

To: Office of Planning and Research
 PO Box 3044
 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113
 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: California Energy Commission
 1516 Ninth Street, MS-48
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Project Applicant: Indian Energy, LLC.

Project Title: Demonstrating a Long-Duration Flywheel Energy Storage System

Project Location – Specific: 5000-5636 Willows Road, APN 406-070-10-00

Project Location – City: Alpine, 91901 **Project Location – County:** San Diego

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians is a federally-recognized Native American Tribe. The installation and operation of this project will take place entirely on land that is self-governed by the Viejas Tribe. The Viejas Tribe previously conducted an environmental review pursuant to its own environmental policy ordinance, which requires a detailed report on the environmental impacts of the microgrid that is in substantial compliance with the requirements set out in the National Environmental Policy Act.

The purpose of this project is to install and operate a renewable energy microgrid system that reduces electricity consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and ensures reliability at the Viejas Indian Reservation. The microgrid system will consist of a 150 kilowatt (kW) solar photovoltaic (PV) system and a 150 kW/600 kilowatt-hour (kWh) flywheel energy storage system (ESS). The flywheel ESS will support up to 10 hours of islanded off-grid operation. Existing electrical infrastructure at the reservation will be modified to integrate the new energy system. The solar PV system will involve the installation of above ground concrete piers. The solar PV arrays will be mounted on top of the piers totaling up to three feet tall. The installed area of the solar PV system will be approximately 9,000 square feet. All solar PV panels will have an antiglare coating that maximizes light absorption and will be tilted at a 12.5-degree angle facing west or south. The direction of the solar arrays will be selected during final design. Any potential glare from the operation of the solar PV system will be minimal.

The flywheel ESS will be located next to the solar PV system and will involve the installation of five flywheel containment units. Each flywheel unit will be buried and require an excavated area of approximately 12 feet by 12 feet and 10 feet deep. The flywheel installation area will be approximately 3,000 square feet. The flywheel ESS will not be visible from on or off-reservation vantage points because all flywheel containment units will be buried.

An electrical equipment area will be located onsite adjacent to the solar PV system and flywheel ESS areas. The electrical equipment area will be 1,000 square feet. The area will contain accessory equipment including: switchgear, a transformer, and disconnects and panel boards on a unistrut rack. All electrical equipment will be less than seven feet tall. The PV solar system and flywheel ESS will require aboveground and underground conduit and conductors to connect to the final on-reservation point of interconnection.

The connection of the microgrid system involves three interconnection strategies: 1) on site, at the Air Medical Service facility meter, 2) on site, at the distribution level with direct feed to the Air Medical Services facility, or 3) at the distribution level. The interconnection location will be determined during the project’s final design. All interconnection options will take place within the boundaries of the reservation. All structures and equipment will be installed outdoors.

Installation of the project will require 20 construction workers and will take approximately 12 to 18 months to complete. During installation, the project will require approximately 20 construction worker roundtrips per day. A temporary parking and staging area will be provided within the same parcel as the microgrid system. The project site will be accessed by Willows Road. Any new sources of air emissions resulting from the construction of the project will be temporary and intermittent in nature and will not significantly affect on-site or off-site air quality. Storm water collected from surface runoff will be managed with the current storm water infrastructure in place and in accordance with current federal storm water management practices. Furthermore, best management practices (such as dust suppression and storm water pollution prevention plans) used during construction and operation of the Air Medical Services facility will also be used during the installation and operation of the microgrid system. Therefore, no adverse effects to off-site water or air quality will occur as a result of the project.

Willows Road runs east-west along the southern boundary of the project site. The speed limit along this road is 50 miles per hour. Motorists traveling along Willows Road have limited views of the project site due to topography and vegetation barriers. Due to the high travel speeds of motorists and geographic location, views of the above-ground components of the microgrid system from passing cars would be brief. The nearest off-reservation residences are located south of Willows Road, adjacent to the project site. All solar PV panels will have an antiglare coating that maximizes light absorption and minimizes glare. The installation and operation of the microgrid system would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of off-reservation visual resources, as the system components are not visually obtrusive. Installation of the microgrid system is expected to reduce the Viejas community's GHG emissions by 1,450,000 kilograms of carbon dioxide over the project's 20-year lifetime. Indian Energy, LLC applied for a grant from the California Energy Commission (CEC) to build the project. The project is consistent with the CEC's mission of leading the state to a 100 percent clean energy future.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Energy Commission

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Indian Energy, LLC.

Exempt Status: (*check one*)

- Ministerial Exemption (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(1); Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(3); Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(4); Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number
Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15301
- Statutory Exemptions. State code Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 21080.35
- Common Sense Exemption. (Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, §15061(b)(3))

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project will install and operate a microgrid system including a ground-mounted solar PV system and flywheel ESS within a previously disturbed area. The microgrid system installation will be a minor alteration to the Air Medical Services facility within the interior of the Viejas Indian Reservation with no expansion beyond the reservation operation. The project will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances, result in a significant cumulative impact, damage resources within a designated state scenic highway, cause a substantial adverse change to the significance of a historical resource, or be located on a listed hazardous waste site. For these reasons, the project is categorically exempt from CEQA under California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15301, as a minor alteration of existing facility, involving no expansion of the existing use.

The project will install and operate a microgrid system including a solar PV system and flywheel ESS at the Viejas Indian Reservation. The new microgrid system will reduce the Viejas Community's GHG emissions. Additionally, the project will ensure energy is provided to support essential lifesaving operations such as continuous pumping for reservation water wells and provide electricity to the elderly tribal population who require uninterrupted power for medication refrigeration, operation of medical equipment (e.g. ventilators, defibrillator) and temperature control. The installation of the microgrid system will not result in the expansion of the existing use. Vehicle trips associated with the construction of the project will be temporary and the operation of the microgrid system will result in a negligible number of regular operational trips for maintenance. Motorists using Willows Road will view the above-ground components of the microgrid system briefly when passing by the project site. The ground-mounted solar panels will have an antiglare coating that maximizes light absorption and minimizes glare. No significant effects to off-reservation water quality or to air quality would occur as a result of the project. Therefore, the project is exempt under the common-sense exemption listed in California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061(b)(3), as there is no possibility the installation of the microgrid system will have a significant effect on the off-reservation environment.

The section 15301 and 15061(b)(3) exemptions each serve as an independent basis for finding the project exempt.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Bryan Lee **Area code/Telephone/Ext:** 916-327-1414

If filed by applicant:

- 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
- 2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: Bryan Lee **Date:** 8/4/20 **Title:** Mechanical Engineer

- Signed by Responsible Agency
- Signed by Lead Agency
- Signed by Applicant

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Date received for filing at OPR: Aug 04 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE