

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND
PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING FOR THE
KEY ENERGY STORAGE PROJECT**

TO: Responsible and Trustee Agencies, other interested agencies, and members of the public

FROM: County of Fresno, Department of Public Works and Planning
Development Services and Capital Projects Division
2220 Tulare Street, Sixth Floor
Fresno, CA 93721

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Key Energy Storage Project

Date: July 25, 2022

Action: The County of Fresno (County) will be the Lead Agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and will be responsible for preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines for the Key Energy Storage Project.

Project Title: Key Energy Storage Project, Unclassified Conditional Use Permit Application No. 3734 & EIR No. 8189

Project Applicant: Key Energy Storage, LLC

Project Location and Summary:

The Applicant proposes to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission an energy storage facility on approximately 318-acres of private land comprised of APNs 085-040-58S, 085-040-36S, and 085-040-37S in western Fresno County. The site is located 4 miles southwest of the City of Huron, 0.4 mile east of Interstate 5 (I-5), immediately south of W. Jayne Avenue, between I-5 and South Lassen Avenue (State Route 269), and adjacent to PG&E's existing Gates Substation. See Figure 1, *Project Site*.

The project could store 3 gigawatts of energy or more in modular enclosures. The project would consist of a lithium ion, iron-flow, or other similar storage technology. A lithium-ion battery storage system would be comprised of battery cells assembled in a series of modules. An iron flow battery storage system would use containerized power conversion units combined with large volume storage tanks containing an electrolyte solution used to store and later discharge electrical energy. The electrolyte solution would consist primarily of water and include additives such as dissolved iron and salt. On-site project support facilities would include a collector substation, inverters with connection lines, heating ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) units, transformers, fencing, access roads, a supervisory control and data acquisition system, and security lighting. Diesel generators may be needed for substation purposes or to power water pumps for the existing well on parcel 085-040-58S. The project also includes an approximately 0.3-mile long, 500-kilovolt (kV) overhead generation tie line that would extend north to the Gates Substation. This line would be installed on new steel or concrete poles, each up to 150 feet tall and spaced at approximately 500-foot intervals. Project buildout would occur in four phases.

A project description, maps, and figures are available for review at the following locations:

- Fresno County Public Works and Planning Department, 2220 Tulare Street, Suite A Street Level, Fresno, CA 93721
- Fresno County website: www.co.fresno.ca.us/EIR

Written Comments:

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) solicits comments from Responsible and Trustee Agencies and other public agencies so that project-related concerns relevant to each agency’s statutory responsibilities can be addressed in the EIR. This NOP also solicits input from other interested parties, including Tribes and members of the public. The County requests that any potential Responsible or Trustee Agencies responding to this NOP reply in a manner consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b), which allows for submittal of any comments in response to this notice no later than 30 days after receipt of the NOP. Comments in response to this NOP will be accepted through Wednesday, August 24,2022.

Please send written scoping input to:

Attn: Jeremy Shaw
Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning
Development Services and Capital Projects Division
2220 Tulare Street, Sixth Floor
Fresno, CA 93721
Phone: (559) 600-4207 Fax: (559) 600-4200
Email: jshaw@FresnoCountyCA.gov

Please reference EIR 8189, Key Energy Storage Project. Include your name, address, and phone number and/or email address so that we may contact you for clarification, if necessary.

Signature: Jeremy Shaw Date: 7/21/2022

Public Scoping Meeting:

CEQA encourages public input throughout the planning process. Consistent with CEQA and CEQA Guidelines Section 15083, oral and written comments may be presented at a scoping meeting where the County will solicit input on the scope and content of the EIR, including environmental impacts of concern and mitigation measures or alternatives that should be considered. The scoping meeting will be held online for 30 minutes or until all who wish to speak have had an opportunity to do so. Scoping meeting details are as follows:

- Date: Tuesday, August 9, 2022
- Time: 2:30 p.m.
- If joining from a computer: <https://bit.ly/KeyEnergyScopingMeeting> (Webinar ID: 861 6426 3856)
- If joining by phone: (888) 788-0099

Physical Setting:

The project site is designated as Prime Farmland and subject to Williamson Act contracts. It currently is in agricultural production (a citrus orchard on APN 085-040-58S) and fallow (085-040-36S and 085-040-37S). Dirt access roads traverse the eastern, western, and southern site boundaries and two cross east-west through the site. An existing well is located on APN 085-040-58S. An overhead generation tie line exists along the western boundary; high voltage transmission lines traverse north-south along the eastern boundary. Surrounding land uses include agricultural uses, two substations, and solar energy generation facilities.



SOURCE: USGS 24k Topo Quad - Guljarral Hills

NextEra - Key Energy Storage Project

Figure 1
Project Site



Land Use Designation:

The project site is designated for Agriculture in the County General Plan and zoned AE-40 (Exclusive Agricultural, 40-acre minimum parcel size) pursuant to the County’s Zoning Map. The AE District is intended to be an exclusive district for agriculture and for those uses which are necessary and an integral part of the agricultural operation. This district is intended to protect the general welfare of the agricultural community from encroachments of non-related agricultural uses which by their nature, would be injurious to the physical and economic well-being of the agricultural district.

County Zoning Ordinance Section 816.2, which relates to the AE Zone District, permits electric transmission substations and electric distribution stations subject to a Director Review and Approval (DRA), which is a form

of discretionary review; however, the proposed energy storage facility is not an electrical substation or electrical distribution station, and thus not an allowed use with a DRA, nor is it expressly allowed with a classified conditional use permit under Section 816.3; therefore, it is being processed as an Unclassified Conditional Use Permit application, as provided for under Section 853.B.14.

Alternatives to be Analyzed in the EIR:

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, the Draft EIR will assess a range of alternatives to the Project, including a No Project Alternative and one or more other alternatives that would attain most of the basic objectives of the Project while avoiding or reducing any of its significant environmental effects. Potential alternatives will be identified during the scoping process.

Potential Environmental Impacts:

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d), the County has determined that this Project could result in one or more significant impacts on the physical environment, thereby necessitating the preparation of an EIR, and so has not prepared an Initial Study. The EIR will analyze the environmental issues identified in the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Environmental Checklist (listed below) after establishing the environmental setting, or baseline, for the analysis. The EIR will identify potential significant direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the Project and alternatives related to:

- Aesthetic quality and views, particularly in the vicinity of existing communities;
- Agriculture and forestry resources, including the use of property currently subject to Williamson Act contracts to an energy storage use for the duration of the permit term;
- Air quality and noise in the vicinity of sensitive receptors, particularly from equipment;
- The intersection of air quality, energy use, transportation, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions;
- Biological resources, including species and habitats, based on database queries, field surveys, and agency consultations, if required;
- Cultural and tribal cultural resources that could be disturbed during construction, based on record searches, field surveys, and input that may be received from California Native American Tribes;
- Geology and soils, paleontological resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, and related considerations and constraints;
- The Project's relationship to land use and planning, as well as lands subject to special resources management activities, such as mineral resources and recreation;
- Population and housing, public services, and utilities and service systems;
- Wildfire, including the potential to exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose people to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire; and
- Growth inducement, particularly in relation to existing, adopted development plans for Fresno County.