has generally led to reduced groundwater storage and availability in the past. Land disturbance and earth movement, including grading and excavation, have led to increased erosion and sedimentation. Floodplain functions have been impaired through the placement of structures (such as housing) within floodplains and through the alteration of floodplain hydrology (including construction of dams, levees, and engineered channels). The creation of impervious surface (including parking lots, roadways, and rooftops) has altered the rate and amount of surface water runoff in the study area. Spillage and improper handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials, and contamination of runoff from contact with urban areas, have led to contamination of surface water and groundwater.*

However, the proposed project would result in minimal disturbance to the land surface, minimal new impervious area, the project area is not prone to major flooding, groundwater use is minor, and the minor impacts related to water quality will be controlled by compliance with regulations and Mitigation Measure WQ-1. Therefore, the incremental contribution of the proposed project to the cumulative adverse hydrology and water quality impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable. No revisions to the Draft EIR are required.

B-7. The comment identifies several permits that may be required for the proposed project, including a Clean Water Act Section 401 water quality certification for impacts to federal waters or dredge and fill waste discharge requirements for impacts to non-federal waters, as well as Clean Water Act Section 402(p) storm water permits. As described in Section C.5.1 (Environmental Setting) of the Draft EIR (page C.5-9), the project would not affect any federal waters and therefore would not require a Section 401 water quality certification. Additionally, as identified in the Existing Conditions Jurisdictional Delineation Report for the proposed project (Appendix 3b of the Draft EIR), no wetlands occur on the project site, eight linear drainage features were identified (two on the SGF site and the remaining cross the proposed gen-tie and communication line alignments). The jurisdictional delineation report concludes that none of the drainages are jurisdictional under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (See pages C.5-9 through C.5-10 and C.9-1 through C.9-2 of the Draft EIR). The Applicant is currently coordinating with the Lahontan RWQCB to obtain all applicable permits for the project.
Comment Letter C: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
South Coast Region
3833 Ruffin Road
San Diego, CA 92123
(858) 467-4201
www.wildlife.ca.gov

January 2, 2018

Ms. Jocelyn Swain
City of Lancaster Planning Department
44933 Fern Avenue
Lancaster, CA 93534
jswain@cityoflancasterca.org

Subject: Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Conditional Use Permit 17-10
(Antelope North), City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, SCH #2017061079

Dear Ms. Swain:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has reviewed the above-referenced Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 17-10 (Antelope North). The following statements and comments have been prepared pursuant to CDFW’s authority as a Responsible Agency under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15361, and extend to those aspects of the proposed project that may also come under the purview of CDFW through the California Endangered Species Act (CESA, Fish and Game Code § 2050 et seq.), Fish and Game Code section 1600 et seq., and as a Trustee Agency with jurisdiction over natural resources affected by the project (California Environmental Quality Act, [CEQA] Guidelines § 15386).

Project Description and Location
The proposed Project is a 72-megawatt (MW) capacity solar generating facility located on approximately 430 acres in the western portion of the City of Lancaster, within the Antelope Valley portion of the Mojave Desert. The facility would include onsite switchgear, communication lines, and multiple 34-kV underground generation-tie (gen-tie) lines and up to 220-kV underground gen-tie lines. The proposed project would operate year-round and produce electricity during daylight hours. The project site is generally bounded by Avenue D-8, Avenue G, 100th St. West, and 110th St. West. In addition to the construction of the solar facility, generation tie lines are proposed to connect the Project to the existing substation on Avenue J.

California Endangered Species Act (CESA)
The proposed project may have the potential to effect three CESA-listed species, desert tortoise (Gopherus agassizii), Mohave ground squirrel (Xerophomophilus mohavensis), Swainson’s hawk (Buteo swainsonii), and their habitats. CDFW considers adverse impacts to a species protected by CESA, for the purposes of CEQA, to be significant without mitigation. As to CESA, take of any endangered, threatened, candidate species, or state-listed rare plant species that results from the project is prohibited, except as authorized by state law (Fish and Game Code, §§ 2080, 2085; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §786.9). Consequently, if the Project, project construction, or any Project-related activity during the life of the Project will result in take of a species designated as endangered or threatened, or a candidate for listing under CESA, CDFW recommends that the Project proponent seek appropriate take authorization under CESA prior to implementing the Project. Appropriate authorization from CDFW may include an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) or a consistency determination in certain circumstances, among other options [Fish and Game Code §§ 2080.1, 2081, subsd. (b) and (c)]. Early consultation is encouraged,

Conserving California’s Wildlife Since 1870
as significant modification to a Project and mitigation measures may be required in order to obtain an ITP. Revisions to the Fish and Game Code, effective January 1998, may require that CDFW issue a separate CEQA document for the issuance of an ITP unless the Project CEQA document addresses all Project impacts to CESA-listed species and specifies a mitigation monitoring and reporting program that will meet the requirements of CESA. For these reasons, impact analyses and biological mitigation monitoring and reporting proposals should be of sufficient detail and resolution to satisfy the requirements for a CESA ITP.

Impacts to Desert Tortoise
Based upon a review of available information, including species databases and aerial interpretation (i.e., Google Earth imagery), CDFW believes that the project site and surrounding area may support habitat for the state threatened desert tortoise within its historic range. We recommend conducting U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) protocol surveys for desert tortoise within appropriate on-site habitat and disclosing the results in the CEQA document for the Project. The environmental document should identify and discuss the presence/absence of suitable habitat for desert tortoise and include the FWS survey results to adequately disclose potential impacts under CEQA and to develop appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures. To fully mitigate for take of desert tortoise under CESA, further consultation with CDFW and CESA incidental take authorization through an ITP may be required.

Impacts to Mohave Ground Squirrel
Based upon a review of available information, CDFW believes that the project site and surrounding area may also support habitat for the state threatened Mohave ground squirrel (Xerospermophilus mohavensis). We recommend conducting focused surveys for Mohave ground squirrel within appropriate on-site habitat following CDFW’s 2003 Trapping and Survey Guidelines (see https://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/mongame/MGS/) and disclosing the results in the CEQA document for the Project. The environmental document should identify and discuss the presence/absence of suitable habitat for Mohave ground squirrel and include the survey results to disclose potential impacts under CEQA and to develop appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures. To fully mitigate for take of Mohave ground squirrel under CESA, further consultation with CDFW and CESA incidental take authorization through an ITP may be required.

Nesting Birds
To protect nesting birds that may occur on-site, we recommend that the environmental document and Project conditions include a measure that no construction shall occur from February 15 through August 31 unless a qualified biologist completes a survey of nesting birds in the orders Falconiformes and Strigiformes (raptors and owls) within a 500-foot radius of the construction site. The nesting bird surveys shall be conducted at appropriate nesting times and concentrate on potential roosting or perch sites. If any nests of birds of prey are observed, these nests shall be designated an ecologically sensitive area and protected (while occupied) by a minimum 500-foot radius during project construction.

Burrowing Owl
The DEIR (Figure C.5-5) identifies documented occurrences of burrowing owl (Athene cunicularia), a state species of special concern, on-site and in the project area. We recommend that the City require additional focused surveys for the burrowing owl to accurately quantify the magnitude of impact and to develop an avoidance/mitigation strategy in accordance with CDFW’s Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (March 7, 2012) and Burrowing Owl Consortium’s Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines (April 1993). In addition,
the EIR should include a plan to replace on-site burrowing owl habitat lost from the Project (with location of acreage identified). CDFW considers the loss of occupied burrowing owl habitat significant, at a project-level and cumulatively, without adequate mitigation. Since burrowing owls are present, CDFW recommends that the mitigation land support an active burrowing owl population to replace impacts to on-site occupied burrowing owl habitat. Mitigation lands for any unavoidable impacts to occupied burrowing owl habitat on-site should include occupied burrowing owl burrows and be of sufficient acreage and vegetative composition to support foraging activities. CDFW is available to discuss potential mitigation options for the burrowing owl and other biological resources potentially impacted, directly or indirectly, by the Project.

Swainson’s Hawk

The DEIR (Table C.5-5) and other sources (e.g., CNDB) confirm occurrence of the state-listed Swainson’s hawk (Buteo swainsoni) on-site and 2.8 miles southwest and 3.75 miles southeast of the project site. CDFW considers a Swainson’s hawk nest site to be active if it was used at least once within the past five years, and impacts to suitable habitat or individual birds within a five-mile radius of an active nest as significant. CDFW released guidance for this species entitled “Swainson’s Hawk Survey Protocols, Impact Avoidance, and Mitigation Measures for Renewable Energy Projects in the Antelope Valley of Los Angeles and Kern Counties, California (2010)”. In addition, the Project could potentially contribute to the abandonment of an active nest and/or the loss of significant foraging habitat for a given nest territory, which may result in “take” as defined under CESA. We recommend that the City require additional updated focused surveys for Swainson’s hawk to avoid impacts to nesting birds during construction and that the EIR identify a plan to replace foraging habitat lost from the Project. If take of Swainson’s hawk would occur from Project construction or operation, an ITP pursuant to CESA would be required for the Project. As previously mentioned, CDFW may consider the Lead Agency’s CEQA documentation for its CESA-related actions if it adequately analyzes/discloses impacts and mitigation to state-listed species. Additional documentation may be required as part of an ITP application for the Project in order for CDFW to adequately develop an accurate take analysis and identify measures that would fully mitigate for take of state-listed species.

Impacts to Raptors

The greater Antelope Valley has been subject to an influx of renewable energy development resulting in a loss of raptor foraging habitat from approximately 15 projects within a two mile radius of the project site. CDFW has previously commented on the losses of foraging habitat from these projects, which has cumulatively impacted in excess of 2,500 acres of raptor and other species foraging habitat. CDFW considers the loss of proposed project’s 430 acres added with the prior loss of available raptor foraging habitat to be cumulatively significant absent adequate compensatory mitigation.

Tables C.5-6 and C.5-8 of the DEIR provide estimates of the direct and temporary impacts to habitat communities from the proposed Project. Page C.5-31 states that construction of the proposed project would result in direct and indirect impacts to approximately 428 acres of native vegetation communities. These include permanent impacts to 62 acres of California poppy fields, 30 acres of fiddleneck fields, 0.6 acre of saltbrush scrub, and 6.0 acres of rubber rabbitbrush scrub (Table C.5-5). The mitigation measures provided on page C.5-33 of the DEIR do not provide for offsetting the loss of native vegetation communities, even though it provides nesting, prey base and foraging for several native species. The loss of native vegetation from this Project, without adequate replacement, would result in a project-specific and cumulative loss of grassland habitat for raptors and other native wildlife species.
Based on the DEIR (Table C.5-3), in addition to use by Swainson’s hawk and burrowing owl, other species with high or moderate potential to use the site include golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos), Bell’s sage sparrow (Artemisiospiza belli belli), Ferruginous hawk (Buteo regalis), Mountain plover (Charadrius montanus), Merlin (Falco columbarius), and Prairie falcon (Falco mexicanus). Given the high species diversity utilizing the project site/area and incremental loss of raptor foraging habitat, CDFW recommends mitigating the Project's impact to native vegetation that provides raptor foraging habitat at a minimum ratio of 2:1. Mitigation should occur at a location that provides equivalent function/value, is protected with a conservation easement (or equivalent), and includes appropriate management and monitoring with sufficient funding to ensure long-term protection of the habitat. If off-site mitigation is selected, CDFW recommends it be at a state-approved mitigation bank or via an entity that has been approved by CDFW to hold and manage mitigation lands pursuant to AB 1094 (2012), which amended Government Code sections 65965-65968.

Impacts to Bats and Birds

CDFW is concerned with potential impacts to both bird and bat species from utility-scale renewable energy, such as the proposed Project. Utility-scale renewable energy presents a variety of potential effects to avian species including, but not limited to, direct and indirect effects of loss of foraging habitat, loss of breeding habitat, direct mortality, increased anthropogenic pressures, and navigational disruptions during migration. For example, recent studies indicate that flat, reflective surfaces (such as solar panels) can polarize natural light, which may serve as ecological traps and impact multiple animal taxa (Horváth et al., 2008). The CEQA document should provide a thorough discussion of potential impacts to birds and bats from construction and operation of the Project to adequately disclose potential impacts and to identify appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures.

The DEIR (Table C.5-3) identifies a moderate potential for Townsend’s big-eared bat to occur on-site. Additional habitat assessment and survey work should be conducted for this species and a mitigation program included in the environmental document.

Loggerhead shrike (Lanius ludovicianus), a CDFW species of special concern, was reported on-site (Table C.5-3). Construction during the breeding season of nesting birds could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings or otherwise lead to nest abandonment. The loss of occupied habitat or reductions in the number of rare species, either directly or indirectly through nest abandonment or reproductive suppression, would constitute a significant impact absent appropriate mitigation. Furthermore, nests of all native bird species are protected under both federal and State laws and regulations, including the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503 and 3503.5, respectively.

The DEIR (Table C.5-3) indicates a high potential for tricolored black bird (Agelaius tricolor), a state candidate species, to occur on-site. Additional habitat assessment and survey work should be conducted for this species and a mitigation program included in the environmental document. If take of tricolored black bird would occur from Project construction or operation, an ITP pursuant to CESA would be required for the Project.
Ms. Jocelyn Swain  
City of Lancaster  
January 2, 2018  
Page 5 of 7

Project-level  
Since the project includes grading of the site, the level of detail in the EIR on baseline resources and potential impacts to biological resources should include site-specific information based on focused surveys as recommended above, rather than deferral of such information to pre-construction surveys and/or future studies (CEQA Guidelines §15161). Otherwise, the EIR should clearly identify as a mitigation measure that additional environmental review for biological resources will be required prior to any clearing, grading or grubbing of the 430-acre project site.

Extent of Grading  
CDFW recommends that the EIR include a sufficient description of the methodology and plans expected for the installation of the proposed photovoltaic modules. To avoid and minimize impacts to biological resources, CDFW encourages limiting clearing, grubbing and grading activities to the greatest extent feasible. If alternative methods for mounting the photovoltaic system (e.g., pile-driving) will be utilized, the EIR should specify the methodology and provide a comparative discussion of the potential direct and indirect impacts associated with biological resources (CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6).

Gen-tie Routes  
The DEIR indicates that gen-tie routes are proposed to be constructed either overhead on 50-foot wooden poles or underground. Transmission lines have the potential to impact avian species, with impacts ranging from direct line strikes and electrocution from arcing (particularly problematic with small span electrical poles) to interference with nesting activities and increased predation. To avoid and minimize impacts to avian species, CDFW recommends routing all electrical cables through a conduit to limit potential ground faults and or electrocutions associated with fossorial animals. Additionally, CDFW suggests that the Project underground generation-tie lines to limit perching subsidies for common ravens (Corvus corax), a species which is a growing management constraint that can compete for resources and predate on sensitive species. If an overhead configuration is considered for the Project, we recommend that a raven management plan with sufficient funding be identified as a mitigation strategy for the Project.

Compensatory Mitigation  
The environmental document should include mitigation measures for adverse project-related impacts to sensitive plants, animals, and habitats as identified above. These measures should include species-specific avoidance measures during construction as well as measures to replace the native vegetation that would be lost from project construction and operation. For any impacts that have been adequately demonstrated to be unavoidable, CDFW believes that the City should require a scientifically rigorous monitoring and management program as part of the Project’s CEQA mitigation, monitoring and reporting program (MMRP) that would include adaptive management strategies (Public Resources Code 21081.6 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15097). If on-site mitigation is not feasible or would not be biologically viable and therefore not adequately mitigate the loss of biological functions and values, off-site mitigation through habitat creation and/or acquisition and preservation in perpetuity may be appropriate.

For any land that is proposed for preservation and/or restoration, the CEQA document should include measures to protect the targeted habitat values from direct and indirect negative impacts in perpetuity. The objective should be to offset the project-induced qualitative and quantitative losses of wildlife habitat values. Issues that should be addressed include, but are
not limited to, restrictions on access, proposed land dedications, monitoring and management programs, control of illegal dumping, water pollution, and increased human intrusion. An appropriate non-wasting endowment should be set aside to provide for long-term management of mitigation lands.

CDFW recommends that all designated Project habitat mitigation land (HML) be protected in perpetuity with minimal human intrusion by recording and executing a perpetual conservation easement in favor of an approved agent dedicated to conserving biological resources. A management and monitoring plan, including a funding commitment, should be developed for the HML and implemented in perpetuity to protect existing biological functions and values. Permeable wildlife fencing should be erected around any HML to restrict incompatible land uses and signage posted and maintained at conspicuous locations communicating these restrictions to the public.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Project to assist the City in adequately analyzing and minimizing/mitigating impacts to biological resources. CDFW requests an opportunity to review and comment on any response that the City has to our comments and to receive notification of any forthcoming hearing date(s) for the Project (CEQA Guidelines; §15073[c]). If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter, please contact Andrew Valand, Environmental Scientist at Andrew.Valand@wildlife.ca.gov or (562) 342-2142.

Sincerely,

Betty J. Courtney
Environmental Program Manager I
South Coast Region

ec: Scott Morgan (State Clearinghouse)
    Erin Wilson – Los Alamitos
    Andrew Valand – Los Alamitos
C-1. Section C.5 (Biological Resources) addresses potential project impacts to listed species, including desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*), and Swainson’s hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*). Each species is assessed for its potential to occur (based on site-specific field surveys and habitat assessments, see Appendix 3a of the Draft EIR), and mitigation is proposed where warranted. See the responses to Comments C-2, C-3, and C-6 for more information on each species.

C-2. As described in Section C.5 (Biological Resources) of the Draft EIR, site-specific habitat assessments determined that marginal habitat occurs on the project site, and while it is within the historic range of the desert tortoise, there are no recent records within 10 miles of the site. There is a low potential for it to occur. No revisions to the Draft EIR are required.

C-3. As described in Section C.5 (Biological Resources) of the Draft EIR, site-specific habitat assessments determined that Mohave ground squirrel habitat does not occur in the project site or along the gen-tie and communication line routes and the nearest reported occurrences are more than 10 miles east of the site. This species is not likely to occur, and would not be impacted by the project. No revisions to the Draft EIR are required.
Mitigation Measure BR-6 requires pre-construction surveys for nesting birds and raptors for any construction activities occurring between January 1 and August 15. Surveys are required within a 500-foot buffer, and active nests are to be protected by an appropriately sized buffer (300 feet or as modified by a qualified avian biologist according to site-specific conditions). Active nests are to be monitored to determine success or failure of the nest and to ensure project activities are not conducted within the buffers. Any trees or structures to be removed shall be inspected for active nests by a qualified biologist, and any active nests would be protected by a 300-foot buffer for nesting birds or a 500-foot buffer for raptors until the young have fledged the nest. The Lead Agency has determined that this mitigation measure would adequately protect nesting birds and raptors. No revisions to the Draft EIR are required.

Protocol surveys for burrowing owl, based on the 2012 CDFW Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation were conducted in April, May, and June 2017. The surveys and results are documented in Appendix 3a of the Draft EIR. As described on page C.5-25 of the Draft EIR, eight potential burrows of suitable size and dimensions were identified during the protocol survey, including structures formerly used to support irrigation. Each of these potential burrows was visited during the follow-up visits of the protocol, and signs of previous burrowing owl use (whitewash and pellets) were observed at two of the burrows (Figure C.5-5 of the Draft EIR). None of the burrows was occupied at the time of the surveys, suggesting that they were not in use during the 2017 breeding season. However, they may have been occupied by non-breeding owls in winter 2016-2017, or earlier. Aspen biologists observed three burrowing owls and several potentially active burrows on the SGF site during reconnaissance surveys in early September 2017.

Mitigation Measure BR-8 requires pre-construction surveys for burrowing owls within 14 days of the commencement of ground disturbance, and implementation of a disturbance-free buffer around any occupied burrows. Any damaged or collapsed active burrowing owl burrows will be replaced with artificial burrows in adjacent habitat at a 2:1 ratio.

The City has a program in place to offset the cumulative loss of habitat from development; this program requires the payment of biological impact fees that the City uses to acquire conservation lands. The proposed project and all other developments in the City that would impact undeveloped land are subject to the $770 per acre fee. The City works with other agencies to identify lands that can be acquired and conserved to protect resources including burrowing owl. Therefore, no additional mitigation is required and revisions to the Draft EIR are not required.

As described in Section C.5 (Biological Resources) and documented in Appendix 3a of the Draft EIR, focused surveys for nesting Swainson’s hawks were conducted within the Study Area and a 1/2-mile buffer. Three survey events were completed for this species. Previously recorded nest sites within the survey area were also visited to determine their current status. Swainson’s hawk was observed soaring over the project site. Limited potential nesting trees occur within the site, but none supported nesting Swainson’s hawks. No active Swainson’s hawk nests were observed during the survey, and the nearby previously recorded nest (on 110th Street West, approximately a quarter-mile west of the SGF) was inactive and in disrepair.

Mitigation Measure BR-6 requires surveys for nesting Swainson’s hawks within 0.5 mile of all project components. If nesting Swainson’s hawks are identified nesting within the project areas or within 0.5 miles of the construction areas, a 0.5-mile no activity buffer shall be implemented; no construction activity shall occur within a 0.5-mile buffer until the young have fledged. The project is not expected to result in take of Swainson’s hawk. As described in the response to Comment C-5, the City of Lancaster has a program in place to offset the cumulative loss of habitat from
development; this program requires the payment of biological impact fees that the City uses to acquire conservation lands. No additional compensatory mitigation for impacts to Swainson’s hawk is proposed.

C-7. As described in the response to Comment C-5, the City has a program in place to offset the cumulative loss of habitat from development; this program requires the payment of biological impact fees that the City uses to acquire conservation lands. The impact fees are used to purchase conservation lands within the Antelope Valley, and to provide for their protection in perpetuity. Because of this City policy, which the proposed project is subject to, additional compensatory mitigation is not required.

C-8. Potential impacts to birds and bats from project construction and operation are thoroughly discussed under Impact BR-2 (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 CDFW or USFWS) of the Draft EIR on pages C.5-35 through C.5-38. Mitigation Measure BR-5 requires the applicant to prepare and implement a Bird and Bat Monitoring and Avoidance Plan, including monitoring during construction and for three years following the beginning of the solar farm operation. Adaptive management actions will be identified and implemented if the monitoring identifies that the project is causing bird or bat mortality.

C-9. Mitigation Measure BR-9 requires a pre-construction survey for sensitive bats no more than 15 days prior to grading near or removing trees or structures. During the maternity season (March 1 to July 31), surveys for bats will be conducted within 300 feet of all project activities. If active maternity roosts or hibernacula are found, the structure or tree occupied by the roost shall be avoided (i.e., not removed). If avoidance of the maternity roost is not feasible, the biologist shall survey for nearby alternative maternity colony sites. If the biologist determines in consultation with the City of Lancaster that there are alternative roost sites used by the maternity colony and young are not present, then no further action is required, and it will not be necessary to provide alternate roosting habitat. No additional mitigation is required.

C-10. See the response to Comment C-4 regarding mitigation to protect nesting birds, including the loggerhead shrike (Lanius ludovicianus).

C-11. Table C.5-3 of the Draft EIR states that there is suitable habitat for foraging but nesting is not likely to occur. Additionally, this species was not observed on-site although it has been observed within a mile of the study area. See the response to Comment C-4 regarding mitigation to protect nesting birds. This measure would identify and protect any nesting tricolored blackbirds (Agelaius tricolor) from take, and additional mitigation is not required.

C-12. Section C.5.1 (Environmental Setting) of the Draft EIR includes a detailed site-specific description of the resources on and near the project site and gen-tie and communication line routes; this information was derived from biological technical reports prepared by the applicant (see Appendix 3 of the Draft EIR), review of existing literature, consultation with technical experts, reconnaissance surveys, and focused surveys of the project site. The project’s potential impacts to biological resources are detailed in Section C.5.3 (Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures). No information is deferred to the pre-construction surveys; all required pre-construction surveys are intended to identify any resources on site at the time of project construction that would require additional avoidance measures. The Draft EIR contains substantial and adequate information to
support the environmental analysis of project impacts, and no additional environmental review is required.

C-13. Please see Section B.4 (Solar Facility Components) of the Draft EIR for a description of the solar field. As described on page B.6 of the Draft EIR, solar PV modules are expected to include a pile-driven foundation design, and this installation method has been analyzed in the EIR as the expected installation method. The proposed project includes minimal grading for staging areas, roads, and concrete pad areas. See Section B.4.3 (Installation, Array Assembly, and Racking), B.6.2 (PV System Installation), and Section C.5.3 (Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures) of the Draft EIR for more information on the construction of the solar field and associated biological impacts.

C-14. The County and City require that gen-tie lines be placed underground; therefore, avian impacts and raven perch subsidies would not occur.

C-15. The Draft EIR presents a variety of mitigation measures to avoid or minimize impacts to sensitive plants, animals, and habitats; see Section C.5.3 (Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures). As described in the responses to Comments C-5, C-6, and C-7, and in Section C.5.4 (Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the Draft EIR, the City has a program in place to offset the cumulative loss of habitat from development; this program requires the payment of biological impact fees that the City uses to acquire conservation lands. The proposed project and all other developments in the City that would impact undeveloped land are subject to the fee. These fees are utilized to fund the acquisition of conservation habitat. Each property acquired through the program has a conservation easement placed on it in perpetuity, and this easement is held by a conservation entity such as the Wildlife Heritage Foundation. Therefore, project-specific compensatory mitigation is not required.
Comment Letter D: Merrylou Nelson

Jocelyn Swain
City of Lancaster
44933 Fern Avenue
Lancaster, Ca. 93534

January 2, 2018

RE: DEIR Conditional Use Permit 17-10, Antelope North Solar Project

Dear Ms. Swain:

I would like to submit the following comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report of the above referenced project.

Air Quality/ Dust Control Plan:

Request that Lancaster City as the lead agency require a revision of the AVAQMD Fugitive Dust Rule 403. It is inadequate for the environment in the A. V. and does not prevent uncontrollable fugitive dust. It requires a more active response and involvement from the AVAQMD. I request that Lancaster City as the lead agency implement dust control measures that will adequately control highly erodible sandy soils and establish a requirement for solar projects which require a permit.

Lack of air quality monitoring stations in the four directions of the Valley, we have one station in the City of Lancaster which is located in an urban setting and is unable to monitor air quality anywhere near this project location.

Please add a requirement for a Dust Plume response Plan to include the use of weather stations, monitors with wind speed, wind direction, temperature, humidity sensors and a PM 10, PM 2.5 monitor which will generate reliable data to use to establish EPA classifications.

To properly mitigate the issue please require that the Dust Control Plan be developed and approved by an approved expert in desert wind erosion.

Please require an independent contractor to monitor the effectiveness of the Fugitive Dust Control Plan, interface with CARB which would be the first and best step to collect the published data for use in establishing compliance to EPA standards.
Valley Fever: I have attached a report dated 12-13-17 by Dr. Antje Lauer, PhD, California State University Bakersfield which updates the information contained in the DEIR. This report states that twelve sites west of Antelope Acres were sampled at a “site destined for imminent development.” Soil samples were collected in February, May and September of 2017 which resulted in detection of Valley Fever spores. Dr. Lauer concluded that the “eroded area west of Antelope Acres poses a threat to the public and construction workers to contract Coccidiomycosis from airborne arthroconidia even without further wind blowing from the west over the positive site towards Antelope Acres and beyond.”

She further recommends that dust mitigation methods need to be considered and recommends re-vegetation methods and cautions that watering a site that is positive during construction to keep the dust load down will likely result in its growth and increase the potential hazard for the public

I urgently request that Los Angeles County Health Department, the AVAQMD, AVRCD, the City of Lancaster and representatives from Antelope Acres form a group to address this problem.

Additionally, I propose that to help prevent a health hazard to the area that mulching the entire project site be seriously implemented prior to any grading actions.

Health Issues: Valley Fever in July of 2017 Dr. Benjamin Schwartz released an L.A. County Health Alert which states that Valley Fever cases have increased in L.A. County 2016 with 714 reported cases in L.A. County, compared with 522 in 2015, a 37% increase. Reported cases are from the entire county but most have occurred in the northern areas, specifically Antelope and San Fernando Valleys. The overall rate of cocci in LA is about 7 cases per 100,000. Among residents of Antelope Valley the rate is about 9 fold higher than elsewhere in the county.

Additionally the Antelope Valley has the highest numbers of pulmonary illness in L.A. County as reported by the “Key Indicators of Health 2017 Report.” The A.V. has the highest percentage of children with asthma, pneumonia/influenza
mortality rate, the highest COPD/Emphysema mortality and the highest cardiovascular mortality rate, more than all other of its Service Plan Areas.

I request that Lancaster City as the lead agency enlist the aid of the Los Angeles County Health Department, the AVAQMD, the AVRCD, representatives from the Solar industry the Antelope Acres to establish a permanent organization which will establish and implement a plan to effectively review the steps to be taken to reduce the effects of fugitive dust and Valley Fever on each new project.

**Wildlife:** Please add a notation that there has been several very recent sightings of at least one Great Horned Owl, at least one Barn Owl and at least one Kit Fox in the 93rd St. West/ Ave F-8 area which is adjacent to parcels at the southwestern portion of this project.

Please add the requirement that construction activities will be conducted during the during the non-nesting season (September 1 thru January 3) to avoid potential disturbance of avian breeding activities.

**Landscaping:** The DEIR defines very little landscaping for the entire project. There is no landscaping on the north most parcel, only partial coverage on the western side of the second parcel, and minimal on the third and fourth parcels. There is no attempt to block visibility on any of the parcels or to create a wind break. Typically all perimeter borders are landscaped to create a visual barrier to the inside of the project site and create living wind breaks.

I request that the Landscape Plan be revised to include the requirement for a minimum of a ten foot landscape zone around all of the exterior perimeters of all of the parcels in the Project. Landscaping must be well maintained. **Note:** New Lancaster City projects require permanent irrigation installations to ensure a successful landscape plan. Dead/dying materials need to be replaced in a timely manner. To control fugitive dust I request a ground cover of clean and well maintained mulch be applied. Please require large, evergreen, low water, fast growing plants which will serve as a living windbreak. Plants should be chosen from the AVRCD Nursery. No oleander as it is poisonous to animals.
Additionally, there is an issue with the scenic view shed; the view from the higher elevations around the Poppy Fields will be devastating. Requiring additional landscaping to dissipate the impact of this large field of solar panels would be more aesthetically pleasing.

**Fencing:** There is a requirement for an 8’ Security fence with 3 strands of barbed wire on top. Please add a requirement for design features to reduce the potential for avian injury and add a requirement for a wildlife egress area of at least 18” high along the bottom of the fence line every 100 feet to assure a corridor for animals to traverse the project property.

**Roads:** SORT (Save Our Rural Town) Director, Jacqueline Ayer submitted a letter of concern which identified access and egress requirements. The project appears to eliminate some local access roads. E-8 is of concern because there are existing legal parcels on both sides of the project which could affect their buildability in the future. Additionally other dirt roads appear to be affected/eliminated by the project. Parcels on both sides of the project are located in the unincorporated portion of L. A. County, Ms. Ayer requested that the City of Lancaster obtain an offer of dedication for at least 30 foot wide access route that would connect the east and west sides of E-8. I request that this issue be addressed in the Final EIR.

**Easements:** Assumed Easements of 50’ and 100’ for Existing Overhead Power Lines run through the project. What is the current status of these easements? Have they been finalized? Please complete any pending requirements prior to the release of the Final EIR.

Final Right-of-way width to accommodate the drainage facilities: Request that the final right-of-way be included into the Hydrology Study.

Sincerely

Merrylou Nelson
Detection of *Coccidioides* spp. west of Antelope Acres, Northern Los Angeles County, CA

**Investigator:** Antje Lauer, PhD, California State University Bakersfield

Date 12/13/2017

**Report**

**Sampling location and sampling**

Soil samples were collected from a disturbed and eroded site west of Antelope Acres, in the Antelope Valley of California (Figure 1). The entire sampling area is eroded but varies in the degree of and vulnerability to erosion (Figure 2). Sampling occurred on 02/02/2017, 05/20/2017, and on 09/12/2017. In addition to sampling at 5-7 cm depth (~25 g), several soil core samples were collected (surface, 5-7 cm, 10-12 cm, 18-20 cm, 23-25 cm, 28-30 cm depth). Altogether, samples were collected from 12 sites in early February 2017, but not all sites were revisited in May and September due to budget and time constraints. Coordinates of sampling sites were documented, as well as vegetation type and cover (table 1 and figures 2-4). We also analyzed soil pH, redox potential, electrical conductivity, and total salts. Soil samples were collected aseptically, avoiding cross contamination, transferred to 50 ml Falcon tubes and delivered to the CSUB laboratory on ice.

![Figure 1: Location of sampling area (yellow square) with 12 sampling sites (red dots) west of Antelope Acres. Different soil types (soil map units) are separated by thin orange lines. Dominant soil types are shown on the left based on information obtained from the USDA websoilsurvey database.](image)

**Table 1:** Location of sampling sites. Coordinates highlighted in grey are locations were *Coccidioides* was detected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Coordinates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>site 1</td>
<td>34°44'48.97&quot; N 118°18'57.58&quot; E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site 2</td>
<td>34°44'48.01&quot; N 118°18'59.04&quot; E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site 3</td>
<td>34°43'34.29&quot; N 118°18'59.30&quot; E</td>
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<tr>
<td>site 4</td>
<td>34°44'48.22&quot; N 118°18'25.29&quot; E</td>
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<td>34°44'48.40&quot; N 118°18'25.04&quot; E</td>
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<td>site 6</td>
<td>34°44'48.62&quot; N 118°18'25.62&quot; E</td>
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<tr>
<td>site 7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>site 8</td>
<td>34°44'48.84&quot; N 118°18'03.94&quot; E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site 9</td>
<td>34°44'35.76&quot; N 118°18'03.89&quot; E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site 10</td>
<td>34°44'11.53&quot; N 118°18'55.99&quot; E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site 11</td>
<td>34°43'58.00&quot; N 118°18'10.16&quot; E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Description of sites

The vegetation encountered at sites 1-3 was mostly invasive grasses (*Bromus* spp.) with native and non-native annuals present including poppies and rattle snake weed. Sites 4-7 were influenced by sheep grazing, showed the same grassy vegetation as sites 1-3, but with occasional rabbit brush. Site 7 had the most brush. Ants and rodent activities were especially abundant at sites 4-10. Sites 4-7 in particular showed many unvegetated spots and extreme disturbance and erosion, whereas the other sites were mostly covered evenly by invasive grasses (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Examples of photos from sampling sites (02/02/2017). A: Site 12 with invasive grasses, also representative for sites 1-3), solar ranch can be seen in the background. B-D: sites 4-6, eroded landscape. E: Site 7 with plenty of rabbit brush. F: Site 8, dunes, with rabbit brush, eroded landscape, plenty of trash. G: Site 10, eroded landscape. H: Site 11: former agricultural field, dormant, invasive grasses.

Figure 3: Close-up of area with most positive soil samples for *Coccidioides*. Sites 5-7 are indicated with a red dot. Antelope Acres can be seen on the right.
DNA extraction and PCRs

Prior to DNA extraction using the Qiagen DNeasy Powersoil DNA extraction kit (Qiagen), soils aliquots were heated to 70 °C for 30 min followed by a Proteinase K step for additional 30 min at 56 °C. This step ensures that spores are successfully lysed before the DNA extraction procedure. Success of DNA extraction was performed via agarose gel electrophoresis (2% gels) and showed non-sheared DNA of good quality was obtained from all samples. The extracted DNA was not quantified. Once, DNA was extracted, 2 μl of the extracts were used in a nested PCR approach to detect Coccidioides spp. We have adopted the protocol published by Vargas-Gastalum et al. (2015) combined with Johnson et al. (2015) and used it successfully in previous research (Colson et al. 2017). Two different diagnostic PCRs were included in our approach that target the hypervariable Intertranscribed spacer regions of the fungal ribosomal DNA. Briefly, the first PCR was performed with a primer pair (NS1/NS54) that amplifies a 900 bp fragment of predominantly Ascomycetes. This PCR was followed by a nested PCR with primer pair EC3/EC100 (600 bp) and primer pair ITS1CF/ITS1CR (Figure 5). Positive PCR products were sequenced (Laragen Inc.) to ensure no false positive result. Figure 5 shows examples of PCR results obtained with the two diagnostic primer pairs, and overall results so far are indicated in table 2.

Figure 5: Position of primers and annealing sites used for nested PCR approaches to amplify fragments of the fungal ribosomal gene (Hoegeger and Kues 2007, updated). The different primer pair combinations are indicated in different colors ITS= Intertranscribed spacer regions.
Figure 6: Examples of diagnostic PCR results with primer pair EC3/EC100 (350 bp) (A), and with primer pair ITS1Cf/r (120 bp) (B) for samples collected in February 2017. A DNA ladder in the left picture indicates a strong band in the center of about 500bp; no DNA ladder was included in the left picture (NC=neg. control).

Table 2: Number of samples collected over the seasons with indication of numbers of Coccidioides positive samples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>date of sampling</th>
<th># of pos. samples</th>
<th>% of pos. samples</th>
<th># of neg. samples</th>
<th>% of neg. samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/02/17</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>69.44</td>
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<td>05/02/17</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/12/17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>70.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Soil parameters analyses

In addition to environmental data obtained from the USDA websoilsurvey database, we analyzed soil pH, electrical conductivity (millisiemens/cm), redoxpotential (mV), and total salts (g/L) for all samples. Not all samples have been analyzed yet. So far, the pH in this area is elevated, ranging from 7.11-9.09. The redoxpotentials are generally negative with very few exceptions, generally between -30 and -80 mV. The soils are also salty with elevated electrical conductivity between 1-18 ms/cm and total salts accumulating to about 0.5 - 9g/L. Once all data is complete, we will correlate positive and negative soil samples to these environmental parameters to find out if they are indicative of the presence of the pathogen.

Summary and Conclusion

Twelve sites west of Antelope Acres were initially sampled at a site that is destined for imminent development. At each site, 3 soil samples were collected on 02/02/2017. First results from this sampling set resulted in the detection of the pathogen at sites 4, 5, 6, and 7 (5-7 cm depth). On May 20th, 2017, additional samples were collected from the negative sites 2 and 3 and from the positive sites 5 and 7. The analysis of this second set of samples resulted in the detection of 2 positive samples for sites 5 and 7 (5-7 cm depth). The last set of samples were collected on 09/12 2017,
from sites 5 and 7 only. Several samples were found positive in different depths, mostly from site 7. The analysis of the soil samples is ongoing. We are currently in the process of finalizing the environmental parameters analyses.

We conclude that the eroded area west of Antelope Acres that is destined for development poses a threat to the public and construction workers to contract coccidioidomycosis from airborne arthroconidia. Even without further disturbance, this site with its unvegetated, highly eroded soil, is a health hazard. The location is usually very windy; the wind blowing from the west over the positive site towards Antelope Acres and beyond, will transport infectious arthroconidia towards the east, Lancaster, Palmdale, Edwards AFB etc.

During development of this site, dust mitigation methods need to be considered. We recommend re-vegetation of this area with native plants, maintaining the plants until they are established, if possible. If soils are too far degraded, even non-native plants could be used to cover the ground. One should keep in mind that watering a site that is positive for a soil-borne pathogen during construction to keep the dust load down will likely result in its growth and thus increase the potential hazard for the public.

Further discussion is needed, especially because previous research in this area resulted in the detection of many Coccidioides positive sites (e.g. most recently Colson et al. 2017).

Acknowledgements

This project was supported by the U.S. Dept. of Defense, SERDP 16-RC01-50 and by the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minorities (LSAMP, HIRD-0331537). CSUB undergraduate students Alex Valenzuela and Eduardo Garcia, contributed to the data collection.

References


Responses to Comment Letter D

D-1. The commenter requests that the City pursue revision of the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD) Fugitive Dust Rule 403 because it does not control fugitive dust. This comment will be provided to City decision makers for their review and consideration regarding this AVAQMD rule.

The commenter also requests the City establish dust control requirements for solar projects that require a permit. The City has required implementation of dust control measures consistent with ACAQMD requirements and has consistently applied these measures on solar projects. Section C.4 (Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases) of the Draft EIR addresses federal, state, and local regulations and evaluates the projects potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. The discussion acknowledges the AVAQMD requirement for a Dust Control Plan, which will specify
actions to control dust such as watering unpaved roads, reduced vehicle speeds and other measures as identified by the AVAQMD as part of their review and approval of the plan.

D-2. The commenter notes that more monitoring stations are needed in the Antelope Valley. Monitoring stations for air quality fall under the purview of the regulatory agencies specifically responsible for air quality in the region. In this instance, these agencies are the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the AVAQMD. This comment will be provided to decision makers for their consideration.

D-3. The commenter requests a requirement for a Dust Plume Response Plan for the project. The request made by the commenter is for information that goes beyond the scope of this project. This comment will be provided to City decision makers for their consideration for the need for additional monitors and data collection in the Antelope Valley. Additionally, EPA attainment classifications are based on the region as a whole and not on individual projects.

D-4. The commenter requests that the Dust Control Plan (DCP) be developed and approved by an approved expert in desert wind erosion. The preparation of a dust control plan is the responsibility of a project developer and it identifies how they will meet the dust requirements for their individual project. The Dust Control Plan is a requirement of the AVAQMD and it will be reviewed and approved by the district staff. The district has in-house air quality experts with experience in the Antelope Valley.

D-5. The commenter requests that an independent contractor monitor the effectiveness of the Fugitive Dust Control Plan. As part of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the City, the City will monitor the implementation of all measures and conditions of approval for the project. The AVAQMD is also responsible for monitoring and enforcing regulations and conditions of approval related to air quality. As needed, independent contractors are brought in to assist with monitoring and compliance with required measures and plans.

D-6. The commenter requests that the City form a group of local and regional agencies and residents to address concerns with Valley Fever. This comment will be provided to City decision makers for their consideration.

Section C. 4 (Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases) of the Draft EIR evaluates the potential for Valley Fever exposure. In addition to measures that will be included in the Dust Control Plan, the EIR recommends dust suppression measures that specifically address the potential for spread of Valley Fever spores. These measures will be incorporated in the Dust Control Plan and the City will review the plan to ensure the added measures are included and implemented.

D-7. The commenter requests that the project include mulching prior to grading. The EIR and the associated Dust Control Plan requirements include sufficient measures to control dust in the project area. No additional measures such as mulching are necessary. Also see the response to Comment D-11.

D-8. See the response to Comment D-6 above.

D-9. Thank you for the information regarding species occurrences. Commenter states that at least one great horned owl, one barn owl, and one kit fox have been observed adjacent to the southwestern portion of the project site. As stated on page C.5-11 of the Draft EIR, Aspen biologists observed a great horned owl on the project site during reconnaissance surveys in September 2017. Kit fox was detected on site by sign during project surveys (see page C.5-12 of the Draft EIR). While not
detected on site during surveys, the site and surrounding areas support barn owl habitat, and they are common in the Antelope Valley.

D-10. Mitigation Measure BR-6 requires pre-construction surveys for nesting birds and raptors for any construction activities occurring between January 1 and August 15. Surveys are required within the project and include a 500-foot buffer beyond the project site, and active nests are to be protected by an appropriately sized buffer (300 feet or as modified by a qualified avian biologist according to site-specific conditions). Active nests are to be monitored to determine success or failure of the nest and to ensure project activities are not conducted within the buffers. Any trees or structures to be removed shall be inspected for active nests by a qualified biologist, and any active nests would be protected by a 300-foot buffer for nesting birds or a 500-foot buffer for raptors until the young have fledged the nest. The Lead Agency has determined that this mitigation measure would adequately protect nesting birds. No revisions are required to the Draft EIR.

D-11. As described in Section B.7.4 (Landscaping) of the Draft EIR, the project would include a 10-foot wide landscaped area around portions of the proposed solar facility. The project would include use of drought-tolerant plants in all landscaping. Landscaping would be required at all project boundaries that are readily visible from major public roadways, but is not required in areas where distance, intervening elevated terrain, or adjacency to other approved solar facilities would mask the project fence line as viewed from paved public roadways (i.e., 110th Street West, Avenue D, and Avenue F).

With regard to the request to mulch the entire project site, the City has determined that this approach is not warranted as fugitive dust would be adequately controlled through compliance with Rule 403 Dust Control Plan requirements (see pages C.4-19 through C.21 of the Draft EIR) and through implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-1, which prescribes additional dust control measures beyond those in the Rule 403 requirements.

The City requires drought-tolerant, preferably native plants in all solar facility landscaping plans. The developer is required to provide irrigation to landscaping plants until they are well-established, but the method of irrigation is chosen by the developer depending on the specifics of each site. The irrigation method utilized is required to be shown on the landscape plans that are submitted and approved by the City Planning Department prior to installation of the landscaping. Each developer is required to maintain the landscaping for the life of the project, and is required to replace dead plants as necessary. City staff periodically inspects solar sites and notifies developers if there are items that need to be corrected. Developers are also notified if the City receives a complaint about landscaping condition from the public, and they are expected to promptly address the situation.

The City does not allow the use of oleander in landscaping plans. The City cannot require the Applicant to obtain landscaping plants from a specific vendor. Additionally, solar developers have been referred to the AVRCD nursery to obtain information regarding types of plants that do well in the local environment. However, the nursery does not have the ability to provide the number of plants that are needed for these types of solar developments.

D-12. As described on page C.2-7 of the Draft EIR, views of the project site from the Antelope Valley Poppy Reserve were considered. The Poppy Reserve is located approximately three miles from the nearest proposed project solar panel. While the proposed project may be slightly visible from this location, given the distance, the project would appear as a thin line on the horizon, and
project landscaping would not be visible from that distance. Therefore, the request for additional landscaping would not affect views of the project from the Poppy Reserve, which would be minimal.

D-13. The project site is required to be fenced. The height of the fence is typically between six and eight feet and the developer is allowed to top the fence with barbed wire. The use of razor wire is prohibited. The developer has agreed to install fencing with raised sections to allow for the passage of wildlife through the property.

D-14. Conditions of approval for the proposed project require the applicant to provide irrevocable offers of dedication for the following roadways: 110th Street West, 105th Street West, 100th Street West, Avenue D-8, Avenue E, Avenue F, and Avenue F-6. Development of the proposed project would not eliminate access to any existing legal parcel.

D-15. The commenter notes that easements of 50 feet and 100 feet run through the project site and asks the current status of the easements and request any pending requirements to be addressed prior to release of the Final EIR. The project site plan shows existing utility easements in the project area including the two noted by the commenter. These utility easements are existing and currently in use; the easements will not change with implementation of the project. Therefore, no action is needed on the easements prior to release of the Final EIR.

D-16. Conditions of approval for the proposed project require the applicant to submit final hydrology/hydraulics studies for review and approval. This final study will determine the final drainage facilities which will be designed based on City Engineering Design Guidelines. The applicant is also required to dedicate any additional street right-of-way or drainage easements necessary for the installation of the Master Plan of Drainage Facilities as determined by the approved hydrology and hydraulics study.

D-17. The commenter attached a paper titled Detection of Coccidioides spp. west of Antelope Acres, Northern Los Angeles County, CA by Antje Lauer, PhD, California State University Bakersfield and dated 12/13/17. The information contained in this report is noted and has been forwarded to the decision makers. The report indicates that spores were identified in four of the twelve test locations. As indicated in the report, the four locations (Sites 4, 5, 6, and 7) which tested positive for the spores are located along 100th Street West between Avenue F and Avenue G. These four locations are not on or immediately adjacent to proposed project. The three locations closest to the project site (Sites 1, 2, and 3) along 105th Street West did not test positive for the spores according to this report. This report was also referenced in Comment D-6.
Comment Letter E: Linda Ford

Swain, Jocelyn

From: robert <robertc44@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 03, 2018 7:02 PM
To: Swain, Jocelyn
Subject: Antelope North Solar Project No. CUP 17-10 Comments

B.7.4 Landscaping
Large Natural Desert Trees and Large Eldarica Pine Trees.

B.7.3 Security Fencing
Fencing to include proper size openings at the bottom of the fencing to allow Natural Wildlife to enter and exit their Natural Environment.
Set aside Natural Areas for Natural Wildlife and Hunting Grounds for native owls and Kit Fox.

May I please have a confirmation that you received these comments.
Thank you, Linda Ford

Responses to Comment Letter E

E-1. As described in the response to Comment D-11, the City requires solar developers to prepare and implement a landscaping plan, to be approved by the City. The City requires appropriate drought-tolerant, non-invasive, and preferably native species in the landscape plant palette. The suggested plants would conform to general City landscaping requirements, but the ultimate selection of species would depend on availability, site characteristics, and other factors to be considered by a qualified landscape architect on the development of the project landscape plan.

E-2. Please see the response to Comment D-13. The Applicant has agreed to incorporate fencing that allows wildlife passage. As described in the responses to Comments C-5, C-6, and C-7, and in Section C.5.4 (Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the Draft EIR, the City has a program in place to offset the cumulative loss of habitat from development; this program requires the payment of biological impact fees that the City uses to acquire conservation lands. The proposed project and all other developments in the City that would impact undeveloped land are subject to the fee. The City works with other agencies to identify lands that can be acquired and conserved. These conserved lands provide protected habitat for wildlife, including native owls and kit fox.
Comment Set F: Verbal Comments Received at Planning Commission Meeting

BEFORE THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2017
LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA
5:33 P.M.

Reported by: Vanessa Zaragoza, CSR No. 13924
Regular meeting held on Monday, December 18, 2017,
44933 Fern Avenue, Lancaster, California 93534.

PLANNING COMMISSION:

JAMES D. VOSE, Chairman
THOMAS (RANDY) HALL, Vice Chairman
DIANA COOK, Commissioner
CASSANDRA D. HARVEY, Commissioner
DREW MERCY, Commissioner
RANDY SMITH, Commissioner

PRESENTER:

JOCELYN SWAIN, Associate Planner Environmental
Lancaster, California
Monday, December 18, 2017
5:33 p.m.

CHAIRMAN VOSE: The next Item is Item Number 9.
Mr. Ludicke, do you have speakers on Item 9?
MR. LUDICKE: You know, Mr. Chairman, I did
have a speaker's card on Item 9, and I, for whatever
reason, can't seem to find it. But we did have somebody
that filled out wanting to speak on Item 9. I also do
have one for Item 10, and that is Virginia Stout.
CHAIRMAN VOSE: On Item 10?
MR. LUDICKE: Yeah.
MR. VOSE: Okay. Thank you.
So Item 9 is a new public hearing. This
hearing is being written and taken down by a court
reporter. So everything that is shared with the
commission will be recorded verbatim. The commission
will not enter into any discussion or question either
among themselves or with any presenter tonight.

It's an opportunity for the public to provide
comments on the draft environmental impact report in
this particular case for the Avanti South Specific Plan
(State Clearinghouse Number 2016071067). And as I
mentioned, the planning commission will not have any
discussion on this draft environmental impact report or
the proposed project. Those hearings will take place at
a future time which will be appropriately noticed, and
the public then will have an opportunity to address the
commission when the commission takes up the application
for the specific project sometime after the 1st of the
year. I have no idea when.

Ms. Swain, do you care to add anything?

MS. SWAIN: I would only add that the proposed
Avanti South Project is a specific plan, general plan
amendment zone change, and a tentative tract map which
would allow a mixed-use development on approximately
307 acres. The proposed project includes 1700 dwelling
units; 213,600 square feet of commercial uses; 31.5
acres of open space and parks; 12.8-acre school site,
1.3-acre fire station; and approximately 38 acres of
internal streets.

The comment period on this document runs from
November 9th to December 27th. So this is not the only
opportunity to provide comments. You still have the
ability to submit comments in writing, either e-mail,
mail, or fax.

CHAIRMAN VOSE: Thank you.

Do I have a speaker, Mr. Ludicke?

MR. LUDICKE: Yes, I did find Number 9’s, David
CHAIRMAN VOSE: I heard the first name but didn't hear you clearly on the last name.

MR. LUDICKE: Mr. David Joseph.

CHAIRMAN VOSE: Mr. Joseph, welcome.

MR. JOSEPH: Thank you.

I'm probably premature, but it's going to be a big project. And my neighbor and I were talking about it, are there going to be a lot of -- I guess you're not going to -- you're probably don't even know yet but proposed roads, egress and ingress -- the widening of the roads there because already there's, you know, lots of traffic around the high school and that area and just -- just asking about that.

I may be premature on that -- on that question, from what you said earlier, a few minutes ago -- a minute ago. So that's it, just roads, egress and ingress. I guess you can't answer that yet.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He can't speak back to you.

MR. JOSEPH: So -- okay. That's all.

CHAIRMAN VOSE: Thank you for your comments.

Do we have other speakers?

MR. LUDICKE: I have no other cards for Item 9, Mr. Chairman.
CHAIRMAN VOSE: Thank you.

So without objection, we'll close the public hearing on Item 9. The next item is Item 10. This is a Notice of Availability for Draft Environmental Impact Report, Antelope Valley North Solar Project (State Clearinghouse Number 2017061079).

As I mentioned in the previous, this an opportunity for the public to provide comment on the draft environmental impact report. There will be no discussion by the planning commission on the draft environmental impact report or on the proposed project which will occur at a meeting sometime in the future, sometime next year. We don't know when. And just to be clear, the commission does not respond to question or enter into any communication at all in this public hearing.

Ms. Swain, do you care to add anything?

MS. SWAIN: The proposed project is a 72-megawatt solar generating facility on approximately 430 acres. The proposed comment period for this EIR is from November 16th through January 3rd, and you have the ability to continue to submit comments up until that date.

CHAIRMAN VOSE: Thank you.

And we have a speaker on this -- did you say --
did you say Ms. Stout?

MR. LUDICKE: Yes, Virginia Stout.

MS. STOUT: Is that all right? Can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN VOSE: Good evening, Ms. Stout, and welcome.

MS. STOUT: Good evening. Thank you for having this hearing. We appreciate the ability to speak anytime that you want to hear from us. We're happy to talk to you.

Okay. I'd like to address the -- something that's kind of glossed over in a lot of EIRs -- on that, and people don't seem to take it very seriously is the cumulative impacts of all the projects which is required to be looked at in an EIR. And we'd like to see that added -- that taken a little more seriously.

Some of the things that are never or rarely ever addressed including the latest science regarding heat island effects which have come out in reports from University of Arizona; University of Maryland; Madison, Wisconsin; Nevada, et cetera. And if you could take a look at some of those and add that to it, that the possibility -- you know, what they say. It's very hot here in the desert and climate change. Take a look at that and add that to the cumulative effects.
The loss of the traditional valley visuals coming down from Tehachapi Willow Springs Road and any other place where people could look out over from the above, what that does to the aesthetics to the people. And that's something that's very important to a lot of people who move up here. It's kind of well-known. You know, to see the poppy park, to see the second growth desert, et cetera.

Okay. The loss of the wildfire seed bank is never addressed. People used to go up to 110th and take a look at all the poppies, which aren't there; they dried out. You know, what happens? Are there -- are there certain rare endangered species we haven't seen for a while because of the drought? Loss of foraging habit for foxes. We see -- even an antelope turned up this summer on -- on alfalfa farm on 90th Street, probably lost.

We've got miles of chain-link fence. We'd like to see -- how many miles of chain-link fence are now across the western end of the valley? You know, just -- how many -- how many roads that people used to travel on that are dirt roads are now missing because of that. Cumulatively, what are we taking a look at here?

And then we have -- how many of these could have been wildlife corridors that are now -- that
could’ve been used for that? And the effects on the
county trail system. You know, what are the -- how
visually, aesthetically what is that going to do? We
worked very hard to put a county trail system out there,
and what -- no one ever seems to talk about what the
projects are actually affecting that.
And there needs to be mitigation anchors we’d
like to see for cumulatively acre for acre, the
transition habitat conservancy. We’d like to help you,
work on that. If you’re going use 400 acres, 800 acres,
and 1600 acres and thousands of acres, we’d like to see
some actual real mitigation land that’s put into that.
Thank you very much. Appreciate that.
CHAIRMAN VOSE: Thank you for your comments.
Do we have any other speakers?
MR. LUDICKE: Ryan Lanedale.
CHAIRMAN VOSE: Good evening. Mr. Lanedale, is
it?
MR. LANEDALE: Yes, Lanedale. Thank you for
getting it correct. Some people add an S in the middle.
CHAIRMAN VOSE: Welcome. You might want to --
there you go. Perfect.
MR. LANEDALE: So I’ve lived -- I actually
moved out here back in -- I want to say around ’96, and
I’ve noticed that the plot of land that is across the
street from my house off of H and it would be Suffolk, I think is the street you turn into to go into my neighborhood, has been vacant for years, for over 20 years now. I moved here when I was 8. I'm 29, almost 30. So that land has been underutilized.

It has a radio tower there, and I can assure you -- I mean, I think they have different communities, homeless communities living there. Another bag of things I could talk about. But there is very little wildlife living there, as the previous speaker just mentioned that we're taking away from wildlife that lives out there. Being that there isn't much, there aren't any antelopes, very few birds.

That area would be a perfect area to set up, in my opinion, solar farms because nobody wants to use it with the radio tower there because it's radioactive.

Radioactive is probably the wrong word, but it does emit signals, microwaves, and things of that nature.

So the planning in this, if we keep extending areas where we can't inhabit or animals can't inhabit, then we're just creating more of a problem, from my perspective, not work for any wildlife or anything.

Just seems like common sense to me. But yes that would be part of the problem.

I see that we are expanding as a city, and
we're expanding outward. We're not taking care of
what's already established. Which if we want to promote
growth and have businesses come out here, it would kind
of help to work on what we have instead of branching out
and putting the nicer stuff on the outskirts of the town
and taking away wildlife's living habitats. So thank
you for allowing me to speak. Cut this early.

    CHAIRMAN VOSE: Thank you for your comments.
    Do we have another speaker, Mr. Ludicka?

    MR. LUDICKE: No, I have no other speakers.

    CHAIRMAN VOSE: All right then. So without
objection, the public hearing is closed on Item
Number 10. That completes the court reporter's
responsibility.

    (MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:43 P.M.)
CERTIFICATE
OF
CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER

I, VANESSA ZARAGOZA, CERTIFIED SHORTHAND
REPORTER, CERTIFICATE NO. 13924, DO HEREBY CERTIFY:

THAT SAID PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING WAS TAKEN
BEFORE ME AT THE TIME AND PLACE THEREIN SET FORTH AND
WAS TAKEN DOWN BY ME IN SHORTHAND AND THEREAFTER
TRANSCRIBED, SAID TRANSCRIPT BEING A TRUE COPY OF MY
SHORTHAND NOTES THEREOF.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I HAVE HEREBUTO SUBSCRIBED

______________________________
CERTIFICATE NUMBER 13924
Responses to Comment Set F

F-1. The commenter expresses concern regarding the cumulative impacts of the proposed project and requests additional information be added to the EIR on a variety of cumulative impact topics, including heat island effects. Section C of the Draft EIR includes the discussion of the cumulative impact approach, lists the cumulative projects that were considered in the cumulative evaluation, and discusses potential cumulative impacts for each of the 12 environmental issue areas addressed in the EIR.

The commenter also notes that the issue of heat island effects was not addressed in the cumulative analysis. The heat island effect refers to solar panels causing an increase in the temperature (heat) surrounding a solar facility. There have been some studies or articles written regarding the potential for the heat island effect. This issue (heat island effect) has been discussed as part of utility-scale solar projects and the result has been inconclusive. While there is some increase in heat from the panels, there has been no evidence that this increase extends outside of the solar facility boundary. In the analysis of the Topaz Solar Facility project in San Luis Obispo County, the EIR addressed the potential for heat to be transferred to the surrounding air. The applicant (First Solar) conducted a study at one of its facilities that concluded that “... there was no statistically significant mean temperature difference between the monitoring stations located within the solar farm and the monitoring stations located outside the solar farm boundary.”

The commenter also identifies a study prepared by several universities on this issue. The article addresses findings from the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Arizona, University of Madison-Wisconsin, and the Nevada Center of Excellence. The article states that their findings contradict the prediction that solar power installations decrease temperatures around them. However, the study concluded that the heat effect of a large-scale solar facility is similar to, but smaller than, that created by urban or industrial areas.

F-2. The commenter expresses concern regarding the cumulative change to “traditional valley visuals” and aesthetic effects from the viewshed observed from Tehachapi Willow Springs Road and other vantage points. Section C.2.4 (Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the Draft EIR addresses cumulative viewshed impacts. As described on page C.2-21, the EIR’s geographic area of analysis for cumulative impacts to visual resources is limited to a one-mile radius surrounding the project site. This area is defined because the proposed project’s permanent visual changes occur only slightly above surface grade. At distances greater than one mile, visual changes of the proposed project begin to blend in with existing views and would likely be shielded from view by the cumulative development. While the EIR acknowledges that the overall visual quality of the cumulative project area has degraded with the addition of several solar energy facilities and electrical transmission lines, it concluded that the proposed project’s incremental contribution would not be considerable.

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The commenter expresses concern for the loss of wildflower seed banks, rare and endangered species, and loss of foraging habitat. Cumulative effects to biological resources are analyzed in Section C.5.4 (Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the Draft EIR. As described in the responses to Comments C-5, C-6, and C-7, and in Section C.5.4 (Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the Draft EIR, the City has a program in place to offset the cumulative loss of habitat from development; this program requires the payment of biological impact fees that the City uses to acquire conservation lands. The proposed project and all other developments in the City that would impact undeveloped land are subject to the fee. Additionally, the City only allows minimal grading on solar developments in order to allow for the access roads and pads for inverters, transformers, and batteries. As such, the roots and seeds for the plant species on site remain and regrow naturally over time.

The commenter would like to know how many miles of chain-link fence are now in the western end of the Antelope Valley, and how many dirt roads are no longer accessible to the public. Solar and other development in the western Antelope Valley has occurred on private property, and the City cannot restrict a landowner from erecting fencing on their own property. Additionally, private dirt roads may be gated or otherwise made inaccessible to the general public at the landowner’s discretion. However, designated public roads must be accessible to the public, and private development cannot land lock existing legal parcels. Therefore, recent development in the region has not resulted in the loss of public access roadways.

The commenter expresses concern for the cumulative loss of wildlife movement corridors. Cumulative effects to wildlife movement are addressed on pages C.5-46 of the Draft EIR. The EIR states that cumulatively, solar field developments have the potential to substantially reduce the size of movement corridors and alter wildlife movement patterns. While the project itself only represents a small portion of the available habitat in the region, the impacts of the project and surrounding development would be cumulatively substantial. Implementation of Mitigation Measures BR-1 through B-10 would reduce the proposed project’s incremental contribution to cumulative impacts to wildlife movement to less than cumulatively considerable (Class II).

The commenter expresses concern for the cumulative effects to the County trail system. The EIR addresses recreational facilities including parks and trails in several locations. Figure B-2, Existing Land Uses, identifies the location of existing land uses surrounding the project area. It includes the recreational trail more than 2 miles south of the project site. The Draft EIR evaluated potential impacts to recreational facilities in Section C.2 (Aesthetics), Section C.10 (Land Use, Population, and Recreation), and in Section C.12 (Public Services, Utilities, and Service Systems). For all of these issue areas, the EIR concluded that the project would not significantly impact recreational facilities including trails during construction or operation. Direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts were considered in these evaluations.

The commenter requests mitigation for cumulative impacts on an acre-for-acre basis. As described in the responses to Comments C-5, C-6, and C-7, and in Section C.5.4 (Cumulative Impact Analysis) of the Draft EIR, the City has a program in place to offset the cumulative loss of habitat from development; this program requires the payment of biological impact fees that the City uses to acquire conservation lands. The proposed project and all other developments in the City that would impact undeveloped land are subject to the $770 per acre fee. The City works with other entities to identify lands that can be acquired and conserved. To date, the City has funded the acquisition of over 700 acres of conservation habitat which is held in perpetuity by a conservation entity such as Wildlife Heritage Foundation.
F-8. The commenter describes a vacant plot of land across the street from his residence that he believes would be an ideal location for a solar development (north of Avenue H at Suffolk Drive). However, neither the proposed project developer nor the City own or otherwise control the identified plot of land, and therefore cannot propose or implement any solar or other development types at this location.
C. Revisions to the Draft Environmental Impact Report

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15132, this section identifies revisions made to the Draft EIR that resulted from comments submitted during the public comment period and the associated responses. The changes identified in this section include revisions to Section A (Introduction), Section B (Project Description), Section C (Environmental Setting, Analysis, and Mitigation Measures), and an updated appendix. Where revisions to the language of the Draft EIR have been made, the text in this section has been marked in strike-through (strike-through) for deletions and underline (underline) for additions. The revisions also identify the Draft EIR page number, section number, and mitigation measure number as identified in the Draft EIR.

C.1 Revisions to Section A: Introduction

Section A.2: Overview of the Proposed Project

Draft EIR page A-1:

The proposed project would consist of the following elements: photovoltaic modules, module mounting system, balance of system and electrical boxes, electrical inverters and transformers, electrical alternating current (AC) collection system including switchgear, intelligent onsite battery storage system, data monitoring equipment, transmission and gen-tie lines, communication lines, and access roads and security fencing.

Section A.3: Required Permits and Approvals

Draft EIR page A-3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table A-1. Permits and Approvals (Revised)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGF- 45 13 APNs¹ (430 acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen-Tie and Communication Line Route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen-Tie and Communication Line Route</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1) APN = Assessor’s Parcel Number
### Section A.4 EIR Process

#### Draft EIR page A-4 through A-6:

#### Table A-2. Scoping Comments (Revised)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commenter</th>
<th>Comment Date</th>
<th>Commenter Type</th>
<th>Comment Summary</th>
<th>Addressed in:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antelope Acres Town Council</td>
<td>6/16/2017</td>
<td>Local Agency</td>
<td>The commenter makes several requests for items to be included as part of the CUP for the project. First, that any required drainage facilities be addressed in the project design, and be constructed prior to flooding. In addition, the commenter includes several questions, requests, and recommendations regarding the planned landscaping and vegetation as well as mowing and clearing. The commenter also requested clarification on the roadway access, easement access, and dedication of land.</td>
<td>Section C.5 Biological Resources; Section C.9 Hydrology; Section C.13 Traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District</td>
<td>7/24/2017</td>
<td>Local Agency</td>
<td>The commenter expressed concern regarding the Air Quality impacts of the proposed Project, and compliance with District Rule 403 – Fugitive Dust. The commenter also provided recommendations on grading, vegetation removal, soil stabilization, and construction vehicles.</td>
<td>Section C.4 Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Department of Fish and Wildlife</td>
<td>7/28/2017</td>
<td>State Agency</td>
<td>The commenter provided information on two CESA listed species in the area, as well as other sensitive species. The commenter provided information on guidelines for analysis in the Draft EIR, and included suggestions for the Project Description, Alternatives, Biological Assessment, and mitigation</td>
<td>Section C.5 Biological Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Los Angeles Fire Department Fire Prevention Division</td>
<td>6/23/17</td>
<td>Local Agency</td>
<td>The commenter identified several project design features that the agency requests to be incorporated into a revised site plan. The commenter also lists conditions of approval associated with access, water, electrical equipment, and vegetation management.</td>
<td>Section C.5 Biological Resources; Section C.9 Hydrology; Section C.12 Public Services/Utilities; Section C.13 Traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Los Angeles Fire Department Planning Division, Land Development Unit, Forest Division, Health Hazardous Materials Division</td>
<td>7/25/17</td>
<td>Local Agency</td>
<td>The commenter lists conditions of project approval that were identified in the letter from the Fire Prevention Division, dated 6/23/17. The commenter requests that the EIR address impacts to erosion control, watershed management, rare and endangered species, vegetation, fuel modification for Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones or Fire Zone 4, archaeological and cultural resources, and the County Oak Tree Ordinance.</td>
<td>Section C.5 Biological Resources; Section C.6 Cultural Resources; Section C.9 Hydrology; Section C.12 Public Services/Utilities; Section C.13 Traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commenter</td>
<td>Comment Date</td>
<td>Commenter Type</td>
<td>Comment Summary</td>
<td>Addressed in:</td>
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<tr>
<td>County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works</td>
<td>7/31/17</td>
<td>Local Agency</td>
<td>The commenter requests a hydrology study to identify potential flooding impacts on public roadways and private properties. The commenter also requests a construction traffic management plan.</td>
<td>Section C.9 Hydrology; Section C.13 Traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Heritage Commission</td>
<td>7/7/17</td>
<td>State Agency</td>
<td>The commenter identifies CEQA requirements for projects to avoid tribal cultural resources. The commenter recommends consultation with all California Native American tribes affiliated with the project area.</td>
<td>Section C.6 Cultural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board</td>
<td>5/31/17</td>
<td>Local Agency</td>
<td>The commenter recommends design alternatives to minimize runoff, requirements for siting staging areas, and restoration to pre-project conditions. The commenter requests agency consultation with the project proponent to determine necessary permitting authorizations.</td>
<td>Section C.9 Hydrology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save Our Rural Town</td>
<td>6/16/17</td>
<td>Citizen Group</td>
<td>The commenter expresses concern on flood hazards, as well as potential restriction or elimination of local access roads.</td>
<td>Section C.9 Hydrology; Section C.13 Traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern California Association of Governments</td>
<td>7/31/17</td>
<td>State Agency</td>
<td>The commenter requests a copy of the environmental document as soon as it is available during the public comment period. The commenter provides multiple resources for use in document preparation and recommends a side-by-side comparison of SCAG goals in table format for ease of review.</td>
<td>Section C.13 Traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duffie Brown</td>
<td>7/18/17</td>
<td>Private Citizen</td>
<td>The commenter requests additional information on the effects of the proposed project on the commenter’s parcel of land.</td>
<td>Section C. Environmental Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Chew</td>
<td>7/19/17</td>
<td>Private Citizen</td>
<td>The commenter requests additional information on the effects of the proposed project on the commenter’s parcel of land, rights the applicant would obtain if CUP 17-10 is approved, compensation to commenter if project affects his land, name of the applicant, ownership information on the proposed project parcels, right of entry easements, next steps following the EIR process, public notification during project approval process, additional approvals needed, landowner rights if gen-ties cross private lands, and the approved solar projects and companies that can construct gen-tie lines along 110th Street West, 105th Street West, and 100th Street West.</td>
<td>Section A, Introduction; Section B Project Description; Section C, Environmental Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Cho</td>
<td>7/14/17</td>
<td>Private Citizen</td>
<td>The commenter requests information on the reimbursement offered to owners of the affected APNs, future restrictions on selling affected parcels, and the project lifespan.</td>
<td>Section B, Project Description Section C.10 Land Use/Recreation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table A-2. Scoping Comments (Revised)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commenter</th>
<th>Comment Date</th>
<th>Commenter Type</th>
<th>Comment Summary</th>
<th>Addressed in:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dolores Howard</td>
<td>7/10/17</td>
<td>Private Citizen</td>
<td>The commenter expresses concern on the proximity of the proposed project to residences.</td>
<td>Section C. Environmental Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Pearce</td>
<td>7/30/17</td>
<td>Private Citizen</td>
<td>The commenter expresses concern on the proximity of the proposed project to the commenter’s parcels of lands, including property value and health risks.</td>
<td>Section C.8 Hazards; Section C.10 Land Use/Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalina Thoele</td>
<td>7/13/17</td>
<td>Private Citizen</td>
<td>The commenter requests additional information on the effects of the proposed project on the commenter’s parcel of land.</td>
<td>Section C. Environmental Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seffi Toneman</td>
<td>No date</td>
<td>Private Citizen</td>
<td>The commenter requests measures to shield adjacent residences from visual impacts and dust.</td>
<td>Section C.2 Aesthetics; Section C.4 Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Stout</td>
<td>10/27/17</td>
<td>Private Citizen</td>
<td>The commenter referenced previously submitted comments (summarized above), and requests the Draft EIR reflect current conditions in the area.</td>
<td>Section C.5 Biological Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Second Scoping Period (September 25, 2017 – October 27, 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commenter</th>
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<th>Commenter Type</th>
<th>Comment Summary</th>
<th>Addressed in:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native American Heritage Commission</td>
<td>9/28/17</td>
<td>State Agency</td>
<td>The commenter identifies CEQA requirements for projects to avoid tribal cultural resources. The commenter recommends consultation with all California Native American tribes affiliated with the project area.</td>
<td>Section C.6 Cultural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merrylou Nelson</td>
<td>10/27/17</td>
<td>Private Citizen</td>
<td>The commenter requests multiple additional requirements and technical studies for the proposed project including requirements related to air quality and dust control, valley fever, biological resources, aesthetics, and hydrology. The commenter also provided information on local airports.</td>
<td>Section C.2 Aesthetics; Section C.4 Air Quality; Section C.5 Biological Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Stout</td>
<td>10/27/17</td>
<td>Private Citizen</td>
<td>The commenter provided input with regard to the analysis of cumulative and recreation impacts. The commenter recommends multiple resources to aid the cumulative analysis.</td>
<td>Section C.1 Introduction; Section C.2 Aesthetics; Section C.5 Biological Resources; Section C.10 Land Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Stout</td>
<td>10/30/17</td>
<td>Private Citizen</td>
<td>The commenter referenced previously submitted comments (summarized above), and requests the Draft EIR reflect current conditions in the area.</td>
<td>Section C.5 Biological Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C.2 Revisions to Section B: Project Description

Section B.3: Solar Project and Site Description

Draft EIR page B-3:

Figure B-1 (Solar Generating Facility) has been revised to identify the location of two parcels which are being removed from the proposed project site (APNs 3264-022-044 and 3264-022-045). Removal of the two parcels would not affect the number of solar panels or proposed capacity of 72 MW.
C.3 Revisions to Section C: Environmental Setting, Analysis, and Mitigation Measures

Section C.6: Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Section C.6.1: Environmental Setting

Draft EIR page C.6-2:

Figure C.6-1 (Geologic Map) has been revised to clarify the legend.

Mitigation Measure CR-5 has been revised to reflect consultation between interested tribes and the City.

Section C.6.3: Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Draft EIR page C.6-19:

Mitigation Measure CR-5 has been revised to reflect consultation between interested tribes and the City.

MM CR-5 The project applicant shall work with the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians to address potential concerns associated with tribal cultural resources. The details of the agreement shall be identified in the Final EIR and in the project’s conditions of approval.

MM CR-5 As a result of consultation with the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians to address potential concerns associated with tribal cultural resources, the following requirements shall apply in the event that previously unknown cultural resources are identified during construction:

- Both the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians shall be notified about the start of construction activities and provided with the project archaeologist’s contact information.

- If human remains or funerary objects are encountered during any construction activities associated with the proposed project, work within a 100-foot buffer shall cease and the County Coroner shall be contacted pursuant to State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5.

- In the event that Native American cultural resources are discovered during any construction activities, all work within a 60-foot buffer shall cease and a qualified archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior standards shall be hired to assess the find. The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians shall be contacted and provided information and invited to perform a site visit in conjunction with the archaeologist to provide Tribal input.

- If significant Native American resources are discovered and avoidance cannot be ensured, a Secretary of the Interior qualified archaeologist shall be retained to develop a cultural resources Treatment Plan, as well as a Discovery and Monitoring Plan. A copy of the draft document shall be provided to the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians for review and comment. All in field investigation, assessment and/or data recovery pursuant to the Treatment Plan shall be monitored by a Tribal Monitor.
Section C.12: Public Services, Utilities, and Service Systems

Section C.12.1: Environmental Setting

*Draft EIR pages C.12-1 to C.12-2:*

Fire Prevention and Suppression Services

The City of Lancaster contracts with the Los Angeles County Fire Department for fire and paramedic services. The Consolidated Fire Protection District of Los Angeles County provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the City of Lancaster. There are currently six fire stations within the City of Lancaster, as well as one in the unincorporated community of Antelope Acres and one in the unincorporated community of Quartz Hill. Services provided include fire suppression, fire prevention, paramedic response, swift water rescue, and hazardous materials response. (City of Lancaster 2017a)

The following fire stations are within the City of Lancaster:

- Fire Station 33, Battalion Headquarters, 44947 Date Avenue
- Fire Station 112 CFF¹, 8812 Avenue E-8
- Fire Station 117, 44851 30th Street East
- Fire Station 129, Division Headquarters, 42110 6th Street West
- Fire Station 130, 44558 40th Street West
- Fire Station 134, 43225 North 25th Street West
- Fire Station 135, 1846 East Avenue K-4
- Fire Station 84, 5030 West Avenue L-14

C.4 Revisions to Appendices

This Final EIR includes revisions to Appendix 1 of the Draft EIR, as described below:

- **Appendix 1, Notice of Preparation/Scoping and Notice of Availability** has been updated to include the Notice of Availability and newspaper notice announcing the publication of the Draft EIR as well as the State Clearinghouse letter acknowledging compliance with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents. Additionally, Appendix 1 was updated to include a NOP comment letter from Thomas Chew that was accidently left out of the Draft EIR.
Appendix 1

Notice of Preparation
Notice of Preparation Newspaper Notice
Scoping Comment Letters
Notice of Availability
Notice of Availability Newspaper Notice
State Clearinghouse Letter

[Note: Appendix updated to add one scoping comment letter received on the NOP, notices prepared for the Draft EIR, and the State Clearinghouse public review confirmation letter]
Dear Ms. Swain,

I am writing to you to follow up on my comments sent July 19, 2017. The November 2017 draft of the NOP has been issued but my comments were not included in the draft.

Thank you for your response,
Thomas Chew

On Wed, Jul 19, 2017 at 9:27 PM, Tom Chew <tmcrenewableenergy@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Ms. Swain,

In regards to the City of Lancaster Notice of Preparation for the Antelope North Solar Project (CUP 17-10) dated June 27, 2017 sent to me by the City of Lancaster Development Services Department,

- What rights would the applicant obtain if their proposed Conditional Use Permit No. 17-10 is approved?
- The proposed project does not include my land, APN 3264-022-050. How would my parcel be impacted if the Conditional Use Permit No- 17-10 is approved?
- How would I be compensated if the Conditional Use Permit is approved and the proposed project affects the value, use, and/or access of my land?
- What is the name of the applicant?
- Is applicant the current owner of any of the APN's included in the proposed Project?
- Has the applicant obtained any right of entry easements for any of the APN's included in, bordering or in the near vicinity of the proposed Project?
- What are the next steps and process after the EIR is completed?
- Will we all be notified of the status of the Project as it goes through the approval process?
- Would the Conditional Use Permit be approved once the EIR is completed or are there other requirements, approvals or permits needed?
- If the Project requires gen-tie lines that cross over my land (either underground or overhead) to connect to the collector substation, what kind of legal approval would need to be obtained from the landowner and how would the landowner be compensated?
• Regarding the potential gen-tie corridors, what are the approved solar projects and companies that have obtained the rights to develop gen-tie lines along 110th Street West, 105th Street West and 100th Street West streets?

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Thomas Chew
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
ANTELOPE NORTH SOLAR PROJECT
(CUP 17-10)

DATE: NOVEMBER 13, 2017

TO: STATE CLEARINGHOUSE AND INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: CITY OF LANCASTER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT,
PLANNING SECTION

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE ANTELOPE NORTH SOLAR PROJECT (SCH NO. 2017061079)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City of Lancaster has completed a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Antelope North Solar Project (CUP 17-10). Based on the analysis presented in the DEIR, the proposed project would not result in significant and unavoidable adverse impacts to any environmental resource areas. All environmental effects evaluated in the DEIR are determined to be less than significant, or can be feasibly reduced to less-than-significant levels with incorporation of the mitigation measures provided in the DEIR.

An opportunity will be provided to give oral comments on the DEIR at the City of Lancaster Planning Commission meeting that will be held on December 18, 2017. The meeting will be held at 5:00 PM in the Council Chambers at Lancaster City Hall, located at 44933 Fern Avenue, Lancaster, CA 93534.

A copy of the DEIR and its technical appendices are on file and available to the public during normal working hours at the following locations: (1) City of Lancaster Community Development Division – Planning, 44933 Fern Avenue, Lancaster, CA 93534; and (2) County of Los Angeles Public Library – Lancaster, 601 Lancaster Blvd., Lancaster, CA 93534. The DEIR and its technical appendices also are available for review online at the following website: www.cityoflancasterca.org/environmentalreview

Inquiries regarding the project and/or the DEIR should be directed to Jocelyn Swain, Principal Planner at (661) 723-6249. Written comments must be sent to the City of Lancaster (44933 Fern Avenue, Lancaster, CA 93534), care of Jocelyn Swain. Comments can also be provided by fax at (661) 723-5926 or by e-mail to jswain@cityoflancasterca.org.

1. Project Name: Antelope North Solar Project (CUP 17-10)

2. Project Location: The project site encompasses approximately 430 acres of vacant land within the northwestern portion of the City. The project site is generally bounded by Avenue D-8 to the north, Avenue G to the south, 100th Street West to the east, and 110th Street West to the
west. Specifically, the project site is comprised of the following Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs): 3264-002-016; 3264-015-017; 3264-019-002; 3264-022-001; -044, -045, -068, -069, -070, -071, -072; 3265-003-005, -010, -011, and -012. The Project site is not included on any list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to California Government Code Section 65962.5.

3. Project Description: The project requests the approval of Conditional Use Permit No. 17-10 for a 72 megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) solar electric generating facility on 430 acres. The proposed project would include construction and operation of a 72 MW PV solar electric generating facility, as well communication lines co-located with multiple underground gen-tie lines to connect the facility to previously approved collector substations located at approximately Avenue G-8 and 100th Street West and on Avenue J, and ultimately to the Antelope Substation. The proposed project would be constructed in phases including site preparation, facility installation and commissioning, and site cleanup and restoration. The proposed project’s planned operational lifespan is 35 years. The proposed project would consist of the following elements: photovoltaic modules, module mounting system, balance of system and electrical boxes, electrical inverters and transformers, electrical alternating current (AC) collection system including switchgear, data monitoring equipment, transmission and gen-tie lines, communication lines, and access roads and security fencing. The proposed project would not require the construction of an on-site operations and maintenance facility.

The proposed project would include a series of PV module arrays mounted onto racking systems. These systems are typically supported by a pile-driven foundation design. The foundation design would be determined based on a full geotechnical study to be completed by the applicant prior to construction and as part of final engineering. The module mounting system or racking system would be a fixed-tilt or tracker PV array configuration oriented to maximize the amount of incident solar radiation absorbed over the course of the year.

4. Lead Agency: City of Lancaster, 44933 Fern Avenue, Lancaster, CA 93534

5. Applicant: Antelope Expansion 2, LLC (sPower)

PUBLIC COMMENT regarding the proposed project and/or adequacy of the DEIR will be accepted in writing and will be considered by the City of Lancaster. The period for public review during which the City will receive written comments on the DEIR will begin on November 16, 2017 and ends on January 3, 2018.
AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

(2015.5 C.C.P.)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
County of Los Angeles

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
CUP 17-10

I am a citizen of the United States and a resident of the County aforesaid; I am over the age of eighteen years, and not a party to or interested in the above entitled matter. I am the principal clerk of the printer of the Antelope Valley Press, a newspaper of general circulation, printed and published daily in the City of Palmdale, County of Los Angeles, and which newspaper has been adjudged a newspaper of general circulation by the Superior Court of the County of Los Angeles, State of California, under date of October 24, 1951, Case Number 328601; Modified Case Number 657770 April 11, 1956; also operating as the Ledge-Gazette, adjudicated a legal newspaper June 15, 1927, by Superior Court decree No. 224545; also operating as the Desert Madera News, formerly known as the South Antelope Valley Post-News, adjudicated a newspaper of general circulation by the Superior Court of the County of Los Angeles, State of California on May 29, 1967, Case Number NOC564 and adjudicated a newspaper of general circulation for the City of Lancaster, State of California on January 26, 1990, Case Number NOCH714, Modified October 22, 1990, that the notice, of which the above is a printed copy (set in type not smaller than ninepoint), has been published in each regular and entire issue of said newspaper and not in any supplement thereof on the following dates, to wit:

November 15, 2017

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury that the fore-going is true and correct.

Signature

Dated: November 15, 2017
Executed at Palmdale, California
January 3, 2018

Jocelyn Swain  
City of Lancaster  
44033 N. Fern Avenue  
Lancaster, CA 93534

Subject: Conditional Use Permit 17-10 (Antelope North)  
SCH#: 2017061079

Dear Jocelyn Swain:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Draft EIR to selected state agencies for review. On the enclosed Document Details Report please note that the Clearinghouse has listed the state agencies that reviewed your document. The review period closed on January 2, 2018, and the comments from the responding agency (ies) is (are) enclosed. If this comment package is not in order, please notify the State Clearinghouse immediately. Please refer to the project’s ten-digit State Clearinghouse number in future correspondence so that we may respond promptly.

Please note that Section 21104(c) of the California Public Resources Code states that:

"A responsible or other public agency shall only make substantive comments regarding those activities involved in a project which are within an area of expertise of the agency or which are required to be carried out or approved by the agency. Those comments shall be supported by specific documentation."

These comments are forwarded for use in preparing your final environmental document. Should you need more information or clarification of the enclosed comments, we recommend that you contact the commenting agency directly.

This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. Please contact the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan  
Director, State Clearinghouse

Enclosures  
cc: Resources Agency
**Lead Agency Contact**
- **Name**: Jocelyn Swain
- **Agency**: City of Lancaster
- **Phone**: 661-723-6249
- **Address**: 44933 N. Fern Avenue
- **City**: Lancaster
- **State**: CA
- **Zip**: 93534

**Project Location**
- **County**: Los Angeles
- **City**: Lancaster
- **Region**: 
- **Lat / Long**: 
- **Cross Streets**: Ave G, 100th St. W, 110th St., W., Ave D-8
- **Parcel No.**
- **Township**: 8N
- **Range**: 14W
- **Section**: 24/5,3
- **Base**: SBBM

**Proximity to:**
- **Highways**: 138/14
- **Airports**: 
- **Railways**: 
- **Waterways**: 
- **Schools**: Del Sur Elementary
- **Land Use**: Land Use - Vacant; Zoning - RR-2.5 (Rural residential, minimum lot size 2.5 acres), General Plan - NU (Non-Urban Residential)

**Project Issues**: Air Quality; Archaeologic-Historic; Biological Resources; Flood Plain/Flooding; Geologic/Seismic; Noise; Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading; Toxic/Hazardous; Traffic/Circulation; Water Quality; Water Supply; Landuse: Cumulative Effects; Aesthetic/Visual; Public Services; Growth Inducing; Vegetation

**Reviewing Agencies**: Resources Agency; Department of Conservation; Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 5; Cal Fire; Department of Parks and Recreation; Department of Water Resources; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, District 7; Regional Water Quality Control Bd., Region 6 (Victorville); Department of Toxic Substances Control; Native American Heritage Commission; California Energy Commission; Public Utilities Commission

**Date Received**: 11/16/2017  
**Start of Review**: 11/16/2017  
**End of Review**: 01/02/2018

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.