

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk
County of: Sonoma

From: (Public Agency): Valley of the Moon Water District
P.O. Box 280

El Verano, CA 95433-0280

(Address)

Project Title: Headquarters Solar Panel Installation Project

Project Applicant: Valley of the Moon Water District

Project Location - Specific:
19039 Bay Street, El Verano, Sonoma County

Project Location - City: N/A Project Location - County: Sonoma

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:
The proposed project involves the installation of solar panels and ancillary facilities on the roofs of buildings on the VOMWD headquarters property.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Valley of the Moon Water District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Valley of the Moon Water District

- Exempt Status: (check one):
- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- [X] Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 15301
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

Reasons why project is exempt:
Project involves minor alterations to existing facilities. See attached Environmental Evaluation for more detail.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Matt Fullner Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 707-996-1037

- 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: [Signature] Date: 7/18/2022 Title: General Manager

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Date Received for filing at OPR:
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.



Valley of the Moon Water District Solar Panel Installation Project Environmental Evaluation for Class 1 Categorical Exemption

OVERVIEW

The Valley of the Moon Water District (VOMWD) is a public agency that provides high-quality drinking water to 23,750 people in a 12 square-mile area in the Sonoma Valley, near to the City of Sonoma.

The Valley of the Moon Water District (District) intends to install a solar panel array on one or more of the following existing buildings (Figure 1):

- Shop
- Office
- Car Port

In addition, the District intends to begin installing Electric Vehicle (EV) plugs at the shop and office connected to the solar array.

NEED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project has two main purposes, disaster preparedness and reducing of the District's carbon footprint, both described in more detail below.

Disaster Preparedness – In the event of a fire, earthquake or other natural disaster, it may be difficult to receive deliveries of fuel needed for the operation of VOMWD pumps and vehicles for a time. This can hinder operations and limit the VOMWD's ability to respond to customer needs. The addition of solar power generation and EVs/EV plugs will reduce the District's reliance on those deliveries and allow the District to continue operating for longer periods of time between fuel deliveries. It will also conserve fuel for power generators at water sources and pumping stations, further hardening the District's ability to continue supplying water in an emergency.

Reducing the District's Carbon Footprint – The VOMWD 2022-2023 Strategic Plan, cites "Climate change and the need for renewable energy sources" as an import issue for VOMWD to address. The installation of the solar panels and



associated facilities will begin addressing that need. The facility should be large enough to power the Shop and Office facilities under normal operations and may even produce enough power to offset some of the District's other power needs at remote sites, since any additional power will be able to feed back into the power grid.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Some details regarding the proposed project are not yet available. After completing California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance, VOMWD will issue a Request for Proposals and solicit bids for completing the work. At that time, additional detail will be available. However, the following information is currently available.

Size

Based on current VOMWD electricity usage, a preliminary assessment was conducted which estimated that approximately 27.7 kilo-watts of power would need to be installed to meet shop and office demands. The number of panels ultimately installed will depend on the cost of installation and the space available. The total power generation capability could be greater or less than the estimated 27.7 kilo-watts.

Location

VOMWD has identified three potential locations for the installation of solar panels at its headquarters at 19039 Bay Street, in Sonoma County. As shown in Figure 1, the three potential locations are the headquarters building (south-facing portion of sloped roof), the carport (flat roof), and the shop building (flat roof). It is expected that first priority for installation would be the shop building.

Facilities

VOMWD intends to begin by installing solar panels and related improvements to generate electricity for its facilities and operations. Depending on finances available and a cost/benefit analysis, VOMWD may also install charging stations fed by the solar panels to power VOMWD vehicles. This would necessarily involve the replacement of gasoline-powered vehicles in the VOMWD fleet with plug-in electric vehicles.

Project Construction

Project construction would involve the installation of the solar panels and ancillary facilities to convert the power from direct current to alternating current,



to connect the panels to the VOMWD electrical system, and to connect the panels to the PG&E electrical system.

Project Operations

VOMWD intends to work with PG&E to negotiate an interconnection agreement to allow VOMWD to sell power to PG&E during periods when the panels generate more electricity than needed for VOMWD operations.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The VOMWD headquarters is located on Bay Street in Sonoma. The site itself is fully developed with VOMWD structures and facilities. Other than landscaped areas, the site is covered in impermeable surfaces. The headquarters is surrounded by residential and commercial uses.

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

1. Does the project require obtaining an environmental permit that could result in physical changes to the environment?

No, the proposed project would not require obtaining any other environmental permits.

2. Is the project visible from an official State Scenic Highway?

The only roadway listed as a State Scenic Highway in the vicinity of the proposed projects is SR 12, which is listed as an “Eligible” facility (Caltrans 2022). The proposed project cannot be seen from SR 12, due to distance (more than ½ mile) and the presence of intervening structures and vegetation.

3. Is the project located on a site included on any list compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5 (Cortese List)?

The VOMWD headquarters is not listed on the Cortese List as containing a hazardous waste site, per Government Code § 65962.5 (CalEPA 2022) nor in the EnviroStor database (DTSC 2022).



4. Would the project result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource?

The VOMWD shop building was constructed in 1983 and the office building was constructed in 1985 and are not considered historical resources. There is no evidence of other historic resources on the property, and all construction would be within the already disturbed portions of the site.

5. Is there evidence of the potential for the project to contribute to a significant cumulative impact?

There is no evidence that the proposed project would contribute to a significant cumulative environmental impact.

6. Is there evidence of a reasonable possibility of a significant environmental impact due to unusual circumstances?

There is no evidence that either the project site or the surrounding areas present any unusual circumstances. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a significant environmental impact due to unusual circumstances.

Conclusion

Based on information contained in the administrative record, including the answers provided to Questions 1-6 above, VOMWD finds that the project is eligible for a Class 1 Categorical Exemption covering minor alterations to existing facilities (Section 15301. VOMWD further finds that the project fits within the parameters established in CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, and none of the exceptions to this exemption defined in Section 15300.2 apply.

References

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2022. Scenic Highways website. Accessed by Craig Stevens on June 20, 2022 at: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways>.



California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA). 2022. Cortese List Data Resources website. Accessed by Craig Stevens on July 18, 2022 at: <https://calepa.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/CorteseList/>.

Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). 2022. Envirostor website. Accessed by Craig Stevens on July 18, 2022 at: <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>.



Map Date: 07/13/2022

Figure 1: Location of Proposed Project Facilities
Solar Panel and EV Plug Installation
Valley of the Moon Water District