

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE BRAWLEY SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY PROJECT

December 27, 2021

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 Brawley Solar Energy Facility Project.

Project Title: Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Brawley Solar Energy Facility Project (State Clearinghouse [SCH] # 2021070424).

Project Location: The project site is located on approximately 227 acres of privately-owned land (Assessor Parcel Nos. [APN] 037-140-006, -020, -021, -022, and -023) in the unincorporated area of Imperial County, CA. The project site is south of Baughman Road, west of North (N) Best Avenue, and north of Andre Road. The Union Pacific Railway transects the project site. The City of Brawley Wastewater Treatment Plant is located along the western edge of the project site.

The gen-tie line would originate from the southern edge of the project site and then head west along Andre Road to interconnect to the Imperial Irrigation District's (IID) existing North Brawley Geothermal Power Plant substation, located at Hovley Road and Andre Road. The gen-tie line route would be approximately 1.8 miles.

Project Description: The project applicant, ORNI 30, LLC, proposes to construct and operate a 40 megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) solar facility with an integrated 40 MW battery energy storage system (BESS) (not to exceed 80 MW) on approximately 227 acres of privately-owned land. The proposed project would be comprised of bifacial solar PV arrays panels, an on-site substation, BESS, fiberoptic line or microwave tower, inverters, transformers, underground electrical cables and access roads. The proposed project would connect to the existing North Brawley Geothermal Power Plant substation located southwest of the project site via an approximately 1.8-mile long aboveground 92 kilovolt generation tie line.

The County Land Use Ordinance, Division 17, includes the Renewable Energy (RE) Overlay Zone, which authorizes the development and operation of renewable energy projects with an approved conditional use permit (CUP). CUP applications proposed for specific renewable energy projects not located in the RE Overlay Zone would not be allowed without an amendment to the RE Overlay Zone. The northern portion of the project site (APNs 037-140-020 and 037-140-021) is located within the Geothermal Overlay Zone. However, the entire project site (APNs 037-140-006, -020, -021, -022, and -023) is located outside of the RE Overlay Zone.

Implementation of the project requires an amendment to the County's General Plan Renewable Energy and Transmission Element, Zone Change, and approval of a CUP, as described below:

- **General Plan Amendment:** The applicant is requesting a General Plan Amendment to include/classify all five project parcels (Assessor Parcel Nos. [APN] 037-140-006, -020, -021, -022, and -023) into the RE Overlay Zone. No change in the underlying General Plan land use (Agriculture) is proposed.
- **Zone Change:** The entire project site is currently zoned General Agricultural with a Geothermal Overlay (A-2-G). The applicant is requesting a Zone Change to include/classify all five project parcels into the Renewable Energy/Geothermal (REG) Overlay Zone (A-2-REG).
- **Conditional Use Permit:** Implementation of the project would require the approval of a CUP by the County to allow for the construction and operation of the proposed solar energy facility with an integrated BESS on land zoned General Agricultural with a REG Overlay Zone (A-2-REG).
- **Water Supply Assessment:** Implementation of the project would require the approval of the Water Supply Assessment.

Probable Environmental Effects: Aesthetics; Agricultural Resources; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Cumulative Impacts; Geology and Soils; Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Climate Change; Growth-inducing Impacts; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology/Water Quality; Land Use and Planning; Public Services; Transportation; Tribal Cultural Resources; and Utilities and Service Systems including water supply.

Availability: The Draft EIR can be reviewed by appointment at the following location: Imperial County Planning and Development Services Department, 801 Main Street, El Centro, CA 92243. To make an appointment please contact David Black at (442) 265-1736. The document can be reviewed on-line at: www.icpds.com.

Comments: 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 10, 2022** (public review period is from December 27, 2021 through February 10, 2022). A Final EIR incorporating public input will be prepared for consideration by the Imperial County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors at a future public meeting. For environmental review information for this project, please contact David Black at (442) 265-1736.

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