

## California Department of Transportation

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

**AUG 03 2022**

August 3, 2022

### STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

11-IMP-86  
PM 31.288

VEGA SES 6 Solar and Battery Storage Project  
NOP of a DEIR/SCH#2022070146

Mr. David Black  
Planner IV  
Imperial County, Planning and Development Services Department  
801 Main Street  
El Centro, CA 92243

Dear Mr. Black:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the VEGA SES 6 Solar and Battery Storage Project (SCH#2022070146) located near State Route 86 (SR-86). The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. The Local Development Review (LDR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with our mission and state planning priorities.

Caltrans has the following comments:

#### Traffic Impact Study

- A Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) based Traffic Impact Study (TIS) should be provided for this project. Please use the Governor's Office of Planning and Research Guidance to identify VMT related impacts.<sup>1</sup> Or please provide justification on VMT Exemption.
- The TIS may also need to identify the proposed project's near-term and long-term safety or operational issues, on or adjacent to any existing or proposed State facilities.

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<sup>1</sup> California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) December 2018. "Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA." <https://opr.ca.gov/ceqa/sb-743/>

## **Hauling**

Caltrans has discretionary authority with respect to highways under its jurisdiction and may, upon application and if good cause appears, issue a special permit to operate or move a vehicle or combination of vehicles or special mobile equipment of a size or weight of vehicle or load exceeding the maximum limitations specified in the California Vehicle Code. The Caltrans Transportation Permits Issuance Branch is responsible for the issuance of these special transportation permits for oversize/overweight vehicles on the State Highway network. Additional information is provided online at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/trafficops/permits/index.html>

## **Environmental**

Caltrans welcomes the opportunity to be a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as we have some discretionary authority of a portion of the project that is in Caltrans' Right-of-Way (R/W) through the form of an encroachment permit process. We look forward to the coordination of our efforts to ensure that Caltrans can adopt the alternative and/or mitigation measure for our R/W. We would appreciate meeting with you to discuss the elements of the EIR that Caltrans will use for our subsequent environmental compliance.

An encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans' R/W prior to construction. As part of the encroachment permit process, the applicant must provide approved final environmental documents for this project, corresponding technical studies, and necessary regulatory and resource agency permits. Specifically, CEQA determination or exemption. The supporting documents must address all environmental impacts within the Caltrans' R/W and address any impacts from avoidance and/or mitigation measures.

We recommend that this project specifically identifies and assesses potential impacts caused by the project or impacts from mitigation efforts that occur within Caltrans' R/W that includes impacts to the natural environment, infrastructure including but not limited to highways, roadways, structures, intelligent transportation systems elements, on-ramps and off-ramps, and appurtenant features including but not limited to lighting, signage, drainage, guardrail, slopes, and landscaping. Caltrans is interested in any additional mitigation measures identified for the project's draft Environmental Document.

## **Mitigation**

Caltrans endeavors that any direct and cumulative impacts to the State Highway network be eliminated or reduced to a level of insignificance pursuant to the CEQA and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) standards.

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Mitigation measures to State facilities should be included in TIS/TIA. Mitigation identified in the traffic study, subsequent environmental documents, and mitigation monitoring reports, should be coordinated with Caltrans to identify, and implement the appropriate mitigation. This includes the actual implementation and collection of any "fair share" monies, as well as the appropriate timing of the mitigation. Mitigation improvements should be compatible with Caltrans concepts.

### **Right-of-Way**

- Any work performed within Caltrans' R/W will require discretionary review and approval by Caltrans and an encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans' R/W prior to construction.

Additional information regarding encroachment permits may be obtained by contacting the Caltrans Permits Office at (619) 688-6158 or emailing [D11.Permits@dot.ca.gov](mailto:D11.Permits@dot.ca.gov) or by visiting the website at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep>. Early coordination with Caltrans is strongly advised for all encroachment permits.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Charlie Lecourtois, LDR Coordinator, at (619) 985-4766 or by e-mail sent to [Charlie.Lecourtois@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Charlie.Lecourtois@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

*Maurice A. Eaton*

MAURICE EATON  
Branch Chief  
Local Development Review