



County of Fresno

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PLANNING
STEVEN E. WHITE, DIRECTOR

Planning Commission Staff Report Agenda Item No. 2 June 4, 2026

SUBJECT: **Unclassified Conditional Use Permit Application No. 3630, Heartland Solar Project and associated Environmental Impact Report No. 7564 (State Clearinghouse No.2022100609).**

Allow the construction and operation of the Heartland Solar Project. The project proposes to construct, operate, maintain and provide for the future decommissioning of photovoltaic (PV) solar energy generation and battery energy storage system facilities. Proposed facilities would generate approximately 300 megawatts alternating current (MWAC) of solar PV energy and have capacity to store up to 300 MW of energy on approximately 2,362 acres of private land in western Fresno County. The facilities would interconnect to the regional electrical grid via an electrical generation-tie (gen-tie) line between the solar facility and the existing Tranquility Switching Station, which is located approximately 1.25 miles south of the solar and energy storage facility site. The Tranquility Switching Station is owned and operated by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). PG&E also would conduct other necessary infrastructure work to support interconnection of the Heartland Solar Project. The project site is in the AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District.

LOCATION: The project area is located approximately 6 miles southwest of the City of Mendota, 10 miles east of Interstate 5 (I-5), to the east of S. San Bernardino and Los Angeles avenues, south of W. American Avenue, west of State Route (SR) 33 (also called S. Derrick Avenue), 0.5 mile north of W. Manning Avenue, and 1.25 miles north of PG&E's Tranquility Switching Station. The Tranquillity Switching Station is located near the northeast corner of the intersection of W. Dinuba Avenue and S. Ohio Avenue, within the boundaries of the Tranquillity Solar Generating Facility. (APNs: 028-140-38, 028-140-41, 028-170-77, 028-060-84, 028-160-23, 028-060-77, 028-101-85, 028-101-81, 028-101-82) (Sup. Dist. 1)

OWNERS: **Westlands Water District, Luna Valley Land Holdings LLC, PG&E, and RE Tranquillity Landco LLC.**

APPLICANT: **Heartland Solar 1, LLC**

STAFF CONTACT: **Alyce Alvarez, Planner**
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RECOMMENDATION:

1. Move to:
 - Determine that the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) was presented to, reviewed and considered by the Planning Commission; and
 - Determine the certification of the FEIR reflects the Planning Commission's independent judgement; and
 - Adopt the CEQA Findings of Fact and certify that the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) No. 7564 prepared for the Heartland Solar Project processed under Unclassified Conditional Use Permit No. 3630, as complete and adequate in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA);
2. Move to determine the required Findings can be made as discussed in the staff report, and move to approve Unclassified Conditional Use Permit (CUP) Application No. 3630, subject to the Mitigation Measures, Conditions of Approval and Project Notes listed in Exhibit 1; and
3. Direct the Secretary to prepare a Resolution documenting the Commission's action.

EXHIBITS:

1. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, Conditions of Approval, and Project Notes
2. Location Map
3. Zoning Map
4. Land Use Map
5. Site Plan
6. Applicant's Operational Statement
7. CEQA Findings of Fact
8. Reclamation Plan
9. Pest Management Plan
10. Letter of Support
11. Draft EIR No. 7564
12. Draft EIR Appendices
13. Final EIR No. 7564

NOTE: Items 11-13 (the Draft EIR, Appendices, and Final EIR for the Heartland Solar Project) are available for review at the following link: <https://www.fresnocountyca.gov/eir7564> . These documents were previously distributed to members of the Planning Commission as part of Advance Agenda Item Material on May 22, 2026.

SITE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONAL INFORMATION:

Criteria	Existing	Proposed
General Plan Designation	Agriculture	No Change
Zoning	AE-20 (Exclusive Agriculture, 20-acre minimum parcel size)	No Change
Parcel Size	APN 028-140-38 (310.97 acres) APN 028-060-77 (5.97 acres) APN 028-101-85 14.42 acres APN 028-101-82 (2.36 acres) APN 028-140-41 (641.36 acres) APN 028-160-23 (640.55 acres) APN 028-170-77 (439.21 acres) APN 028-060-84 (318.57 acres) Offsite/gen tie parcel: APN 028-101-81 (2 acres of PG&E substation parcel)	No Change
Project Site	The project site has been dry farmed for forage crops or lain fallow for the past 10 years.	Construct, operate, maintain, and provide for the future decommissioning of a solar energy generating facility, an energy storage system, project substation, and gen-tie line. access roads, and perimeter security fencing.
Structural Improvements	Site contains no buildings, existing features include agricultural roads, abandoned piping, and other irrigation and agricultural drainage features.	A utility scale PV solar facility with 300 MW capacity; battery energy storage system with 300 MW capacity; an on-site substation with a 1.25 miles gen-tie line connecting to existing Tranquillity Switching Station; operations and maintenance facility; Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system; meteorological equipment, telecommunications infrastructure, internal access roads, and perimeter security fencing.

Criteria	Existing	Proposed
Nearest Residence	The closest residence is located on the corner of S. Ohio Avenue and W. Adams Avenue, approximately 80 feet west of the project site. The next closest residence is located on W. Adams Avenue approximately 0.4 miles east of the project site	No Change
Surrounding Development	Land uses surrounding the project site include (Adams East) solar facilities to the east, (Tranquillity Solar and Tranquillity Switching Station) to the south and southeast; fallowed land and active agriculture and a residence to the west, and active agriculture to the southwest.	No Change
Operational Features	N/A	See above "Project Site"
Employees	No permanent employees, periodic agricultural labor employed during intermittent farming operations	Peak daily workforce would be up to 625 workers for project construction and decommissioning/site restoration activities. Once operational, the project would require approximately 3 full-time O&M staff and limited additional personnel to visit the project site. Up to 10 workers may be needed for annual maintenance activities.
Customers	N/A	None: The project would not receive customers.
Traffic Trips	Negligible trips from agricultural operations	Project construction and decommissioning/site restoration would require up to 800 daily vehicle trips (400 trips each, inbound and outbound). During project operation, up to 20 daily vehicle trips infrequently may be required.
Lighting	None	Exterior security lighting would be installed in areas

Criteria	Existing	Proposed
		necessary for operations, security, and safety. All exterior lighting would be directed downward and shielded to minimize its impact on surrounding properties and nighttime light pollution. Lighting would be activated through a motion sensor or manual switch and would be on only when personnel are in the area. All exterior lighting would be shielded and directed downward in conformance with applicable Fresno County requirements including Chapter 855-I.3.d. of the Zoning Ordinance.
Hours of Operation	N/A	The solar facility would operated remotely, 7 days per week, 365 days per year.

EXISTING VIOLATION (Y/N) AND NATURE OF VIOLATION: N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

As stated in CEQA Guidelines §15121(a), “An EIR is an informational document which will inform public agency decision makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effect of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project.” An EIR is not intended to recommend either approval or denial of a project: Its primary purposes are to disclose the potential environmental impacts of the project and to document the evaluation of methods for agencies to avoid or reduce environmental harm by adopting feasible project alternatives or mitigation measures.

In addition, CEQA Guidelines §15151 contains the following standards of adequacy:

An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.

As required by CEQA Guidelines §15120(c), an EIR shall:

- Provide a sufficiently detailed project description;

- Describe the existing environmental setting;
- Identify and evaluate potential environmental impacts of the project, including the cumulative effects of the project in combination with the impacts of other existing or proposed activities in the vicinity;
- Describe feasible mitigation measures that could minimize the project's significant adverse environmental impacts; and
- Describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project that would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.

CEQA does not require evaluation of all possible alternatives, only evaluation of "a range of reasonable alternatives" to encourage both meaningful public participation and informed decision making (CEQA Guidelines §15126.6[a]). "The discussion of alternatives need not be exhaustive, and the requirement as to the discussion of alternatives is subject to a construction of reasonableness. The statute does not demand what is not realistically possible given the limitation of time, energy, and funds" (*Residents Ad Hoc Stadium Committee v. Board of Trustees* (1979) 89 Cal.App.3d 274, 286; see also CEQA Guidelines §15126.6[f][3]). In addition, as stated by the court in *Village of Laguna Beach, Inc. v. Board of Supervisors* (1982) (134 Cal.App.3d 1022, 1029), "Absolute perfection is not required; what is required is the production of information sufficient to permit a reasonable choice of alternatives so far as environmental aspects are concerned."

First Solar, Inc. submitted an application for an unclassified CUP on November 29, 2018 for two photovoltaic solar power generation facilities. That project was subsequently purchased by Plug Power, Inc. (Plug Power Holding Co. LLC). The Project was refined following the initial CUP application, and now consists solely of Heartland Solar 1, LLC's facilities. Formerly proposed hydrogen and tertiary treatment facilities are no longer part of the current project. The current developer is Heartland Solar 1, LLC. Heartland Solar 1, LLC submitted an application for an Unclassified CUP for the project on August 4, 2021 and revised the application September 30, 2021. County staff determined that preparation of an EIR was necessary. The EIR was prepared in compliance with CEQA (Pub. Res. Code §21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (14 Cal. Code Regs. §15000 et seq.). Technical analysis was conducted, and public comment was solicited and considered to ensure that potential environmental impacts of the project were evaluated and disclosed in the EIR. A summary of the steps of environmental review and public comment process is provided below:

- A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was prepared for the project, and circulated to all trustee agencies, responsible agencies, and interested parties beginning on October 24, 2022 for a 30-day review (scoping) period that ended on November 22, 2022. The NOP was also posted for the same time period in the Office of the County Clerk.
- A Notice of Project Refinement clarifying the project changes (subsequent to the initial NOP) was published on the Fresno County website (<https://www.fresnocountyca.gov/eir7564>) December 16, 2024.
- A Notice of Completion for the Draft EIR was filed with the State of California Clearinghouse on September 24, 2025
- A Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR was published in the Business Journal on September 24, 2025, and was posted on the County's website

(<https://www.fresnocountyca.gov/eir7564>). A notification of the document's availability was mailed to the Project's distribution list to inform individuals, organizations, and agencies that previously expressed interest in the Project.

- The Draft EIR was circulated for review and comment during a 45-day period that began on September 24, 2025 and ended on November 7, 2025.
- The Draft EIR was made available for public review at the Fresno County Main Library Reference Department, Mendota Branch Library, the County Public Works and Planning offices, and in electronic format on the County's planning website.
- Copies of the Draft EIR were provided, upon request, to responsible trustees and other federal, state, and local agencies expected, or known, to have expertise or interest in the resources that the Project may affect.
- Copies of the Draft EIR, or notices of the Draft EIR's availability, were sent to organizations and individuals with special expertise on environmental impacts and/or who had previously expressed an interest in this project or other activities.
- On May 20, 2026 the Final EIR was provided to Tribes, agencies, organizations, and members of the public who were included on the project's distribution list. Printed copies of the Final EIR were made available for public review at Fresno County Main Library Reference Department, Mendota Branch Library, the County Public Works and Planning offices, and on the County's website.

The EIR found that the Project would have:

No impact regarding:

- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation

Less-than-significant impact regarding:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Less-than-significant impact with the implementation of Mitigation Measures regarding:

- Biological Resources

- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise and Acoustics
- Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

The EIR found that the Project would have no significant and unavoidable impacts.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Notices were sent to 14 property owners within one-mile of the subject parcels, exceeding the minimum notification requirements prescribed by the California Government Code and County Zoning Ordinance.

PROCEDURAL CONSIDERATIONS:

An Unclassified Conditional Use Permit may be approved only if the four Findings specified in the Fresno County Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 842.5.050.B are made by the Planning Commission. The decision of the Planning Commission on an Unclassified Conditional Use Permit Application is final, unless appealed to the Board of Supervisors within 15 days of the Commission's action.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Heartland Solar 1, LLC filed an application with the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning for Unclassified Conditional Use Permit (CUP No. 3630) to construct, operate, maintain, and eventually decommission the proposed facility on an approximately 2,362-acre Project Area located on parcels within unincorporated Fresno County. Lands proposed for Project use are zoned AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size) and have historically been used for agricultural purposes. In the past 10 years, the Project site has been intermittently dry farmed for grain or forage crops or has lain fallow. Agricultural uses generally predominate in the vicinity of the Project site.

- Total Heartland Solar Project Site Area:
Approximately 2,362 acres across nine parcels
- Solar Facility Footprint (solar panels and associated infrastructure):
Approximately 2,340 acres
Includes solar panel arrays, inverter/transformer equipment, BESS, on-site substation, operations and maintenance area, telecommunications and meteorological equipment, SCADA system, internal access roads, parking, water tanks, septic systems, storage/communication enclosures, signage, and related supporting infrastructure. The BESS would occupy approximately 8 acres, and the solar facility substation would occupy approximately 4 acres.

- **Generation-Tie Line Area**
Up to approximately 5 miles long across approximately 40 acres, including an overhead 230-kilovolt generation-tie line, approximately 57 pole structures, and fiber lines that may be collocated on the poles or installed underground.
- **PG&E Components Area:**
Approximately 4 acres, including an approximately 1,000-foot PG&E-owned segment of generation-tie line, fiber lines and related communications equipment, and upgrades within the existing fenced Tranquillity Switching Station, including installation of a new 230-kilovolt breaker-and-a-half configuration.

The Project would generate renewable energy from mounted horizontal, single-axis tracking photovoltaic solar arrays and store electricity through a battery energy storage system. The Project would have a generating capacity of up to 300 megawatts (MW), a battery storage capacity of approximately 300 MW, and an on-site substation. Electricity generated by the Project would be delivered to the electrical grid via the on-site substation and the gen-tie connection to the existing PG&E Tranquillity Switching Station. The surrounding area includes existing utility corridors, public utility infrastructure, and other utility-scale solar energy facilities.

If the Project is approved, the Applicant anticipates that it would have an operational lifespan of approximately 35 years.

Finding 1: **That the site of the proposed use is adequate in size and shape to accommodate said use and all yards, spaces, walls and fences, parking, loading, landscaping, and other features required by this Division, to adjust said use with land and uses in the neighborhood.**

	Current Standard:	Proposed Operation:	Is Standard Met (y/n)
Setbacks	Front: 35 feet. Side (each): 20 feet. Street side: 35 feet. Rear: 20 feet. Reversed corner (street side): 35 feet. (§808.2.040, Table 2-3) County Solar Electrical Generation Facilities Guidelines (2017): Minimum 50-foot buffer from the edges of the property boundaries to the closest structural improvements or equipment (excluding fencing).	Minimum 50-foot setback of structural improvements and equipment from property lines.	Yes
Parking	The required parking area for commercial business office, and professional use shall be provided on	Parking would be provided on-site. Operation and maintenance area	Yes

	Current Standard:	Proposed Operation:	Is Standard Met (y/n)
	the parcel with the structure or uses being served, or on a contiguous parcel in the same zone. (§828.3.030[G]) For a facility that is not open to the public, 1 space is required per 2 employees, based on the maximum number of employees on duty at any one time. (§828.3.040, Table 3-7) If four or fewer parking spaces are required for a specific project, then the parking space for the disabled shall be 17 feet wide but does not need to be marked or reserved exclusively for the disabled. (§828.3.050[F])	would include an adjacent parking area to accommodate approximately seven employee vehicles for intermittent maintenance visits.	
Lot Coverage	None (§808.2.040, Table 2-3)	N/A	N/A
Space Between Buildings	6 feet (§808.2.040, Table 2-3)	Only one building proposed; will conform to County setback requirements.	Yes
Wall Requirements	No requirements.	N/A.	N/A
Fencing Requirements	None AE zones excluded from maximum fence height requirements. (§822.3.050 Table 3-2)	Perimeter fence will be 6-8 feet high; substation will be secured by 8-foot-tall, barbed wire fence.	Yes
Septic Replacement Area	100 percent (LAMP §101.6)	Septic system will conform to Local Area Management Plan (LAMP) requirements.	Yes
Water Well Separation	Building Sewer: 50 feet Septic Tank: 100 feet Dispersal Field: 100 feet Seepage Pit: 150 feet	Project will comply with the minimum distances outlined in Table 101.8 of the LAMP and adhere to applicable Fresno County Code requirements.	Yes

	Current Standard:	Proposed Operation:	Is Standard Met (y/n)

Reviewing Agency/Department Comments Regarding Site Adequacy:

No comments specific to the adequacy of the site were expressed by reviewing Agencies or Departments.

Finding 1 Analysis:

The Fresno County Solar Facility Guidelines, as approved by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors and last amended on December 12, 2017, include provisions intended to reduce potential conflicts between solar facilities and adjacent agricultural operations. Item 5 of the Guidelines calls for a buffer between a proposed solar facility and adjacent agricultural operations. For solar projects, this has generally been applied as a minimum 50-foot setback from the project boundary to the nearest structural improvement or equipment, not including fencing.

The submitted site plans indicate that the proposed solar facility improvements would be located outside of the required buffer area and would maintain adequate separation from adjacent agricultural properties. Final verification of setbacks, site layout, access, circulation, drainage, fire protection, lighting, signage, and other applicable design requirements would occur through the required Site Plan Review process pursuant to Chapter 854.5 of the Fresno County Zoning Ordinance. Site Plan Review has been included as a Condition of Approval and would also be verified through applicable building permit review and inspection.

The Project is proposed on an approximately 2,362-acre Project Area consisting of nine parcels. Several parcel mergers occurred during processing of the CUP and EIR, resulting in APNs that may differ from those identified in the EIR. However, the change in parcel numbering does not affect the Project configuration or the environmental review. The Project Area is sufficient in size and configuration to accommodate the proposed solar arrays, battery energy storage system, on-site substation, generation-tie line, internal access roads, perimeter fencing, operations and maintenance area, and other related improvements while maintaining required setbacks and buffers from surrounding agricultural uses.

As evaluated in the EIR, the Project would not result in significant impacts related to land use compatibility, agricultural resources, or surrounding development patterns. With compliance with applicable County standards, required Site Plan Review, and the Conditions of Approval, the proposed site is adequate in size and shape to accommodate the Project and would not adversely affect adjacent uses.

Based on the above information, the 2,362-acre site is adequate in size and shape to be able to conform to County Standards and not adversely impact surrounding properties.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

See Mitigation Measures, Design Measures, and recommended Conditions of Approval attached as Exhibit 1.

Finding 1 Conclusion:

Based on the above information, and with adherence to the Conditions of Approval described above and the Mitigation Measures described in the EIR, staff believes the site will be adequate

in size and shape to accommodate the proposed use.

Finding 2: **That the site for the proposed use relates to streets and highways adequate in width and pavement type to carry the quantity and kind of traffic generated by the proposed use.**

		Existing Conditions	Proposed Operation
Private Road	No	W American Ave: unpaved dirt road Los Angeles Ave: unpaved dirt road S Ohio Ave: unpaved dirt road W Lincoln Ave: unpaved dirt road W South Ave: unpaved dirt road	No change
Public Road Frontage	Yes	SR 33 S. Derrick Ave: paved road W Adams Ave: paved road	No change
Direct Access to Public Road	Yes	Primary access along W Adams Avenue	Primary driveway access from the public roadway network would be provided along W Adams Ave
Road Average Daily Traffic (ADT)		- I-5 near W Manning Ave interchange: 37,000 vehicles per day. - State Route 33 in the vicinity of the solar facility site is approximately 1,650 vehicles. - W. Adams Avenue in the vicinity of the Project site is approximately 187 vehicles. W. Manning Avenue in the vicinity of the Project site is approximately 1,055 vehicles per day.	(Construction) - I-5: 1,105 additional trips - SR 33 north of Project site: 663 additional trips - SR 33 south of Project site: 442 additional trips - W. Adams Avenue: 1,105 additional trips - W. Manning Ave: 111 additional trips
Road Classification		- I-5 and SR 33: Major Highways - West Adams Avenue: Local Road	No change
Road Width		32 feet	No change
Road Surface		Asphalt paved	No change

		Existing Conditions	Proposed Operation
Traffic Trips		Typical Agriculture	See above for construction trips.
Traffic Impact Study (TIS) Prepared	Yes	TIS prepared for the Heartland Solar Project by VRPA Technologies, Inc., dated May 25, 2023.	Limited additional trips following construction (Maintenance only)
Road Improvements Required		N/A	Mitigation Measure 3.18-1 (Exhibit 1) requires an approved traffic management plan.

Reviewing Agency/Department Comments Regarding Adequacy of Streets and Highways:

No comments specific to the adequacy of streets and highways were expressed by reviewing Agencies or Departments.

Finding 2 Analysis:

The Heartland Solar Project site would be accessible from West Adams Avenue and existing agricultural access roads located along and within the Project site. No direct driveway access to State Route 33 is proposed. Construction vehicle traffic would approach the Project site from State Route 33 onto West Adams Avenue.

Project access points, driveways, and internal access roads would be required to comply with applicable County and fire access standards. Gravel access roads approximately 20 feet in width would be constructed around the perimeter of the Project site, and 10 foot wide aggregate base access roads would be constructed between blocks of enclosures. Final access road and driveway design, including fire access, would be reviewed through the Site Plan Review process by applicable County departments and the Fresno County Fire Department prior to construction.

Traffic associated with the Project would occur primarily during the construction period and would consist of equipment deliveries, material hauling, and construction workers. Following construction, traffic would be minimal and generally limited to occasional operations and maintenance visits. The FEIR evaluated Project related transportation impacts and determined that impacts would be less than significant with implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.18-1, which requires preparation and County approval of a Construction Traffic Management Plan prior to issuance of construction permits to minimize construction-related traffic effects along West Adams Avenue.

Based on the above information, and with adherence to the Conditions of Approval and Mitigation Measures identified in the FEIR and presented in Exhibit 1, the public roadway serving the Project site, together with the existing agricultural access roads and on-site circulation system, is adequate to accommodate the quantity and kind of traffic generated by the proposed use.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

See Mitigation Measures, and recommended Conditions of Approval attached as Exhibit 1.

Finding 2 Conclusion:

Staff can recommend making Finding 2 with the recommended Mitigation Measure and Conditions of Approval as the site for the proposed use relates to streets and highways adequate in width and pavement type to carry the quantity and kind of traffic generated by the proposed use.

Finding 3: **That the proposed use will have no adverse effect on abutting property and surrounding neighborhood or the permitted use thereof.**

Surrounding Parcels

	Size:	Use:	Zoning:	Nearest Residence:
North	APN 019-170-08: (161.71 acres) APN 019-170-010: (39.24 acres) APN 019-170-11 (37.93 acres) APN 019-170-27 (156.94 acres) APN 019-170-28 (157.29 acres) APN 019-180-31 (323.01 acres)	Agricultural land uses	AE-20	1 mile west of northern limit of project site; 1.35 miles north of northeast corner of project site
South	APN 028-060-73 (154.64 acres) APN 028-060-77 (625.30 acres) APN 028-101-82 (153.30 acres) APN 028-101-84 (386.82 acres) APN 028-101-85 (261.54 acres)	Tranquillity and Luna Valley solar arrays and agricultural land uses	AE-20	1.8 mile south of southeastern corner of project site
East	APN 028-030-01 (641.56 acres) APN 028-030-17 (78.30 acres) APN 028-030-18 (76.35 acres) APN 028-030-46 (72.95 acres) APN 028-071-01 (628.19 acres) APN 028-071-54 (191.95 acres)	Agricultural uses; fallow fields and Sonrisa solar array	AE-20	0.4 miles east (on West Adams Avenue)
West	APN 028-060-51 (160.39 acres) APN 028-140-05 (40.78 acres) APN 028-140-38 (485.35 acres) APN 028-140-39 (39.90 acres) APN 028-160-01 (314.92 acres) APN 028-160-06 (59.58 acres) APN 028-160-07 (19.85 acres) APN 028-160-09 (3.69 acres) APN 028-160-13 (73.54 acres) APN 028-170-15 (156.33 acres) APN 028-170-16 (39.31 acres) APN 028-170-23 (18.92 acres)	Agricultural land uses including fallow fields and active agriculture; some residences	AE-20	80 feet west of project site (on West Adams Avenue)

	Size:	Use:	Zoning:	Nearest Residence:
	APN 028-170-25 (19.12 acres) APN 028-170-26 (18.71 acres) APN 028-170-27 (17.97 acres) APN 028-170-28 (18.49 acres)			

Reviewing Agency/Department Comments:

No comments specific to land use compatibility were expressed by reviewing Agencies or Departments.

Finding 3 Analysis:

As evaluated in the FEIR, construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of the Project would be subject to applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and standards governing utility-scale solar facilities. These requirements address, among other things, air quality and fugitive dust control, water quality protection, hazardous materials handling, fire protection, traffic management, biological and cultural resource protection, and site restoration. The FEIR determined that, with implementation of applicable mitigation measures, the Project would not result in significant unavoidable impacts.

The Project would operate as a passive renewable energy-generating facility with limited on-site staffing, minimal long-term traffic generation, and no public access. Traffic, dust, and other temporary construction-related effects would be managed through compliance with applicable Conditions of Approval and mitigation measures identified in the FEIR. Construction-related noise impacts to nearby residences would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through preparation and implementation of the required Construction Noise Reduction Plan. Following construction, operational activity would generally be limited to periodic maintenance, inspections, and repair activities.

The Project site and surrounding area are characterized by agricultural uses, existing utility infrastructure, and existing or approved utility-scale solar energy facilities. Surrounding land uses include non-irrigated fields owned primarily by Westlands Water District and existing solar generation facilities. Agricultural properties in the area generally have a land use pattern of dry farming and fallowing rotation similar to the Project site. Neighboring agricultural uses also include orchards and forage and grain crops. Multiple solar energy facilities are operating or under development to the south and east of the Project site, including the Tranquillity, Adams East, Scarlet, Luna Valley, and Sonrisa solar projects.

The Project site has historically been used for agricultural purposes, including irrigated farming, dry farming, grazing, and fallowing. However, the site is no longer irrigated due to drainage limitations, salt accumulation in the soil, and legal restrictions on irrigation for certain parcels. In recent years, the site has been intermittently dry farmed for grain or forage crops or has lain fallow. The FEIR determined that the Project would result in less-than-significant impacts to agricultural resources.

The Project has been designed in accordance with the Fresno County Supplemental Information for Solar Electrical Generation Facilities ("Solar Facility Guidelines"), which establish standards intended to minimize potential conflicts with adjacent agricultural operations. Consistent with those Guidelines, an Integrated Pest Management Plan and Reclamation Plan have been prepared for the Project. The Integrated Pest Management Plan addresses weed and pest control

during construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning, while the Reclamation Plan identifies measures for removal of Project improvements and restoration of the site following the end of the Project's operational life. If the Project is approved, final reclamation requirements and financial security would be required to ensure implementation of site restoration.

Based on the Project's design, operational characteristics, compliance with County standards, and implementation of the Conditions of Approval and Mitigation Measures identified in the FEIR, the proposed use would not result in adverse effects on abutting properties or the surrounding neighborhood, or interfere with the permitted use of adjacent agricultural lands.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

See Exhibit 1 for full text of Conditions & Mitigation Measures.

Finding 3 Conclusion:

Staff can recommend making Finding 3 based on the above information and with adherence to the included Mitigation Measures, recommended Conditions of Approval, and mandatory Project Notes, staff believes the proposal will not have an adverse effect upon surrounding properties.

Finding 4: That the proposed development is consistent with the General Plan.

Relevant Policies:	Consistency/Considerations:
Policy LU-A.1: <i>The County shall maintain agriculturally-designated areas for agriculture use and shall direct urban growth away from valuable agricultural lands to cities, unincorporated communities, and other areas planned for such development where public facilities and infrastructure are available.</i>	Consistent: The Project site is zoned AE-20 and AE-40, Exclusive Agricultural. As indicated in Chapter 806.2 of the Fresno County Zoning Ordinance, permitted uses in the AE district include electrical transmission and distribution. As evaluated in the FEIR, the Project would not constitute urban development, would not induce population growth, and would not result in expansion of urban services or infrastructure into agricultural areas. The Project represents a utility-scale renewable energy use that does not alter the long-term agricultural land use designation of the surrounding area.
Policy LU-A.3: <i>The County may allow by discretionary permit in areas designated Agriculture, special agricultural uses and agriculturally-related activities, including value added processing facilities, and certain non-agricultural uses listed in Table LU-3. Approval of these and similar uses in areas designated Agriculture shall be subject to the following applicable criteria:</i> <i>a. The use shall provide a needed service to the surrounding agricultural area which cannot be provided more efficiently within</i>	Consistent. The Project is a non-agricultural use proposed within an Agriculture-designated area and is subject to the County's discretionary Unclassified Conditional Use Permit process. (a) The Project requires a large, contiguous site near existing electrical transmission infrastructure and the PG&E Tranquillity Switching Station, which supports its location in a non-urban area.

Relevant Policies:	Consistency/Considerations:
<i>urban areas or which requires location in a non-urban area because of unusual site requirements or operational characteristics;</i> <i>b. The use should not be sited on productive agricultural lands if less productive land is available in the vicinity;</i> <i>c. The operational or physical characteristics of the use shall not have a detrimental impact on water resources or the use or management of surrounding properties within at least one-quarter (1/4) mile radius;</i> <i>d. A probable workforce should be located nearby or be readily available</i>	(b) The site is no longer irrigated due to drainage limitations, salt accumulation, and legal restrictions on irrigation for certain parcels. In recent years, the site has been intermittently dry farmed or fallow. (c) The EIR determined that the Project would not result in significant impacts to agricultural resources, water resources, or land use compatibility. With required buffers, Site Plan Review, mitigation measures, and Conditions of Approval, the Project would not adversely affect the use or management of surrounding agricultural properties. (d) Construction labor would be temporary and available from the regional workforce. Long-term operation would require limited staffing for periodic maintenance, inspections, and repair activities. Based on the above, the Project is consistent with Policy LU-A.3.
Policy LU-A.12: <i>Agricultural Protection. In adopting land uses policies, regulations and programs, the County shall seek to protect agricultural activities from encroachment of incompatible land uses.</i>	Consistent: The Project site is located in an area already characterized by dry-farmed or fallow agricultural lands, utility infrastructure, and existing or approved solar facilities. The Project site is no longer irrigated and has a similar dry farming/fallowing pattern as surrounding agricultural properties. Because the Project would be a passive solar use and would not introduce residences or other sensitive receptors that could conflict with nearby agricultural operations, it would not result in incompatible encroachment into agricultural lands.
Policy LU-A.13: <i>The County shall protect agricultural operations from conflicts with nonagricultural uses by requiring buffers between proposed non-agricultural uses and adjacent agricultural operations.</i>	Consistent: the Project would provide required buffers from adjacent agricultural operations consistent with the County's Solar Facility Guidelines and would be required to record the County's Right-to-Farm Notice prior to issuance of permits. These requirements would help protect surrounding agricultural operations and reduce potential

Relevant Policies:	Consistency/Considerations:
	conflicts between the proposed solar use and adjacent agricultural lands.
Policy LU-A.14: <i>The County shall ensure that the review of discretionary permits includes an assessment of the conversion of productive agricultural land and that mitigation be required where appropriate.</i>	Consistent: The FEIR evaluated the temporary conversion of agricultural land associated with the Project and determined that impacts would be less than significant with implementation of required mitigation measures, including site reclamation and financial assurance. At the end of the Project's operational life, the facility would be decommissioned and the site restored as nearly as feasible to its original agricultural condition.
Policy LU-A.15: <i>The County shall generally condition discretionary permits for development within or adjacent to agricultural areas upon the recording of a Right-to-Farm Notice, which is an acknowledgment that residents in the area should be prepared to accept the inconveniences and discomfort associated with normal farming activities and that an established agricultural operation shall not be considered a nuisance due to changes in the surrounding area.</i>	Consistent. The Project will be required to record the County's Right-to-Farm Notice prior to issuance of permits. The notice would acknowledge that adjacent agricultural operations shall not become a nuisance due to the changed condition of the Project site.
Policy LU-A.23: <i>For discretionary land use projects that are not directly related to or supportive of agricultural uses and which propose the permanent conversion of twenty acres or more of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance (as designated by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program) to nonagricultural uses, the County shall consider and adopt feasible measures including, but not limited to:</i> • <i>Acquisition of conservation easements at a 1: 1 ratio for lands lost to nonagricultural uses.</i> • <i>Fee title of agricultural mitigation land that may be held by a third party or the County.</i> • <i>In lieu fees paid to the County that may be used to acquire future mitigation property.</i> • <i>Mitigation banks.</i>	Consistent: Policy LU-A.23 applies to discretionary projects that permanently convert 20 acres or more of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use. The FEIR evaluated agricultural conversion and determined that the Project site is not mapped as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. The Project site is mapped as Farmland of Local Importance, and the proposed use is temporary in nature because the facility would be decommissioned at the end of its operational life. The Project would also be subject to an approved Reclamation Plan and financial assurance to ensure restoration of the site as nearly as feasible to its pre-project agricultural condition. Based on this, the Project would not result in the type of permanent farmland conversion addressed by Policy LU-A.23.

Relevant Policies:	Consistency/Considerations:
<i>The County may exempt projects from agricultural mitigation requirements when it has been determined that conversion is occurring pursuant to a local groundwater sustainability plan, or the project is for housing which is predominately for persons of low or moderate income as defined in section 50093 of the Health and Safety Code. Further, the County may exempt discretionary land use projects from agricultural mitigation requirements if it finds that the loss of agricultural land caused by the proposed conversion is outweighed by specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of the conversion, as contemplated by section 21081 (b) of the Public Resources Code.</i>	
Program LU-A.C: <i>The County shall develop and implement guidelines for design and maintenance of buffers to be required when new non-agricultural uses are approved in agricultural areas. Buffer design and maintenance guidelines shall include, but not be limited to, the following:</i> <i>a. Buffers shall be physically and biologically designed to avoid conflicts between agriculture and non-agricultural uses.</i> <i>b. Buffers shall be located on the parcel for which a permit is sought and shall protect the maximum amount of farmable land,</i> <i>c. Buffers generally shall consist of a physical separation between agricultural and non-agricultural uses. The appropriate width shall be determined on a site-by-site basis taking into account the type of existing agricultural uses, the nature of the proposed development, the natural features of the site, and any other factors that affect the specific situation.</i> <i>d. Appropriate types of land uses for buffers include compatible agriculture, open space and recreational uses such as parks and golf courses, industrial uses, and cemeteries.</i> <i>e. The County may condition its approval of a project on the ongoing maintenance of buffers.</i>	Consistent: As required by the Fresno County Solar Facility guidelines and as summarized in FEIR, the Project would include a sufficient buffer to minimize impacts of the operation to adjacent properties.

Relevant Policies:	Consistency/Considerations:
<i>f. A homeowners' association or other appropriate entity shall be required to maintain buffers to control litter, fire hazards, pests, and other maintenance problems.</i> <i>g. Buffer restrictions may be removed if agricultural uses on all adjacent parcels have permanently ceased. (See Policy LU-A.16).</i>	
Policy PF-C.16: Water Supply Evaluation. <i>The County shall, prior to consideration of any discretionary project related to land use, require a water supply evaluation be conducted. The evaluation shall include the following:</i> <i>a. A determination that the water supply is adequate to meet the highest demand that could be permitted on the lands in question. If surface water is proposed, it must come from a reliable source and the supply must be made "firm" by water banking or other suitable arrangement. If groundwater is proposed, a hydrogeologic investigation may be required to confirm the availability of water in amounts necessary to meet project demand. If the lands in question lie in an area of limited groundwater, a hydrogeologic investigation shall be required.</i> <i>b. If use of groundwater is proposed, a hydrogeologic investigation may be required. If the lands in question lie in an area of limited groundwater, a hydrogeologic investigation shall be required. Should the investigation determine that significant pumping-related physical impacts will extend beyond the boundary of the property in question, those impacts shall be mitigated.</i> <i>c. A determination that the proposed water supply is sustainable or that there is an acceptable plan to achieve sustainability. The plan must be structured such that it is economically, environmentally, and technically feasible. In addition, its implementation must occur prior to long-term and/or irreversible physical impacts, or</i>	Consistent: As evaluated in the FEIR, the Project would have limited water demands associated primarily with construction, dust control, panel washing, and routine maintenance. The Water Supply Assessment determined that water supplies would be available through Westlands Water District. The FEIR determined that the Project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies, interfere with groundwater recharge, or conflict with applicable groundwater sustainability planning.

Relevant Policies:	Consistency/Considerations:
<i>significant economic hardship, to surrounding water users.</i>	

Reviewing Agency Comments:

No other comments specific to General Plan Policy were expressed by reviewing Agencies or Departments.

Finding 4 Analysis:

As discussed in the table above and evaluated in the FEIR, the Project is consistent with applicable Fresno County General Plan policies and the Fresno County Solar Facility Guidelines. The Solar Facility Guidelines provide a framework for reviewing utility-scale solar projects in agricultural areas while addressing agricultural compatibility, site buffering, pest management, reclamation, and protection of surrounding agricultural operations. The Project would not represent urban development, would not create pressure for urban expansion, and would operate as a passive renewable energy facility in an area already characterized by agricultural uses, utility infrastructure, and other solar energy facilities.

The Project site is not subject to a Williamson Act contract, and no Williamson Act cancellation is required for the proposed use. The FEIR determined that the Project would not result in significant unavoidable impacts and would not conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations. The Solar Facility Guidelines require information related to historical agricultural use, soil conditions, water supply, site buffering, long-term reclamation, pest management, and acknowledgment of the County's Right-to-Farm Ordinance. These requirements have been addressed through the Project review and, where applicable, incorporated into the Conditions of Approval.

Based on the Project's consistency with applicable General Plan policies, the conclusions of the FEIR, and compliance with the Solar Facility Guidelines, the proposed use is consistent with the Fresno County General Plan.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

See Mitigation Measures, and recommended Conditions of Approval attached as Exhibit 1.

Finding 4 Conclusion:

Staff can recommend making Finding 4 with the aforementioned Conditions of Approval.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The County received written comments on the Draft EIR from these organizations:

- Defenders of Wildlife

Responses to all comments were provided in Chapter 2 of the FEIR.

OTHER AGENCY COMMENTS:

The County also received comments on the Draft EIR from these agencies:

- California Department of Conservation, Geologic Energy Management Division.
- California Department of Transportation.
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

- Westlands Water District
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Responses to all comments were provided in Chapter 2 of the FEIR.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT:

The Applicant provided the County with seven letters of support from these organizations:

- Centro La Family Advocacy Services
- City of Mendota
- Fresno Chamber of Commerce
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 100
- Operating Engineers Local 3
- West Hills Community College
- Westlands Water District

SUMMARY CONCLUSION:

Based on the factors cited in the analysis, the required Findings can be made. Staff therefore recommends approval of Unclassified Conditional Use Permit Application No. 3630, subject to the recommended Mitigation Measures, Conditions of Approval and Project Notes.

PLANNING COMMISSION MOTIONS:

Recommended Motion (Approval Action)

1. Determine the FEIR was presented to, reviewed and considered by the Planning Commission, and represents their independent judgement;
2. Move to adopt the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Findings of Fact and certify that Environmental Impact Report (EIR) No. 7564 prepared for the Project, consisting of Unclassified Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 3630 complete and adequate in conformance with California Environmental Quality Act;
3. Move to determine the required Findings can be made, as stated in the Staff Report, and move to approve the Unclassified Conditional Use Permit Application No. 3630 subject to the Mitigation Measures, Conditions of Approval, and Project Notes listed in Exhibit 1;

Direct the Secretary to prepare a Resolution documenting the Commission's action and direct staff to file a Notice of Determination for the Project.

Alternative Motion (Denial Action)

- Move not to certify Environmental Impact Report (EIR) 7564; and
- Move to determine that the required Findings cannot be made (state basis for not making the Findings) and move to deny Unclassified CUP No. 3630; and
- Direct the Secretary to prepare a Resolution documenting the Commission's action.

Mitigation Measures, Recommended Conditions of Approval and Project Notes:

See attached Exhibit 1.

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Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
Environmental Impact Report No. 7564 and Unclassified Conditional Use Permit No. 3630
(Including Conditions of Approval and Project Notes)

Mitigation Measures					
Biological Resources					
Mitigation Measure No.*	Impact	Mitigation Measure Language	Implementation Responsibility	Monitoring Responsibility	Time Span
1.	Biological Resources	Mitigation Measure 3.5-1: Protection of San Joaquin Kit Fox, Burrowing Owl and American Badger During Construction. San Joaquin kit fox and American badger: Preconstruction surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist for the presence of San Joaquin kit fox and American badger 14 to 30 days prior to commencement of construction activities pursuant to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (2011) <i>Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the Endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance</i>. The surveys shall be conducted in areas of suitable habitat for San Joaquin kit fox and American badger. Surveys need not be conducted for all areas of suitable habitat at one time; they may be phased so that surveys occur 14 to 30 days prior to disturbance within active portions of the site. If no Known, Potential, or Natal/pupping San Joaquin kit fox or American badger dens are identified (as those terms are defined in USFWS [2011]), then no further mitigation is required. If potential dens are observed and	Project owner and/or its designee to implement measure as defined.	Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division, and/or its designee.	Prior to and during construction and decommissioning

				avoidance is determined to be feasible (as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15364 consistent with the USFWS [2011] <i>Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the Endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox</i>) by a qualified biologist in consultation with the Project owner and the County, buffer distances shall be established prior to construction activities. If avoidance of the potential dens is not feasible, the following measures shall be implemented to avoid potential adverse effects to the San Joaquin kit fox or American badger: • If the qualified biologist identifies known or natal/pupping dens occupied by San Joaquin kit fox, the Project owner shall initiate consultation with USFWS and CDFW to discuss how to avoid take or, if take avoidance is not feasible, to acquire an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) pursuant to federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 and California Fish and Game Code section 2081(b), prior to initiating or resuming ground-disturbing activities. • If the qualified biologist identifies dens occupied by American badger, an on-site passive relocation program shall be implemented in coordination with CDFW. This program shall consist of excluding badgers from occupied burrows by installation of one-way doors at burrow entrances, monitoring of the burrow for 72 hours to confirm usage has been discontinued, and excavation and collapse of the burrow to prevent reoccupation.		
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				After the qualified biologist determines that the badgers have stopped using active dens within the Project boundary, the dens shall be hand-excavated. Burrowing owl: The Project owner shall have burrowing owl surveys performed within 14 days before the initiation of equipment staging or ground-disturbing activities. A qualified wildlife biologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys on the site and immediate vicinity only in areas of the site with suitable burrowing habitat to locate any active breeding or wintering burrowing owl burrows, no fewer than 14 days prior to initial ground-disturbing activities (e.g., vegetation clearance, grading, tilling). Areas that have been plowed within 12 months prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities are not considered suitable habitat. The survey methodology shall be consistent with the methods outlined in the Appendix D of the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG; 2012) <i>Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation</i>, or latest appropriate guidance documents, with regard to transect spacing, weather conditions, and time of day requirements. If the work activity halts for a period of 14 days or more, the survey would need to be conducted again prior to the continuation of site activities. Copies of the survey results shall be submitted to CDFW and the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning. • If inactive (unoccupied) burrowing owl burrows are detected any time of the year, the burrows may be excavated by hand		
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				with a shovel or covered (i.e., with sandbags) to prevent burrowing owls from re-using them during construction. The burrow's inactive status will be determined by the approved biologist through monitoring prior to burrow excavation. • If active (occupied) burrowing owl burrows are detected, no ground-disturbing activities, such as vegetation clearance, grading, or other construction activities, shall be permitted within a no-disturbance buffer around the burrow. The size of any employed no-disturbance buffers will be in accordance with the recommended restricted activity dates and setback distances by level of disturbance for burrowing owls outlined in the CDFG (2008) <i>Guidance for Burrowing Owl Conservation</i>: - o 75 meters (250 feet) from occupied burrows during breeding season, and - o 50 meters (160 feet) from occupied burrows during non-breeding season. • Occupied burrowing owl burrows shall be regularly monitored by a qualified biologist or biological monitor throughout project construction. Depending on the level of disturbance and its duration, visual and auditory screening, and similar, a larger or smaller buffer may be established by a qualified biologist in coordination with CDFW based on the visibility and sensitivity responses of each individual burrowing owl.		
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			If active burrowing owl avoidance is infeasible, then the project owner shall consult with CDFW regarding potential for project activities to result in take of burrowing owl and shall comply with all avoidance, minimization, and compensatory mitigation requirements set forth in any ITP issued for the project by CDFW authorizing take of the species.	Project owner and/or its designee to implement measure as defined.	Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division, and/or its designee.	WEAP training to be developed and implemented prior to issuance of grading/building permits and repeated to train new construction personnel during construction and decommissioning as defined in the measures
2.	Biological Resources (cont.)	Mitigation Measure 3.5-2: Worker Environmental Awareness Program Training and Best Management Practices for Biological Resources During construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of the facility, the Project owner and/or contractor shall implement the following general avoidance and protective measures to protect San Joaquin kit fox and other special-status wildlife species: • Prior to the issuance of grading or building permits and for the duration of construction activities, the Project owner, or its contractor, shall implement a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) to train construction personnel how to recognize and protect biological resources on the Project site. The WEAP training shall include a review of the special-status species and other sensitive biological resources that could exist in the Project area, the locations of sensitive biological resources and their legal status and protections, and measures to be				

				implemented for avoidance of these sensitive resources, highlighting San Joaquin kit fox, Swainson's hawk, burrowing owl, and loggerhead shrike. • The Project owner shall limit the areas of disturbance. Parking areas, new roads, staging, storage, excavation, and disposal site locations shall be confined to the smallest areas possible. All proposed impact areas, including solar fields, staging areas, access routes, and disposal or temporary placement of spoils, shall be delineated with stakes and/or flagging prior to construction to avoid special-status species where feasible. Construction-related activities, vehicles, and equipment outside of the impact zone shall be avoided. These areas shall be flagged, and disturbance activities, vehicles, and equipment shall be confined to these flagged areas. • To prevent inadvertent entrapment of wildlife during construction, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches with a 2-foot or greater depth shall be covered with plywood or similar materials at the close of each working day or provided with one or more escape ramps constructed of earth fill or wooden planks. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they shall be thoroughly inspected by the approved biological monitor for trapped animals. If trapped animals are observed, escape ramps or structures shall be installed immediately to allow escape. If a listed species is trapped,		
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				the USFWS and/or CDFW shall be contacted immediately. • All construction pipes, culverts, or similar structures with a 4-inch or greater diameter that are stored at a construction site for one or more overnight periods shall be thoroughly inspected for special-status wildlife or nesting birds before the pipe is subsequently buried, capped, or otherwise used or moved in any way. If an animal is discovered inside a pipe, that section of pipe shall not be moved until a qualified biologist has been consulted and the animal has either moved from the structure on its own accord or until the animal has been captured and relocated by the biologist. • Vehicles and equipment parked on the site shall have the ground beneath the vehicle or equipment inspected for the presence of wildlife prior to moving. • Vehicular traffic shall use existing routes of travel. Cross-country vehicle and equipment use outside of the Project properties shall be prohibited. • A speed limit of 20 miles per hour shall be enforced within all construction areas in daylight; in the event night work is required, the enforced speed limit shall be 10 miles per hour. • A long-term trash abatement program shall be established for construction, operation, and decommissioning and submitted to the County. Trash and food items shall be contained in closed containers and		
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		removed daily to reduce the attractiveness to wildlife such as common raven (<i>Corvus corax</i>), coyote (<i>Canis latrans</i>), and feral dogs. Workers shall be prohibited from bringing pets and firearms to the Project site and from feeding wildlife in the vicinity. Intentional killing or collection of any wildlife species shall be prohibited.			
3.	Biological Resources (cont.)	Mitigation Measure 3.5-3: Protection of Nesting Birds, including Swainson's Hawk If construction is scheduled to commence outside of nesting season (September 16 to January 31; September 16 to February 28 for Swainson's hawk), no preconstruction surveys or additional measures are required for nesting birds, including Swainson's hawk and other raptors. Trees that have documented usage by Swainson's hawks as nesting trees within the past 5 years shall not be removed. During the breeding season (February 1 to September 15; March 1 to September 15 for Swainson's hawk), in order to avoid impacts to nesting birds in the Project site and immediate vicinity, a qualified wildlife biologist shall conduct preconstruction surveys of all potential nesting habitat within the Project site where vegetation removal or ground disturbance is planned. The survey shall focus on potential nest sites and cover an area up to 0.5-mile buffer around the site for Swainson's hawk, 500 feet for common	Project owner or its (qualified wildlife biologist) designee	Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division, and/or its designee.	Surveys to be conducted no more than 10 working days prior to construction and re surveyed (if construction is halted for 10 working days or more) prior to re-initiating work; implement measures; during construction phase as defined in the measures

				raptors, and 250 feet for passerines in areas where access to neighboring properties is available or visible using a spotting scope or binoculars. Surveys shall be conducted no more than 10 working days prior to construction activities. If construction is halted for 10 working days or more, the area shall be re-surveyed prior to re-initiating work. Swainson's hawk surveys shall follow CDFW-approved methodology (SWHA TAC 2000) . Surveys need not be conducted for the entire Project site at one time; they may be phased so that each work area is surveyed no more than 10 working days prior to the start of construction in that area. The surveying biologist must be qualified to determine the status and stage of nesting by migratory birds and all locally breeding raptor species without causing intrusive disturbance. If active nests are found, a suitable buffer (500 feet for common raptors; 0.5 mile for Swainson's hawk; 250 feet for passerines) shall be established around active nests and no construction within the buffer allowed until a qualified biologist has completed an assessment of the potential for current construction activities to impact the nest. The assessment would consider the type of construction activities (e.g., noise levels and duration), the location of construction relative to the nest and pre-existing disturbance levels (e.g., construction activities in historically agricultural land versus activities in non-agricultural land), the visibility of construction activities from the nest location		
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					(e.g., topography or vegetation that could block line-of-sight to the nest), the number of construction personnel required to perform activities within the setback, and other existing disturbances in the area that are not related to construction activities of this project. Based on this assessment, the biologist will determine if construction activities can proceed and the level of nest monitoring required. When conducting the assessment, the biologist will consider the following levels of construction activity, with higher levels of activity requiring greater caution in determining setbacks: • Light construction activity such as fence installation and limited vehicle access. Noise levels generated by these construction activities would likely be similar to existing ambient noise levels in closer proximity to the occupied nests. • Moderate and/or isolated construction activity such as grading and construction of substation, substation-access road, inverter skids, and manual installation of solar panels. Noise levels generated by these construction activities would likely be similar to existing ambient noise levels beyond a moderate distance from the occupied nests. • Heavy construction activity across a large area of the Project and/or using louder equipment such as concrete saws, or jackhammers. Noise levels for this type of activity will depend on location of the activities relative to the nest and allowing these activities within the 0.5-mile
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		setback would require coordination with CDFW. In the event the assessment determines that construction activities could occur closer than 0.5 miles to an active Swainson's hawk nest, in no event would construction activities occur within 500 feet of an active nest without coordination with CDFW. Full-time monitoring to evaluate the effects of construction activities on nesting Swainson's hawks would be required where activity occurs closer than 0.5 miles. The qualified biologist shall have the authority to stop work if it is determined that project construction is disturbing nesting activities. These buffers may need to increase depending on the sensitivity of the nesting Swainson's hawk to disturbances and at the discretion of the qualified biologist. No avoidance would be needed if construction occurs near a known Swainson's hawk nest outside of the Swainson's hawk nesting season. In the event take cannot be avoided, the proponent shall confer with CDFW on the need for an incidental take permit and will comply with any specific-specific minimization and avoidance measures identified in the issued incidental take permit prior to the removal of active nest trees.			
Cultural Resources					
1.	Cultural Resources	Mitigation Measure 3.6-1: Cultural Resources Awareness Training The Heartland Solar Project owner shall retain a Secretary of Interior qualified Project	Project owner or its designee	Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning,	Prior to and during construction and decommissioning

		Archaeologist(s) to carry out all mitigation measures related to archaeological and historical resources during construction of their respective project components. Prior to the start of any ground-disturbing activities, the Heartland Solar Project owner shall ensure that the qualified archaeologist(s) has prepared and conducted a Cultural Resources Awareness Training for all construction personnel working on the Project. A Native American-designated representative from the Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi-Yokut Tribe will be invited to attend and provide a Tribal perspective regarding tribal cultural resources for the training. The lead archaeologist will present the initial briefing of the cultural resources sensitivity training at the construction orientation program given to all personnel working on the proposed Project. The Project proponent/operator shall ensure all new employees or on-site workers who have not participated in earlier cultural resources sensitivity training will receive the training prior to working on the construction site. A copy of the cultural resources sensitivity training guide/materials shall be kept on-site and available for all personnel to review and become familiar with as necessary. The training shall include: An overview of applicable laws and penalties pertaining to disturbing or collecting cultural resources. A brief discussion of the prehistoric and historic regional context and archaeological sensitivity of the area, and potential cultural		Development Services Division, and/or its designee.	g as defined in mitigation measures
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		resources that could be encountered during ground disturbing activities to facilitate worker recognition. Instruction that workers will halt construction in the event of a cultural resource inadvertent discovery (see Mitigation Measure 3.6-2), and notification procedures of Project personnel (i.e., Project Archaeologist, and others as appropriate including the PG&E Cultural Resource Specialist if the resource is located within the PG&E scope components). Roles and responsibilities of the Project Archaeologist and Archaeological and Tribal Monitors (see Mitigation Measure 3.6-2). A sign-in sheet shall be completed, retained by the Heartland Solar Project construction contractor for the duration of Heartland Solar Project construction to demonstrate attendance at the awareness training, and provided to the County upon the completion of Project construction (as appropriate).			
2.	Cultural Resources (cont.)	Mitigation Measure 3.6-2: Inadvertent Discovery of Cultural Resources In the event archaeological materials are encountered during Heartland Solar Project activities, the Heartland Solar Project construction contractor shall immediately cease any ground disturbing activities within 100 feet of the find. The Project Archaeologist, in coordination with the Native American-designated representative from the	Project owner or its designee (designated Cultural Resource Specialist)	Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division, and/or its designee.	During construction in the event of an inadvertent discovery, as defined by the measure

				Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi-Yokut Tribe and the PG&E Cultural Resource Specialist (as appropriate), shall evaluate the significance of the resources for California Register of Historical Resources eligibility and recommend appropriate treatment measures to the County and the Applicant. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(b)(3)(C), if it is demonstrated that resources cannot be avoided, the Project Archaeologist shall, in coordination with a Native American-designated representative from the Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi-Yokut Tribe and the PG&E Cultural Resource Specialist (as appropriate), develop additional treatment measures in consultation with the County, which may include data recovery or other appropriate measures. The County shall consult with appropriate Native American representatives in determining appropriate treatment for unearthed cultural resources if the resources are pre-contact, tribal cultural resources, or Native American in nature. The Project Archaeologist shall prepare a report documenting evaluation and/or additional treatment of the resource. A copy of the report shall be provided to the County and to the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center. Construction can recommence based on direction of the Project Archaeologist with the County's agreement.		
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3.	Cultural Resources (cont.)	Mitigation Measure 3.6-3: Inadvertent Discovery of Human Remains Existing law (Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5) requires that if human remains are uncovered during Heartland Solar Project activities, the Heartland Solar Project construction contractor shall immediately halt work within 100 feet of the find, immediately contact the Fresno County Coroner to determine whether the remains are subject to the coroner's authority, and adhere to the procedures and protocols set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(e)(1 and 2), as applicable. If the County Coroner determines that the remains are Native American in origin, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) will be notified, in accordance with Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5(c), and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 (as amended). The NAHC shall designate a Most Likely Descendant (MLD) for the remains per Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, and in accordance with generally accepted cultural or archaeological standards or practices, the landowner shall ensure that the immediate vicinity of the Native American human remains, is not damaged or disturbed by further development activity until the landowner has discussed and conferred with the MLD regarding their recommendation for the disposition of the remains, taking into account the possibility of multiple human remains.	Project owner or its designee	Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division, and/or its designee.	During construction in the event human remains are discovered
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4.	Cultural Resources (cont.)	Mitigation Measure 3.6-4: In addition to implementing Mitigation Measures 3.6-1, 3.6-2, and 3.6-3, the Project owner shall retain a Secretary of the Interior (SOI)-qualified Project Archaeologist to prepare and implement a Cultural Resource Monitoring Plan (Plan) and coordinate and schedule archaeological monitoring during Project construction. The plan will be submitted to the County for review and approval. The plan will include a requirement for monitoring, as determined by the Project Archaeologist, of initial Project ground-disturbing activities of previously undisturbed soils by a qualified archaeologist and a Native American-designated monitor, if participating. The plan will include (but not be limited to) the following components: The identification and qualifications of person(s) responsible for conducting monitoring activities, including a request to the Native American Tribe for a Native American-designated monitor; The identification of person(s) responsible for overseeing and directing the monitors; Monitoring protocols and procedures and the required format and content of monitoring logs; The schedule for submittal of monitoring logs and identification of person(s) responsible for review and approval of monitoring logs;	Project owner or its designee (Secretary of the Interior-qualified Project Archaeologist)	Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division, and/or its designee.	Prior to and during construction as defined by the measure
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			A protocol for notifications in the event cultural resources are encountered, as well as methods of dealing with the encountered resources (e.g., collection, identification, curation); Methods to ensure the security of cultural resources sites; and A protocol for notifying local authorities (i.e., Sheriff, Police) should site looting and other illegal activities occur during construction. Protocols and procedures for a final monitoring report that summarizes the duration of monitoring activities, all daily monitoring logs, any inadvertent discoveries, and associated reporting. This report will be submitted to the County and, once finalized, to the SSJVIC. During the course of the monitoring, the Project Archaeologist may adjust the frequency, from continuous to intermittent, of the monitoring based on the conditions and professional judgment regarding the potential to impact resources, with consideration of the judgement of the tribal monitor.			
Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources						
1.	Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources	Mitigation Measure 3.8-6: Unanticipated Fossil Discovery Prior to any ground disturbing activities, the Project owner shall develop and implement a Paleontological Worker Education and Awareness Program. If	Project owner or its designee	Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services	Prior to and during construction and decommissioning involving ground disturbance.	

			paleontological resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities (e.g., during Project construction or decommissioning), all earthwork or other types of ground disturbance within 50 feet of the find shall stop immediately until a qualified professional paleontologist meeting the standards of the SVP can assess the nature and importance of the find. Based on the scientific value or uniqueness of the find, the paleontologist may record the find and allow work to continue or recommend salvage and recovery of the fossil. The paleontologist may also propose modifications to the stop-work radius based on the nature of the find, site geology, and the activities occurring on the site. If treatment and salvage is required, recommendations will be consistent with the standards of the SVP that are current as of the discovery and with currently-accepted scientific practice. The current standards of the SVP are set forth in the SVP's 2010 <i>Standard Procedures for the Assessment and Mitigation of Adverse Impacts to Paleontological Resources</i>, as prepared by the SVP's Impact Mitigation Guidelines Revision Committee. If required, treatment for fossil remains may include preparation and recovery of fossil materials so that they can be housed			Worker education and awareness training to occur before excavation; training to be repeated for new personnel during the construction phase, as needed.
					Division, and/or its designee.	

			in an appropriate museum or university collection and may also include preparation of a report for publication describing the finds.			
Hazards and Hazardous Materials						
1.	Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Mitigation Measure 3.10-1: Site Management Plan The contractor conducting the cleanup of the illegal dump sites shall develop and implement a site management plan (SMP) for the management of waste, hazardous materials, and affected soil before any ground-disturbing activity. The SMP shall describe measures for (i) removal of waste, hazardous materials, and contaminated soil (ii) characterization of the soil underlying the waste and hazardous materials to verify all contaminated materials have been removed per regulatory standards, and (iii) off-site disposal of waste, hazardous materials, and soil in compliance with all applicable regulations. The SMP shall include the following, at a minimum: • Site description, including the waste and hazardous materials that may be encountered. • Roles and responsibilities of on-site workers, supervisors, and the regulatory agency. • Training for site workers focused on the recognition of and response to encountering waste and hazardous materials.	Project owner or its designee	Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division, and/or its designee.	Submit SMP prior to issuance of grading/construction permits and implement measures during construction	

		• Notification requirements in the event of discovery of unknown contamination. • Protocols for the materials (waste, hazardous materials, and soil) testing, handling, removing, transporting, and disposing of removed materials in a safe, appropriate, and lawful manner. • Reporting requirement to the overseeing regulatory agency, if any contamination is found that requires agency oversight, documenting that site activities were conducted in accordance with the SMP. The SMP shall be submitted to the lead agency for review before the start of cleanup activities and as a condition of the grading and/or construction permit(s). The contract specifications shall mandate full compliance with all applicable federal, State, and local regulations related to the identification, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials.			
Hydrology and Water Quality					
1.	Hydrology and Water Quality	Mitigation Measure 3.11-1: Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the Project proponent/operator shall submit to the County a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) complying with requirements of the Construction Stormwater General Permit. The SWPPP shall be designed to minimize runoff and shall specify best management practices to prevent all construction pollutants from contacting	Project owner or its designee	Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division, and/or its designee.	Submit SWPPP prior to issuance of grading permit and implement its measures during construction and decommissioning

				stormwater, with the intent of keeping sediment or any other pollutants from moving offsite and into receiving waters. The requirements of the SWPPP shall be incorporated into design specifications and construction contracts. Recommended best management practices to be incorporated in the SWPPP may include, but would not be limited to, the following: a) Minimization of vegetation removal; b) Implementing sediment controls, including silt fences a necessary; c) Installation of a stabilized construction entrance/exit and stabilization of disturbed areas; d) Properly containing and disposing of hazardous materials used for construction onsite; e) Properly covering stockpiled soils to prevent wind erosion; f) Proper protections and containment for fueling and maintenance of equipment and vehicles; and g) Appropriate disposal of demolition debris, concrete and soil, and aggressively controlling litter. h) Cleanup of silt and mud on adjacent street due to construction activity. i) Checking all lined and unlined ditches after each rainfall. j) Install additional erosion control measures as may be required due to uncompleted grading operations or		
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		unforeseen circumstances which may arise.				
Noise and Acoustics						
1.	Noise and Acoustics	Mitigation Measure 3.14-1: Noise Reduction for Nighttime Construction and Decommissioning Activities Prior to issuance of construction permits for the Project, the Project owner shall submit to the County for approval a Construction Noise Reduction Plan to be implemented by all contractors as a condition of contract. Contents of the Plan should include at a minimum: • Maintain all construction tools and equipment in good operating order according to manufacturers' specifications; • Limit use of major excavating, pile driving, earth-moving machinery, and pneumatic tools to daytime hours; • Equip any internal combustion engine used for any purpose on the job or related to the job with a properly operating muffler that is free from rust, holes, and leaks; • For construction devices that utilize internal combustion engines, ensure the engine's housing doors are kept closed, and install noise-insulating material mounted on the engine housing consistent with manufacturers' guidelines, if possible; • Limit possible evening and nighttime shift work to the southern (i.e., Areas 8a and 8b) and/or northern (i.e., Areas 1 through 3) portions of the Project site conducting	Project owner or its designee	Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division, Department of Public Health, and/or its designee.	Submit Construction Noise Reduction Plan to County prior to issuance of construction permits; implement plan during construction and decommissioning	

			low noise activities such as welding, wire pulling, and other similar activities, together with appropriate material handling equipment; and Utilize a Complaint Resolution Procedure to address any noise complaints received from residents.			
Transportation						
1.	<i>Transportation</i>	Mitigation: Implement Mitigation Measure 3.18-1: Construction and Decommissioning Traffic Management Plan Prior to the issuance of construction or building permits and the issuance of decommissioning authorizations, the Project owner and/or its construction contractor shall prepare and submit a Traffic Management Plan to the Fresno County Public Works Department and the California Department of Transportation, District 6, as appropriate, for approval. Review of the Traffic Management Plan (from a County standpoint) will be conducted by Fresno County Road Maintenance and Operations Division. The Traffic Management Plan must be prepared in accordance with both the California Department of Transportation Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and Work Area Traffic Control Handbook and must include, but not be limited to, the following elements:		Project owner or its designee	Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division, Road Maintenance and Operations Division, and/or its designee.	Submit Traffic Management Plan to County prior to issuance of construction permits or decommissioning authorizations; implement plan during construction and decommissioning

				• Temporary Traffic Control plan that addresses traffic safety and control through the work zone, including during temporary lane closures (if needed) to accommodate materials delivery, transmission line stringing activities, or any other utility connections; • Identify the timing of deliveries of heavy equipment and building materials; • Requirement for designated construction staff to be assigned as flaggers to direct traffic into and/or through temporary traffic control zones, as needed; • Requirement to place temporary signage, lighting, and traffic control devices, including, but not limited to, appropriate signage along access routes to indicate the presence of heavy vehicles and construction traffic; • Ensure access for emergency vehicles to the Project site; • Access to adjacent properties shall be maintained; • Specify both construction/decommissioning-related vehicle travel and oversize load haul routes, minimizing construction/decommissioning traffic during the AM and PM peak hour, distributing construction/decommissioning traffic flow across alternative routes to access the Project site, and avoiding residential neighborhoods to the maximum extent feasible.		
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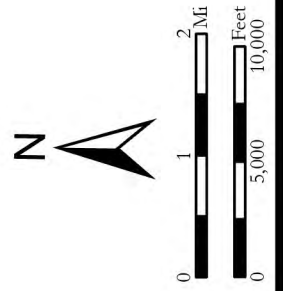
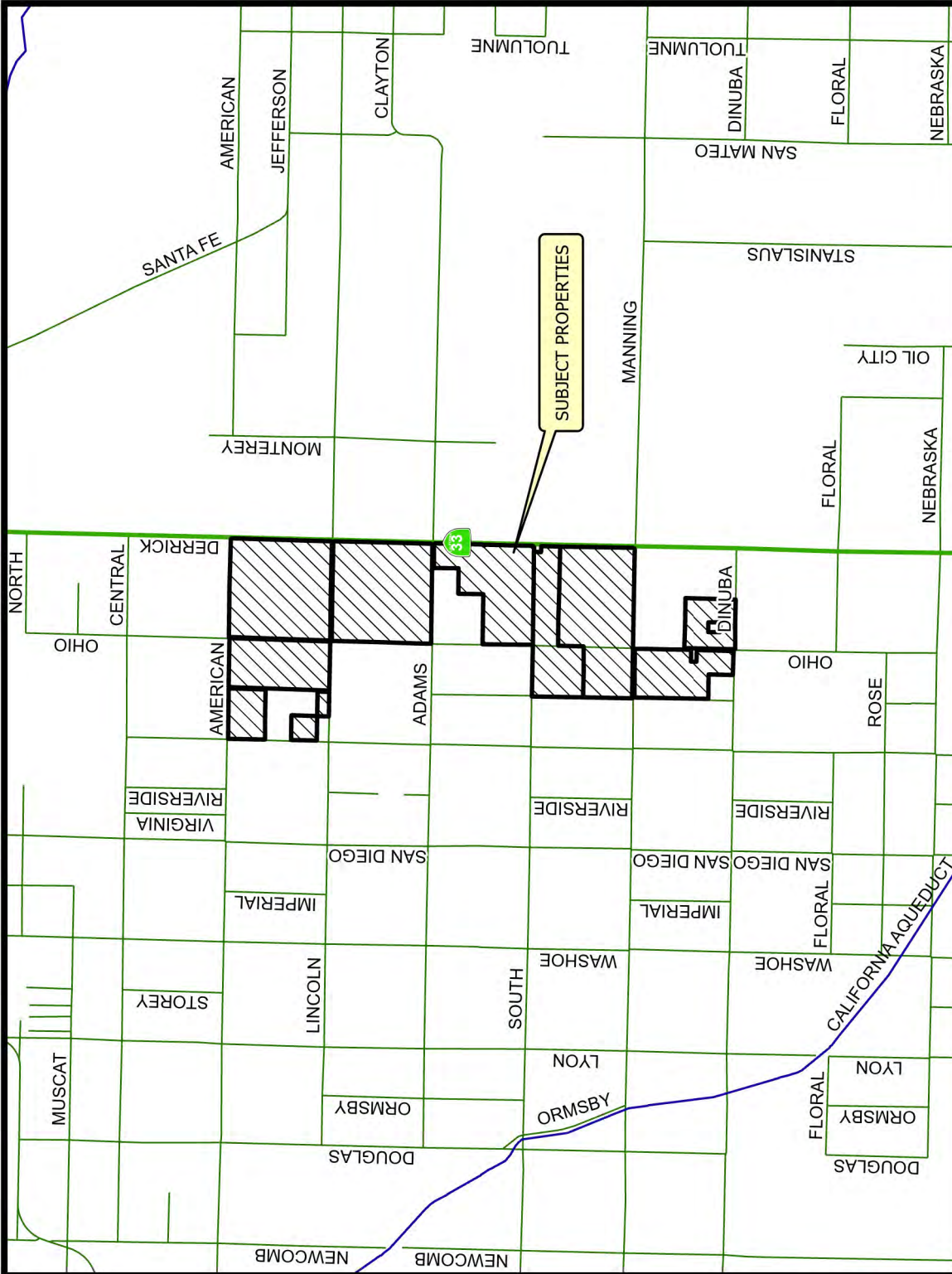
			Requirement to obtain all necessary permits for the work within the road right of way or use of oversized/overweight vehicles that would utilize County-maintained roads, which may require California Highway Patrol or a pilot car escort. Copies of the approved traffic plan and issued permits shall be submitted to the Fresno County Divisions of Public Works and Planning. Applicant shall coordinate with Fresno County to assess potential impacts to County roads from Project-related activities. If any County roads are demonstrably damaged as a result of the Project, the Applicant shall work with Fresno County to determine appropriate repairs, which may include paving, slurry-sealing, or reconstruction, as required by state and/or County standards.		

Conditions of Approval	
1.	Development and operation of the project shall be substantially in accordance with the Site Plan, Elevations, Operational Statement, Project Description, and Draft Reclamation Plan submitted to the Planning Commission.
2.	The life of this Use Permit (CUP No. 3630) shall expire 35 years after the issuance of any permits for development of the Project site.
3.	Prior to issuance of any building permits, a Site Plan Review (SPR) application shall be submitted to and approved in accordance with Section 854.5 of the Fresno County Zoning Ordinance. Site Plan Review (SPR) approval shall be required to ensure compliance with setback requirements, including a minimum 50-foot buffer from the project property boundaries to the closest structural improvements or equipment, excluding fencing. Items to be addressed under the SPR process may include, but are not limited to, design of parking and circulation, driveway access, grading and drainage, fire protection, and lighting.
4.	Prior to the County of Fresno's issuance of a grading or any development permit, the project developer must enter into a reclamation agreement with the County of Fresno on terms and conditions acceptable to the County of Fresno. The reclamation agreement shall require the project owner to: 1) decommission, dismantle, and remove the project and reclaim the site to its pre-project condition in accordance with the approved Reclamation Plan; and 2) maintain a financial assurance to the County of Fresno to secure the project owner's obligations under the reclamation agreement in an amount sufficient to cover the costs of performing such obligations, as provided herein. Such financial assurance shall be in the form of cash and maintained through an escrow arrangement or other form of security acceptable at the discretion of the Board of Supervisors. The amount of the financial assurance under the reclamation agreement shall 1) initially cover the project owner's cost of performing its obligations under the reclamation agreement, based on the final County of Fresno-approved design of the project. The cost estimate shall be provided by the project owner to the County of Fresno and be subject to County approval; and 2) be automatically increased annually due to increases in costs using the Engineering News-Record construction cost index. This initial cost estimate shall consider any project components, other than improvements, that are expected to be left in place at the request of and for the benefit of the subsequent landowner, provided the improvements are directly supportive of restoring the site to a viable agricultural use (e.g., access roads, electrical lines, O&M building).
5.	The project shall adhere substantially to the provisions in the Reclamation Plan as submitted to the Planning Commission and prepared for the decommissioning of the facility when operation ceases. Reasonable modifications may be made to the Plan to address changes of scope and configuration of the final Site Plan and improvements. The draft reclamation

	Plan shall be reviewed and approved as final by the County of Fresno, Department of Public Works and Planning, Current Planning Division prior to the issuance of any development permits.
6.	Prior to issuance of a building permit for the Use Permit (CUP 3630), the developer shall submit to the County of Fresno for review and approval a Pest and Weed Management Plan prepared for the project to control weeds and rodents on the property that may impact adjacent properties.
7.	The County of Fresno shall enter into an agreement with a Consultant to act as a Third-Party Monitor and implement the Mitigation Monitoring and/or Reporting Program and Conditions Compliance Matrix in accordance with Section 21081.6 of the California Public Resources Code and Section 15097 of Title 14, Chapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations. This agreement shall cover monitoring the Project's Mitigation Measures and Conditions of Approval as provided in the Mitigation Monitoring and/or Reporting Program and Conditions of Approval, and the developer shall enter into an agreement with the County to pay all costs associated with the Consultant costs, Mitigation Monitoring expenses, and cost of County staff time related to implementation of mitigation measures and Conditions of Approval.
8.	The project developer shall make all reasonable efforts to establish a point of sale in Fresno County for equipment and construction related items necessary for the project.
9.	The project developer shall make all reasonable efforts to conduct local recruitment efforts and/or coordinate with employment agencies in an attempt to hire from the local workforce.
10.	The project developer shall make all reasonable efforts to purchase products and equipment from local (Fresno County) manufacturing facilities and/or vendors.
11.	The project is located within the Fresno County Fire Protection District. District review and approval of Development plans will be required as part of the building permit approval process. The District may require additional measures to provide sufficient fire protection services. The District may be contacted directly at FKU.Prevention-Planning@fire.ca.gov or (559) 319-0400 to coordinate the plan review and to address their requirements.
12.	Prior to issuance of any grading or development permits, the project developer must submit an engineered grading and drainage plan for review and approval by the County of Fresno, Department of Public Works and Planning, demonstrating that project-generated stormwater runoff will be managed without adverse impacts to adjacent properties. The plan must provide calculations of the proposed ponding basin storage capacity and the ponding basin design storage capacity for verification purposes.
13.	The Proposed Manning Avenue gen-tie line crossing shall be registered with Underground Service Alert (USA).

Project Notes	
The following Notes reference mandatory requirements of Fresno County or other Agencies and are provided as information to the project Developer.	
1.	A Notice of Intent (NOI) and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) are required to be filed with State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) before the commencement of any construction activities disturbing 1.0 acre or more of area. Copies of completed NOI with WDID # and SWPPP shall be provided to Development Engineering prior to any grading work.
2.	Any additional storm water runoff generated by the proposed development of a site cannot be drained across property lines or into the County road right-of-way, and must be retained on-site, per County Standards.
3.	An engineered grading and drainage plan will be required to show how the additional storm water runoff generated by the proposed development will be handled without adversely impacting adjacent properties.
4.	Any proposed photovoltaic solar farm should comply with Cal Fire Prevention Standard and Guidelines for clearance between property line/fence, clearance around any structure, clearance between photovoltaic arrays (walkway width), dead-end fire apparatus access road turnaround, minimum clear width and maximum grade of fire department access road, minimum turning radius, unobstructed vertical clearance, and the like.
5.	Facilities that use and/or store hazardous materials and/or hazardous wastes shall meet the requirements set forth in the California Health and Safety Code (HSC), Division 20, Chapter 6.95, and the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 22, Division 4.5. Your proposed business will handle hazardous materials and/or hazardous waste and will be required to submit a Hazardous Materials Business Plan pursuant to the HSC, Division 20, Chapter 6.95 (http://cers.calepa.ca.gov/). Depending on the quantity of battery storage, the facilities may have to comply with either the California Accidental Release Prevention (Cal-ARP) Program or the Federal Risk Management Plan (RMP).
6.	Any existing or proposed parking areas should comply with the Fresno County Off-Street Parking Design Standards. Stalls should be 18' x 9', and backing distance must be a minimum of 29' for 90-degree parking stalls. Also 5' should be provided beyond the last stall in any row to provide for backing. Any proposed handicap accessible parking stalls and curb ramps shall be in compliance with ADA standards and the maximum surface slope within the disabled parking space(s) and adjacent access aisle(s) shall not exceed 2% in any direction. Any proposed access road turnaround should comply with 2025 California Fire Code Appendix D Fire Apparatus Access Roads and/or current industry standards.

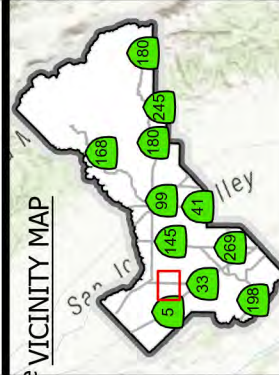
7.	Any work done within the County road right-of-way to construct a new driveway or improve an existing driveway will require an Encroachment Permit from the Road Maintenance and Operations Division.
8.	Any work done within the Caltrans state highway right-of-way to construct a new driveway or improve an existing driveway will require an Encroachment Permit/Clearance from Caltrans.
9.	A grading permit/voucher is required for any grading proposed with this application.
10.	If not already present, a minimum of 10' x 10' corner cut-off should be improved for sight distance purposes at any existing or proposed driveway accessing American Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, San Bernardino Avenue, Los Angeles Avenue, Ohio Avenue, Adams Avenue, South Avenue, Manning Avenue and Dinuba Avenue.
11.	For unpaved or gravel surface access roads, the first 100 feet off of the edge of the road right-of-way must be graded and asphalt concrete paved or treated with dust palliative.
12.	Any existing or proposed entrance gate should be set back a minimum of 20' from the road right-of-way line or the length of the longest truck entering the site, and shall not swing outward. The end of curbed/taper edge of any existing or proposed access driveway approach should be set back a minimum of 5' from the property line.
13.	Prior to the issuance of development permits, the Applicant shall record with the County recorder a Right-to-Farm Notice indicating that adjacent agricultural operations shall not become a nuisance due to the changed condition of the Project site.
14.	Construction plans, building permits and inspections are required for all proposed improvements on the property.
15.	Conditional Use Permit No. 3630 will become void unless there has been substantial development within two years of the effective date of this approval, or there has been a cessation of the use for a period more than two years.



LOCATION MAP

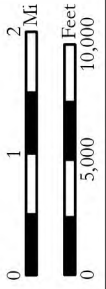
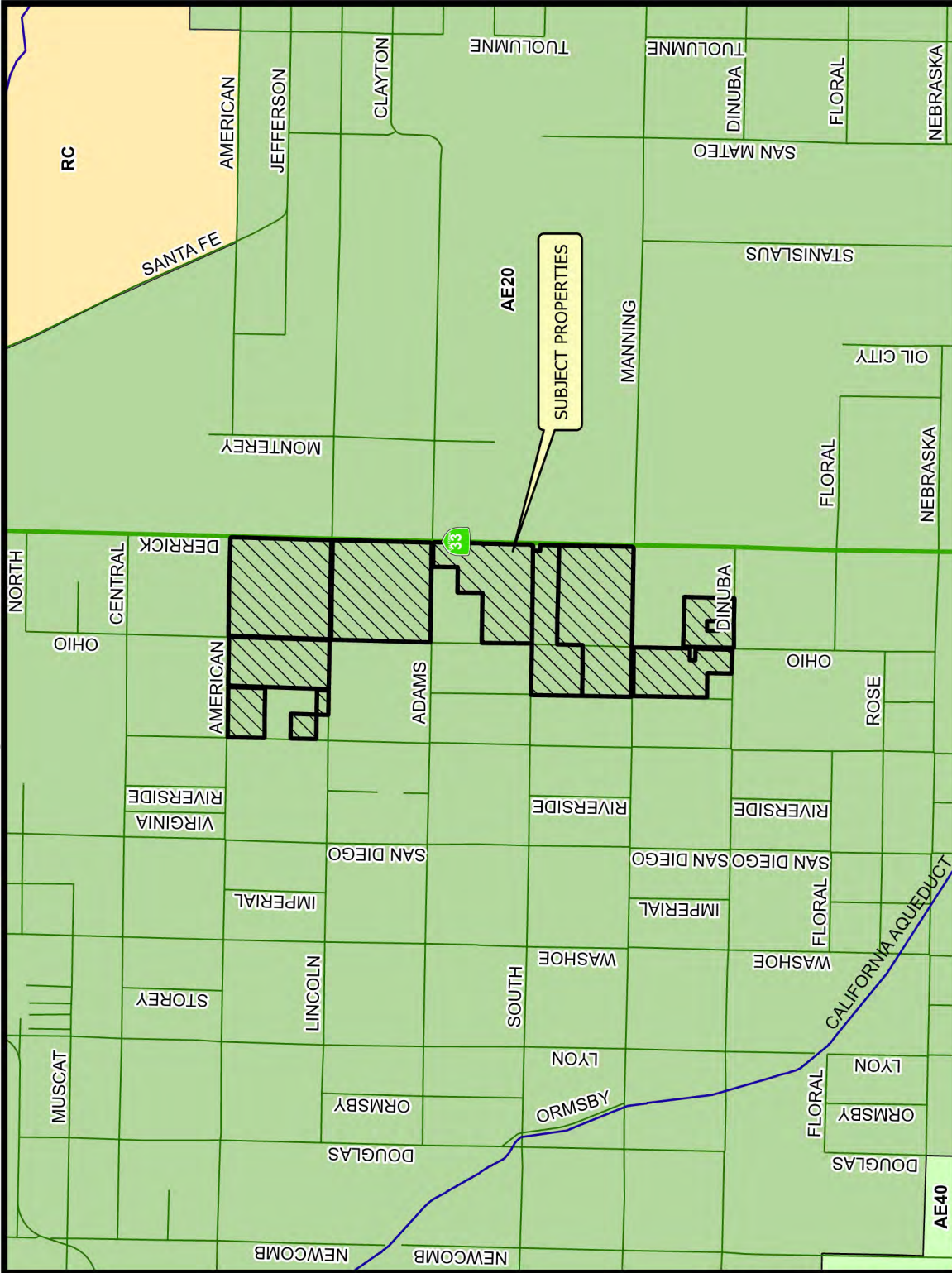
CUP3630 EIR7564 2026

Prepared by : County of Fresno, Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division
 Person Prepared by : chuvang
 On Date : 5/6/2026



Legend

 Subject Properties

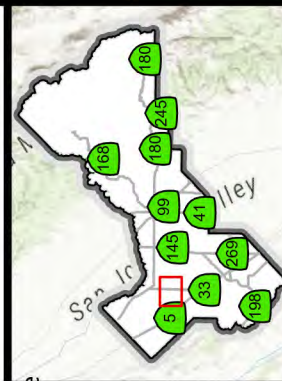
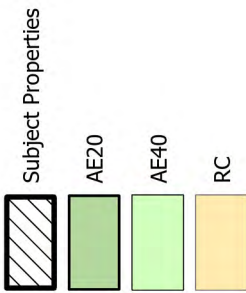


Existing Zoning Map

CUP3630 EIR7564
STR 1, 2, 12, 13, 23, AND 24 # - 15S / 14E
2026

Prepared by : County of Fresno, Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division
Person Prepared by : chuvang
On Date : 5/6/2026

Legend





CUP3630 EIR7564	2026
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Prepared by : County of Fresno, Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division
 Person Prepared by : chuvang
 On Date : 5/6/2026

LEGEND:

- Subject Property

Ag Contract Land

LEGEND
DRY - DRY FARMING
FC - FIELD CROP
ORC - ORCHARD
PWR - POWER GENERATION SITE
SF# - SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE
V - VACANT

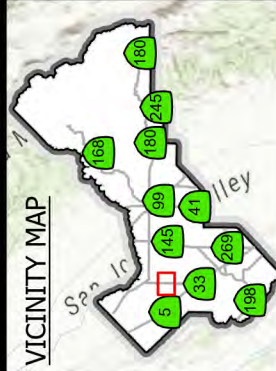
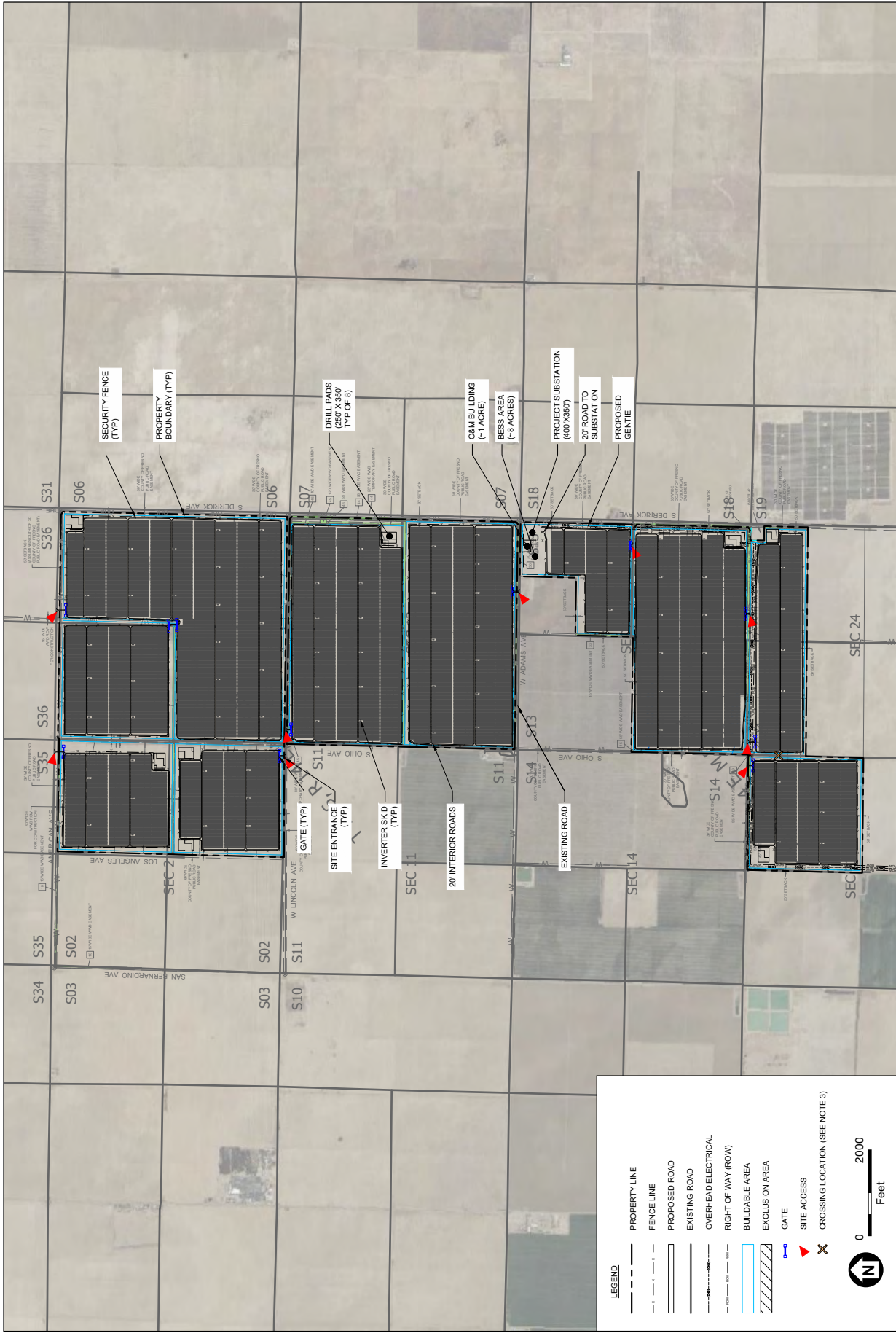


EXHIBIT 5



SOURCE: Revamp Engineering, Inc., 2025

Heartland Solar Project

Figure 2-3
Site Plan

HEARTLAND SOLAR PROJECT OPERATIONAL STATEMENT

1 NATURE OF THE OPERATION

Heartland Solar, LLC (Applicant) is proposing to develop, own, and operate the Heartland Solar Project (Project) in Fresno County, California, approximately 6 miles southwest of the city of Mendota (Figure 1). The Project consists of constructing and operating a utility-scale alternating current (AC) photovoltaic (PV) solar generating and battery energy storage system (BESS) that would produce and store up to approximately 300 megawatts of energy at the point of electrical grid interconnection on approximately 2,362 acres of privately owned agricultural land (Figure 2). The Project would include the construction of access roads, electrical interconnection facilities, and a Project substation.

Assessor parcel numbers:

Solar: 028-060-32ST, 028-060-33ST, 028-140-38ST, 028-060-41ST, 028-140-23T, 028-140-32ST, 028-140-36ST, 028-140-37ST, 028-160-16ST, 028-160-17ST, 028-160-19ST, 028-160-20ST, 028-160-22ST, 028-170-17T, 028-170-18T, 028-170-41ST, 028-170-42ST, 028-170-43ST, 028-170-44ST, 028-170-45ST, 028-170-46ST, 028-170-47ST, 028-170-48ST, 028-170-60ST, 028-170-61ST

Generation tie (gen-tie) transmission line and Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) Substation: 028-060-77ST, 028-101-85ST, 028-101-81S, 028-101-82S

2 OPERATIONAL TIME LIMITS

The facility would begin operation in 2028. The facility is intended to operate for 35 years or more.

2.1 Months (if seasonal)

The Project is not seasonal.

2.1.1 Days per Week and Hours of Operation

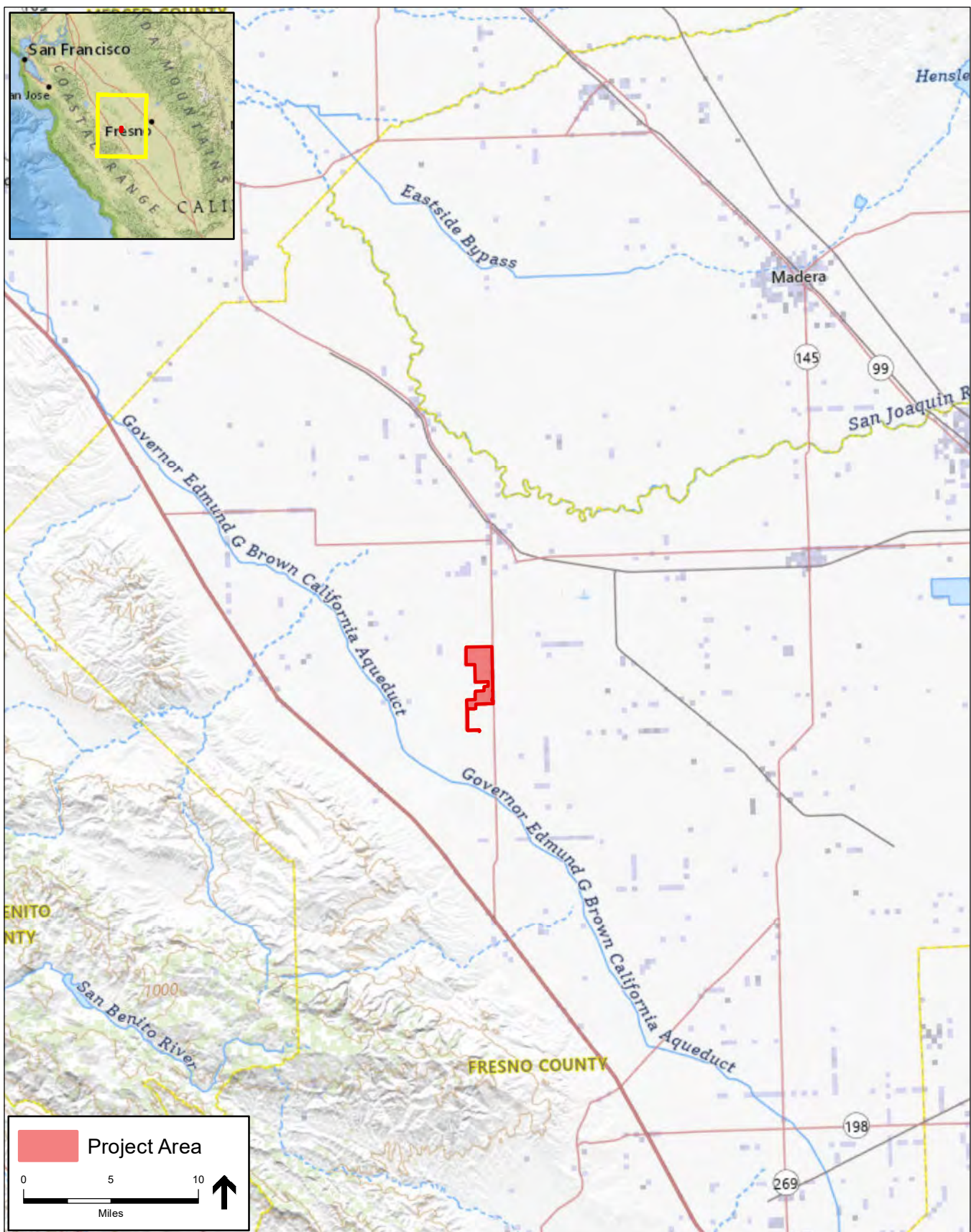
Operations would occur 7 days per week.

2.2 Special Activities

No special activities are included in the Project.

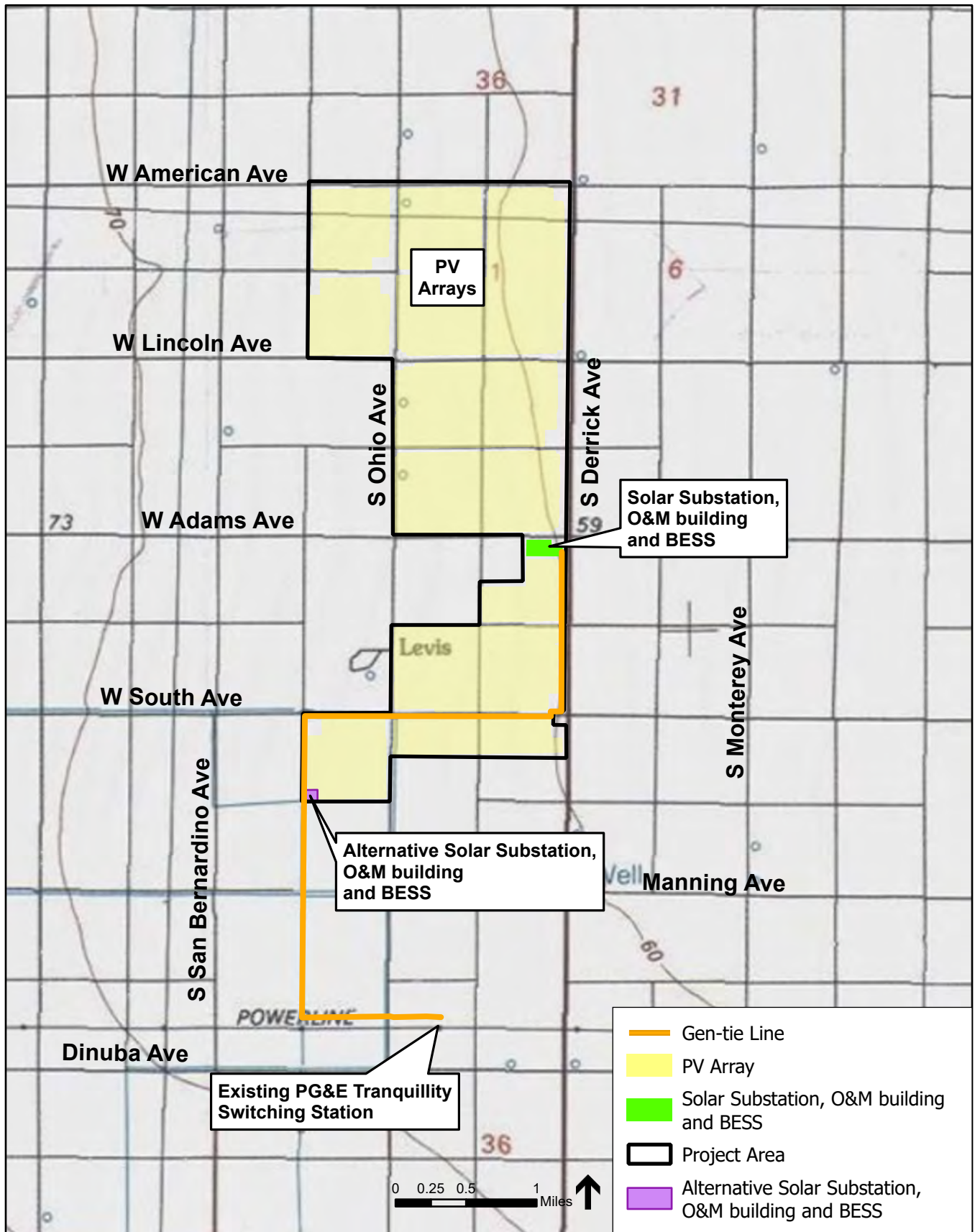
3 NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS OR VISITORS

No customers or visitors are anticipated on a regular basis, other than the employees and/or maintenance contractors.



SOURCE: USGS 7.5' Topographic Quadrangle (Coit Ranch, CA; Levis, CA; Mendota Dam, CA)

Heartland Solar Project
Figure 1
 Project Location



SOURCE: USGS 7.5' Topographic Quadrangle (Coit Ranch, CA; Levis, CA)

Heartland Solar Project
Figure 2
 Project Site

4 NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

Only occasional, onsite maintenance is expected to be required following commissioning. Initially, personnel would likely visit the Project area daily or weekly, but it is anticipated that eventually maintenance visits would be reduced to once a month or less. Operations and maintenance (O&M) activities would require up to four workers performing visual inspections, monitoring plant performance, executing minor repairs, and responding to needs for plant adjustment. On intermittent occasions, the presence of 5 to 30 workers may be required for repairs or replacement of equipment, panel cleaning, battery augmentation activities, and other specialized maintenance, mainly during daylight hours, as needed. However, due to the self-operating nature of the facilities, such actions would likely occur infrequently. No personnel would live onsite as a caretaker.

5 SERVICE AND DELIVERY VEHICLES

Approximately 8,500 truck trips are anticipated for construction. The expected maintenance would generate little traffic during operations. O&M vehicles would include light-duty trucks (e.g., pickup, flatbed) and other light equipment for maintenance and module washing. Heavy equipment would not be utilized during normal operation. Large or heavy equipment may be brought to the facility infrequently for equipment repair or replacement or vegetation control.

6 ACCESS TO THE SITE

Access to the Project area main entrance along W. Adams Avenue would be via Interstate 5 and State Route 33. Worker traffic may also use Interstate 5 and W. Manning Avenue, however construction equipment and material deliveries would be prohibited from using W. Manning Avenue. The Applicant plans to utilize existing interior access roads to the extent possible; however, these roads may be improved with the addition of an aggregate base or other native material with a soil stabilization material, if necessary. Interior and perimeter access routes would be approximately 20 feet wide.

7 PARKING

The O&M building is expected to be designed to accommodate parking for approximately seven cars.

8 GOODS TO BE SOLD ONSITE

No goods would be sold onsite. The Project's gen-tie transmission line would collect the energy from the solar arrays and transmit it from the Project substation to the existing PG&E-owned Tranquillity Switching Station.

9 EQUIPMENT TO BE USED

The Project would include a solar energy generating facility, direct current (DC) electricity to AC electricity power inverters and transformers or power conditioning stations, a Project onsite substation, BESS, and a connection to the PG&E-owned Tranquillity Switching Station. Major Project features are described below.

Other Project components include access roads, perimeter fences, telecommunications, a meteorological data collection system, signage, lighting, stormwater facilities, backup power system, and an O&M building. These components are also discussed in detail below.

9.1 Photovoltaic Modules and Support Structures

The solar facility would consist of Project PV or solar cells mounted on modules that track the sun (Figure 3). The PV cells on the trackers convert sunlight into electricity. When modules are mounted on tracking devices, they are referred to as trackers or tracker blocks. The trackers are organized in rows in a uniform grid pattern or solar array. The proposed Project would have multiple solar arrays interconnected to form a utility-scale PV system.

Figure 3. Typical Tracker Panel and Pier Design



The modules may be constructed of cadmium telluride semiconductors, also known as thin-film modules or crystalline silicon semiconductor modules. The PV modules would be dark blue, almost black in color, with minimal light reflection. A plastic binding material and metal frame will provide structural rigidity. The solar modules would be self-contained, durably constructed units designed to withstand exposure to the elements for a period of 35 years or greater. The solar modules deployed for use in the Project would be certified to comply with all industry standard quality testing. Modules would be electrically connected and grounded. The plant would be

designed in accordance with local and state codes and regulations. The final panel selection would be determined at the detailed Project-engineering phase.

To support the trackers, the Project would utilize a single-axis tracking system designed to optimize power production of the modules by ensuring proper orientation to the sun both daily and seasonally. Metal piers driven into the ground by a pile-driving machine support the single-axis tracking systems. Pier placement begins with a precise surveyed layout, ensuring proper positioning of remaining tracker assembly parts. Affixed to the top of each pier is a pier cap and bearing assembly that supports and allows proper movement of the torque tube assembly. Single-axis tracking systems require a drive system that provides directional force to the torque tube. This can be accomplished with either a mechanical or hydraulic drive arm and tube assembly that “pushes and pulls” the torque arm through its range of motion or by a geared assembly that redirects rotational force to the tubes. Both approaches require a small geared motor or hydraulic system mounted on a pile support or pad strong enough to move the system through its daily range of motions.

The trackers would be separated by distances to accommodate maintenance personnel and design parameters that meet applicable Fresno County fire safety requirements. Modules would be organized in rows in a uniform grid pattern, with each row separated by approximately 15 to 25 feet (from post to post). The module and tracker features allow for a natural light regime between and under the modules, supporting the co-management of solar energy generation, agriculture, and wildlife.

9.2 Power Conditioning Stations (Inverters and Transformers)

Individual PV tracker panels would be connected together in series to create a “string” of trackers carrying DC electricity using a combiner box. Inverters in the power conditioning stations (PCS) convert the DC electricity produced by the trackers to AC electricity. The PCS transformers then accumulate the AC electricity to the appropriate collection level voltage (34.5 kilovolt [kV]) for movement to the Project substation and eventual delivery to the electrical grid. The number of trackers connected to each PCS would vary with module output relative to inverter size and desired output from the PCS.

The number of trackers connected to each of the PCS varies with tracker output relative to inverter size and desired output from the PCS. The PCS would be distributed strategically throughout the Project site, and the inverters and transformers, as well as other electrical equipment that comprises each PCS, would be contained within electrical equipment enclosures.

Each inverter and transformer would be installed as per manufacturer’s requirements.

9.3 Substation

A substation would be constructed as part of the Project. The Project substation would include transformers, breakers, switches, meters, and related equipment. All interconnection equipment, including the control room if required, would be installed aboveground and within the footprint of the substation. The Project substation would be within an approximately 4-acre area with structures up to 120 feet in height.

The Project substation may also contain a control room building approximately 40 feet by 40 feet with an overall height of less than 15 feet. The substation would be surrounded by an 8-foot

barbed wire chain-link fence to comply with electrical codes. The control room may be outside the fenced area.

The Project substation must have access to communication systems in the area to comply with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission/California Independent System Operator utility monitoring and control requirements. Compliance may be accomplished by underground lines, aboveground lines, or using wireless technology.

9.4 Interconnection

To interconnect to the grid, the Project includes construction of a new 230-kV gen-tie transmission line that would extend from the onsite Project substation to the existing PG&E Tranquillity Switching Station. The gen-tie transmission line would be approximately 5 miles in length and include up to approximately 38 new poles each up to 200 feet in height. To interconnect and support the Project, PG&E would implement infrastructure improvements at the existing Tranquillity Switching Station, including installation of a new 230-kV breaker-and-a-half configuration within the switching station.

9.5 Energy Storage System

Energy storage system (ESS) components (batteries, etc.) are advantageous for renewable energy projects because they allow energy to be reliably fed to the grid from an otherwise intermittent energy production source. The ESS is expected to be located adjacent to the Project substation or distributed throughout the solar array at the inverter equipment pads or tracker rows. The battery enclosures would be no taller than approximately 10 feet tall and 30 feet wide regardless of final design. The color of the metal enclosure has not yet been determined; it typically varies by manufacturer.

The key components of the ESS are described below.

- **Batteries.** Individual lithium-ion cells form the core of the ESS. Cells are assembled either in series or parallel connection, in sealed battery modules. The battery modules would be installed in self-supporting racks electrically connected either in series or parallel to each other. The operating rack-level DC voltage currently ranges between 700 and 1,500 volts. The individual battery racks are connected in series or a parallel configuration to deliver the battery storage system energy and power rating.
- **System Enclosure and Controller.** The battery storage system enclosure would house the batteries described above, as well as the battery storage system controller. The battery storage system controller is a multilevel control system designed to provide a hierarchical system of controls for the battery modules, PCS, medium-voltage system, and up to the point of connection with the electrical grid. The controllers ensure that the battery storage system effectively mimics conventional turbine generators when responding to grid emergency conditions. The battery storage system enclosure would also house required heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and fire protection systems.
- **DC/DC Converter.** In a DC-coupled system, the DC/DC converter allows the connection of the battery storage system to the DC side of the PV inverter. The DC/DC converter manages the battery and PV bus voltage and provides appropriate protections for the PV inverter.

- **PCS - Inverter.** The PCS consists of an inverter, protection equipment, circuit breakers, air filter equipment, equipment terminals, and cabling. Electricity is transferred from the PV array (or power grid) to the Project batteries during a battery charging cycle and from the Project batteries to the power grid during a battery discharge cycle. The inverter is bi-directional, with the ability to convert power from AC to DC when the energy is transferred from the grid to the battery and from DC to AC when the energy is transferred from the battery to the grid. The inverter DC operating voltage would be between 700 and 1,500 volts, with a typical power rating of approximately 3,000 kilowatts. The inverter AC operating voltage may be approximately 630 volts AC nominal. Voltage is increased to medium-voltage levels (typically approximately 13 to 34.5 kV) when combined with a medium-voltage transformer. Voltage and power ratings are specific to the equipment manufacturer and product model. The installed equipment would be selected at a later date and therefore is subject to change.
- **Medium-Voltage Transformer.** A separate medium-voltage transformer may be present if not integrated into the inverter skid. This would be a pad-mounted transformer used to increase voltage on the AC side of the inverter from low to medium voltage. Medium-voltage transformers are used to increase the efficiency of power transmission associated with reduced resistive power losses at higher voltage.

The ESS would likely use one of several available lithium-ion technologies, though alternatives may be considered (such as flow batteries or fly-wheel technology) given continuing rapid technological change in the battery industry. In general, a lithium-ion battery is a rechargeable battery consisting of three major functional components: a positive electrode made from metal oxide, a negative electrode made from carbon, and an electrolyte made from lithium salt. Lithium ions move from negative to positive electrodes during discharging and in the opposite direction when charging. Five major lithium-ion battery sub-chemistries are commercially available:

- Lithium nickel cobalt aluminum (NCA)
- Lithium nickel manganese cobalt (NMC)
- Lithium manganese oxide (LMO)
- Lithium titanate oxide (LTO)
- Lithium iron phosphate (LFP)

Selection of the lithium-ion sub-chemistry for the Project would take into consideration various technical factors, including safety, lifespan, energy performance, and cost.

The proposed ESS would be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained in accordance with existing federal, state, and local regulations for health and safety. The Applicant would select batteries or ESS providers that comply with the application-specific codes, standards, and regulations for the siting, construction, and operation of lithium-ion stationary ESS.

The configuration of the safety system would be determined based on site-specific environmental factors and associated fire response strategy. The ESS would contain a safety system that would be triggered automatically when the system senses imminent fire danger. The fire safety system inside each enclosure would shut down the unit if any hazard indicators are detected. If the safety system detects a potential issue as detected by the smoke and temperature sensors, the batteries would be automatically deenergized by opening the electrical contacts, and HVAC units and fans are shut off. The enclosure wall is designed to contain the

fire, providing sufficient time for the fire to die down and allow the system to cool. Fire responders are trained to monitor fire from a safe distance using infrared cameras until temperature of the affected enclosure cools to ambient temperature.

9.6 Telecommunications

The Project would require connection with the existing local telecommunication service. A telecommunication line comprising fiber optic cable and/or 25-pair telephone line would be installed above and below ground, either attached to existing distribution lines or installed immediately adjacent to the Project substation. The telecommunication routes would use a combination of existing poles or new poles and below ground installations. Lines would be placed within utility franchise easements to the extent feasible. The point of interconnection to the existing telecommunication facilities would be in a small telephone/fiber optic vault. Interconnection to the Project would be within the Project substation. Below ground installations are usually installed 24 to 48 inches below grade. Aboveground lines are typically placed 6 feet below existing distribution lines or on new, adjacent wooden poles. Up to approximately 70 new wooden poles would need to be constructed if that option is utilized. Telecommunications may also be transmitted by a small wireless antenna, which would be placed at the Project substation.

9.7 Meteorological Data Collection System

The Project would require several meteorological data collection systems. The systems would include a variety of instruments to collect meteorological data, which would be mounted at various locations throughout the facility. Approximately five meteorological stations, each including an approximately 20-foot-tall meteorological tower and various sensors, would be installed. The towers would have a monopole design and require a concrete foundation measuring approximately 2 feet by 2 feet that would extend approximately 4 feet below the ground surface depending on soil conditions.

10 SUPPLIES, MATERIALS, AND STORAGE

An emergency generator for use in the event that the regional transmission system fails would be located at the substation; this emergency generator would provide emergency power until the regional transmission system restores operations. The generator would be powered by propane or diesel and is estimated to be 49 kilowatts or less in size. An approximately 220-gallon fuel tank would be immediately adjacent to the generator. Other materials and supplies would generally not be stored onsite.

11 DOES THE USE CAUSE AN UNSIGHTLY APPEARANCE

Operations of the Project would not cause an unsightly appearance or generate substantial noise, glare, dust, or odors.

11.1 Noise

The primary noise sources during the operation and maintenance of the Project would be the inverters, transformers, and BESS HVAC systems. The modeled noise levels at nearby residences would comply with the standards set forth in the Fresno County Noise Control Ordinance (Fresno County Code 8.40). Therefore, it is not anticipated that noise from the solar and BESS facilities would be impactful to any residential areas.

11.2 Glare and Lighting

The Project would use solar panels that have a low profile (typically 6 feet high, but generally no more than 13 feet high at the highest point during the day) to minimize visual impacts. These solar panels are designed to be anti-reflective.

Nighttime lighting impacts would be minimized by including only small lighting features that are equipped with on/off switches or motion detectors. The lighting impacts from such fixtures would be similar to those of domestic fixtures on local homes.

11.3 Dust

Onsite roads would be constructed with a scarified and compacted subgrade and treated with a soil binder to create a dustless or durable surface or may be surfaced in some areas with aggregate material or gravel. At the footing for the PCS pads, existing soil would be scarified and recompacted following recommendations of the geotechnical report. Water would be used for dust control as needed during construction.

11.4 Odor

The Project is not anticipated to generate any odors.

12 SOLID OR LIQUID WASTES TO BE PRODUCED

Sanitary facilities for operations would be provided through the septic system at the proposed O&M building. Other wastes from equipment replacement or other work would be minimal. Wastes would be removed from the site at the end of the day, or as needed, and disposed of at approved facilities.

13 WATER USE

During construction, 130,340,400 gallons of water (400 acre-feet) are anticipated to be required during a construction period of 40 months. This is a conservative estimate and it may be significantly less.

During operations, approximately 1,629,255 gallons (5 acre-feet) per year would be required for panel washing activities and general maintenance. The need for panel washing would be infrequent (e.g., months to years between washings) and determined based on operating considerations, including actual soiling of the PV panels and any expected benefit from cleaning. Should cleaning be necessary, demineralized water would be sprayed on the PV panels to remove dust, or a dry cleaning method may be used.

13.1 Source of Water

The specific sources of water supply for the Project would primarily include groundwater owned by Westlands Water District (WWD) and supplied via WWD infrastructure. This infrastructure would likely be one or more groundwater wells within the Project area or adjacent to it. It may also include the use of a water broker to find and facilitate the sale of supplemental surface water for Project use, which would be delivered via WWD municipal and industrial infrastructure.

14 SIGNAGE AND ADVERTISING

No advertising is proposed as part of the Project. Project signage is proposed to allow for the identification of the Project owner and for safety and security purposes. Signage is proposed to be installed on the fence or ground mounted in the vicinity of the main entry gates. Signage would identify the Project operator and owner and would provide emergency contact information. Small-scale signage would also be posted at the main entry gates and intermittently along the perimeter fencing on all exterior parcel boundaries, to indicate “No Trespassing” and “Private Property” for security purposes. All signage would conform to Fresno County signage requirements.

15 EXISTING BUILDINGS AND NEW BUILDINGS TO BE CONSTRUCTED

There are no existing buildings onsite. New buildings and structures would be constructed and used for operations, including a project substation and an O&M building.

15.1 Substation

The Project substation would be within an approximately 4-acre area. The substation may include one or more 230-kV transformers, transformer fluid containment area circuit breakers, capacitor banks, a 120-foot-tall microwave tower, lightning protection, and metering and a control enclosure(s).

15.2 Operations and Maintenance Building

The Project site would include an overall O&M area of up to 3,000 square feet. The O&M area would accommodate an O&M building, parking area for approximately seven cars, and other associated facilities such as aboveground water storage tanks, sanitary septic system, security gate, communications enclosures, storage containers, storage area, trash containers, and signage. The O&M building itself would house communication equipment, storage and equipment area, offices, restrooms, and necessary administrative, operation, and maintenance equipment and personnel. It would have a maximum height of 20 feet.

16 BUILDINGS USED IN THE OPERATION

The substation and O&M building would be used during operations.

17 OUTDOOR LIGHTING AND OUTDOOR SOUND AMPLIFICATION

Limited lighting is proposed on the Project site. Lighting would be used from dusk to dawn. Project lighting would be installed to allow for ongoing maintenance and security. Low-level lighting may be installed at entry and egress gates and at other strategic locations around the facility. Manually controlled lights would be installed at equipment pads and substations. All Project lighting would be shielded and directed downward to minimize the potential for glare or spillover onto adjacent ownerships. All lighting would conform to applicable Fresno County outdoor lighting codes.

Nighttime lighting impacts would be minimized by including only small lighting features that are equipped with on/off switches or motion detectors. The lighting impacts from such fixtures would be similar to those of domestic fixtures on local homes.

No outdoor sound amplification system is included as part of the Project.

18 LANDSCAPING AND FENCING

Chain-link fencing is proposed along the perimeter of the Project area. One foot of three-strand concertina wire may also be added to the perimeter fence if deemed necessary. The substation and BESS (if in centralized configuration) would be surrounded by an 8-foot barbed wire chain-link fence to comply with electrical codes. Access gates would be provided at each site entry road. No Project landscaping is proposed.

19 ADDITIONAL PROJECT OPERATIONS INFORMATION

19.1 Stormwater Facilities

The site drainage is designed to follow the natural drainage pattern, and none of the onsite facilities, including fences and panel posts, should prevent stormwater flow. Therefore, the Applicant anticipates that the Project would have very limited impact on site drainage. Onsite detention facilities will be designed based on County requirements.

19.2 Security

Onsite security would be achieved through a combination of fencing, lighting, security patrols, and/or security cameras and other electronic security monitoring systems as needed. The facilities would be secured with approximately 6- to 7-foot-high chain-link (or other wire) fencing, with the top 1 foot comprising barbed wire strands.

19.3 Vegetation Management

Combustible vegetation or agricultural products on and around the Project boundary would be actively managed by the Project owner or its affiliates during both the construction and operation phases of the Project to minimize fire risk. Combustible products would be either limited in height or removed. Additionally, the Project would include firebreaks around the site boundary in the form of access roads subject to Fresno County standards.

19.4 Emergency Response

An Emergency Response Plan would be included for construction and operations of the Project. The Emergency Response Plan is used to train local emergency response personnel during development and operations of the facility. The plan would be completed in accordance with existing state regulations (Health and Safety Code § 25504(b); 19 California Code of Regulations [CCR] §2731; 22 CCR §66262.34(a)(4)). The contents of the Emergency Response Plan would be developed in consultation with Fire Department and ESS Supplier and would comply with existing state regulations and include the following components and involve training for the local fire responders:

- Defined roles and responsibilities
- Potential emergency scenarios including fire
- Onsite training of fire personnel and onsite Project staff
- Training for local first responders

20 IDENTIFY ALL OWNERS, OFFICERS, AND/OR BOARD MEMBERS FOR EACH APPLICATION SUBMITTED

Please refer to Table 1 for a list of Heartland Solar LLC officers and members.

Table 1. Heartland Solar LLC Officers and Members

Name	Title	Title Role
Cornelius, Craig	President	Officer
Ryder, Steven	Vice President	Officer
Fox, Christopher	Vice President	Officer
Summa, Daniel	Vice President	Officer
Woody, John	Vice President	Officer
Hein, Jennifer	Secretary	Officer
DeMoranville, Justin	Authorized Signatory	Officer

**CEQA Findings of Fact for the Final Environmental Impact Report
Heartland Solar Project**

**State Clearinghouse No. 2022100609;
County EIR No. 7564; CUP No. 3630**

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

This statement of Findings of Fact (Findings) addresses the environmental impacts of the Heartland Solar Project, which consists of renewable photovoltaic (PV) solar energy generation and energy storage system facilities and interconnection to the regional energy grid. Proposed solar facilities would generate approximately 300 megawatts alternating current (MWAC) of solar PV energy and have capacity to store up to 300 MW of energy on approximately 2,362 acres of private land in western Fresno County. These facilities would interconnect to the regional electrical grid via an electrical generation-tie (gen-tie) line between the solar facility and the existing Tranquillity Switching Station, which is located approximately 1.25 miles south of the solar and energy storage facility site. The project would also require other necessary infrastructure work to support interconnection and upgrades within the existing Tranquillity Switching Station, owned and operated by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E).

These Findings are made pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under sections 21081, 21081.5, and 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code and section 15091 of the regulations implementing CEQA (the CEQA Guidelines; 14 Cal. Code Regs. section 15000 et seq.). Potentially significant impacts were identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and the Final EIR, based on facts cited therein and facts found in the complete record of proceedings. Public Resources Code section 21081 and section 15091 of the CEQA Guidelines require that the lead agency prepare written findings for identified significant impacts, accompanied by a brief explanation for the rationale for each finding. Fresno County (County) is the lead agency responsible for preparation of the EIR in compliance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. Section 15091 of the CEQA Guidelines states, in part:

- a) No public agency shall approve or carry out a project for which an EIR has been certified which identifies one or more significant environmental effects of the project unless the public agency makes one or more written findings for each of those significant effects, accompanied by a brief explanation of the rationale for each finding. The possible findings are:
 - 1. Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.
 - 2. Such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency.
 - 3. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the final EIR.

The “changes or alterations” referred to in CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1) may include any among the following variety of measures or actions set forth in CEQA Guidelines section 15370:

- a) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
- b) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.
- c) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment.
- d) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.
- e) Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

The Final EIR for the Project identified potentially significant effects that could result from Project implementation. However, the County finds that the inclusion of certain mitigation measures as part of Project approval will reduce all of those effects to less-than-significant levels.

In accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, the County adopts these Findings as part of its certification of the Final EIR for the Project. Pursuant to section 21082.1(c)(3) of the Public Resources Code, the County also finds that the Final EIR reflects the County’s independent judgment. As required by CEQA, the County, in adopting these Findings, also adopts a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the Project. The County finds that the MMRP, which is incorporated by reference and made a part of these Findings, meets the requirements of section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code by providing for the implementation and monitoring of measures intended to mitigate potentially significant effects of the Project.

B. Organization and Format of Findings

Section I, *Introduction*, explains the purpose of these Findings, describes the organization and format of this document, and provides a summary of the Project and background facts regarding the environmental review process.

Section II, *CEQA Findings of Independent Judgment*, discusses the CEQA findings of independent judgment:

- *Section II(A)* identifies the effects of the Project that were determined not to be significant and, therefore, not to require mitigation measures.
- *Section II(B)* identifies the potentially significant effects of the Project that would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level with implementation of identified mitigation measures.
- *Section II(C)* documents the County’s determination that the Project would result in no significant and unavoidable impacts.
- *Section II(D)* outlines findings regarding alternatives and identifies the feasibility of the alternatives to the Project that were analyzed in the EIR.
- *Section II(E)* makes the findings required by CEQA, including but not limited to findings related to the mitigation of significant adverse impacts and adoption of the MMRP, certification of the EIR, and the County’s exercise of its independent judgment.

C. Project Summary

Following publication of the Notice of Preparation in October, 2022, for the Heartland Hydrogen Project, a Notice of Project Modification was published on the Fresno County website clarifying the refined scope of the project (as currently proposed and evaluated in the environmental impact report). As revised, the Project is summarized below.

1. Project Description

The Applicant proposes to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission the Heartland Solar Project, which consists of renewable photovoltaic (PV) solar energy generation and energy storage system facilities and interconnection to the regional energy grid. Proposed solar facilities would generate approximately 300 megawatts alternating current (MWAC) of solar PV energy and have capacity to store up to 300 MW of energy on approximately 2,362 acres of private land in western Fresno County. These facilities would interconnect to the regional electrical grid via an electrical generation-tie (gen-tie) line between the solar facility and the existing Tranquillity Switching Station, which is located approximately 1.25 miles south of the solar and energy storage facility site. The project would also require other necessary infrastructure work to support interconnection and upgrades within the existing Tranquillity Switching Station, owned and operated by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E).

2. Project Location

The Project site is located approximately 6 miles southwest of the City of Mendota, 10 miles east of Interstate 5 (I-5), to the east of S. San Bernardino and Los Angeles avenues, south of W. American Avenue, west of State Route 33 (SR 33, also called S. Derrick Avenue), 0.5 mile north of W. Manning Avenue, and 1.25 miles north of the PG&E's Tranquillity Switching Station. The Project site is located across SR 33 from the existing Adams East solar facility and immediately north of the approved Luna Valley solar facility. The Tranquillity Switching Station is located near the northeast corner of the intersection of W. Dinuba Avenue and S. Ohio Avenue, within the boundaries of the Tranquillity Solar Generating Facility.

The Heartland Solar Project site is 2,362-acres and encompasses the following Fresno County Assessor's Parcel Numbers:

028-140-38	028-140-41	028-160-23	028-170-77	028-101-85
028-060-77	028-101-82	028-060-84		

The PG&E Components would include the PG&E owned portion of the gen-tie line (approximately 1,000 feet in length) and upgrades to the existing PG&E Tranquillity Switching Station on 2 acres of land (Fresno County Assessor's Parcel Number 028-101-81).

3. Project Approvals

The following authorizations or entitlements are expected to be necessary for the Project to proceed:

- **Fresno County**—County approval of Unclassified Conditional Use Permit No. 3630 for the Project.
- County approval to authorize abandonment or vacation of segments of unimproved County roads, including portions of S. Ohio Avenue, W. Lincoln Avenue, and W. South Avenue.

- County approvals also may be required if work is to be performed within a County right-of-way (i.e., an encroachment permit from the Road Maintenance and Operations Division of the Department of Public Works and Planning), along a County right-of-way (i.e., a franchise agreement) if necessary, or for the erection, demolition, or conversion of any building or structure (i.e., building and grading permits).
- **San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District** – District approval of Indirect Source Review, stationary and/or mobile sources may be required. San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District also may require submittal of a Construction Notification Form or submit and receive approval of a Dust Control Plan prior to commencing any earthmoving activities involving disturbance of at least 1 acre. Permits from the air district may be required for emergency diesel generators for the backup energy for the battery energy storage system.
- **California Department of Fish and Wildlife** – California Department of Fish and Wildlife authorization may be required pursuant to the agency’s lake and streambed alteration regulatory authority (Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq.) and/or if the proposed activities could result in *take* as defined in the California Endangered Species Act (Fish and Game Code Section 2050 et seq.).
- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** consultation/authorization may be required if the proposed activities could result in *take* as defined in the Federal Endangered Species Act.
- **Westlands Water District**—If Project features, including electrical facilities, would cross Westlands Water District’s (WWD) distribution system laterals 6L, 7L, or 8L, then compliance with WWD’s requirements for crossing a District lateral easement would be required. Since the WWD pipeline facilities are also within U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) easements, then approval from Reclamation would also be required in the form of a Letter of No Objection.
- **California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)**— For the PG&E Project, approval would be required to issue an Advice Letter pursuant to General Order 131-E authorizing PG&E to proceed with construction of the PG&E-owned portion of the generation-tie line and facilities within Tranquillity Switching Station
- **State Water Resources Control Board/Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board** – A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction General Storm Water Permit would be required for the Project and potentially the PG&E portion of the Project.

4. Project Objectives

The objectives for this Project can be found in Draft EIR Section 2.4, *Project Purpose and Objectives*, in Chapter 2, *Project Description*. The Project objectives are to:

1. Establish a photovoltaic (PV) renewable solar energy power-generating facility of a sufficient size and configuration to produce up to approximately 300 megawatts alternating current (MW_{AC}) of electricity in a cost-competitive manner.
2. Establish an energy storage system of a sufficient size and configuration to store up to approximately 300 MW_{AC} of electricity for at least four-hour discharge in a cost-competitive manner.
3. Assist California load-serving entities in meeting their obligations under California’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) Program and Senate Bill 100, which calls for 60 percent of all electricity sold in California to come from renewable sources by 2030, and 100 percent by 2045.

4. Assist California load-serving entities in meeting their obligations under the California Public Utilities Commission's Energy Storage Framework and Design Program.
5. Provide for the economically viable, commercial financeable, and environmentally beneficial use of lands.
6. Develop a renewable PV solar energy and energy storage project in proximity to transmission infrastructure in order to minimize environmental impacts.
7. Create jobs and tax revenue for Fresno County.

II. CEQA Findings of Independent Judgment

A. Impacts Determined Not to Be Significant

Section 15128 of the CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant. The EIR for the Project evaluated whether it would cause significant impacts on any of the resources identified in the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G environmental checklist and determined, based on substantial evidence in the record including information in the Final EIR, that the impacts identified below would not be significant based either on a finding of no impact or a finding of less-than-significant impact. Accordingly, no mitigation is required for these resources pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a).

1. Aesthetics

The Draft EIR Section 3.2 analyzed impacts related to Aesthetics. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that the following potential impacts have been determined not to be significant and so no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a): Project impacts on scenic vistas; scenic resources; the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings; and the creation of a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that the impacts of the Project on Aesthetics are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact.

2. Agriculture and Forestry Resources

The Draft EIR Section 3.3 analyzed impacts related to Agriculture and Forestry Resources. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that the following potential Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) for the following criteria evaluated: conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland) to non-agricultural use, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency; a conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract; conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government

Code section 51104[g]); the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; and other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that the impacts of the Project on Agriculture and Forestry Resources are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact.

3. Air Quality

The Draft EIR Section 3.4 analyzed impacts on Air Quality. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the Draft EIR, that potential Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) for the following criteria evaluated: a conflict with or obstruction of the implementation of the applicable air quality plan; a cumulatively considerable net increase of any nonattainment pollutant; violation of any air quality standard or substantial contribution to an existing or projected air quality violation; the exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; and other emissions (such as those leading to odors) affecting a substantial number of people.

The County also finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that potential impacts associated with the PG&E Project have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) for the following criteria evaluated: a conflict with or obstruction of the implementation of the applicable air quality plan; a cumulatively considerable net increase of any nonattainment pollutant; violation of any air quality standard or substantial contribution to an existing or projected air quality violation; the exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; and other emissions (such as those leading to odors) affecting a substantial number of people.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that these impacts of the Project on Air Quality are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact in these areas.

4. Biological Resources

The Draft EIR Section 3.5 analyzed impacts on Biological Resources. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that potential Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) for the following criteria evaluated: Riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act; interference with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, established wildlife corridors, or native wildlife nursery sites; and conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

The County also finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that impacts of the PG&E Project on biological resources have been determined not to be significant and

no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a).

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that these impacts of the Project on these Biological Resources would not be significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact in these areas.

5. Energy

Draft EIR Section 3.7 analyzed impacts on Energy. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required related to a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources; and conflict with or obstruction of a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a).

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that the impacts of the Project on Energy are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact.

6. Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources

Draft EIR Section 3.8 analyzed impacts related to Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that the Project impacts on Geology and Soils have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) for the following criteria: the direct or indirect causation of potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, landslides, or strong seismic ground shaking or seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction; substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil; potential to result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse as a result of being located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project; the creation of substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property as a result of being located on expansive soil, as defined in California Building Code (2019) section 1803.5.3; and having soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal system where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that these impacts of the Project on Geology and Soils are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact.

7. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Draft EIR Section 3.9 analyzed impacts related to Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) for the following criteria: The generation of GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment; and

conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that the impacts of the Project related to GHG emissions are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact.

8. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Draft EIR Section 3.10 analyzed impacts related to Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) for the following criteria: Hazardous emissions or the handling of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school; location on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5; a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area due to its being located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport; and impairment of the implementation of or physical interference with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that these impacts of the Project related to Hazards and Hazardous Materials are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact related to hazards and hazardous materials.

9. Hydrology and Water Quality

Draft EIR Section 3.11 analyzed impacts on Hydrology and Water Quality. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) for the following criteria: Impedance of the sustainable groundwater management of the basin as a result of causing a substantial decrease in groundwater supplies or substantial interference with groundwater recharge; and risk the release of pollutants due to Project inundation as a result of being located in a flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zone.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that these impacts of the Project on Hydrology and Water Quality are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact related to these resources.

10. Land Use and Planning

Draft EIR Section 3.12 analyzed impacts on Land Use and Planning. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that the Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) related to the following: The physical division of an established community; and a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that the impacts of the Project on Land Use and Planning are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact.

11. Mineral Resources

Draft EIR Section 3.13 analyzed impacts on Mineral Resources. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) related to the following: The loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state; and the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that the impacts of the Project on Mineral Resources are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact.

12. Noise

Draft EIR Section 3.14 analyzed impacts related to Noise. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) related to the following criteria: Exposure of people and/or structures to excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels; and exposure of people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels as a result of the Project's location within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that these impacts of the Project on Noise are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact.

13. Population and Housing

The Draft EIR Section 3.15 analyzed impacts on Population and Housing. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) related to the following criteria: The inducement of substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly or indirectly; and displacement of substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that the impacts of the Project on Population and Housing are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact.

14. Public Services

Draft EIR Section 3.16 analyzed impacts on Public Services. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) related to the following considerations: The potential for the Project to result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities or a need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, or other public facilities.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that the impacts of the Project on Public Services are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact.

15. Recreation

Draft EIR Section 3.17 analyzed impacts on Recreation. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) for the following criteria: Increased use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; and the inclusion of recreational facilities or a requirement that new or expanded recreational facilities be constructed, where the construction could have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that the impacts of the Project on Recreation are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact.

16. Transportation

Draft EIR Section 3.18 analyzed impacts on Transportation. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) for the following: Generation of vehicle miles traveled; a substantial increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses; and inadequate emergency access.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that the impacts of the Project on Transportation are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact in these areas.

17. Utilities and Service Systems

Draft EIR Section 3.19 analyzed impacts on Utilities and Service Systems. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR, that Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section

21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) for the following criteria: A significant environmental effect as a result of requiring or resulting in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities; sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years; a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the Project that it does not have adequate capacity to serve the Project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments; the generation of solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or other impairment of the attainment of solid waste reduction goals; and compliance with federal, state, and local solid waste management and reduction statutes and regulations.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that these impacts of the Project on Utilities and Service Systems are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact in these areas.

18. Wildfire

Draft EIR Section 3.20 analyzed impacts on Wildfire. The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, including information in the EIR and other information received by public agencies, that Project impacts have been determined not to be significant and no mitigation is required pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a) for the following criteria: Exposure of Project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, or other exacerbation of wildfire risks; exacerbation of fire risk or creation of temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment as a result of the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities); and the exposure of people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

Finding: The County finds, based upon substantial evidence in the record, that these impacts of the Project on Wildfire are not significant, and that no mitigation measures are required to ensure that the Project would not cause a significant impact.

B. Significant Impacts that Can Be Mitigated to a Less-than-Significant Level

Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a) and section 15091(a)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines, the County finds that, for each of the following potential significant impacts identified in the EIR, changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid the identified significant impact on the environment or reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level. These findings are explained below and are supported by substantial evidence in the record of proceedings.

1. Biological Resources (Special-Status Species and Nesting Birds)

The analysis of impacts on Biological Resources in Draft EIR Section 3.5 determined that the Project would have a substantial adverse direct or indirect impact on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species and nesting birds in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS, at the Project level as well as cumulatively.

Special-status mammals, notably San Joaquin kit fox and American badger, have low potential to occur on-site due to disking and lack of loose soils for burrowing, but may occasionally transit the site and use the suitable burrows which were present on the fringe of agricultural fields. Should these species be present during construction, they could be injured or killed by vehicles or equipment. In addition, during either construction or operation, workers on the construction site could inadvertently harm these animals by entrapping them, damaging habitat outside work areas, speeding, or leaving trash on the site. These impacts would be potentially significant but would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by the implementation of **Mitigation Measure 3.5-1: Protection of San Joaquin Kit Fox, Burrowing Owl, and American Badger During Construction** and **Mitigation Measure 3.5-2: Worker Environmental Awareness Program Training and Best Management Practices for Biological Resources**.

The Project site has several trees that have been used for nesting by Swainson's hawk and other raptors, as well as special-status nesting birds and protected migratory birds. While many potential Swainson's hawk nests identified during prior surveys are no longer present, suitable foraging and nesting habitat for this species occurs within and within 0.5 mile of the Project site; therefore, these birds have the potential to be disturbed by Project construction. Potentially significant direct effects on nesting birds, including Swainson's hawk, would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through implementation of **Mitigation Measure 3.5-3: Protection of Nesting Birds, including Swainson's Hawk**. This mitigation measure would reduce impacts on Swainson's hawk to a less-than-significant level through requiring preconstruction nesting bird surveys for Swainson's hawk. If active Swainson's hawk nests are identified, a 0.5-mile buffer would be established and no construction within the buffer would be allowed until a qualified biologist has determined that the nest is no longer active.

The results of the habitat assessment and winter season protocol survey for burrowing owl (Draft EIR Appendix E5) indicate that discrete portions of the Project perimeter along existing drainage ditches that are not tilled support burrowing owl during the overwintering season. The potential exists for Project activities to affect the species due to direct impacts or substantial indirect impacts, such as direct encounters with moving vehicles, burrow collapse from equipment, nest abandonment, and/or entrapment in construction materials. **Mitigation Measure 3.5-1** and **Mitigation Measure 3.5-2** would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level by requiring preconstruction surveys for burrowing owl; if any burrowing owls are identified, an avoidance buffer would be implemented.

Migratory nesting birds have limited potential to nest on the site due to regular disturbances associated with disking and limited nesting sites. However, to minimize any potential impacts on nesting birds, preconstruction nesting bird surveys would be implemented as required by **Mitigation Measure 3.5-3**, and appropriate avoidance buffers around active nests would be implemented to ensure avoidance of the nest.

Bats, including special-status bats, have the potential to occur at the Project site. However, due to the rarity of trees and structures, bat roosting habitat is very limited on the Project site. Presence of bats on the site is anticipated to be limited to flyovers while foraging, or occasional night-time roosting on mature trees. With implementation of **Mitigation Measure 3.5-2**, workers would be informed about the potential for wildlife species including bats to roost on the Project site, and best management practices such as limiting areas of disturbance, trash abatement, and avoiding the intentional killing or collection of wildlife would minimize the potential for impacts to bats and other wildlife species.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-1: Protection of San Joaquin Kit Fox, Burrowing Owl and American Badger During Construction.

San Joaquin kit fox and American badger: Preconstruction surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist for the presence of San Joaquin kit fox and American badger 14 to 30 days prior to commencement of construction activities pursuant to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (2011) Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the Endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance. The surveys shall be conducted in areas of suitable habitat for San Joaquin kit fox and American badger. Surveys need not be conducted for all areas of suitable habitat at one time; they may be phased so that surveys occur 14 to 30 days prior to disturbance within active portions of the site. If no Known, Potential, or Natal/pupping San Joaquin kit fox or American badger dens are identified (as those terms are defined in USFWS [2011]), then no further mitigation is required. If potential dens are observed and avoidance is determined to be feasible (as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15364 consistent with the USFWS [2011] Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the Endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance) by a qualified biologist in consultation with the Project owner and the County, buffer distances shall be established prior to construction activities.

If avoidance of the potential dens is not feasible, the following measures shall be implemented to avoid potential adverse effects to the San Joaquin kit fox or American badger:

- If the qualified biologist identifies known or natal/pupping dens occupied by San Joaquin kit fox, the Project owner shall initiate consultation with USFWS and CDFW to discuss how to avoid take or, if take avoidance is not feasible, to acquire an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) pursuant to federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 and California Fish and Game Code section 2081(b), prior to initiating or resuming ground-disturbing activities.
- If the qualified biologist identifies dens occupied by American badger, an on-site passive relocation program shall be implemented in coordination with CDFW. This program shall consist of excluding badgers from occupied burrows by installation of one-way doors at burrow entrances, monitoring of the burrow for 72 hours to confirm usage has been discontinued, and excavation and collapse of the burrow to prevent reoccupation. After the qualified biologist determines that the badgers have stopped using active dens within the Project boundary, the dens shall be hand-excavated.

Burrowing owl: The Project owner shall have burrowing owl surveys performed within 14 days before the initiation of equipment staging or ground-disturbing activities. A qualified wildlife biologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys on the site and immediate vicinity only in areas of the site with suitable burrowing habitat to locate any active breeding or wintering burrowing owl burrows, no fewer than 14 days prior to initial ground-disturbing activities (e.g., vegetation clearance, grading, tilling). Areas that have been plowed within 12 months prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities are not considered suitable habitat. The survey methodology shall be consistent with the methods outlined in the Appendix D of the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG; 2012) *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation*, or latest appropriate guidance documents, with regard to transect spacing, weather conditions, and time of day requirements. If the work activity halts for a period of 14 days or more, the survey would need to be conducted again prior to the continuation of site activities. Copies of the survey results shall be submitted to CDFW and the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning.

- If inactive (unoccupied) burrowing owl burrows are detected any time of the year, the burrows may be excavated by hand with a shovel or covered (i.e., with sandbags) to prevent

burrowing owls from re-using them during construction. The burrow's inactive status will be determined by the approved biologist through monitoring prior to burrow excavation.

- If active (occupied) burrowing owl burrows are detected, no ground-disturbing activities, such as vegetation clearance, grading, or other construction activities, shall be permitted within a no-disturbance buffer around the burrow. The size of any employed no-disturbance buffers will be in accordance with the recommended restricted activity dates and setback distances by level of disturbance for burrowing owls outlined in the CDFG (2008) *Guidance for Burrowing Owl Conservation*:
 - o 75 meters (250 feet) from occupied burrows during breeding season, and
 - o 50 meters (160 feet) from occupied burrows during non-breeding season.
- Occupied burrowing owl burrows shall be regularly monitored by a qualified biologist or biological monitor throughout project construction. Depending on the level of disturbance and its duration, visual and auditory screening, and similar, a larger or smaller buffer may be established by a qualified biologist in coordination with CDFW based on the visibility and sensitivity responses of each individual burrowing owl.
- If active burrowing owl avoidance is infeasible, then the project owner shall consult with CDFW regarding potential for project activities to result in take of burrowing owl and shall comply with all avoidance, minimization, and compensatory mitigation requirements set forth in any ITP issued for the project by CDFW authorizing take of the species.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-2: Worker Environmental Awareness Program Training and Best Management Practices for Biological Resources

During construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of the facility, the Project owner and/or contractor shall implement the following general avoidance and protective measures to protect San Joaquin kit fox and other special-status wildlife species:

- Prior to the issuance of grading or building permits and for the duration of construction activities, the Project owner, or its contractor, shall implement a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) to train construction personnel how to recognize and protect biological resources on the Project site. The WEAP training shall include a review of the special-status species and other sensitive biological resources that could exist in the Project area, the locations of sensitive biological resources and their legal status and protections, and measures to be implemented for avoidance of these sensitive resources, highlighting San Joaquin kit fox, Swainson's hawk, burrowing owl, and loggerhead shrike.
- The Project owner shall limit the areas of disturbance. Parking areas, new roads, staging, storage, excavation, and disposal site locations shall be confined to the smallest areas possible. All proposed impact areas, including solar fields, staging areas, access routes, and disposal or temporary placement of spoils, shall be delineated with stakes and/or flagging prior to construction to avoid special-status species where feasible. Construction-related activities, vehicles, and equipment outside of the impact zone shall be avoided. These areas shall be flagged, and disturbance activities, vehicles, and equipment shall be confined to these flagged areas.
- To prevent inadvertent entrapment of wildlife during construction, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches with a 2-foot or greater depth shall be covered with plywood or similar materials at the close of each working day or provided with one or more escape ramps constructed of earth fill or wooden planks. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they shall

be thoroughly inspected by the approved biological monitor for trapped animals. If trapped animals are observed, escape ramps or structures shall be installed immediately to allow escape. If a listed species is trapped, the USFWS and/or CDFW shall be contacted immediately.

- All construction pipes, culverts, or similar structures with a 4-inch or greater diameter that are stored at a construction site for one or more overnight periods shall be thoroughly inspected for special-status wildlife or nesting birds before the pipe is subsequently buried, capped, or left in the vicinity.

Intentional killing or collection of any wildlife species shall be prohibited.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-3: Protection of Nesting Birds, including Swainson's Hawk

If construction is scheduled to commence outside of nesting season (September 16 to January 31; September 16 to February 28 for Swainson's hawk), no preconstruction surveys or additional measures are required for nesting birds, including Swainson's hawk and other raptors. Trees that have documented usage by Swainson's hawks as nesting trees within the past 5 years shall not be removed.

During the breeding season (February 1 to September 15; March 1 to September 15 for Swainson's hawk), in order to avoid impacts to nesting birds in the Project site and immediate vicinity, a qualified wildlife biologist shall conduct preconstruction surveys of all potential nesting habitat within the Project site where vegetation removal or ground disturbance is planned. The survey shall focus on potential nest sites and cover an area up to 0.5-mile buffer around the site for Swainson's hawk, 500 feet for common raptors, and 250 feet for passerines in areas where access to neighboring properties is available or visible using a spotting scope or binoculars. Surveys shall be conducted no more than 10 working days prior to construction activities. If construction is halted for 10 working days or more, the area shall be re-surveyed prior to re-initiating work. Swainson's hawk surveys shall follow CDFW-approved methodology (SWHA TAC 2000).

Surveys need not be conducted for the entire Project site at one time; they may be phased so that each work area is surveyed no more than 10 working days prior to the start of construction in that area. The surveying biologist must be qualified to determine the status and stage of nesting by migratory birds and all locally breeding raptor species without causing intrusive disturbance. If active nests are found, a suitable buffer (500 feet for common raptors; 0.5 mile for Swainson's hawk; 250 feet for passerines) shall be established around active nests and no construction within the buffer allowed until a qualified biologist has completed an assessment of the potential for current construction activities to impact the nest. The assessment would consider the type of construction activities (e.g., noise levels and duration), the location of construction relative to the nest and pre-existing disturbance levels (e.g., construction activities in historically agricultural land versus activities in non-agricultural land), the visibility of construction activities from the nest location (e.g., topography or vegetation that could block line-of-sight to the nest), the number of construction personnel required to perform activities within the setback, and other existing disturbances in the area that are not related to construction activities of this project. Based on this assessment, the biologist will determine if construction activities can proceed and the level of nest monitoring required. When conducting the assessment, the biologist will consider the following levels of construction activity, with higher levels of activity requiring greater caution in determining setbacks:

- Light construction activity such as fence installation and limited vehicle access. Noise levels generated by these construction activities would likely be similar to existing ambient noise levels in closer proximity to the occupied nests.
- Moderate and/or isolated construction activity such as grading and construction of substation, substation-access road, inverter skids, and manual installation of solar panels. Noise levels generated by these construction activities would likely be similar to existing ambient noise levels beyond a moderate distance from the occupied nests.
- Heavy construction activity across a large area of the Project and/or using louder equipment such as concrete saws, or jackhammers. Noise levels for this type of activity will depend on location of the activities relative to the nest and allowing these activities within the 0.5-mile setback would require coordination with CDFW.

In the event the assessment determines that construction activities could occur closer than 0.5 miles to an active Swainson's hawk nest, in no event would construction activities occur within 500 feet of an active nest without coordination with CDFW. Full-time monitoring to evaluate the effects of construction activities on nesting Swainson's hawks would be required where activity occurs closer than 0.5 miles. The qualified biologist shall have the authority to stop work if it is determined that project construction is disturbing nesting activities. These buffers may need to increase depending on the sensitivity of the nesting Swainson's hawk to disturbances and at the discretion of the qualified biologist. No avoidance would be needed if construction occurs near a known Swainson's hawk nest outside of the Swainson's hawk nesting season. In the event take cannot be avoided, the proponent shall confer with CDFW on the need for an incidental take permit and will comply with any specific-specific minimization and avoidance measures identified in the issued incidental take permit prior to the removal of active nest trees.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measures 3.5-1, 3.5-2, and 3.5-3** are feasible, will reduce the Project's potential significant impact on special-status species to a less-than-significant level, and is adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.5-1, 3.5-2, and 3.5-3 would reduce potential significant impacts of the Project to a less-than-significant level because impacts on special-status species and nesting birds would be avoided or minimized by fencing, worker education, surveys and avoidance of potentially occupied habitat and burrows.

2. Biological Resources (Local Policies/Ordinances)

The analysis of impacts on Biological Resources in Draft EIR Section 3.5 determined that the Project could conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, at the Project level as well as cumulatively.

The County also has policies protecting fish and wildlife habitat (Fresno County General Plan Goal OS-E). The Heartland Solar Project site does not contain any fish habitat. The Project site and immediate vicinity contain active and potential nesting habitat for Swainson's hawk, burrowing owl, other raptors and migratory birds, including loggerhead shrike, as well as suitable denning habitat for wildlife species, including San Joaquin kit fox. Implementation of the preconstruction wildlife surveys, worker

environmental awareness and wildlife avoidance and protection measures described in **Mitigation Measures 3.5-1** through **3.5-3**, would avoid or minimize potential impacts to these species and ensure compliance with General Plan Goal OS-E. Therefore, with mitigation incorporated, the Project would not conflict with local policies and ordinances protecting biological resources.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measures 3.5-1, 3.5-2, and 3.5-3** are feasible, will reduce the Project's potential significant impact relating to compliance with General Plan Goal OS-E to a less-than-significant level, and are adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.5-1, 3.5-2, and 3.5-3 will reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level because the Project will avoid or minimize effects on wildlife species from the construction and operation of the solar facility, thus avoiding conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.

3. Cultural Resources (Historical/Archaeological Resources)

The analysis of impacts on Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources in Draft EIR Section 3.6 determined that ground-disturbing activities associated with the Project could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a newly-discovered historical or archaeological resource, as defined in CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5.

The Project could cause an impact on previously unknown, buried archaeological resources due to construction activities, pole placement, or other ground-disturbing activities. According to the geoarchaeological review and analysis conducted for the EIR, the Project site has low sensitivity for buried archaeological resources based on the geomorphology, proximity to water, and landform slope. Nonetheless, given that the general vicinity is covered by Holocene basin and fan deposits, which have been deposited over the course of known human occupation in the region, there is a possibility that the deposition of soils has buried pre-contact archaeological sites that once existed on the surface. Therefore, although overall there is a low probability of significant pre-contact resources existing within the Project site, there nevertheless exists the possibility that buried archaeological resources may be encountered during ground disturbing activities.

If an unknown archaeological resource is discovered during ground-disturbing activities required for construction or operation and maintenance of the Project, significant impacts could occur. With the implementation of **Mitigation Measure 3.6-1: Cultural Resources Awareness Training**, which requires the retention of a qualified archaeologist and cultural resources awareness training, and **Mitigation Measure 3.6-2: Inadvertent Discovery of Cultural Resources**, which governs procedures in the event of inadvertent discovery of archaeological materials, impacts to any newly discovered historical or unique archaeological resources would be reduced to less than significant.

Decommissioning and reclamation of the Project and restoration of the Project site would not impact historical or unique archaeological resources. Ground disturbance associated with these activities would occur within soils previously disturbed by construction and subject to Mitigation Measures 3.6-1 and 3.6-2.

Mitigation Measure 3.6-1: Cultural Resources Awareness Training

The Heartland Solar Project owner shall retain a Secretary of Interior qualified Project Archaeologist(s) to carry out all mitigation measures related to archaeological and historical resources during construction of their respective project components.

Prior to the start of any ground-disturbing activities, the Heartland Solar Project owner shall ensure that the qualified archaeologist(s) has prepared and conducted a Cultural Resources Awareness Training for all construction personnel working on the Project. A Native American-designated representative from the Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi-Yokut Tribe will be invited to attend and provide a Tribal perspective regarding tribal cultural resources for the training. The lead archaeologist will present the initial briefing of the cultural resources sensitivity training at the construction orientation program given to all personnel working on the proposed Project. The Project proponent/operator shall ensure all new employees or on-site workers who have not participated in earlier cultural resources sensitivity training will receive the training prior to working on the construction site. A copy of the cultural resources sensitivity training guide/materials shall be kept on-site and available for all personnel to review and become familiar with as necessary. The training shall include:

- An overview of applicable laws and penalties pertaining to disturbing or collecting cultural resources.
- A brief discussion of the prehistoric and historic regional context and archaeological sensitivity of the area, and potential cultural resources that could be encountered during ground disturbing activities to facilitate worker recognition.
- Instruction that workers will halt construction in the event of a cultural resource inadvertent discovery (see Mitigation Measure 3.6-2), and notification procedures of Project personnel (i.e., Project Archaeologist, and others as appropriate including the PG&E Cultural Resource Specialist if the resource is located within the PG&E scope components).
- Roles and responsibilities of the Project Archaeologist and Archaeological and Tribal Monitors (see Mitigation Measure 3.6-2).

A sign-in sheet shall be completed, retained by the Heartland Solar Project construction contractor for the duration of Heartland Solar Project construction to demonstrate attendance at the awareness training, and provided to the County upon the completion of Project construction (as appropriate).

Mitigation Measure 3.6-2: Inadvertent Discovery of Cultural Resources

In the event archaeological materials are encountered during Heartland Solar Project activities, the Heartland Solar Project construction contractor shall immediately cease any ground disturbing activities within 100 feet of the find. The Project Archaeologist, in coordination with the Native American-designated representative from the Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi-Yokut Tribe and the PG&E Cultural Resource Specialist (as appropriate), shall evaluate the significance of the resources for California Register of Historical Resources eligibility and recommend appropriate treatment measures to the County and the Applicant. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(b)(3)(C), if it is demonstrated that resources cannot be avoided, the Project Archaeologist shall, in coordination with a Native American-designated representative from the Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi-Yokut Tribe and the PG&E Cultural Resource Specialist (as appropriate), develop additional treatment measures in consultation with the County, which may include data recovery or other appropriate measures. The County shall consult with appropriate Native American representatives in determining appropriate treatment for unearthed cultural

resources if the resources are pre-contact, tribal cultural resources, or Native American in nature. The Project Archaeologist shall prepare a report documenting evaluation and/or additional treatment of the resource. A copy of the report shall be provided to the County and to the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center. Construction can recommence based on direction of the Project Archaeologist with the County's agreement.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measures 3.6-1 and 3.6-2** are feasible, will reduce the Project's potential significant impact on significant tribal cultural resources to a less-than-significant level, and are adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.6-1 and 3.6-2 will result in the training of all construction personnel involved in ground-disturbing activities in the identification and notification process in the event of the identification of archaeological deposits and human remains. Because any potential archaeological resources identified that could be considered tribal cultural resources would be evaluated and treated, and because consultation with Native American representatives would occur to determine appropriate treatment, the impact would be reduced to less than significant.

4. Cultural Resources (Human Remains)

The analysis of impacts on Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources in Draft EIR Section 3.6 determined that ground disturbing activities associated with the Project could result in damage to previously unidentified human remains.

There is no indication that the Project site has been used for human burial purposes in the recent or distant past. However, in the event that human remains are discovered, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries, the human remains could be inadvertently damaged, which would be a significant impact. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure 3.6-3: Inadvertent Discovery of Human Remains** would help ensure that any human remains encountered pursuant to the Project are appropriately addressed, thus reducing any potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure 3.6-3: Inadvertent Discovery of Human Remains

Existing law (Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5) requires that if human remains are uncovered during Heartland Solar Project activities, the Heartland Solar Project construction contractor shall immediately halt work within 100 feet of the find, immediately contact the Fresno County Coroner to determine whether the remains are subject to the coroner's authority, and adhere to the procedures and protocols set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(e)(1 and 2), as applicable. If the County Coroner determines that the remains are Native American in origin, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) will be notified, in accordance with Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5(c), and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 (as amended). The NAHC shall designate a Most Likely Descendant (MLD) for the remains per Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, and in accordance with generally accepted cultural or archaeological standards or practices, the landowner shall ensure that the immediate vicinity of the Native American human remains, is not damaged or disturbed by further development activity until the landowner has discussed and conferred with the MLD regarding their recommendation for the disposition of the remains, taking into account the possibility of multiple human remains.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measure 3.6-3** is feasible, will reduce the Project's potential significant impact on significant tribal cultural resources to a less-than-significant level, and are adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.6-3 would require the Project owner to immediately halt work, contact the Fresno County coroner to evaluate the remains, and follow the procedures and protocols set forth in CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5(e). Compliance with the independently enforceable laws described above would help ensure that any human remains encountered pursuant to the Project are appropriately addressed; therefore, any potential impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

5. Tribal Cultural Resources

The analysis of impacts on Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources in Draft EIR Section 3.6 determined that ground disturbing activities associated with the Heartland Solar Project could cause a substantial adverse change to tribal cultural resources, as defined in Public Resources Code section 21074(a).

A tribal consultation letter from the Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi-Yokut Tribe requested the crew receive a cultural presentation prior to construction, that to have an Archaeological and Native American monitor be present during ground disturbance, and that salt grass be included in the revegetation seed mix. The results of the records search conducted at the SSJVIC identified four pre-contact archaeological isolates within 0.5-mile of the Heartland Solar Project site, and five pre-contact archaeological isolates have been identified during field survey (Draft EIR Section 3.6.3.2). A letter from the NAHC stated that a review of the Sacred Lands File failed to identify any Native American resources in the vicinity of the Project.

In light of the nature and the disturbed character of the Heartland Solar Project site, tribal cultural resources, if present, are anticipated to be subsurface pre-contact archaeological resources, potentially including human remains. However, no such subsurface pre-contact resources have been documented within, or in the immediate vicinity of, the Project site. If not discovered prior to development, such resources could be damaged or destroyed through earthwork, ground disturbance, or other subsurface construction activities. Damage to or loss of tribal cultural resources would be a potentially significant impact. Implementation of **Mitigation Measures 3.6-1, 3.6-2, 3.6-3, and 3.6-4** would ensure that any encountered archaeological resources at the Project site that are considered tribal cultural resources would be appropriately addressed, thus reducing any potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure 3.6-4: In addition to implementing Mitigation Measures 3.6-1, 3.6-2, and 3.6-3, the Project owner shall retain a Secretary of the Interior (SOI)-qualified Project Archaeologist to prepare and implement a Cultural Resource Monitoring Plan (Plan) and coordinate and schedule archaeological monitoring during Project construction. The plan will be submitted to the County for review and approval. The plan will include a requirement for monitoring, as determined by the Project Archaeologist, of initial Project ground-disturbing activities of previously undisturbed soils by a qualified archaeologist and a Native American-

designated monitor, if participating. The plan will include (but not be limited to) the following components:

- The identification and qualifications of person(s) responsible for conducting monitoring activities, including a request to the Native American Tribe for a Native American-designated monitor.
- The identification of person(s) responsible for overseeing and directing the monitors.
- Monitoring protocols and procedures and the required format and content of monitoring logs.
- The schedule for submittal of monitoring logs and identification of person(s) responsible for review and approval of monitoring logs.
- A protocol for notifications in the event cultural resources are encountered, as well as methods of dealing with the encountered resources (e.g., collection, identification, curation).
- Methods to ensure the security of cultural resources sites.
- A protocol for notifying local authorities (i.e., Sheriff, Police) should site looting and other illegal activities occur during construction.
- Protocols and procedures for a final monitoring report that summarizes the duration of monitoring activities, all daily monitoring logs, any inadvertent discoveries, and associated reporting. This report will be submitted to the County and, once finalized, to the SSJVIC.

During the course of the monitoring, the Project Archaeologist may adjust the frequency, from continuous to intermittent, of the monitoring based on the conditions and professional judgment regarding the potential to impact resources, with consideration of the judgment of the tribal monitor.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measures 3.6-1, 3.6-2, 3.6-3, and 3.6-4** are feasible, will reduce the Project's potential significant impact on significant tribal cultural resources to a less-than-significant level, and are adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.6-1, 3.6-2, 3.6-3, and 3.6-4 will result in the training of all construction personnel involved in ground-disturbing activities in the identification and notification process in the event of the identification of archaeological deposits and human remains. Because any potential archaeological resources identified that could be considered tribal cultural resources would be evaluated and treated, and because consultation with Native American representatives would occur to determine appropriate treatment, the impact would be reduced to less than significant.

6. Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources (Paleontological Resources)

The analysis of impacts on Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources in Draft EIR Section 3.8 determined that the Project could directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature, if they are present, as a result of construction, both at the Project level and cumulatively

Excavation into deeper soils at the Heartland Solar Project site may encounter geologic materials with paleontological resources. Project-related excavation to install the steel supports for the solar panels is proposed at depths of up to 15 feet below ground surface. Soils up to this depth also may be disturbed during Project decommissioning. In the event of an unanticipated fossil discovery during ground-disturbing activities, the severity of the impact would be reduced to a less than significant level by the implementation of **Mitigation Measure 3.8-6: Unanticipated Fossil Discovery**, which would require the development of a Paleontological Worker Education and Awareness Program, and would require that work halt in the vicinity of any potential find until a qualified paleontologist can make an assessment and provide further recommendations.

Mitigation Measure 3.8-6: Unanticipated Fossil Discovery

Prior to any ground disturbing activities, the Project owner shall develop and implement a Paleontological Worker Education and Awareness Program. If paleontological resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities (e.g., during Project construction or decommissioning), all earthwork or other types of ground disturbance within 50 feet of the find shall stop immediately until a qualified professional paleontologist meeting the standards of the SVP can assess the nature and importance of the find. Based on the scientific value or uniqueness of the find, the paleontologist may record the find and allow work to continue or recommend salvage and recovery of the fossil. The paleontologist may also propose modifications to the stop-work radius based on the nature of the find, site geology, and the activities occurring on the site. If treatment and salvage is required, recommendations will be consistent with the standards of the SVP that are current as of the discovery and with currently-accepted scientific practice. The current standards of the SVP are set forth in the SVP's 2010 Standard Procedures for the Assessment and Mitigation of Adverse Impacts to Paleontological Resources, as prepared by the SVP's Impact Mitigation Guidelines Revision Committee. If required, treatment for fossil remains may include preparation and recovery of fossil materials so that they can be housed in an appropriate museum or university collection and may also include preparation of a report for publication describing the finds.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measure 3.8-6** is feasible, will reduce the Project's potential significant impact on paleontological resources to a less-than-significant level, and is adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.8-6 will provide for a halt work protocol upon discovery of a potential paleontological resource and ensure that a qualified paleontologist assesses the discovery. If the discovery is determined to be significant by the qualified paleontologist, then it would be recovered using appropriate recovery techniques, identified, catalogued, and prepared for storage in a

recognized paleontological repository. In the event of a discovery, the qualified paleontologist may recommend paleontological resource monitoring on an as-needed basis. Thus, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.8-6, the impacts of the Project on paleontological resources would be less than significant.

7. Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Illegal Dump Sites)

The analysis of impacts on Hazards and Hazardous Materials in Draft EIR Section 3.10 determined that the Project could create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials or through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment pursuant to removal of illegal dump sites.

Three small illegal dump sites exist within the Project site that would need to be cleaned up prior to Project construction. The discarded materials and waste are considered a *de minimis* condition because the materials could be properly disposed of at any nonhazardous waste landfill. Some small areas of stained soil were observed but are not extensive or deep and are considered also a *de minimis* condition. A half-full plastic drum with what appears to be used motor oil is also present and has bullet holes that have punctured the drum in numerous places, some of which have leaked oil to the ground. This condition is considered a *de minimis* condition because the used motor oil could be recycled at any oil recycling facility and the soil with oil could be disposed of as nonhazardous waste. Nonetheless, the presence of this debris and waste, along with stained soil, would need to be properly disposed of prior to Project construction. While the observed discarded materials did not appear to contain hazardous materials, there is potential of exposure to hazardous materials, particularly at Dump Site #2, which contains extensive debris, some of which is buried under other debris concealing its nature. Impacts on workers during this cleanup could be potentially significant. This condition would be mitigated to less than significant levels with the implementation of **Mitigation Measure 3.10-1: Site Management Plan**.

Mitigation Measure 3.10-1: Site Management Plan

The contractor conducting the cleanup of the illegal dump sites shall develop and implement a site management plan (SMP) for the management of waste, hazardous materials, and affected soil before any ground-disturbing activity. The SMP shall describe measures for (i) removal of waste, hazardous materials, and contaminated soil (ii) characterization of the soil underlying the waste and hazardous materials to verify all contaminated materials have been removed per regulatory standards, and (iii) off-site disposal of waste, hazardous materials, and soil in compliance with all applicable regulations. The SMP shall include the following, at a minimum:

- Site description, including the waste and hazardous materials that may be encountered.
- Roles and responsibilities of on-site workers, supervisors, and the regulatory agency.
- Training for site workers focused on the recognition of and response to encountering waste and hazardous materials.
- Notification requirements in the event of discovery of unknown contamination.
- Protocols for the materials (waste, hazardous materials, and soil) testing, handling, removing, transporting, and disposing of removed materials in a safe, appropriate, and lawful manner.

- Reporting requirement to the overseeing regulatory agency, if any contamination is found that requires agency oversight, documenting that site activities were conducted in accordance with the SMP.

The SMP shall be submitted to the lead agency for review before the start of cleanup activities and as a condition of the grading and/or construction permit(s). The contract specifications shall mandate full compliance with all applicable federal, State, and local regulations related to the identification, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measure 3.10-1** is feasible, will reduce the Project's potential significant impact on hazards and hazardous materials to a less-than-significant level, and is adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.10-1 will provide for the necessary regulatory clean up protocols and site controls to limit exposure of workers to potentially hazardous materials. Thus, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.10-1, the impacts of the Project on hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant.

8. Hydrology and Water Quality (Surface and Groundwater Quality)

The analysis of impacts on Hydrology and Water Quality in Draft EIR Section 3.11 determined that the Heartland Solar Project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality.

Given the scale of the Heartland Solar Project's soil-disturbing site work, water quality degradation or unauthorized discharges could occur. Pursuant to County grading permit requirements, final approval shall not be given until all work, including installation of all drainage facilities and their protective devices, and all erosion-control measures have been completed in accordance with the final approved Grading Plan, and the required reports have been submitted. To limit potential impacts and in compliance with the County's grading permit, the Project would be required to implement a SWPPP during construction. Per **Mitigation Measure 3.11-1: Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan**, the SWPPP would include BMPs designed to prevent the occurrence of soil erosion and discharge of other construction-related pollutants that could otherwise contaminate water quality. This mitigation measure (and SWPPP) would be applicable to all areas of the Heartland Solar Project site, including the solar fields and the gen-tie line alignment.

Potential impacts resulting from decommissioning and site reclamation activities would generally be similar to those described for construction, namely involving the potential for erosion and/or release of construction-related water quality pollutants. Ground disturbing activities during decommissioning and site reclamation (as with construction) would require conformance with Fresno County grading permit requirements and be subject to **Mitigation Measure 3.11-1**, including the preparation and implementation of a site-specific SWPPP.

Mitigation Measure 3.11-1: Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan

Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the Project proponent/operator shall submit to the County a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) complying with requirements of the Construction Stormwater General Permit. The SWPPP shall be designed to minimize runoff and shall specify best management practices to prevent all construction pollutants from contacting stormwater, with the intent of keeping sediment or any other pollutants from moving offsite and into receiving waters. The requirements of the SWPPP shall be incorporated into design specifications and construction contracts. Recommended best management practices to be incorporated in the SWPPP may include, but would not be limited to, the following:

- a. Minimization of vegetation removal;
- b. Implementing sediment controls, including silt fences a necessary;
- c. Installation of a stabilized construction entrance/exit and stabilization of disturbed areas;
- d. Properly containing and disposing of hazardous materials used for construction onsite;
- e. Properly covering stockpiled soils to prevent wind erosion;
- f. Proper protections and containment for fueling and maintenance of equipment and vehicles; and
- g. Appropriate disposal of demolition debris, concrete and soil, and aggressively controlling litter.
- h. Cleanup of silt and mud on adjacent street due to construction activity.
- i. Checking all lined and unlined ditches after each rainfall.
- j. Install additional erosion control measures as may be required due to uncompleted grading operations or unforeseen circumstances which may arise.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measure 3.11-1** is feasible, will reduce the Project's potential significant impact on hydrology and water quality to a less-than-significant level, and is adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-1 will limit runoff, provide for erosion control, and minimize impacts on water quality. Thus, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.10-1, the impacts of the Project on hydrology and water quality would be less than significant.

9. Hydrology and Water Quality (Drainage)

The analysis of impacts on Hydrology and Water Quality in Draft EIR Section 3.11 determined that the Heartland Solar Project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which: i) Results in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; ii) substantially increases the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite; iii) creates or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provides substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or iv) impedes or redirects flood flows.

The Heartland Solar Project site's drainage would be designed and graded to follow the natural existing drainage pattern. Onsite stormwater detention basins may be constructed, operated, and maintained within the boundary of the sites to retain stormwater that could otherwise runoff in a storm event. Pursuant to **Mitigation Measure 3.11-1**, site preparation and construction activities would be performed in accordance with a SWPPP that includes stormwater BMPs to reduce the adverse effects of construction and during the O&M phase, if deemed necessary based on pre-construction design analysis and County of Fresno grading requirements. Given the site's relatively flat topography, and adherence to the **Mitigation Measure 3.11-1**, as outlined in a site specific SWPPP, erosion and runoff during construction and decommissioning is unlikely to be substantial.

Heartland Solar Project construction would involve ground disturbance activities (e.g., grubbing, grading, and excavation), which could change drainage patterns and result in on-site or off-site flooding if stormwater is not properly controlled. In addition, the Project would result in a minor increase in impervious surfaces which could reduce infiltration and increase localized areas of flooding. However, the majority of the Project site would remain pervious or capable of infiltrating precipitation into the groundwater table. Pursuant to **Mitigation Measure 3.11-1**, the Project would develop and implement a SWPPP and associated BMPs to limit erosion or siltation, and runoff with sediment or other pollutants from leaving the site and entering surrounding waterways.

Decommissioning activities for the Project would be similar to construction activities, but would return the site to pre-Project conditions. Decommissioning activities would also follow applicable BMPs outlined in the SWPPP prepared for the Project, per **Mitigation Measure 3.11-1**. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure 3.11-1** and compliance with federal and state laws and local requirements would ensure the impacts associated with construction and decommissioning would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measure 3.11-1** is feasible, will reduce the Project's potential significant impact on hazards and hazardous materials to a less-than-significant level, and is adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-1 will limit runoff, provide for erosion control, and minimize impacts on water quality. Thus, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-1, the impacts of the Project on hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant.

10. Hydrology and Water Quality (Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan and Conflicts with Water Quality Control Plan)

The analysis of impacts on Hydrology and Water Quality in Draft EIR Section 3.11 determined that the Heartland Solar Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

The Project would include soil disturbing activities during construction and would be required to comply with the **Mitigation Measure 3.11-1**, which would require implementation of BMPs as part of a SWPPP

or comparable County requirements. With adherence to the SWPPP, these Project facilities would not result in water quality violations or conflict with the Basin Plan.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measure 3.11-1** is feasible, will reduce the Project's potential significant impact on hydrology and water quality to a less-than-significant level, and is adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-1 will limit runoff, provide for erosion control, and minimize impacts on water quality, thus eliminating conflicts with the Basin Plan or sustainable groundwater management. Thus, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-1, the impacts of the Project on hydrology and water quality would be less than significant.

11. Noise (Ambient Noise Levels)

The analysis of impacts on Noise in Draft EIR Section 3.14 determined that the Heartland Solar Project during nighttime hours could generate a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project site in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance.

Nighttime construction activities for the Project may cause short-term noise impacts that could be loud enough at times to temporarily interfere with speech communication outdoors and indoors with windows open at R1 and R2. Therefore, the noise impact of construction activities during nighttime hours would be potentially significant. **Mitigation Measure 3.14-1: Noise Reduction for Nighttime Construction and Decommissioning Activities** is identified to address this potential significant impact. **Mitigation Measure 3.14-1** would limit the location and types of activities that might occur during nighttime hours. With the implementation of **Mitigation Measure 3.14-1**, nighttime construction noise levels would not exceed Fresno County Exterior Noise Level Standard of 45 dBA L_{eq} and would result in a less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measure 3.14-1: Noise Reduction for Nighttime Construction and Decommissioning Activities

Prior to issuance of construction permits for the Project, the Project owner shall submit to the County for approval a Construction Noise Reduction Plan to be implemented by all contractors as a condition of contract. Contents of the Plan should include at a minimum:

- Maintain all construction tools and equipment in good operating order according to manufacturers' specifications;
- Limit use of major excavating, pile driving, earth-moving machinery, and pneumatic tools to daytime hours;
- Equip any internal combustion engine used for any purpose on the job or related to the job with a properly operating muffler that is free from rust, holes, and leaks;
- For construction devices that utilize internal combustion engines, ensure the engine's housing doors are kept closed, and install noise-insulating material mounted on the engine housing consistent with manufacturers' guidelines, if possible;

- Limit possible evening and nighttime shift work to the southern (i.e., Areas 8a and 8b) and/or northern (i.e., Areas 1 through 3) portions of the Project site conducting low noise activities such as welding, wire pulling, and other similar activities, together with appropriate material handling equipment; and
- Utilize a Complaint Resolution Procedure to address any noise complaints received from residents.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measure 3.14-1** is feasible, will reduce the Project's potential significant impact on noise to a less-than-significant level, and is adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.14-1 will require a plan to reduce nighttime noise and provide procedures for complaint resolution. Thus, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.14-1, the impacts of the Project on noise would be less than significant.

12. Transportation (Roadway Facilities)

The analysis of impacts on Transportation in Draft EIR Section 3.18 determined that the Heartland Solar Project could conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including roadway facilities, both at the Project level and cumulatively.

It is expected that most construction-related traffic would occur during commute hours when construction workers are traveling to and from the Project site, resulting in a potential significant impact due to congestion on the affected roadways. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure 3.18-1: Construction and Decommissioning Traffic Management Plan** would reduce the impact of Project construction traffic on study area roadways during peak commute hours to a less-than-significant level. The Heartland Solar Project's decommissioning impacts would be relatively similar to those identified for construction of the Project and, accordingly, also would result in a less-than-significant impact with mitigation.

[MM]

Mitigation Measure 3.18-1: Construction and Decommissioning Traffic Management Plan

Prior to the issuance of construction or building permits and the issuance of decommissioning authorizations, the Project owner and/or its construction contractor shall prepare and submit a Traffic Management Plan to the Fresno County Public Works Department and the California Department of Transportation, District 6, as appropriate, for approval. Review of the Traffic Management Plan (from a County standpoint) will be conducted by Fresno County Road Maintenance and Operations Division. The Traffic Management Plan must be prepared in accordance with both the California Department of Transportation Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and Work Area Traffic Control Handbook and must include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

- Temporary Traffic Control plan that addresses traffic safety and control through the work zone, including during temporary lane closures (if needed) to accommodate materials delivery, transmission line stringing activities, or any other utility connections;

- Identify the timing of deliveries of heavy equipment and building materials;
- Requirement for designated construction staff to be assigned as flaggers to direct traffic into and/or through temporary traffic control zones, as needed;
- Requirement to place temporary signage, lighting, and traffic control devices, including, but not limited to, appropriate signage along access routes to indicate the presence of heavy vehicles and construction traffic;
- Ensure access for emergency vehicles to the Project site;
- Access to adjacent properties shall be maintained;
- Specify both construction/decommissioning-related vehicle travel and oversize load haul routes, minimizing construction/decommissioning traffic during the AM and PM peak hour, distributing construction/decommissioning traffic flow across alternative routes to access the Project site, and avoiding residential neighborhoods to the maximum extent feasible.
- Requirement to obtain all necessary permits for the work within the road right of way or use of oversized/overweight vehicles that would utilize County-maintained roads, which may require California Highway Patrol or a pilot car escort. Copies of the approved traffic plan and issued permits shall be submitted to the Fresno County Divisions of Public Works and Planning.
- Applicant shall coordinate with Fresno County to assess potential impacts to County roads from Project-related activities. If any County roads are demonstrably damaged as a result of the Project, the Applicant shall work with Fresno County to determine appropriate repairs, which may include paving, slurry-sealing, or reconstruction, as required by state and/or County standards.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measure 3.18-1** is feasible, will reduce the Project's potential significant impact on transportation to a less-than-significant level, and is adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.18-1 will provide traffic controls, public safety protocols, and ensure emergency access during construction and decommissioning. Thus, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.18-1, the impacts of the Project on transportation roadway facilities would be less than significant.

13. Transportation (Emergency Access)

The analysis of impacts on Transportation in Draft EIR Section 3.18 determined that the Heartland Solar Project could result in inadequate emergency access, both at the Project level and cumulatively.

During site clearing and construction of the Project, heavy construction-related vehicles could interfere with emergency response to the site or emergency evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency (e.g., slowing vehicles traveling behind the truck). However, **Mitigation Measure 3.18-1** would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level because vehicle access on roadways adjacent to the Project site would be safely maintained.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measure 3.18-1** is feasible, will reduce the Project's potential significant impact on transportation to a less-than-significant level, and is adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.18-1 will provide traffic controls, public safety protocols, and ensure emergency access during construction and decommissioning. Thus, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.18-1, the impacts of the Project on emergency access would be less than significant.

14. Utilities and Service Systems (Stormwater Drainage)

The analysis of impacts on Utilities and Service Systems in Draft EIR Section 3.19 determined that the Heartland Solar Project could result in the construction of new or expanded stormwater drainage that would cause significant environmental effects.

Detailed site design has not yet been completed for the Heartland Solar Project; however, the construction, operation and maintenance of onsite stormwater detention facilities would be required if deemed necessary based on pre-construction design analysis and County of Fresno grading requirements. If constructed, the stormwater detention facilities would retain stormwater onsite that could otherwise runoff in a storm event. Site preparation and construction activities would be performed in accordance with a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan or similar plan required by **Mitigation Measure 3.11-1: Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan**, which would include stormwater BMPs to reduce potential adverse effects. This mitigation measure (and SWPPP) would be applicable to all areas of the Heartland Solar Project site, including the solar fields and the gen-tie line alignment. With implementation of **Mitigation Measure 3.11-1**, the Project would not cause any changes in stormwater flow that would cause a significant adverse environmental effect. For these reasons, Heartland Project impacts would be less-than-significant with mitigation incorporated.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measure 3.11-1** is feasible, will reduce the Project's potential significant impact on utilities and service systems to a less-than-significant level, and is adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-1 will require a plan for stormwater pollution prevention to reduce potential impacts on stormwater drainage. Thus, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-1, the impacts of the Project on utilities and service systems would be less than significant.

15. Wildfire (Emergency Response or Evacuation Plan)

The analysis of impacts on Wildfire in Draft EIR Section 3.20 determined that the Heartland Solar Project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, both at the Project level and cumulatively.

Vehicle trips and temporary lane closures due to Heartland Solar Project construction and decommissioning activities could contribute to emergency-related congestion on publicly used and County-maintained roadways surrounding the Heartland Solar Project site in the event of an emergency or evacuation. This could lead to a significant impact. However, to reduce potential congestion or emergency response delay-related impacts, the Heartland Solar Project would comply with a Construction and Decommissioning Traffic Management Plan as part of **Mitigation Measure 3.18-1: Construction and Decommissioning Traffic Management Plan**, as described in Draft EIR Section 3.18. Accordingly, Project construction and decommissioning would be required to follow this plan and allow for adequate emergency access to, from, and within the Heartland Solar Project site subject to the requirements of the current Fire Code and Building Code. Therefore, with mitigation measures implemented, the Heartland Solar Project would not require lengthy or repeated closures of public roads that could otherwise inhibit access by emergency response vehicles.

Finding: The County finds that **Mitigation Measure 3.18-1** is feasible, will reduce the Project’s potential significant impact on hazards and hazardous materials to a less-than-significant level, and is adopted by the County. Accordingly, the County finds, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1), that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the EIR.

Rationale: Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.18-1 will provide traffic controls, public safety protocols, and ensure emergency access during construction and decommissioning. Thus, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.18-1, the impacts of the Project on hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant.

C. No Significant Unavoidable Impacts

Section 15126.2(a) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that the EIR describe any significant impacts, including those that can be mitigated but not reduced to less-than-significant levels. As analyzed in Draft EIR Chapter 3, *Environmental Analysis*, the Project would result in no significant unavoidable impacts.

D. Findings Regarding Alternatives

Section 15126.6(a) of the CEQA Guidelines requires the discussion of “a reasonable range of alternatives to a project, or the location of a project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.” The EIR identified and considered the following reasonable range of feasible alternatives to the Project that would be capable, to varying degrees, of reducing identified impacts:

- Alternative 1– Reduced PV Solar Acreage Alternative
- Alternative 2 – Distributed Solar Alternative
- No Project Alternative

1. Summary of Alternative 1, Reduced PV Solar Acreage Alternative

Alternative 1 would include all of the components of the Project as proposed but would reduce the Project footprint from approximately 2,310 acres to approximately 1,352 acres by eliminating solar energy generation-related development in the approximately 958 acres located north of W. Lincoln Avenue, south of W. American Avenue, west of State Route 33 and east of S. Los Angeles Avenue. The 59-acre reduction in the size of the solar array area would result in a corresponding reduction in power output and energy storage capacity. As reduced, Alternative 1's solar panel arrays would be capable of generating 176 MWAC and the energy storage is expected to be at a similar level of capacity.

2. Summary of Alternative 2, Distributed Solar Alternative

Under Alternative 2, the Distributed Solar Alternative, a number of geographically distributed solar PV systems would be developed on existing rooftops throughout Fresno County. Based on a search conducted July 8, 2025, Google's Project Sunroof effort identified 94 percent of the buildings in Fresno County as "solar viable," where viability is based on each roof having a total potential installation size of at least 2 kW, and each solar panel receiving at least 75 percent of the maximum annual sun in the County based on National Renewable Energy Lab weather station data (Google Project Sunroof Data Explorer 2019). Alternative 2 would contribute to grid reliability and resilience, increase energy efficiency and renewable energy, and use smart grid and zero-net energy technologies. Under this alternative, all panels would be flush-mounted with the roof. No new land would be developed or altered; however, depending on the type of solar modules installed, a similar or greater amount of acreage (i.e., 2,362 acres or more of total rooftop area) may be required to attain the Project's 300 MW of solar PV generating capacity. Vehicle trips needed to support construction and maintenance activities would be dispersed in accordance with the individual site locations. Like the Project, Alternative 2 would be designed to operate year-round using PV panels to convert solar energy directly to electrical power. Energy generated either would be for on-site use only, or could be shared via a community solar arrangement that lets multiple customers share power from a single local solar source. Power generated by such distributed solar PV systems typically would not require the construction of new electrical substation or transmission facilities. However, Alternative 2 would not be expected to include battery storage to store unused solar energy and, thus, the solar power could only be used during daylight hours.

The Project proponent does not have immediate control or access to potential urban sites that could accommodate facilities to generate the solar power and, given the size of the project and the need to arrange a suitable assemblage of participating commercial and industrial properties, a distributed generation project of this type would not proceed within a reasonably similar timeframe as the Project. However, it preliminarily has been determined that Alternative 2 could avoid the Project's potential significant impacts on biological resources (including San Joaquin kit fox, burrowing owl, American badger, and birds) and cultural resources (including inadvertent discovery of historical or archaeological resources, previously unidentified human remains, and/or archaeological resources that also are tribal cultural resources).

3. Summary of No Project Alternative

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e), the EIR evaluates a no project alternative. The analysis discusses the existing conditions at the time the notice of preparation was published, as well as what reasonably would be expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the Project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services.

Under the No Project Alternative, the Project site would continue to be used for dry-farmed agriculture and/or left fallow. It is designated “Agriculture” as shown on Fresno County General Plan Countywide Land Use Diagram Figure LU-1a (Fresno County 2024) and is zoned AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size) (Fresno County 2025).

The No Project Alternative would be potentially feasible, could avoid or substantially lessen potential significant impacts of the Project, and its implementation would not be remote or speculative. However, the No Project Alternative fails screening because it would not meet any of the Project objectives, the No Project Alternative nonetheless has been carried forward for more detailed review in accordance with the requirements of CEQA.

4. Findings Concerning Project Alternatives

If a proposed project would result in significant environmental impacts that would not be avoided or substantially lessened by mitigation measures, then CEQA requires the lead agency to consider environmentally superior alternatives identified in the EIR and to find that they are “infeasible” before approving the project (Public Resources Code section 21081[a][3]; CEQA Guidelines section 15091[a][3]). This findings requirement flows from the policy stated in Public Resources Code section 21002, which states:

[I]t is the policy of the state that public agencies should not approve projects as proposed if there are feasible alternatives *or* feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of such projects. ... The Legislature further finds and declares that in the event specific economic, social, or other conditions make infeasible such project alternatives or such mitigation measures, individual projects may be approved in spite of one or more significant effects thereof. [Emphasis added.]

However, findings rejecting alternatives are required only if one or more significant environmental effects will not be avoided or substantially lessened by mitigation measures. To emphasize, an agency need not make findings rejecting alternatives described in the EIR if all of the proposed project’s significant impacts would be avoided or substantially lessened by mitigation measures. See Public Resources Code section 21081(a)(1)–(2); CEQA Guidelines section 15091(a)(1)–(2).

As stated in Section II(D) of these Findings and as analyzed in Draft EIR Chapter 3, *Environmental Analysis*, the Project would result in no significant unavoidable impacts. Therefore, CEQA does not require the County to make findings rejecting the alternatives before considering approval of the Project as proposed.

E. General CEQA Findings

Having received, reviewed, and considered the information in the Final EIR, as well as any and all other information in the record, the County hereby makes findings pursuant to and in accordance with sections 21081, 21081.5, and 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code.

1. Certification of the EIR

Based on the foregoing findings and the information contained in the administrative record and prior to approving the Project, the County certifies pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15090 that:

- **Finding 1.** The Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA.
- **Finding 2.** The Final EIR was presented to the Planning Commission, which has authority to approve the requested Unclassified Conditional Use Permits for the Project. The Planning Commission reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR prior to approving the Project.
- **Finding 3.** The Final EIR reflects the County's independent judgment and analysis. The County has exercised independent judgment in accordance with Public Resources Code section 21082.1(c)(3) in retaining ESA as its own environmental consultant in the preparation of the EIR, as well as reviewing, analyzing, and revising material prepared by the consultant.

2. Significant Environmental Impacts

Based on the foregoing findings and the information contained in the administrative record and pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15091 and 15092, the County has made one or more of the following findings with respect to each of the significant effects of the Project:

- **Finding 1.** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.
- **Finding 2.** Those changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and such changes have been adopted by such other agency, or can and should be adopted by such other agency.
- **Finding 3.** Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

Based on the foregoing findings and the information contained in the administrative record, and as conditioned by the foregoing:

1. All significant effects on the environment due to the Project have been eliminated or substantially lessened where feasible.
2. No significant effects remain that have been found to be unavoidable.

3. Feasibility of Mitigation Measures

Public Resources Code section 21081.5 requires the County to base its findings on substantial evidence in the record. Based on the entire record before the County, the County hereby determines that all feasible mitigation within the County's responsibility and jurisdiction has been adopted to reduce or avoid the potentially significant impacts identified in the Final EIR. The feasible mitigation measures are discussed in Sections II(B) and II(C) of these Findings and are set forth in the MMRP prepared for the Project (Staff Report Exhibit 1).

4. Environmental Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

Public Resources Code section 21081.6(a) requires the County to adopt a monitoring or compliance program regarding the changes in the Project and mitigation measures imposed to lessen or avoid significant effects on the environment. The MMRP for the Project is hereby adopted by the County because it fulfills the CEQA mitigation monitoring requirements:

- The MMRP is designed to ensure compliance with the changes in the Project and mitigation measures imposed on the Project during Project implementation.
- Measures to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment are fully enforceable through conditions of approval, permit conditions, agreements, or other measures.

5. Reliance on Record

Each and all of the findings and determinations contained herein are based on substantial evidence, both oral and written, contained in the administrative record related to the Project.

Record of Proceedings

In addition to this Statement of Findings, in accordance with Public Resources Code section 21167.6(e), the record of proceedings for the Project includes, but is not limited to, the following elements:

- (i) The Notice of Preparation (NOP) and all other public notices issued by the County in conjunction with the Project;
- (ii) The September 2025 Draft EIR for the Project (with appendices, Staff Report Exhibits 10 and 11);
- (iii) The **April 2026 Final EIR** for the Project (Staff Report Exhibit 12);
- (iv) The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Project (Staff Report Exhibit 1);
- (v) All reports, studies, memoranda, staff reports, or other documents related to the Project prepared by the County, or consultants to the County with respect to the County's compliance with the requirements of CEQA and with respect to the County's action on the Project;
- (vi) All documents submitted to the County by other public agencies, the Applicant or the Applicant's consultants, or members of the public in connection with the Project, up through the close of the public hearing;
- (vii) Any minutes and/or verbatim transcripts of all information sessions, public meetings, and public hearings held by the County in connection with the Project; and
- (viii) Any other materials required for the record of proceedings by Public Resources Code section 21167.6(e).

Custodian and Location of Records

The documents and other materials that constitute the record of the proceedings on which the County's decision is based are located at the County of Fresno, Public Works & Planning Department, 2220 Tulare Street, 6th Floor, Fresno, California. The custodian for these documents and materials is Jeremy Shaw, Planner, County of Fresno Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services and Capital

Projects Division. This information is provided in compliance with Public Resources Code section 21081.6(a)(2) and CEQA Guidelines section 15091(e).

6. Nature of Findings

Any finding made by the County shall be deemed made, regardless of where it appears in this document. All language included in this document constitutes findings by the County, whether or not any particular sentence or clause includes a statement to that effect. The County intends that these findings be considered as an integrated whole; and, whether or not any part of these findings fail to cross-reference or incorporate by reference any other part of these findings, any finding required or committed to be made by the County with respect to any particular subject matter of the Final EIR, shall be deemed to be made if it appears in any portion of these findings.

7. Recirculation Not Required

CEQA Guidelines section 15088.5 requires a lead agency to recirculate an EIR for further review and comment when significant new information is added to the EIR after public notice is given of the availability of the Draft EIR but before certification of the Final EIR. New information added to an EIR is not “significant” unless the EIR is changed in a way that deprives the public of a meaningful opportunity to comment upon a substantial adverse environmental effect of the project or a feasible way to mitigate or avoid such an effect that the project proponent declines to implement. The CEQA Guidelines provide the following examples of significant new information under this standard:

- A new significant environmental impact would result from the project or from a new mitigation measure proposed to be implemented.
- A substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact would result unless mitigation measures are adopted that reduce the impact to a level of insignificance.
- A feasible project alternative or mitigation measure considerably different from others previously analyzed would clearly lessen the environmental impacts of the project, but the project's proponents decline to adopt it.
- The Draft EIR was so fundamentally and basically inadequate and conclusory in nature that meaningful public review and comment were precluded. (CEQA Guidelines §150885(a); *Mountain Lion Coalition v. Fish and Game Com.* (1989) 214 Cal.App.3d 1043).

Recirculation is not required where the new information added to the EIR merely clarifies or amplifies or makes insignificant modifications in an adequate EIR. The above standard is “not intend[ed] to promote endless rounds of revision and recirculation of EIRs.” *Laurel Heights Improvement Ass’n v. Regents of the University of California* (1993) 6 Cal. 4th 1112, 1132. “Recirculation was intended to be an exception, rather than the general rule.” *Id.*

No substantial changes were made between the Draft EIR and Final EIR. Therefore, recirculation is not necessary.

B2 Reclamation Plan



PRELIMINARY CLOSURE, DECOMMISSIONING, AND RECLAMATION PLAN

HEARTLAND SOLAR PROJECT FRESNO COUNTY, CA

SUBMITTED TO:

Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning
Development Services Division
2220 Tulare Street, 6th Floor
Fresno, California 93721

PREPARED BY:

Heartland Solar 1, LLC

August 2025



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FIGURES

Figure 1:	Regional Vicinity
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APPENDICES

Appendix A	Reclamation Cost Estimate
Appendix B	Landowner Notification Letters

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Applicant	Heartland Solar 1, LLC
Project	Heartland Solar Project
PV	photovoltaic
Reclamation Plan	Closure, Decommissioning, and Reclamation Plan

1 Introduction

Heartland Solar 1, LLC (Applicant), a wholly owned indirect subsidiary of Clearway Energy Group LLC, proposes to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission the Heartland Solar Project (Project), which consists of renewable photovoltaic (PV) solar energy generation and energy storage system facilities on approximately 2,362 acres of private land in western Fresno County.

1.1 Purpose of the Reclamation Plan

The purpose of this preliminary Closure, Decommissioning, and Reclamation Plan (Reclamation Plan) is to establish the methodologies that could be employed for decommissioning and reclamation activities associated with the Project. The actual actions implemented in the solar facility closure will be determined based on the expected future use of the site. Therefore, a more detailed and final Reclamation Plan will be developed in advance of the start of decommissioning activities.

This Reclamation Plan has been developed in compliance with a requirement in Fresno County Development Services Division's *Solar Facility Guidelines* to "provide a Reclamation Plan detailing the lease life, timeline for removal of the improvements and specific measures to return the site to the agricultural capability prior to installation of solar improvements." The Guidelines provide specific direction on the contents of the Reclamation Plan, which are discussed in further detail starting in Section 2.

The Project is expected to operate at a minimum for the term of its Power Purchase Agreement or other energy contracts. For the purpose of developing this Reclamation Plan, it is required that when the Project is decommissioned, all solar facility structures and electrical equipment will be removed from the site and the disturbed areas will be reclaimed for purposes of restoring the site to its present-day conditions, to the extent feasible.

This preliminary Reclamation Plan addresses the following:

- Project Description
- Regulatory Criteria
- Decommissioning and Reclamation Activities
 - Pre-Decommissioning
 - Removal of Facilities
 - Hazardous Waste Management
 - Debris Management, Disposal, and Recycling
 - Post-Demolition Site Restoration
- Project Reclamation Costs and Bonding

As mentioned above, because this document addresses Project actions that will occur well in the future,

it will be updated and finalized in the months prior to the scheduled decommissioning. This will ensure the final Reclamation Plan addresses the proposed future land use of the site and the applicable rules and regulations in place at that time.

1.2 Project Location and Overview

The Project proposes to construct, own, operate, and eventually decommission an approximately 300-megawatt solar PV power generation facility on rural agricultural lands south of Mendota in Fresno County, California. The Project will consist of a 300-megawatt solar facility along with associated infrastructure including a substation, battery energy storage system, generation-tie line, and operation and maintenance building. The Project will interconnect to the electrical grid at Pacific Gas and Electric's Tranquillity Switching Station, located approximately two miles south of the Project site. The proposed solar facility is intended to operate year-round.

The regional vicinity of the Project is depicted in **Figure 1** and the Project site map is depicted in **Figure 2**.

2 Guidance for Reclamation Plan Contents

Fresno County’s Solar Facility Guidelines provides the following guidance on the minimum content for reclamation plans¹. Where necessary, reference is made to other sections of the Reclamation Plan where more detailed information is provided:

1. Description of present use of the site;

The site is intermittently used for dry-farm agriculture and related activities, such as seasonal livestock grazing. According to information provided by Westlands Water District, the Project property is non-irrigable and thus only capable of being dry farmed. The site has either been dry farmed or lain fallow during the past ten years.

2. Describe the proposed alternate use of the land (all equipment to be installed above and underground, structures, fencing, etc.);

The Project will include the following main elements: modular PV solar panels on horizontal, single-axis trackers; direct current to alternating current power inverters mounted on concrete pads; three-phase transformers mounted on concrete pads, a medium-voltage (34.5 kilovolt) collection system either overhead or underground, electric substations, a battery energy storage system, a 230-kilovolt generation-tie line, a control/administration building and parking lot, meteorology towers, security fencing and lighting and other on-site facilities as required. Onsite detention or retention basins will be constructed to contain storm water runoff from areas of the Project site.

3. Duration of the alternate use of the property (specify termination date);

The Project is expected to be in commercial operation for approximately 35 years from the commencement of operations, with a potential for continued use in accordance with Fresno County permitting requirements, which will require an amendment to the approved and potential Conditional Use Permits.

4. Address ownership of the property (lease or sale);

The Project properties will be owned in fee title as follows:

Facility	Property Owner
Heartland Solar Facility	Heartland Solar 1, LLC

¹ <https://www.fresnocountyca.gov/Departments/Public-Works-and-Planning/divisions-of-public-works-and-planning/development-services-division/planning-and-land-use/photovoltaic-facilities/Solar-Reclamation-Plans> Accessed on April 24, 2025.

5. Describe how the subject property will be reclaimed to its previous agricultural condition (if applicable), specifically:

- a. Timeline for completion of reclamation after solar facility lease has terminated (identify phasing if needed);
- b. Handling of any hazardous chemicals/materials to be removed;
- c. Removal of all equipment, structures, buildings and improvements at and above grade;
- d. Removal of any below-grade foundations;
- e. Removal of any below-grade infrastructure (cables/lines, etc.) that are no longer deemed necessary by the local public utility company;
- f. Detail any grading necessary to return the site to original grade;
- g. Type of crops to be planted; and,
- h. Irrigation system details to be used (existing wells, pumps, etc. should remain throughout the solar facility use)

Section 3, Decommissioning and Reclamation Procedures (below), provides a discussion of the procedures that will be used to return the Project site back to pre-construction conditions. It should be noted that although the property has been historically used for agricultural production it no longer has rights to water delivery from the Westlands Water District, the present property owner. In consideration of these restrictions, this Reclamation Plan contemplates decommissioning of the Project and stabilization of the site and does not propose additional actions to restore agricultural capacity to the property beyond its present condition.

6. A Site Plan shall be submitted along with the text of the Reclamation Plan showing the location of equipment, structures, above and underground utilities, fencing, buffer area, reclamation phasing, etc.;

Figure 2 – Site Map shows the site plan for the Project.

7. An engineering cost estimate of reclaiming the site to its previous agricultural condition shall be submitted for review and approval;

Information for the engineering cost estimate to implement the Reclamation Plan is provided in **Appendix A.**

8. Financial assurances equal to the cost of reclaiming the land to its previous agricultural condition shall be submitted to ensure the reclamation is performed according to the approved plan. Financial assurances shall be made to the County of Fresno and may take the form of cash, letter of credit, or bond that complies with Section 66499 of the California Government Code, et. seq;

See Section 4 below.

9. Evidence that all the owners of Record have been notified of the proposed Reclamation Plan.

Project site landowners including Westlands Water District, Luna Valley Land Holdings LLC, Pacific Gas and Electric, and RE Tranquillity Landco LLC have been notified of the submission of all documents pertaining to the Conditional Use Permit including this Reclamation Plan. Copies of these notifications have been attached to this Reclamation Plan (**Appendix B**).

3 Decommissioning and Reclamation Procedures

The procedures described for decommissioning and reclamation are designed to promote public health and safety, environmental protection and compliance with applicable regulations. It is assumed that decommissioning will begin approximately 35 years after Project operation is initiated. The Project decommissioning plan may incorporate the sale of some of the solar facility components via the used equipment market and recycling of components. Decommissioning will be conducted in accordance with a Final Reclamation Plan that will be developed in the months prior to decommissioning being initiated. Equipment associated with decommissioning and reclamation will include cranes, excavators, backhoes, flat-bed trucks, low-bed trucks, and water trucks.

This Reclamation Plan assumes that all equipment and facilities within and associated with the Project will be removed.

3.1 Pre-Decommissioning Activities

Pre-decommissioning activities will be conducted to prepare the Project for demolition. This will include assessing the existing site conditions and development of a Final Reclamation Plan and schedule as described above.

Pre-decommissioning activities will include removing hazardous materials from the site including residues that occur in equipment. All operational liquids and chemicals are expected to be removed and disposed of as discussed in Section 3.4. Hazardous material and petroleum containers, pipelines, and other similar structures shall be rinsed clean, when feasible, and the waste liquid collected for off-site disposal.

Locations for decommissioned structures, non-hazardous waste, and debris will be designated on the Final Reclamation Plan to facilitate the decommissioning process and off-site removal.

3.2 Removal of Facilities

Site decommissioning and equipment removal is anticipated to require approximately one year and up to 70 workers. Access roads, fencing, electrical power, and other Project infrastructure may temporarily remain in place for use by the decommissioning and restoration workers until no longer needed. Therefore, these components will be the last to be removed prior to site rehabilitation.

Above- and Below-Ground Facilities

Structures that need to be dismantled during decommissioning include the onsite substations, onsite operations and maintenance area, onsite battery energy storage system, perimeter fence, solar field,

and transformers and inverters. These structures will be dismantled and moved to designated areas for salvage, recycling or disposal at an approved landfill.

Above-ground structures will be removed through mechanical or other approved methods. Below-ground structures will be removed or, upon agency approval, may remain in place to minimize soil disturbance. Below-ground facilities/utilities that potentially may be removed include pipelines, electrical lines and conduits, and concrete slabs.

Stormwater retention basins will be filled and brought to grade level.

Generation-Tie Transmission Lines

If the generation-tie transmission lines will not continue to be utilized for another purpose at the time of Project decommissioning, the lines will be removed. Decommissioning of the generation-tie will consist of removal of all structures associated with the construction of the transmission line(s) to include but not limited to overhead conductors and the removal of poles. All steel will be recycled, and the foundations will be removed to a depth up to 3 feet below the ground surface or as otherwise obligated by any real estate agreements. Aluminum from overhead conductors will be recycled.

Roads

Access and on-site roads will remain in place to accomplish decommissioning at the end of the Project's life and will be one of the last Project components to be removed. Any graveled roads or areas—if not left in place for future uses—will be removed and the material used to fortify existing perimeter roads. The compacted native soil roads in the solar field will not need to be removed but may be deep-chiseled to alleviate soil compaction.

3.3 Debris Management, Disposal, and Recycling

All removed material and demolition debris will be placed in designated locations within the Project. Each stockpile will be transported off-site to either a used equipment market, off-site recycling center, or approved landfill depending on the material type. Debris will be broken down into manageable sizes so that transportation is simplified.

3.4 Hazardous Waste Management

All disposal and transportation of hazardous waste will be conducted under compliance with applicable regulations as required. In areas where no record of hazardous waste exposure occurred, a visual inspection will be conducted. If a concern is identified, further evaluation of the area shall occur and the area or structure will be treated accordingly. A licensed state waste contractor will be used to ensure that all required laws and regulations have been met and to address any remaining requirements needed to successfully close the Project.

3.5 Post-Demolition Site Restoration

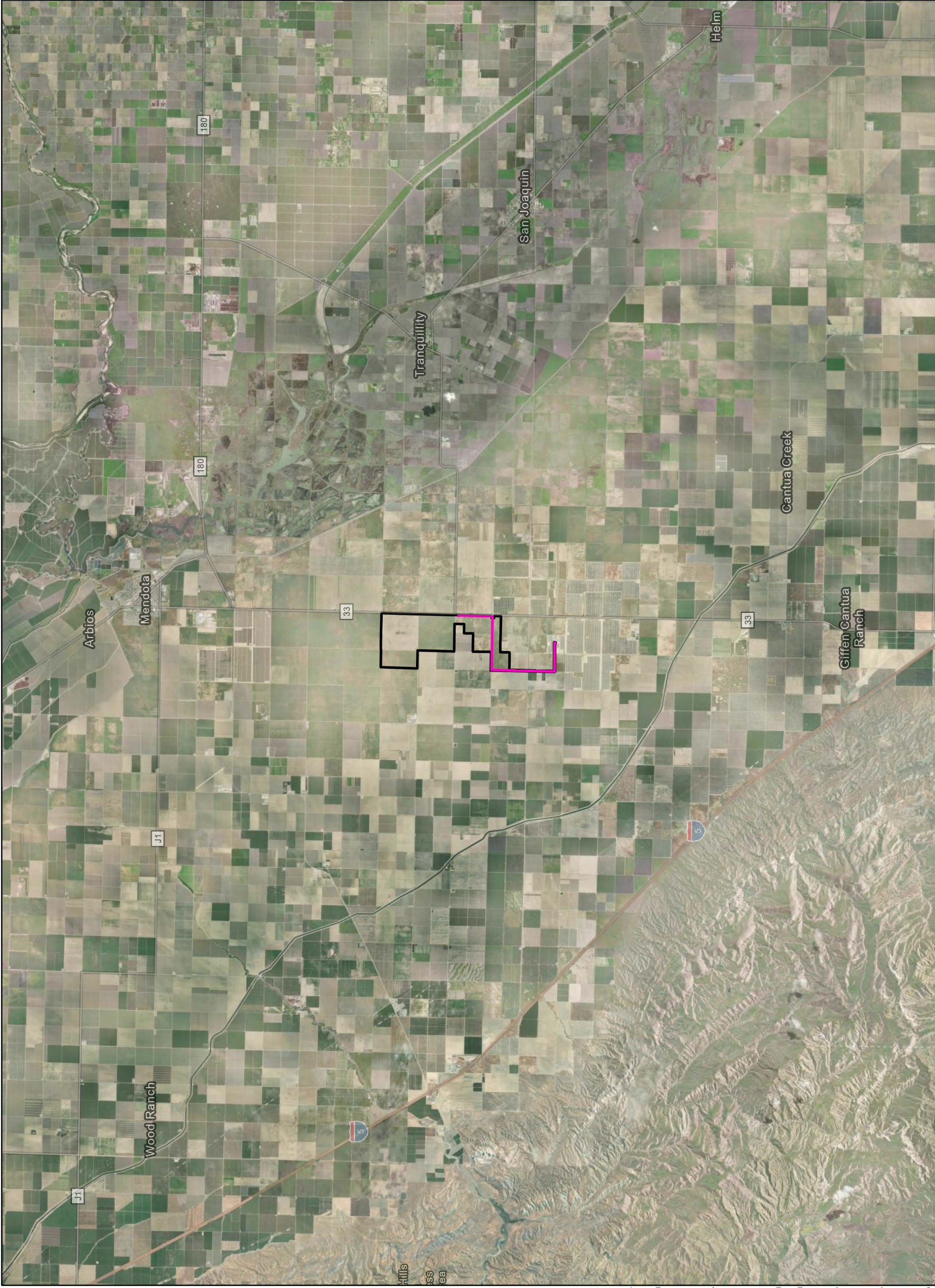
After removal of existing structures, the Project area will be restored to topographic conditions similar to pre-construction. The site will be chiseled and disced to loosen compacted soils. A rangeland seed mix of grasses and forage crops will be broadcast on the property to revegetate the site. Revegetation will assist in preventing soil erosion and dust.

4 Project Decommissioning Costs and Bonding

Prior to the issuance of any construction-related permits (e.g., grading permits), the Applicant will provide financial assurance in an amount sufficient to ensure restoration of the Project land to its previous conditions, to the extent feasible, in accordance with the approved Reclamation Plan. Financial assurances shall be made to the County of Fresno and may take the form of cash, parent guaranty, or bond that complies with Section 66499 of the California Government Code, et seq.

The financial assurance instrument will be based on a decommissioning cost estimate provided by the Applicant based on the final, approved design of the Project. At that time, this Reclamation Plan will be updated to include the final site layout and decommissioning cost estimate. The preliminary site layout is shown in **Figure 3** and will be updated with the approved site layout and the cost estimate for reclamation of the Project is included as **Appendix A**.

FIGURES



Clearway Energy
Heartland Solar Project

Figure 1
Regional Vicinity

Fresno County, CA

Proposed Features

Gen-tie Line

Project Site



NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

Reference Map



APPENDIX A

RECLAMATION COST ESTIMATE

*[Final estimate to be provided in
final Reclamation Plan, to be
approved prior to issuance of
construction permits]*

Reclamation Item	Total Cost (\$)
Equipment & Facilities Mobilization / Demobilization	127,400.00
Project Site Support	611,078.40
Substation Retirement	302,134.37
Transmission Line Retirement	635,436.86
Operations and Maintenance Building Removal	39,455.39
Direct Current Storage Retirement	440,047.97
Solar Array Retirement	10,664,270.44
Inverter / Transformer Removal	34,335.43
Remove Inverter / Transformer Foundations	25,109.35
Underground Cable Removal	94,303.53
Site Restoration – Spot Grade Disturbed Areas	1,282,216.40
Contractor Markups	2,209,647.20
Total	\$16,465,435.34

APPENDIX B

LANDOWNER NOTIFICATION LETTERS

August 5, 2025

RE Tranquillity LandCo LLC
HA Sustainable Infrastructure Capital, Inc.
1 Park Place, Suite 200 Annapolis, MD 21401
Attn: Legal Department

Subject: Landowner Notification of Reclamation Plan and Consent to Clearway Energy Group's Land Use Entitlements Submittal(s)

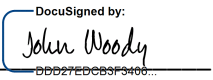
To whom it may concern:

RE Tranquillity LandCo LLC (the "Owner") is the owner of record for the property located in Fresno County, California ("the County"), identified as APN(s) 028-101-82S, formerly 028-101-79S (the "Property"). Clearway Energy Group (or its affiliate) is submitting one or more applications to the County for a conditional use permit and reclamation plan agreement for a 300 MW renewable energy project that includes related gen-tie facilities with respect to the Property. This letter provides the Owner with notice of such submittals, and to subsequent actions thereon by the County.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Sarah Linden at Sarah.Linden@clearwayenergy.com.

Sincerely,

Heartland Solar 1, LLC

By: 
John Woody, Vice President

August 5, 2025

Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Attn: Electric Grid Interconnection – Contract Management
300 Lakeside Drive
Oakland, CA 94612

Subject: Landowner Notification of Reclamation Plan and Consent to Clearway Energy Group's Land Use Entitlements Submittal(s)

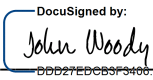
To whom it may concern:

Pacific Gas and Electric (the "Owner") is the owner of record for the property located in Fresno County, California ("the County"), identified as APN(s) 028-101-81S (the "Property"). Clearway Energy Group (or its affiliate) is submitting one or more applications to the County for a conditional use permit and reclamation plan agreement for a 300 MW renewable energy project [that includes related gen-tie facilities] with respect to the Property. This letter provides the Owner with notice of such submittals, and to subsequent actions thereon by the County.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Sarah Linden at Sarah.Linden@clearwayenergy.com.

Sincerely,

Heartland Solar 1, LLC

By: 
John Woody

August 5, 2025

Westlands Water District
286 W Cromwell Ave
Fresno, CA 93711

Subject: Landowner Notification of Reclamation Plan and Consent to Clearway Energy Group's Land Use Entitlements Submittal(s)

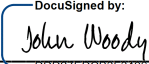
To whom it may concern:

Westlands Water District (the "Owner") is the owner of record for the property located in Fresno County, California ("the County"), identified as APN(s) 028-140-38ST, 028-140-37ST, 028-140-36ST, 028-140-32ST, 028-140-23T, 028-160-22ST, 028-160-20ST, 028-160-19ST, 028-160-17ST, 028-160-16ST, 028-170-18T, 028-170-17T, 028-170-61ST, 028-170-60ST, 028-170-48ST, 028-170-46ST, 028-170-44ST, 028-170-42ST, 028-170-47ST, 028-170-45ST, 028-170-43ST, 028-170-41ST, 028-060-41ST, 028-060-33ST, 028-060-32ST (the "Property"). Clearway Energy Group (or its affiliate) is submitting one or more applications to the County for a conditional use permit and reclamation plan agreement for a 300 MW renewable energy project with respect to the Property. This letter provides the Owner with notice of such submittals, and to subsequent actions thereon by the County.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Sarah Linden at Sarah.Linden@clearwayenergy.com.

Sincerely,

Heartland Solar 1, LLC

By: 
John Woody

August 5, 2025

Luna Valley Land Holdings LLC
100 California Street Suite 650
San Francisco, CA 94111

Subject: Landowner Notification of Reclamation Plan and Consent to Clearway Energy Group's Land Use Entitlements Submittal(s)

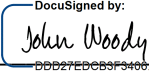
To whom it may concern:

Luna Valley Land Holdings LLC (the "Owner") is the owner of record for the property located in Fresno County, California ("the County"), identified as APN(s) 028-060-77 and 028-100-85 (the "Property"). Clearway Energy Group (or its affiliate) is submitting one or more applications to the County for a conditional use permit and reclamation plan agreement for a 300 MW renewable energy project [that includes related gen-tie facilities] with respect to the Property. This letter provides the Owner with notice of such submittals, and to subsequent actions thereon by the County.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Sarah Linden at Sarah.Linden@clearwayenergy.com.

Sincerely,

Heartland Solar 1, LLC

By: 
John Woody

B1 Pest Management Plan



PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN

**HEARTLAND SOLAR FACILITY
FRESNO COUNTY, CA**

SUBMITTED TO:

Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning
Development Services Division
2220 Tulare Street, 6th Floor
Fresno, California 93721

PREPARED BY:

Heartland Hydrogen Project

August, 2021



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CUP	Conditional Use Permit
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FCAC	Fresno County Agricultural Commissioner
Gen-tie	generation tie-line
IPM	integrated pest management
IPWMP	Integrated Pest and Weed Management Plan
kV	kilovolt
mph	miles per hour
MW	megawatt
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
Project	Heartland Solar Project
PV	Photovoltaic
PPA	Power Purchase Agreement
SDS	Safety Data Sheets
WEAP	Worker Environmental Awareness Procedure

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Plan

This Pest Management Plan (PMP) outlines procedures and strategies for controlling pests at the Heartland Solar Facility. The PMP is designed to satisfy a requirement of Fresno County’s Solar Facility Guidelines (Rev. December 12, 2017) for solar projects, which specifies that the Project operator shall develop and implement an on-site PMP to “identify methods and frequency to manage weeds, insects, disease and vertebrate pests that may impact adjacent sites.”

General requirements for these additional mitigation measures are outlined in Section 3. As required by the CUP, this PMP has been submitted for approval to the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning Development Services Division (County).

1.2 Project Location and Overview

The Heartland Solar Facility (“Facility”) proposes to construct, own, operate and eventually decommission an approximately 300 megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic power generation facility on rural agricultural lands south of Mendota in Fresno County, California. The Facility will be constructed as part of the larger Heartland Hydrogen Project, which includes the Heartland Solar Facility and the Heartland Hydrogen Facility. Combined, the Heartland Hydrogen Project will produce renewable hydrogen for zero-emission transportation fuel. The Facility will consist of a 300 MW facility along with associated infrastructure including a substation and operation and maintenance building. The Facility will produce electricity for the adjacent Heartland Hydrogen Facility and will also interconnect to the electrical grid at Pacific Gas and Electric’s (PG&E) Tranquility Substation, located approximately two miles south of the Project site. The proposed solar facility is intended to operate year-round.

The location of the project is depicted in Figure 1.

2 Procedures and Methodologies

2.1 Weed Management

Weed management at the proposed Facility will include identification of problem areas, implementation of measures intended to prevent the spread and establishment of new weed occurrences, and application of appropriate measures to treat known occurrences of weeds. These steps toward effective weed management are described in the following sections.

There are no known special status plant species that occur on the Facility site. The Fresno County Agricultural Commissioner's office has identified several non-native, invasive weed species that have the potential for spread if not properly identified and managed. Further information is provided in Section 4.

2.1.1 Preventative Measures

The prevention of weed establishment is the most effective weed management practice. Preventing or reducing the potential for weed establishment reduces additional efforts, costs, and time invested in subsequent weed control or eradication measures. Several measures have proven to be effective toward preventing the spread and establishment of weeds on projects where surface disturbing activities are proposed. The following preventative measures will be implemented:

- Vehicles and equipment to be used in off-road areas while on site will be inspected at the site entrance prior to entry to site by EHS personnel or individuals under EHS personnel direction. If excessive dirt/mud and/or visible plant materials is observed, the vehicle/equipment will be washed prior to gaining entry to the site. Washing will occur off site at existing car washes with appropriate containment facilities.
- Vehicle cabs may be subject to cleaning in an effort to remove refuse, soil, or other materials susceptible to transporting weed seeds or other plant structures. The use of compressed air is recommended for cleaning vehicle cabs before and immediately prior to departing the site.
- All imported or procured materials used for site reclamation, revegetation, and installation of stormwater/erosion control measures will be certified as weed free by the vendor.
- Disturbance areas will be limited to the smallest area needed for construction.
- The WEAP training will include a section on weed spread and colonization.

2.1.2 Treatment Methods

Treatment methods are necessary to control and eradicate known invasive and noxious weed occurrences. Treatment methods include a variety of approaches such as mechanical, chemical, and biological controls. The most appropriate and effective weed treatment measures will be determined following the assessment of existing weed populations on the Project site. Herbicides may be used for weed control, consistent with labeling requirements and applicable local regulation.

Mechanical treatments include the use of physical means to remove plants, reproductive parts, or propagules. Mechanical treatments include manual methods (pulling weed plants from the soil), use of hand tools and hand-held power tools, mowing, and more aggressive efforts that involve removing above and below ground plant structures. The designation of the appropriate mechanical treatment will depend on variables including season, plant life stage, weed species, size and population of each occurrence, and more.

Chemical treatments involve the use and application of pre- and/or post-emergent herbicides. The use of herbicides is highly regulated and involves a variety of specific protocols, safety measures, and precautions for eliminating, reducing, and mitigating for uncontrolled releases. Pre-emergent herbicides are applied to the soil before the weed seed germinates and usually incorporated into the soil with irrigation or rainfall. Post-emergent herbicides are applied directly to plants. Timing is critical for both pre-emergent and post-emergent herbicide application. In the Project vicinity, pre-emergent herbicides would primarily be applied in early fall, prior to fall/early winter rains. Post-emergent herbicides must be applied while the weed is actively growing, most effectively in the early seedling stage, but always prior to seed set. Therefore, all post-emergent treatments will occur between February and early April. Species-specific herbicides may be used as appropriate and available, along with other mechanical and chemical means for post-emergent elimination. When possible, selective herbicides may be used to target specific weed species, rather than all plant growth. The perimeter between the fence and the panels may be treated to prevent weeds or vegetation from growing and causing a possible risk for wildland fire exposure. The possible use of herbicides as a treatment method is described in additional detail in Section 2.1.3 of this plan.

Biological treatments include the use of plants and animals (particularly insects) that parasitize, ingest, or out-compete weed species. Based on the weed species expected to occur in the Project area and other factors, biological controls are not expected to be a viable or appropriate alternative for treating weed occurrences at the proposed site.

2.1.3 Herbicide Handling and Application

Weed management contractors/personnel that are responsible for applying herbicides will obtain all of the required Federal, State, or local agency permits and will hold all necessary certifications and have received all relevant training. Permits may include terms and conditions that are not included in this weed management plan. A licensed contractor will apply herbicides in accordance with all applicable

laws, regulations, and permit stipulation, including EPA label instructions. If faced with any of the following scenarios, herbicide application shall be suspended until such conditions no longer exist:

- Wind velocities in excess of 10 miles per hour (mph) during application of liquid herbicides and 15 mph during application of dry herbicides;
- Snow or ice present on weed foliage; or
- Within 12 hours of forecasted rain, or when plant surfaces are covered with water from recent rainfall or dew.

Herbicides glyphosate (Roundup, Touchdown) and pelargonic acid (Scythe) can be used to control small weed populations. Other herbicides can only be used if they are Federal or State Government-approved and applied by a licensed contractor.

For weed infestations readily accessible and passable by vehicle, vehicle-mounted applicators will be used. Manual application methods will be used in weed occurrences that are relatively small, inaccessible by established road or ROW, or in rough, varied terrain. All herbicide applicators, spreaders and sprayers, will be calibrated before each use to ensure all applications rates and procedures are appropriately implemented.

Herbicide transport and handling will follow these methods:

- No herbicides will be stored on-site.
- Only the quantity of herbicide expected for each day's use will be transported.
- Herbicide concentrate will be transported in approved containers in a controlled manner so as to prevent spills. Concentrate will be positioned in delivery or work vehicles so as to be secured and separated from the driving compartment, food, clothing, and safety equipment.
- The mixing of herbicide materials will be conducted at an off-site location or within a controlled space in the O&M Area that is designated on-site. All mixing will take place over a drip/spill containment device and at a distance more than 200 feet from open or flowing water, wetlands, or other sensitive resources.
- Herbicides will not be applied to areas of open or flowing water, wetlands, or other sensitive resources unless authorized by the appropriate regulatory agency.
- All equipment and containers used for herbicide storage, application, and transport will subject to inspection for leaks or damage.
- Emptied herbicide containers will be disposed in accordance with instructions provided on the label.

2.1.4 Herbicide Spills and Cleanup

All spills and inadvertent releases of herbicides will be addressed immediately upon detection. Spill response kits will be readily available in herbicide contractor vehicles and in daily on-site herbicide storage areas.

Spill response will vary depending on a variety of conditions, including location, amount of spill, area impacted by spill, type of herbicide spilled, and more. For each spill the following procedures should be implemented:

- Disseminate the appropriate on-site and agency notifications of a spill.
- Secure the affected area barring pedestrian and vehicle traffic.
- All spill response personnel shall put on the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) prior to entering the spill containment area.
- Personnel, while wearing the appropriate PPE and equipped with the necessary tools and equipment, shall stop the herbicide leak or release.
- All materials associated with spill response, including the released herbicide, affected soils and plants, absorptive material, clothing, and PPE shall be removed and containerized according to appropriate regulations and procedures.

All generated spill response containers shall be transported, following appropriate regulations, and disposed legally at an approved disposal facility.

2.1.5 Worker Safety and Spill Reporting

All contractors responsible for herbicide use, transport, application, and control at the site will hold the appropriate certifications. Such certifications shall be made available. Contractors transporting herbicides to the site shall also have legible Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and labels on-site. All herbicide spills and inadvertent releases shall be reported in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

2.2 Pest Management

Pests, such as rodents, tend to thrive in areas with higher vegetative growth, particularly those providing both shelter from predation and a source of high-quality food. Consequently, vegetation management is the preferred method to manage pest populations on the Facility site.

The Facility site may potentially support special status wildlife species during Project operations. These species include the San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*), Western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) and Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*). The Facility proposes to meet the goal of pest

management while protecting sensitive wildlife species by preferentially supporting ecological pest control practices on-site, as further described below.

The Fresno County Agricultural Commissioner's office provides guidance regarding the identification and control of pests. Additional information is provided in Section 4.

2.2.1 Preventive Controls

2.2.1.1 Vegetation Management

Rodent populations flourish in areas with uncontrolled vegetation growth, as tall, dense stands of weeds provide shelter and food resources for rodents.

Establishment of the Facility would make the site less attractive to rodents by limiting vegetation from growing there and by not providing cover for them to hide. The UC Davis Integrated Pest Management (IPM) guidance recommends removing weeds, heavy mulch, and dense vegetative cover to make habitat for rodents less suitable. As described in Section 2.1, weed control measures would be implemented supporting the reduction of habitat available to pest rodent species. Mowing and/or spraying with herbicides will manage the growth of uncontrolled and/or invasive vegetation on-site.

2.2.1.2 Facilitate Predation by Natural Predators

To support the potential wildlife habitat value of the site during Facility operations, the Facility proposes to manage rodent populations through natural predator-prey techniques. The site may provide foraging habitat for several predator species of rats, voles, and other rodents: northern harrier; Swainson's and ferruginous hawks; prairie falcon, and golden eagle. Northern harrier prey on small mammals, especially mice, rats, voles, shrews, rabbits, and song birds, in addition to small reptiles and amphibians. Major prey for hawk species include California voles, valley pocket gophers, rabbits, deer mice, and California ground squirrels (Estep 1989). Prairie falcons prey on small birds, mammals, and reptiles, particularly ground squirrels. Golden eagles prey on small- to medium-sized mammals, including hares, rabbits, jackrabbits, ground squirrels, prairie dogs, and marmots, in addition to some larger prey. Implementation of weed management practices would support optimum hunting habitat for predator species by ensuring vegetation does not grow too tall to limit visual spotting of or access to prey.

2.2.1.3 Avoiding Rodent Attractants

Review of the UC Davis IPM guidance for rat control indicates that solar arrays do not provide significant habitat favored by rats. No potential food sources would be present in the array area, and the solar arrays would not provide cover for their nests. Burrowing rodents such as Norway rats are found along building foundations and in moist areas in and around garden and fields. Areas around building foundations will be monitored for signs of rodents and pest removal options will be used where appropriate. Additionally, water use will be minimal during operations of the facility thereby minimizing attraction to the site by rodents seeking water sources.

The most successful and long-lasting form of rodent control in structures is exclusion, or “building them out.” The Facility will seal cracks and openings in building foundations and any openings for water pipes, electric wires, sewer pipes, drain spouts, and vents. The Project will ensure that doors, windows, and screens fit tightly. Their edges can be covered with sheet metal if gnawing is a problem. Coarse steel wool, wire screen, and lightweight sheet metal are excellent materials for plugging gaps and holes. Norway and roof rats are likely to gnaw away plastic sheeting, wood, caulking, and other less sturdy materials.

Because rats and house mice are excellent climbers, openings above ground level must also be plugged. Rodent proofing against roof rats, because of their greater climbing ability, usually requires more time to find entry points than for Norway rats. Roof rats often enter buildings at the roofline, so the Facility will ensure that access points in the roof are sealed. If roof rats are traveling on overhead utility wires, contact a pest control professional or the utility company for information and assistance with measures that can be taken to prevent this.

Strict trash policies will be enforced at the Facility site; workers shall be trained in the requirements of utilizing approved, rodent-proof trash containers which will be emptied regularly. Standing water will also be avoided in dust spraying or other water-use operations.

2.2.2 Pest Removal Options

The construction and operation of the Facility would significantly reduce the number of invasive pests on the site; however, preventive controls are not always completely successful. Pest rodent populations may need to be managed through pest removal practices. To support the ecological value of the site, the priority of the Facility is to manage rodent populations through the vegetation/natural predator-prey techniques discussed above. While this approach to pest management is preferred, should rodent populations persist and create operational problems or risks to human health (e.g., chewing through electrical wiring or exposing employees to nests and droppings) then more active management measures may be employed.

Trapping would be the preferred active management technique should avoidance and predator/prey techniques fail to provide sufficient management. Trapping would be employed for 3-6 months and evaluated for success before other management options are considered. Trapping would be done in accordance with management methods such as those provided in the University of California, Davis *Integrated Pest Management for Home Gardeners and Landscape Professionals (for Rats and/or Voles)* guidelines (UC Davis IPM).

The use of rodenticides would be restricted and they would only be employed should other management techniques fail. All uses of such compounds will observe label and other restrictions mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and other state and federal legislation. If rodent control must be conducted, zinc phosphide will be used because of its proven lower risk to San Joaquin Kit Fox. Bait stations shall be enclosed so the opening is

accessible for the target rodent (i.e., 2-inch diameter for ground squirrel), but the openings will be at an elevated angle so that bait remains inside the station under all conditions.

3 Training and Recordkeeping

All workers will complete required WEAP training before starting work. WEAP training will include a section on weed spread and colonization and rodent control. Construction management will designate staff that will be trained to identify noxious weeds and will be responsible for operating and maintaining equipment to control weeds and rodents. Weed management contractors/personnel that are responsible for applying herbicides will obtain all of the required training and permits and will hold and provide evidence of all necessary certifications. Site staff will maintain records of any herbicide use on the Facility site.

4 Specific Guidance for Fresno County

The Fresno County Agricultural Commissioner's office (FCAC) provides information on the identification and control of pests known to occur in Fresno County. The FCAC should be periodically consulted for changes in information or assistance in the identification and control of pests on the Facility site. This PMP should be updated, as warranted, to reflect pertinent changes in information that will assist in the control of pests on the Facility site. Fresno County-specific pest management information can be found on the FCAC website¹.

4.1 Weed Management

The FCAC has identified several non-native, invasive and noxious weed species that occur in Fresno County. By their nature, these species have the potential to spread and cause economic damage to neighboring crops or livestock. Special attention should be paid to the early identification and control of these species, listed below. The FCAC can provide additional assistance in the identification and control of these species.

- Hoary Cress (*Cardaria draba*)
- Perennial Pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*)
- Purple Starthistle (*Centaurea calcitrapa*)

As with general vegetation management, the use of mechanical or chemical treatments to control noxious weeds would consider actions necessary to protect special status species that may be present on the Facility site.

4.2 Pest Management

As described in Section 2, due to the potential for special status species to occur on the Facility site, the Facility will preferentially support ecological pest control practices. Ecological pest control practices are the least invasive pest control methods and provide natural predator/prey opportunities for special status species that may occur on the Facility site.

¹ <https://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/agricultural-commissioner/pest-management>

The FCAC provides general information on the control and identification of pests known to occur in Fresno County. The FCAC should be periodically consulted for updated information on pests that have the potential to occur on the Project site.

5 References

California Department of Food and Agriculture. *Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services (PHPPS): Integrated Pest Control (IPC) – Noxious Weeds Program*. Available at http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/phpps/ar/ipc_nw.html.

California Department of Pesticide Regulation. Website: <http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/>.

California Department of Pesticide Regulation; Product/Label Database Queries & Lists. Website: <http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/label/labelque.htm>.

California Invasive Plant Council. 2006. California Invasive Plant Inventory. Cal-IPC Publication 2006-02. California Invasive Plant Council, Berkeley. Available at: www.calipc.org.

Estep, J.A. 1989. Biology, movements, and habitat relationships of the Swainson's Hawk in the Section Report, 53pp.

James, L., J. Evans, M. Ralphs, and R. Child, editors. 1991. *Noxious Range Weeds*. Westview Press. Boulder, CO.

Mac, M.J., P.A. Opler, C.E. Puckett Haecker, and P.D. Doran. 1998. Status and Trends of the Nation's Biological Resources. 2 vols. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, VA. Available on the internet at: <http://www.nwrc.usgs.gov/sandt/SNT.pdf>. Accessed on April 22, 2015.

Sheley, R., J. Petroff, M. Borman, 1999. *Introduction to Biology and Management of Noxious Rangeland Weeds*, Corvallis, OR.

University of California, Davis. June 2010. "Integrated Pest Management for Home Gardeners and Landscape Professionals – Voles (Meadow Mice)." Pest Notes Publication 7439. Website: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PDF/PESTNOTES/pnvoles.pdf>.

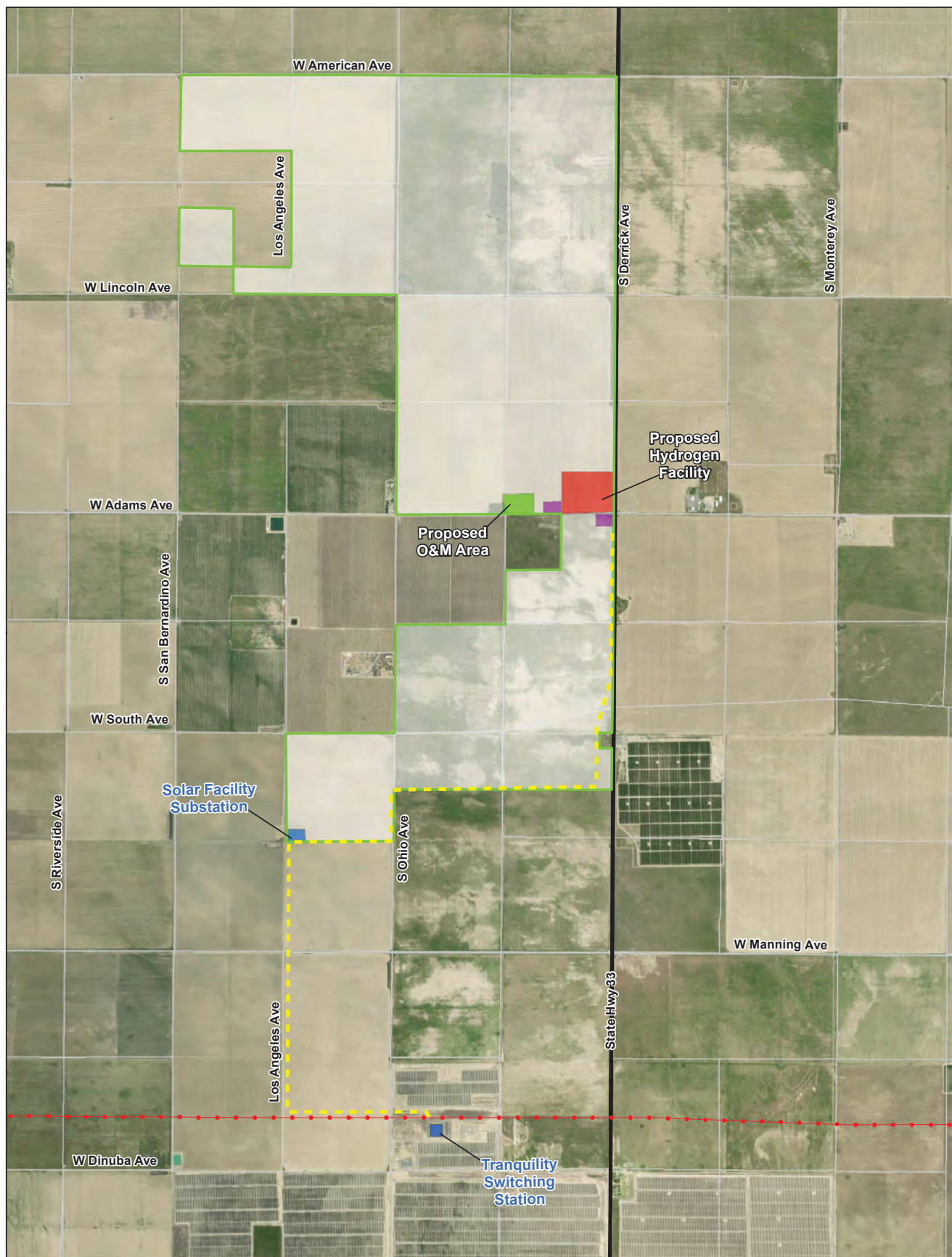
University of California, Davis. January 2003. Integrated Pest Management for Home Gardeners and Landscape Professionals – Rats. Pest Notes Publication 74106. Website: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74106.html>.

United States Department of Agriculture). *Inventory of California State-Listed Noxious Weeds*. Available at <http://plants.usda.gov/java/noxious?rptType+State&statefips+06>. Accessed December 2009.

United States Environmental Protection Agency, Controlling Rodents and Regulating Rodenticides Website: <http://www2.epa.gov/rodenticides>.

FIGURES

Figure 1: Project Site Plan



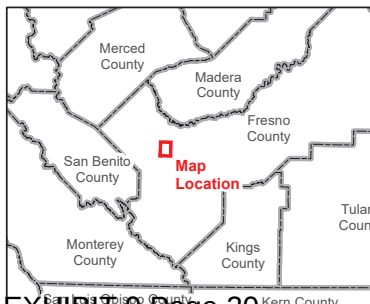
LEGEND

Project Components

- Gen-Tie / Electric Service Line Route
- Heartland Hydrogen Project
- Solar Facility Substation
- Solar Facility Substation (Alternative)
- Hydrogen Facility
- Solar Facility O&M Area
- PV Array

General Features

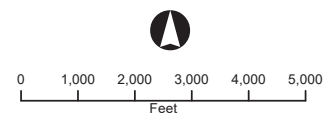
- Switching Station
- Road
- State Highway
- Existing 230 kV Transmission Lines
- County Boundary



HEARTLAND HYDROGEN PROJECT

Site Map

Map Extent: Fresno County, CA





Westlands Water District

May 18, 2026

Fresno County Planning Commission
Planning Commission Chairman Ken Abrahamian
Vice Chair Glenda Hill
Commissioner John Arabian
Commissioner Pablo Villagrana
Commissioner Michelle Roman
Commissioner David Borchardt
Commissioner James Quist
Commissioner Lawrence Garcia
Commissioner Kyle Chaney
Fresno County Hall of Records
2281 Tulare Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Subject: Support for Heartland Solar Project — Planning Commission Hearing

Dear Chair Abrahamian, Vice Chair Hill, and Honorable Commissioners:

On behalf of Westlands Water District (District), we respectfully submit this letter in support of the proposed Heartland Solar Project (Project) in Western Fresno County.

The District recognizes the importance of advancing renewable energy development in a manner that supports California's long-term climate, energy, and water sustainability objectives. The proposed project is consistent with California's ongoing transition toward increased reliance on renewable energy sources to reduce overall climate impacts.

The proposed Project constitutes a significant investment in clean energy infrastructure, converting over 2,300 acres of permanently retired land within the District into productive use. The proposed Project aligns with California's clean energy goals and objectives and utilizing fallowed agricultural land with minimal environmental impact.

Importantly, this project will create meaningful economic opportunities for our region. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2026–2027 and is expected to generate an estimated four hundred (400) construction jobs. The proposed Project has committed to employing union labor sourced from local union halls and has executed Project Labor Agreement (PLA) commitment letters in support of this approach, ensuring that these are high-quality, family-supporting jobs performed by trained and certified electrical workers.

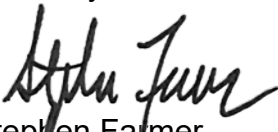
In addition, the Project will provide ongoing operations employment and is expected to generate long-term and significant property and sales tax benefits for the County.

Finally, the proposed Project advances the District's land repurpose goals by transitioning marginal or water-constrained agricultural land to productive, economically viable uses. Projects such as the Heartland Solar Project play a critical role in advancing renewable energy development, strengthening the local workforce, preserving land productivity, and supporting the regional economy.

We respectfully urge the Fresno County Planning Commission to approve the Heartland Solar Project in a timely manner. It represents responsible land use, clean energy advancement, and strong labor standards that will benefit Fresno County for decades to come.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Alma Antuna at (559) 241-6235 or aantuna@wwd.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Farmer", is written over the printed name.

Stephen Farmer
Chief Administrative Officer



CITY OF MENDOTA

"Cantaloupe Center Of The World"

May 12, 2026

Fresno County Planning Commission

Fresno County Hall of Records
2281 Tulare Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Planning Commission Chairman Ken Abrahamian
Vice Chair Glenda Hill
Commissioner John Arabian
Commissioner Pablo Villagrana
Commissioner Michelle Roman
Commissioner David Borchardt
Commissioner James Quist
Commissioner Lawrence Garcia
Commissioner Kyle Chaney

Re: Support for Heartland Solar Project — Planning Commission Hearing, June 4, 2026

Dear Chair Abrahamian, Vice Chair Hill, and Honorable Commissioners:

On behalf of the City of Mendota, we respectfully submit this letter in strong support of the Heartland Solar Project proposed in Western Fresno County.

The Heartland Solar Project represents a significant investment in clean energy infrastructure, bringing a new productive use to more than 2,300 acres of fallowed land in the Mendota Area. This project aligns with California's clean energy goals while making productive use of fallowed farmland with minimal environmental impact.

Importantly, this project will create meaningful economic opportunities for our region. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2026–2027 and is expected to generate an estimated 400 construction jobs. The Heartland Solar Project has committed to employing union labor sourced from local union halls and has executed Project Labor Agreement (PLA) commitment letters in support of this approach, ensuring that these are high-quality, family-supporting jobs performed by trained and certified electrical workers. In addition, the project will provide ongoing operations employment and is expected to generate long-term and significant property and sales tax benefits for the county.

The City of Mendota is supportive of this new use for land in the Mendota Area. Projects like Heartland not only advance renewable energy development but also strengthen the local workforce and economy.

We respectfully urge the Fresno County Planning Commission to approve the Heartland Project in a timely manner. It represents responsible land use, clean energy advancement, and strong labor standards that will benefit Fresno County for decades to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Victor Martinez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Victor" and last name "Martinez" clearly legible.

Victor Martinez, Mayor
City of Mendota



May 15, 2026

Fresno County Planning Commission

Fresno County Hall of Records
2281 Tulare Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Planning Commission Chairman Ken Abrahamian
Vice Chair Glenda Hill
Commissioner John Arabian
Commissioner Pablo Villagrana
Commissioner Michelle Roman
Commissioner David Borchardt
Commissioner James Quist
Commissioner Lawrence Garcia
Commissioner Kyle Chaney

Re: Support for Heartland Solar Project — Planning Commission Hearing

Dear Chair Abrahamian, Vice Chair Hill, and Honorable Commissioners:

On behalf of the Fresno Chamber of Commerce, we respectfully submit this letter in strong support of the Heartland Solar Project proposed in Western Fresno County.

The Heartland Solar Project represents a significant investment in clean energy infrastructure, bringing repurposing 2,300 acres of fallowed land in the Westlands Water District. This project aligns with California's clean energy goals while making productive use of fallowed farmland with minimal environmental impact.

Importantly, this project will create meaningful economic opportunities for our region. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2026–2027 and is expected to generate an estimated 400 construction jobs. The Heartland Solar Project has committed to employing union labor sourced locally and has executed Project Labor Agreement (PLA) commitment letters in support of this approach, ensuring that these are high-quality, family-supporting jobs performed by trained and certified electrical workers. In addition, the project will provide ongoing operations employment and is expected to generate long-term and significant property and sales tax benefits for the county.

We respectfully urge the Fresno County Planning Commission to approve the Heartland Project. It represents responsible land use, clean energy advancement, and strong labor standards that will benefit Fresno County for decades to come.

To promote the success of the regional business community through effective advocacy, education and relationship building.



Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Miller", is written below the word "Sincerely,".

Scott Miller
President/CEO
Fresno Chamber of Commerce

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

May 12, 2026

Fresno County Planning Commission

Fresno County Hall of Records
2281 Tulare Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Planning Commission Chairman Ken Abrahamian

Vice Chair Glenda Hill
Commissioner John Arabian
Commissioner Pablo Villagrana
Commissioner Michelle Roman

Commissioner James Quist
Commissioner Lawrence Garcia
Commissioner Kyle Chaney
Commissioner David Borchardt

Re: Support for Heartland Solar Project — Planning Commission Hearing, June 4, 2026

Dear Chair Abrahamian, Vice Chair Hill, and Honorable Commissioners:

On behalf of the West Hills Community College District, we respectfully submit this letter in strong support of the Heartland Solar Project proposed in Western Fresno County.

The Heartland Solar Project represents a significant investment in clean energy infrastructure, bringing a new productive use to more than 2,300 acres of fallowed land in the Western Fresno Area. This project aligns with California's clean energy goals while making productive use of fallowed farmland with minimal environmental impact.

Importantly, this project will create meaningful economic opportunities for our region. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2026–2027 and is expected to generate an estimated 400 construction jobs. The Heartland Solar Project has committed to employing union labor sourced from local union halls and has executed Project Labor Agreement (PLA) commitment letters in support of this approach, ensuring that these are high-quality, family-supporting jobs performed by trained and certified electrical workers. In addition, the project will provide ongoing operations employment and is expected to generate long-term and significant property and sales tax benefits for the county.

The West Hills Community College District is supportive of this new use for land in the Western Fresno Area. Projects like Heartland not only advance renewable energy development but also strengthen the local workforce and economy.

We respectfully urge the Fresno County Planning Commission to approve the Heartland Project in a timely manner. It represents responsible land use, clean energy advancement, and strong labor standards that will benefit Fresno County for decades to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

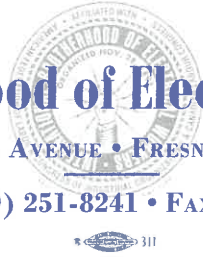
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Pimentel', is positioned above the printed name.

Robert Pimentel, Ed.D
Chancellor
West Hills Community College District
www.westhillscollge.com

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 100

5434 EAST LAMONA AVENUE • FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93727

TELEPHONE (559) 251-8241 • FAX (559) 251-0543



May 8, 2026

Fresno County Planning Commission

Fresno County Hall of Records
2281 Tulare Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Planning Commission Chairman Ken Abrahamian
Vice Chair Glenda Hill
Commissioner John Arabian
Commissioner Pablo Villagrana
Commissioner Michelle Roman
Commissioner David Borchardt
Commissioner James Quist
Commissioner Lawrence Garcia
Commissioner Kyle Chaney

Re: Support for Heartland Solar Project — Planning Commission Hearing

Dear Chair Abrahamian, Vice Chair Hill, and Honorable Commissioners:

On behalf of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 100, we respectfully submit this letter in strong support of the Heartland Solar Project proposed in Western Fresno County.

The Heartland Solar Project represents a significant investment in clean energy infrastructure, bringing repurposing 2300 acres of fallowed land in the Westlands Water District. This project aligns with California's clean energy goals while making productive use of fallowed farmland with minimal environmental impact.

Importantly, this project will create meaningful economic opportunities for our region. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2026–2027 and is expected to generate an estimated 400 construction jobs. The Heartland Solar Project has committed to employing Union labor sourced from local Union halls and has executed Project Labor Agreement (PLA) commitment letters in support of this approach, ensuring that these are high-quality, family-supporting jobs performed by trained and certified electrical workers. In addition, the project will provide ongoing operations employment and is expected to generate long-term and significant property and sales tax benefits for the county.

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 100

5434 EAST LAMONA AVENUE • FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93727

TELEPHONE (559) 251-8241 • FAX (559) 251-0543



IBEW Local 100 members are proud to build and maintain the infrastructure that powers our communities. Projects like Heartland not only advance renewable energy development but also strengthen the local workforce and economy.

We respectfully urge the Fresno County Planning Commission to approve the Heartland Project. It represents responsible land use, clean energy advancement, and strong labor standards that will benefit Fresno County for decades to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jake Pilard

Business Manager

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 100



May 15th 2026

Fresno County Planning Commission

Fresno County Hall of Records
2281 Tulare Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Planning Commission Chairman Ken Abrahamian
Vice Chair Glenda Hill
Commissioner John Arabian
Commissioner Michelle Roman
Commissioner David Borchardt
Commissioner James Quist
Commissioner Lawrence Garcia
Commissioner Kyle Chaney

Re: Support for Heartland Project — Planning Commission Hearing

Dear Chair Abrahamian, Vice Chair Hill, and Honorable Commissioners:

On behalf of the Operating Engineers Local 3, we respectfully submit this letter in strong support of the Heartland Project proposed in Western Fresno County.

The Heartland Solar Project represents a significant investment in clean energy infrastructure, bringing repurposing 2300 acres of fallowed land in the Westlands Water District. This project aligns with California's clean energy goals while making productive use of fallowed farmland with minimal environmental impact.

Importantly, this project will create meaningful economic opportunities for our region. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2026–2027 and is expected to generate an estimated 400 construction jobs. The Heartland Project has committed to employing union labor sourced from local union halls and has executed Project Labor Agreement (PLA) commitment letters in support of this approach, ensuring that these are high-quality, family-supporting jobs performed by trained and certified electrical workers. In addition, the project will provide ongoing operations employment and is expected to generate long-term and significant property and sales tax benefits for the county.



Operating Engineers Local 3 members are proud to build and maintain the infrastructure that powers our communities. Projects like Heartland not only advance renewable energy development but also strengthen the local workforce and economy.

We respectfully urge the Fresno County Planning Commission to approve the Heartland Project. It represents responsible land use, clean energy advancement, and strong labor standards that will benefit Fresno County for decades to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wyatt Meadows
District Representative
Operating Engineers Local 3



OUR MISSION

"Providing services that empower and support families and individuals in our culturally diverse community"

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bob Solis, Chairperson
Nurse RET, Fresno County
Human Services & Det. Facility

Graciela Santillan James, Vice Chair
Officer, El Protector Community
Outreach Program,
California Highway Patrol

Sue Kern, Secretary
Attorney
Fresno Superior Court

Joe Ramirez, Treasurer
Controller
Camarena Health

Lt. Paul Cervantes
Street Violence Bureau Commander
Fresno Police Department

Rogelio Fernandez, M.D.
Community Health Partners

Mirna Garcia
RAINN Speakers Bureau
Realtor

Raquel Haro, Psy.D.
Senior PI Specialist
Community Medical Centers

Gregory Olson
Managing Attorney
Cook & Olson

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Margarita Rocha
Executive Director

May 13, 2025

Fresno County Planning Commission

Fresno County Hall of Records
2281 Tulare Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Planning Commission Chairman Ken Abrahamian
Vice Chair Glenda Hill
Commissioner John Arabian
Commissioner Pablo Villagrana
Commissioner Michelle Roman
Commissioner David Borchardt
Commissioner James Quist
Commissioner Lawrence Garcia
Commissioner Kyle Chaney

Re: Support for Heartland Solar Project — Planning Commission Hearing, June 4 2026

Dear Chair Abrahamian, Vice Chair Hill, and Honorable Commissioners:

On behalf of the Centro La Familia, we respectfully submit this letter in strong support of the Heartland Solar Project proposed in Western Fresno County.

The Heartland Solar Project represents a significant investment in clean energy infrastructure, bringing a new productive use to more than 2,300 acres of fallowed land in the Western Fresno Area. This project aligns with California's clean energy goals while making productive use of fallowed farmland with minimal environmental impact.

Importantly, this project will create meaningful economic opportunities for our region. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2026–2027 and is expected to generate an estimated 400 construction jobs. The Heartland Solar Project has committed to employing union labor sourced from local union halls and has executed Project Labor Agreement (PLA) commitment letters in support of this approach, ensuring that these are high-quality, family-supporting jobs performed by trained and certified electrical workers. In addition, the project will provide ongoing operations employment and is expected to generate long-term and significant property and sales tax benefits for the county.

Centro La Familia is supportive of this new use for land in the Western Fresno Area. Projects like Heartland not only advance renewable energy development but also strengthen the local workforce and economy.



OUR MISSION

"Providing services that empower and support families and individuals in our culturally diverse community"

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bob Solis, Chairperson
Nurse RET, Fresno County
Human Services & Det. Facility

Graciela Santillan James, Vice Chair
Officer, El Protector Community
Outreach Program,
California Highway Patrol

Sue Kern, Secretary
Attorney
Fresno Superior Court

Joe Ramirez, Treasurer
Controller
Camarena Health

Lt. Paul Cervantes
Street Violence Bureau Commander
Fresno Police Department

Rogelio Fernandez, M.D.
Community Health Partners

Mirna Garcia
RAINN Speakers Bureau
Realtor

Raquel Haro, Psy.D.
Senior PI Specialist
Community Medical Centers

Gregory Olson
Managing Attorney
Cook & Olson

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Margarita Rocha
Executive Director

We respectfully urge the Fresno County Planning Commission to approve the Heartland Project in a timely manner. It represents responsible land use, clean energy advancement, and strong labor standards that will benefit Fresno County for decades to come. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Margarita A. Rocha
Executive Director
Centro La Familia Advocacy Services