

Summary Form for Electronic Document Submittal**Form F**

Lead agencies may include 15 hardcopies of this document when submitting electronic copies of Environmental Impact Reports, Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, or Notices of Preparation to the State Clearinghouse (SCH). The SCH also accepts other summaries, such as EIR Executive Summaries prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15123. Please include one copy of the Notice of Completion Form (NOC) with your submission and attach the summary to each electronic copy of the document.

SCH #: 2020100076

Project Title: Arica and Victory Pass Solar Projects

Lead Agency: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Project Location: Approximately 5 miles east of Desert Center in Riverside County

City

County

Project Description (Proposed actions, location, and/or consequences).

See attached project description.

Identify the project's significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect.

See attached identification of impacts.

If applicable, describe any of the project's areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public.

Based on input received from agencies, members of the public, and others, areas of controversy and issues to be resolved related to the Project include the following:

Concerns regarding: visual impacts, including impacts to the night sky; impacts to cultural resources and ongoing consultation with California Native American tribes under "Assembly Bill 52" and CDFW's Tribal Communication and Consultation Policy; impacts due to valley fever; impacts to biological resources (special-status plant and animal species; desert tortoise connectivity; birds, especially due to mortality potentially caused by the avian "lake effect"; microphyll woodland, due to loss of the sensitive habitat; sand transport corridor and Mojave fringe-toed lizard habitat); the need for compensatory mitigation to reduce impacts to biological resources; impacts due to use of Colorado River water and impacts to the groundwater basin; impacts due to dust and soil erodibility; loss of carbon sequestration; need for better greenhouse gas emissions calculation due to battery storage energy use; fire prevention best management practices; alternatives, including an alternative that fully meets the BLM Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan Conservation Management Actions and an off-site alternative.

Provide a list of the responsible or trustee agencies for the project.

Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Caltrans District 8
State Water Resources Control Board
South Coast Air Quality Management District

SCH Summary Form Attachment

Project Description (Proposed actions, location, and/or consequences).

Arica Solar LLC and Victory Pass I LLC (Applicants) have applied for Incidental Take Permits (ITP) for the Mojave desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) under the California Endangered Species Act and submitted Lake and Streambed Agreement (LSA) notifications to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as part of a broader proposal to construct the Projects. The Projects propose utility-scale solar photovoltaic electrical generating and storage facilities and associated infrastructure to generate and deliver renewable electricity to the statewide electricity transmission grid. The Arica Project would generate 265 megawatts (MW) and the Victory Pass Project would generate 200 MW of energy. Each Project would include up to 200 MW of battery storage. The total potential ground disturbance would be 2,724 acres overall (1,355 acres for the Arica site, 1,310 acres for the Victory Pass site, approximately 52 additional acres along the shared gen-tie corridor, and less than 7 acres for access roads). The ITP and LSA, if issued by CDFW subject to certain conditions, would remain in effect for 5 years. Construction of the proposed Projects would take approximately 18 months for Arica and 16 months for Victory Pass from the start of construction to completion of the Projects. The Projects are anticipated to start construction at the same time, so the bulk of the construction for each Project would overlap. During construction, minimal grading would occur, and temporary workspaces and staging areas would be developed. Access roads may be graded and widened and an access road, if not existing, would be developed to access the gen-tie line facilities. Upon completion of construction, temporary disturbance areas would be restored.

Identify the project's significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect.

Biological resources could be potentially affected by the Projects; however, all potential impacts would be less than significant through incorporation of Applicant Proposed Measures (APM) BIO-1 to APM BIO-25 into the Projects and implementation of Mitigation Measures (MM) BIO-1 to MM BIO-13. Significant unavoidable impacts would remain following implementation of APMs for the following resources areas:

- Aesthetics. Incorporation of APM AES-1 to APM AES-4 would reduce visual impacts from Interstate (I) 10 and State Route (SR) 177; however, even with incorporation of these APMs, there would be significant cumulatively considerable visual impacts when viewed by sensitive viewing populations along I-10 and SR-177, from nearby residences, and in the surrounding mountains and wilderness. Therefore, these measures would not be sufficient to reduce the impacts to a level that would be less than significant.
- Air Quality: Emissions during the construction phase would include criteria air pollutants that could exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors; even with incorporation of APM AIR-1 to APM AIR-3, this would represent a cumulatively considerable impact.
- Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs): Incorporation of APM TCR-1 to APM TCR-4, APM CUL-9, and Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure (PFMM) TCR-1 to PFMM TCR-4 is expected to avoid or lessen the Projects' direct and indirect effects on the Cahuilla Traditional Use Area Tribal Cultural Landscape as a TCR and individual TCRs to some extent during all phases of the Projects, yet those effects are considered, at this time by CDFW as CEQA lead agency, to be significant and unavoidable under CEQA.

- Cultural Resources: The Projects' incremental contribution to the prehistoric archaeological resource value and tribal cultural landscape cumulative effects to the Prehistoric Trails Network Cultural Landscape/Cahuilla Traditional Use Tribal Cultural Landscape, in combination with other past, present, and probable future projects, would be cumulatively considerable and significant.

No other potentially feasible MMs were identified to further avoid or substantially lessen significant and unavoidable impacts to aesthetics, air quality, TCRs, and cumulative cultural resources. The full text of the APMs and MMs is included in the Environmental Impact Report.