

Summary Form for Electronic Document Submittal

Form F

Lead agencies may include 15 hardcopies of this document when submitting electronic copies of Environmental Impact Reports, Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, or Notices of Preparation to the State Clearinghouse (SCH). The SCH also accepts other summaries, such as EIR Executive Summaries prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15123. Please include one copy of the Notice of Completion Form (NOC) with your submission and attach the summary to each electronic copy of the document.

SCH #: 2018031027

Project Title: Crimson Solar Project

Lead Agency: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Project Location: Blythe, Riverside County
City *County*

Project Description (Proposed actions, location, and/or consequences).

This Draft Environmental Impact Statement(EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Draft Plan Amendment (PA) addresses a possible United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan of 1980, as amended; a possible decision to issue a right-of-way (ROW) grant for construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar electricity generation facility on BLM-administered public land; and possible CDFW approval of a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement and issuance of an Incidental Take Permit. The Draft EIS/EIR/PA analyzes four alternatives. Alternative A, the Applicant's Proposed Alternative and the proposed Project under CEQA, would develop a 350 MW solar photovoltaic (PV) energy plant and related facilities on approximately 2,500 acres of BLM-administered public lands in unincorporated Riverside County, California. Alternative B would modify Alternative A to include three Design Elements that minimize grading during site preparation and maintain more of the native vegetation (DE-1), avoid or limit trenching by placing electrical wiring aboveground (DE-2), and place transformer inverter and energy storage systems on elevated support structures (DE-3). Alternative C would reduce the size of the project by approximately 300 acres, reducing ground disturbance within key areas containing sensitive vegetation, sand dune habitat, and cultural resources. Alternative D is the No Action/No Project alternative where BLM would not amend the CDCA or grant the ROW, and the CDFW would not issue a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement or Incidental Take Permit for the Project

Identify the project's significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect.

The Project would have significant or potentially significant impacts on or related to biological resources, geology and soil resources, hazards and hazardous materials, paleontological resources, recreation and public access, utilities and public services, visual resources, and water resources that could be reduced to less-than-significant levels through implementation of the over 50 mitigation measures recommended in the Draft EIS/EIR/PA that would avoid, minimize, or mitigate for these impacts. With respect to biological resources, potentially significant impacts could occur such as loss of habitat, sensitive plants, and/or species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; increased spread of invasive plants; however, all impacts on biological resources also would be reduced to less than significant through avoidance and minimization measures such as preconstruction surveys, clearance, delineating work areas, exclusion fencing, preventing spills and fires, and enforcement of measures by biological monitors; and compensatory mitigation measures to replace or rehabilitate habitat when impacts cannot be avoided on the Project site.

The Project would have significant and unavoidable impacts on air quality and on cultural resources and tribal cultural resources. For air quality, mitigation measures have been proposed that would substantially reduce air pollutant emissions but could not reduce the impacts of construction- and decommissioning-related annual mitigated emissions of PM10 and daily mitigated emissions of NOx and PM10 to below thresholds indicating cumulatively considerable contributions to significant cumulative impacts. For cultural resources and tribal cultural resources, Project-level and cumulative impacts of construction, operation, and decommissioning-related ground disturbance on the 23 historical resources determined significant by CDFW, as well as historical resources, unique archaeological resources, human remains, and tribal cultural resources that could be encountered, may remain significant after all feasible mitigation is implemented.

If applicable, describe any of the project's areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public.

Comments were received during the scoping process for the Project. The scoping process is described and the public input received during scoping is provided in Appendix D, Notice of Intent, Notice of Preparation, Scoping Report. Based on input received from agencies, members of the public and others, areas of controversy related to the Project include:

Air Resources: Concerns related to potential air quality impacts as compared to national, state and local ambient air quality standards.

Biological Resources: Concerns related to the disturbance of native plant and wildlife habitats. Specific areas of controversy relating to biological resources relate to wildlife connectivity, sensitive plant communities, special-status species, and mitigation measures.

Cultural Resources: Concerns related to damage to and loss of cultural and historic artifacts and other resources; including Indian sacred sites.

Environmental Justice: Concerns related to whether low-income, minority or tribal populations that may disproportionately affected exist within the geographic scope of the Project.

Hazards and Public Safety: Concerns related to the existing presence of hazardous materials and use and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes.

Lands and Realty: Concerns related to the appropriate land use of the proposed Project site and the Project's consistency with local, state, and federal plans.

Recreation and Public Access: Concerns related to the use of the Project site for the proposed solar facility, given that the Project area has outstanding opportunities for recreation.

Transportation: Concerns regarding Project consistency with applicable plans as well as impacts related to construction traffic.

Utilities and Public Services: Concerns regarding the quantity of construction and demolition waste the Project could generate and how this waste would be disposed.

Visual Resources: Concerns related to the effects of night lighting and industrial facilities on the visual landscape surrounding the Project site and degradation of the visitor experience in the general area.

Water Resources: Concerns related generally to surface water and groundwater use and associated effects.

Statement of Purpose and Need: Concerns related to how the Purpose and Need of the Project is stated.

Provide a list of the responsible or trustee agencies for the project.

Colorado River Water Quality Control Board
State Water Resources Control Board
Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD)
California Office of Historic Preservation
Caltrans District 8
Colorado River Board of California
Native American Heritage Commission