

3.0 – INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This section provides an overview of the environmental analysis and presents the format for the environmental analysis for each environmental category presented in Chapter 4.0. This section also provides an overview of the cumulative impact analysis conducted for the proposed Project.

3.1 ORGANIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE AREAS

Chapter 4.0 presents an analysis of impacts for all environmental topics listed on the CEQA Checklist. Sections 4.1 through 4.17 discuss environmental impacts that may result due to development of future renewable energy facilities under the proposed Project. Each environmental issue area in Chapter 4.0 contains a description of the following:

- The environmental setting as it relates to the specific issue
- The regulatory framework governing that issue
- The threshold of significance (from Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines)
- An evaluation of the Project’s impacts and identification of mitigation measures
- A determination of the level of significance after mitigation measures are implemented
- The identification of any residual significant impacts following mitigation

Where similar environmental impacts would occur for multiple CEQA thresholds, the impact analysis was consolidated into one subsection addressing the applicable thresholds. Each section identifies the resulting level of significance of the impact using the terminology described below following the application of the proposed mitigation. If the impact remains significant, additional discussion is provided to disclose the implications of the residual impact.

3.2 APPROACH TO THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130 requires that EIRs include an analysis of the cumulative impacts to determine if the project’s effect is considered cumulatively considerable. As defined by CEQA Guidelines, Section 15065(a)(3), “...‘Cumulatively considerable’ means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects...”

Section 15130(b)(1) goes on to identify two approaches for performing a cumulative analysis: (1) A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency; or (2) A summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, or related planning document, that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect.

The cumulative analysis for the proposed Project utilized the list approach. According to Section 15130(b)(2), when using a list it is important to consider the nature of each environmental resource being examined, the location of the project, and its type. In keeping with these provisions, a list

of cumulative projects was obtained from the County of Imperial and confirmed to be current as of November 2014. Table 3.2-1 lists the cumulative projects, while Figure 3.2-1 shows the location of each project.

Table 3.2-1: Cumulative Projects

Map No**.	Project Name/ Application #	Project Location	Owner/ Applicant	Summary Project Description	Project Type	Status
	Existing Projects					
1	Niland Gas Turbine Project	Northeast of Niland; Imperial County	IID	93-MW simple-cycle power plant on a 22-acre site adjacent to the IID's existing Niland Substation.	Energy	Existing
2	KN/KS Transmission Line Tubular Pole Replacement Project ⁽¹⁾	West Chocolate Mountain Evaluation Area; Imperial County	IID	230-kV transmission line upgrade (Highline to Mirage). Interconnects to the SCE Mirage Substation.	Transmission	Existing
3a	F-Line	West Chocolate Mountain Evaluation Area; Imperial County	IID	161-kV transmission line (Midway to Blythe). Interconnects to the WAPA Balancing Authority.	Transmission	Existing
3b	N-Line	West Chocolate Mountain Evaluation Area; Imperial County	IID	92-kV transmission line (Midway to Coachella Valley). Connects to the SCE Mirage Substation.	Transmission	Existing
4	State Route 111 Upgrade	Imperial County	Imperial County	Upgrade to six-lane freeway with interchanges at Jasper Road, McCabe Road, Heber Road, and overcrossing at Chick Road from State Route 98 to Interstate 8 (post mile R1.2-R7.7)	Transportation	Existing
5	Ormat Continuing Operations CA-670-2006-12 Geothermal Leases: ⁽²⁾ CACA 000966 CACA 001903 CACA 006218 CACA 006217 CACA 017568 CACA 006219	State Route 115 and Interstate 8; Imperial County	ORRESOURCES Geothermal	Geothermal energy development leases.	Energy	Existing
6	EUIPH Wind Farm, San Gorgonio Westwinds II LLC, San Gorgonio Wind Plant WPP1993, Wintec Energy Ltd.	San Gorgonio Pass Area; Riverside County	Wintec, Ltd.	Multiple wind power plants, ranging from 7.5 MW to 43 MW in size.	Energy	Existing
7	ORNI 18 (North Brawley Geothermal Project) ⁽²⁴⁾	North Brawley; Imperial County	ORNI #18, LLC (Ormat)	49.9-MW geothermal power plant.	Energy	Existing
66	CE Turbo, J.J. Elmore, J.M. Leathers, Vulcan, Del Ranch, Salton Sea 1-5 Geothermal Projects ⁽²³⁾	West of Calipatria; Imperial County	CE Generation LLC	Projects were developed adjacent to one another between 1986 and 2000. Combined power output of 327 MW.	Energy	Existing
67	Heber 1 ⁽²³⁾	Heber; Imperial County	Ormat	Began operation in 1985. As a portion of the Heber Geothermal Complex, contributes to a combined power output of 92 MW.	Energy	Existing
68	Heber 2 ⁽²³⁾	Heber; Imperial County	Ormat	Began operation in 1993. As a portion of the Heber Geothermal Complex, contributes to a combined power output of 92 MW.	Energy	Existing
69	Heber South ⁽²³⁾	Heber; Imperial County	Ormat	Began operation in 2008. As a portion of the Heber Geothermal Complex, contributes to a combined power output of 92 MW.	Energy	Existing

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Map No**	Project Name/ Application #	Project Location	Owner/ Applicant	Summary Project Description	Project Type	Status
19a	Hudson Ranch I Geothermal Project CUP#007-0019 ⁽⁵⁾	Calipatria/Niland area; Imperial County	Hudson Ranch Power I, LLC.	49.9-MW geothermal power plant. Plant facility occupies 65 acres; 1,607 acres of private land leased by the geothermal mineral rights holders.	Energy	Existing. Commenced operations March 2012.
25	El Centro Unit 3 Repower Project ⁽⁷⁾	El Centro; Imperial County	IID	Replaces an existing steam-generating unit within the site of the existing ECGS. The repower project will increase the existing Unit 3 generating capacity by 84 MW, from 44 MW to 128 MW.	Energy	Existing. Under construction.
52	IV Solar ⁽¹⁶⁾ CUP #10-0014	Niland area, Imperial County	IV Solar Company	23-MW solar energy project within 123 acres.	Energy	Existing. Under construction.
	Foreseeable Projects					
8	Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Withdrawal Renewal ⁽³⁾	Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range (CMAGR; Imperial County	Department of the Navy	The CMAGR consists of approximately 459,000 acres located in Riverside and Imperial counties. The Navy owns 50% of CMGAR land, and the balance is withdrawn public lands for military training purposes owned by the BLM. The current withdrawal expires in October 2014. The Navy has applied for new withdrawal for a 25-year period. Because the withdrawal will be larger than 5,000 acres, Congress will need to review the proposal under a Legislative EIS.	Military Operations	Active. Draft LEIS released for public review August 31, 2012.
9	Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan ⁴	Imperial Sand Dunes; Imperial County	BLM	This Recreation Activity Plan addresses management of 215,000 acres of BLM managed lands within the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area.	Recreation	Active. Final Recreation Area Plan /Draft EIS released September 7, 2012.
10	Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Project	Salton Sea, Imperial County	California Natural Resources Agency	The restoration project consists of the following components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Saline Habitat Complex in the northern and southern Sea Bed — A Marine Sea that extends from San Felipe Creek to Bombay Beach — Air Quality Management facilities to reduce particulate emissions from the exposed playa — Brine Sink for discharge of salts — Conveyance facilities — Sedimentation/Distribution facilities 	Restoration	Active. Final Programmatic EIR complete.

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11	Salton Sea Species Conservation Habitat Project	Riverside and Imperial counties	California Natural Resources Agency	Project would construct habitat configured in a series of interconnected shallow ponds within the current footprint of the Salton Sea. Project size at total build-out would be approximately 2,400 acres to be constructed over a period of several years, depending on land availability and cost.	Restoration	Active. Draft EIS/EIR published April 2011.
12	IID Managed Marsh Complex	Imperial County, Salton Sea	IID	A 959-acre managed marsh complex located at English and McDonald roads. The result of mitigation for a Quantification Settlement Agreement Water Transfer to provide habitat for IID's Drain Covered Species.	Restoration	Active. Phase I construction is complete.
13	Quantification Settlement Agreement	Imperial County, Salton Sea	IID	Colorado River water allocations.	Water allocation	Active
14	Black Mountain Wind Project ⁽²⁾ CACA 048272 CACA 052078	Black Mountain south of CMAGR; Imperial County	Imperial Wind LLC (Renewergy)	Wind energy testing and development for eight meteorological towers on 15,335 acres; approximately 40 acres total footprint for meteorological towers. BLM is currently awaiting a POD for a 48- to 65-MW wind energy facility.	Energy	Active. BLM requested submission of the POD in March 2011. Testing ROW for CACA 048272 expired September 2, 2012.
15	Black Mountain Wind Project No. 2 ⁽²⁾ CACA 047751 CACA-052435	Black Valley, near State Route 78 and Ogilby Road; Imperial County	OroValley Power, LLC	Wind energy testing and development for three meteorological towers on 11,227 acres; approximately 15 acres total footprint for meteorological towers. BLM is currently awaiting POD for a 129.6- to 180-MW wind energy facility.	Energy	Active. Wind energy testing ROW expires August 28, 2013. Wind energy facility ROW authorization is pending.
16	Gold Basin Wind Project ⁽²⁾ CACA-51947	East of the Imperial Sand Dunes in the Gold Basin area of Imperial County	LH Renewable, LLC	Wind energy testing using three meteorological towers. Total footprint for all three towers is approximately 15 acres. The total ROW is 8,446 acres.	Energy	Active. ROW authorized September 21, 2011; expires September 18, 2014.
17	Ogilby Solar Project ⁽²⁾ CACA 049615	West of Ogilby Road, east of railroad; Imperial County	Iberdrola (Pacific Solar Investments)	450-MW solar thermal (trough) project. 7,405-acre ROW.	Energy	Active. Currently pending authorization; preliminary POD to BLM.
18	Solar Reserve Project ⁽²⁾ CACA 049884	BLM lands lying east of Lake Cahuilla –ACEC south of I-8 and north of the All American Canal; Imperial County	Solar Reserve	100- to 250-MW concentrating solar thermal tower energy development project on 4,000 acres.	Energy	Active. Pending authorization; updated POD and hydrology report have been received by BLM.

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19b	Midway-to-Bannister Transmission Line ⁽⁶⁾	Calipatria/Niland area; Imperial County	IID	230-kV transmission line, approximately 12.4 miles in length. This is a four-phase project. Phase I is 8.7 miles in length between IID's existing Midway Substation and proposed Bannister substation. Connects the Hudson Ranch I project to the existing Midway Substation.	Transmission	Active. Phase I construction completed March 2011; Phases II and III expected by 2013 and 2015, respectively.
20	West Chocolate Mountain Renewable Energy Evaluation Area (REEA) Plan	Between the eastern edge of the Salton Sea and the Chocolate Mountains; Imperial County	BLM	Consists of an amendment(s) to the California Desert Area Conservation Plan to identify sites within the approximately 59,000-acre West Chocolate Mountain REEA as suitable for geothermal, solar, and wind energy development, subject to certain resource opportunities and constraints.	Energy	Active. Final EIS released for public review November 2012; Record of Decision pending USFWS Biological Opinion.
21	Milpitas Wind Testing Project ⁽²⁾ CACA 051062	Chuckwalla Bench; Northeastern Imperial County	Exelon Wind, LLC	5,763-acre ROW authorized for wind energy testing. Project consists of two meteorological towers and 1 SODAR unit. 10 acres total footprint for meteorological towers and SODAR unit.	Energy	Active. ROW grant expires September 20, 2013.
22	Hudson Ranch II Geothermal/Simbol II Lithium Carbonate Production Plant Project	Niland area; Imperial County	Hudson Ranch II, LLC; Simbol II, LLC	A 49.9 net MW geothermal flash power plant and associated infrastructure located on 326 acres of private land and a co-located commercial lithium carbonate production plant adjacent to the geothermal plant, which will use the geothermal brine from the plant.	Energy	Active. Approved by County of Imperial October 2012.
24	Unnamed Solar Development on BLM-Managed Land	Shavers Valley/ Interstate 10 Corridor; Riverside County	Sierra Renewables	Solar energy development.	Energy	Active.
26	Niland 92/13.2-kV Substation Upgrade Project ⁽⁸⁾	Niland; Imperial County	IID	Installation of a new 92/13.2-kV 25-MVA substation next to existing switching station and communication site (north of Niland Substation). Removal of the existing Niland 92/13.2-kV 10-MVA transformer (156' x 100').	Transmission	Active. Negative Declaration Adopted.
28	Centinela Solar Project CUP #10-0017 ⁽¹⁰⁾	Calexico; Imperial County	Centinela Solar Energy, LLC	275-MW PV solar project on 2,067 acres.	Energy	Active. Construction started early 2012.
29	Imperial Solar Energy Center South ⁽¹¹⁾ CUP #10-0011	Western Imperial Valley; Imperial County	CSOLAR Development, LLC	200-MW solar project on approximately 946 acres. Also includes a 230-kV transmission line connecting to the Imperial Valley Substation.	Energy	Active. Under construction.
30	Imperial Solar Energy Center West Project ⁽¹²⁾ CUP #10-0012	Western Imperial Valley; Imperial County	CSOLAR Development, LLC	250-MW solar project on approximately 1,130 acres. Also includes a 230-kV transmission line connecting to the Imperial Valley Substation.	Energy	Active. Final EIR/EA published July 2011.
31	Mt. Signal Solar Farm I	2.5 to 7.5 miles west of	82LV, 8ME, LLC	200-MW PV solar farm comprised of four agricultural parcels	Energy	Active.

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	CUP #10-0031 ⁽¹³⁾	Calexico; Imperial County.		totaling 1,375 acres owned by Calexico West, Inc. Agricultural land uses surround the project, with the exception of the U.S.-Mexico border located directly south of Parcel II.		CUP approved April 3, 2012. Under construction.
32	Calexico Solar Farm I CUP #11-0009 and #11-0010 ⁽¹³⁾ (Included in Mt. Signal Solar EIR)	Approximately 5 miles west of Calexico, Imperial County.	88FT 8ME, LLC; 8Minute Energy Renewables, LLC	200-MW AC solar farm comprised of two 100-MW phases (A and B) on 1,013 acres of agricultural parcels. Each phase is requesting approval of a separate CUP.	Energy	Active. Final EIR and CUP approved April 3, 2012.
33	Calexico Solar Farm II (CSF-II) ⁽¹³⁾ CUP #11-0011 and #11-0012 (Included in Mt. Signal Solar EIR)	Approximately 2 miles west of Calexico; Imperial County	89MA 8ME, LLC; 8Minute Energy Renewables, LLC	200-MW solar project comprised of two 100-MW phases (A and B) on 1,477 acres of agricultural parcels owned by several land owners. Each phase is requesting approval of a separate CUP.	Energy	Active. Final EIR and CUP approved April 3, 2012.
34	ORNI 19 (East Brawley Geothermal Project) ⁽¹⁶⁾ CUP #08-0023	Brawley area; Imperial County	Ormat	49.9-MW geothermal energy project consisting of the plant being developed on one 33.7-acre parcel and 39 leased parcels encompassing approximately 3,033.2 acres that will contain proposed wells and pipelines. The total area of disturbance would be approximately 190 acres, which includes both the plant site and the wells and pipelines.	Energy	Active. Final EIR published May 2012.
36	Black Rock Units # 1, 2, 3 ⁽²⁸⁾	Approximately 6 miles northwest of Calipatria; Imperial County	CE Butte Energy, LLC	159-MW geothermal energy project within 160 acres.	Energy	Extension approved. Anticipated Const. start Dec. 18, 2014. On Hold: pending a power purchase agreement
37	Black Rock Units # 5 and 6 ⁽²⁸⁾	Approximately 6 miles northwest of Calipatria; Imperial County.	CE Butte Energy, LLC	255-MW geothermal energy project within 140 acres.	Energy	On hold.
38	Ocotillo Express Wind Energy Project ⁽¹⁷⁾ CUP #10-0007	Ocotillo area; Imperial County	Ocotillo Express, LLC	Up to a 465-MW wind energy project within 12,436 acres. Total project footprint is approximately 1,167 acres.	Energy	Active. Under construction.
40	Energy Source Solar I & II ⁽¹⁶⁾ CUP #10-0032 and #10-0033	Niland; Imperial County	Energy Source, LLC	Two adjacent 80-MW solar energy projects within 960 acres.	Energy	Active. Under environmental review.
42	Calipatria Solar Farm I & II ⁽¹⁶⁾ CUP #10-0034	Calipatria; Imperial County	8Minute Energy Renewables, LLC	One 70-MW solar energy project within a total of 609 acres of private land.	Energy	Active. Conditional Use Permit approved August 2012
43	Midway Solar Farm I & II ⁽¹⁶⁾ CUP #10-0036 and #10-0037	Calipatria; Imperial County	8Minute Energy Renewables, LLC	Midway Solar I is a 50-MW solar energy project within 326 acres. Midway Solar II is a 155-MW solar energy project within 803 acres.	Energy	Active. Conditional Use Permit approved August 2012

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44	Sonora Solar ^(16,20) CUP #11-0026	Calipatria; Imperial County	Solar Gen II, LLC	50-MW solar energy project within 488 acres.	Energy	Active. Imperial County Planning Commission approved May 9, 2012.
45	Arkansas Solar ^(16,20) CUP #11-0018	Calipatria; Imperial County	Solar Gen II, LLC	50-MW solar energy project within 481 acres.	Energy	Active. Imperial County Planning Commission approved May 9, 2012.
46	Keystone Solar Power CUP #10-0024 ⁽¹⁶⁾	Mesquite SPA; Imperial County	Keystone Solar Power Generation Station 1, LLC	6.06-MW solar energy project within 40 acres.	Energy	On hold. Under environmental review.
47	Frink Road Solar Power ⁽¹⁶⁾ CUP #10-0025	Niland area; Imperial County	Frink Rd Solar Power Generation Station 1, LLC	30.04-MW high concentration PV solar energy project on 280 acres.	Energy	On hold.
49	Alhambra Solar ⁽¹⁶⁾ CUP #11-0020	Calipatria; Imperial County	Solar Gen II, LLC	50-MW solar energy project within 482 acres.	Energy	Active. Imperial County Planning Commission approved May 9, 2012.
50	Chocolate Mountain Solar ⁽¹⁶⁾ CUP #10-0005	Niland area; Imperial County	8Minute Energy Renewables, LLC	49.9-MW solar energy project within 320 acres.	Energy	Active. Imperial County Planning Commission approved Aug. 25, 2010.
51	Wister Solar ⁽¹⁶⁾ CUP #11-0017	Niland area; Imperial County	28SW 8ME, LLC	20-MW solar energy project within 148 acres.	Energy	Active. Under environmental review (EIR).
53	Campo Verde Solar ⁽¹⁶⁾ CUP #11-0007	Mt. Signal area; Imperial County	USS MSS Permits, LLC	140-MW solar energy project within 1,996 acres.	Energy	Active. Under environmental review (EIR).
56	Simbol Calipatria Plant I (SmCP-1) CUP #12-0004	Calipatria/Niland area; Imperial County	Simbol Mining	Facility to extract lithium, manganese, and zinc from geothermal brine from the adjacent Hudson Ranch I geothermal plant.	Mineral Extraction	Active. County approved October 24, 2012.

Table 3.2-1: Cumulative Projects

Map No**.	Project Name/ Application #	Project Location	Owner/ Applicant	Summary Project Description	Project Type	Status
57	Truckhaven Geothermal Unit – BLM Geothermal Leases: CACA 051002, 043003, 042750, 043002, 051003, 051004, 051005, 051006, 051007, 051008, 042751, 042752, 051009, 051010, 05101, 051012, 051013 ¹²	Northern portion of Truckhaven Geothermal Leasing Area	Calnorth Petroleum, Inc.; NGP Truckhaven LLC; Geo Energy Partners 1983 LTD	Geothermal energy exploration land unit, approximately 40,000 acres in size; expected to include California State Lands Commission and fee lands. ¹⁹ Total acreage of all geothermal leases within the Truckhaven Geothermal Unit is approximately 16,000 acres. ²	Energy	Active. All leases within unit expire September 30, 2019.
61	Wistaria Ranch Solar Energy Center Project CUP#12-0017 ⁽²⁵⁾	West of Calexico; Imperial County	Wistaria Ranch Solar, LLC	250-MW PV solar energy project within 3,394 acres of private land.	Energy	In CEQA process.
62	Sol Orchard Solar Project ⁽²⁶⁾	City of El Centro; Imperial County	Sol Orchard Imperial 1, LLC	20-MW PV solar energy project within 140 acres.	Energy	Active. Final MND issued December 13, 2012.
65	Iris Cluster ⁽²¹⁾	West of Calexico; Imperial County	85JP 8ME, LLC	360-MW PV solar energy project within 1,422 acres of private land.	Energy	In CEQA process.
67	Commercial Algae Fuels Facility ⁽¹⁸⁾	East of Niland; Imperial County	SunEco Energy	Commercial algae farm within 350 acres.	Energy	Active. On hold.
70	Heber Solar Energy Facility CUP #11-0014	Heber	RET Holdings, LLC	14-MW Solar-PV project within 80 acres.	Energy	MND approved October 2011. Originally developed by Ormat, project was sold to RET Holdings, LLC in March 2014.
71	IV Solar 2 CUP #12-0009	Niland	IV Solar 2	20-MW Solar-PV project within 158.65 acres.	Energy	EIR approved July 2013.
72	Seville Solar Farm CUP #13-0011	Borrego Springs	Imperial Solar Holdings, LLC	135-MW Solar-PV project within 1,238 acres.	Energy	EIR approved October 2014.
73	California Ethanol & Power CUP #12-0015	Keystone	SKS Holding	50-MW ethanol project within 160 acres.	Energy	EIR approved.
74	Canergy CUP #13-0030	Brawley	Canergy Rockwood, LLC	Ethanol project within 80 acres.	Energy	In CEQA process.
75	Oberon Fuels CUP #12-0014	Brawley	Henrietta Farms	Dimethyl Ether (DME) project within 4 acres.	Energy	MND approved.

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76	ORNI 21 Wister (Binary) CUP #G10-0004	Niland	Ormat	30-MW geothermal project within 40 acres.	Energy	In CEQA process.
77	Imperial Wells Power (Exploration) CUP #G13-0001	Niland	Imperial Wells	Geothermal project within 26 acres.	Energy	ND approved.
78	Exploratory Well CUP #G13-0002	Niland	State Lands Hudson Ranch	Geothermal project within 40 acres.	Energy	ND approved.

Key:

**** Project Numbers are not sequential.**

ACEC: Area of Critical Environmental Concern

BLM: Bureau of Land Management

CMAGR: Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range

CPUC: California Public Utilities Commission

CUP: Conditional Use Permit

EA: Environmental Assessment

ECGS: El Centro Generating Station

EIR: Environmental Impact Report

EIS: Environmental Impact Statement

IID: Imperial Irrigation District

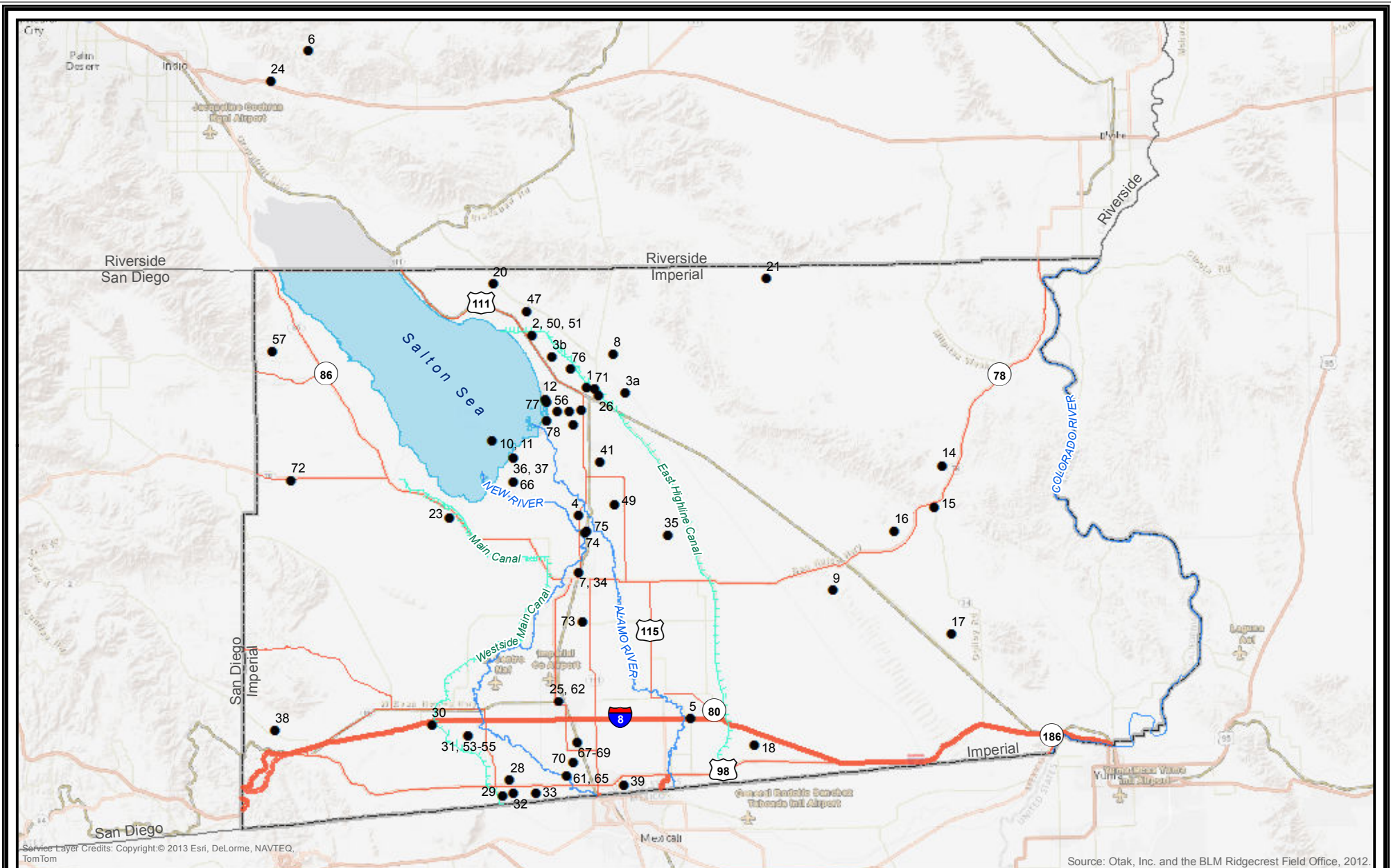
kV: kilovolt LEIS: Legislative Environmental Impact Statement.

MND: Mitigated Negative Declaration

MW: megawatt

Sources:

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2. BLM. 2011. LR2000 Land Records Search online database.
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7. California Energy Commission. 2006. El Centro Unit 3 Repower Project Final Initial Study.
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10. Imperial County. 2010. Centinela Solar Project CUP Application.
11. Imperial County. 2011. Imperial Solar Energy Center South FEIR/EA.
12. Imperial County. 2010. Imperial Solar Energy Center West DEIR.
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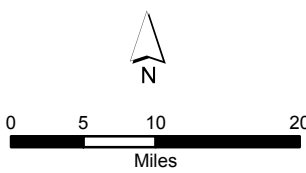


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Source: Otak, Inc. and the BLM Ridgecrest Field Office, 2012.

Legend
 ● Project Location

Figure 3.2-1
 Imperial County Renewable Energy and
 Transmission Element Update PEIR
 Cumulative Projects



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