

## California Department of Transportation

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July 25, 2024

11-IMP-111  
PM 46.39  
NorthStar 1 Solar  
GPA #23-0001, ZC #23-0001  
CUP #23-0005, CUP #23-0006, IS #23-0006  
MND/SCH# 2024060951

Mr. Gerardo Quero  
Planner II  
County of Imperial  
Planning and Development Services  
801 Main Street  
El Centro, CA 92243

Dear Mr. Quero:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the review process for the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), General Plan Amendment (GPA), Zone Change (ZC), Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and Initial Study (IS) for the NorthStar 1 Solar Project located near State Route 111 (SR-111) in the Niland area. 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.

Safety is one of Caltrans' strategic goals. Caltrans strives to make the year 2050 the first year without a single death or serious injury on California's roads. We are striving for more equitable outcomes for the transportation network's diverse users. To achieve these ambitious goals, we will pursue meaningful collaboration with our partners. We encourage the implementation of new technologies, innovations, and best practices that will enhance the safety on the transportation network. These pursuits are both ambitious and urgent, and their accomplishment involves a focused departure from the status quo as we continue to institutionalize safety in all our work.

Caltrans is committed to prioritizing projects that are equitable and provide meaningful benefits to historically underserved communities, to ultimately improve transportation accessibility and quality of life for people in the communities we serve. We look forward to working with the County of Imperial in areas where the County and Caltrans have joint jurisdiction to improve the transportation network and connections between various modes of travel, with the goal of improving the experience of those who use the transportation system.

Caltrans has the following comments:

### **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. Please indicate our status as a Responsible Agency for the Final Environmental Document. 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 Environmental Document 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 that include the work in Caltrans' R/W, 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 (highways/roadways/on- and off-ramps) and appurtenant features (lighting/signs/guardrail/slopes). Caltrans is interested in the analysis for any work identified in Caltrans R/W and any additional mitigation measures identified for the Final Environmental Document.

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

Per Business and Profession Code 8771, perpetuation of survey monuments by a licensed land surveyor is required, if they are being destroyed by any construction.

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.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mark McCumsey, LDR Coordinator, at (619) 985-4957 or by e-mail sent to [Mark.McCumsey@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Mark.McCumsey@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

*Kimberly D. Dodson*

KIMBERLY D. DODSON, GISP  
Branch Chief  
Local Development Review