

**Imperial County
Planning & Development Services Department
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT EIR FOR THE VEGA SES 2, 3, & 5 SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS**

DECEMBER 14, 2022

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department, as lead agency, is circulating for public review a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed VEGA SES 2, 3, & 5 Solar Energy Project EIR.

PROJECT TITLE: Conditional Use Permits (CUP) # 20-0021, 20-0022, 20-0023, 22-0025, and 22-0026; Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the VEGA SES 2, 3 & 5 Solar Energy Project (SCH # 2021050013).

PROJECT LOCATION: The project area is located on approximately 1,963 acres of privately owned land in the unincorporated area of Imperial County, CA. The project area is located approximately 5.67 miles southeast of the unincorporated community of Niland between the unincorporated communities of Iris and Slab City. The Coachella and East Highline Canals and the Union Pacific Railway transect the project area. The project area is located entirely within the County’s Renewable Energy Overlay Zone. The following table identifies the Assessor Parcel Numbers associated with the VEGA SES 2, 3, and 5 sites with their respective acreage.

Project	APN	Acreage
VEGA SES 2 (CUP 20-0021)	025-010-006 (partial)	410
	025-260-011 (partial)	288
	025-270-023	625
	Subtotal	1,323
VEGA SES 3 (CUP 20-0022)	025-010-006 (partial)	230
	Subtotal	230
VEGA SES 5 (CUP 20-0023)	025-260-011 (partial)	160
	025-260-019	90
	025-260-022	160
	Subtotal	410
Total Gross Acres		1,963

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Collectively, the proposed projects involve the construction of up to 350 megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) photovoltaic (PV) solar energy facility with an integrated 350 MW battery storage system (not to exceed 700 MW). The projects propose to utilize either thin film or crystalline solar PV technology modules mounted either on fixed frames or horizontal single-axis tracker systems. The projects would include electronic/electrical equipment, on-site substations, interconnection facilities, access roads and fencing. The electrical energy produced by the projects would be conducted through the projects’ interconnection facilities to the following:

- VEGA SES 2 – Imperial Irrigation District’s (IID) KN/KS Line
- VEGA SES 3 - IID 161 kilovolt (kV) “F” Transmission Line
- VEGA SES 5 - IID 92 kV Midway Substation

Implementation of the projects require the following approvals:

- **Conditional Use Permits:** The project sites are located entirely within the County's Renewable Energy Overlay Zone with a General Plan Designation of Recreation/Open Space and Agriculture. The current zoning for the project parcels are General Agriculture with a Renewable Energy Zone Overlay (A-2-RE), Heavy Agriculture with a Renewable Energy Zone Overlay (A-3-RE), and Open Space/Preservation with a Renewable Energy Zone Overlay (S-2 RE). Implementation of the projects would require the approval of CUPs by the County to allow for the construction and operation of the proposed solar energy facilities with an integrated battery storage system.
- **Conditional Use Permits – Groundwater Wells:** Pursuant to Title 9 Division 21: Water Well Regulations, §92102.00, the Applicant will be required to obtain a CUP for each proposed on-site groundwater well.
- **Water Supply Assessment:** Implementation of the projects require the approval of Water Supply Assessments (WSA).

ANTICIPATED SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS: The EIR will analyze potential impacts associated with the following: Aesthetics; Agricultural Resources; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Geology/Soils; Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology/Water Quality; Land Use/Planning; Noise; Transportation; Tribal Cultural Resources; Utilities and Service Systems including water supply; Cumulative Impacts; and, Growth-Inducing Impacts

COMMENTS REQUESTED: Written comments regarding the Draft EIR should be directed to David Black, Planner IV, Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department, 801 Main Street, El Centro, CA 92243 and must be received **no later than February 2, 2023** (public review period starts on December 14, 2022). The Draft EIR and all documents incorporated by reference are available at the Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department, 801 Main Street, El Centro, CA 92243.

The Final EIR will address and incorporate public input and comments for the consideration by the Imperial County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors at future public meetings.

For environmental review information for this project, please contact David Black at (442) 265-1736.

This notice published in the Imperial Valley Press on December 11, 2022.