

Initial Study and NOP

For:

**Mount Signal Solar Farm
and**

Calexico Solar Farms:

Mount Signal Farm I	CUP 10-0031
Calexico Solar Farm I (Phase A)	CUP 11-0009
Calexico Solar Farm I (Phase B)	CUP 11-0010
Calexico Solar Farm II (Phase A)	CUP 11-0011
Calexico Solar Farm II (Phase B)	CUP 11-0012



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July 2011

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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

This document is a policy-level; project level Initial Study for evaluation of potential environmental impacts resulting with the proposed Mount Signal Solar Farm.

B. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) REQUIREMENTS AND THE IMPERIAL COUNTY'S GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING CEQA

As defined by Section 15063 of the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines and Section 7 of the County's Guidelines for Implementing CEQA, an **Initial Study** is prepared primarily to provide the Lead Agency with information to use as the basis for determining whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Negative Declaration, or Mitigated Negative Declaration would be appropriate for providing the necessary environmental documentation and clearance for any proposed project.

According to Section 15065, an **EIR** is deemed appropriate for a particular proposal if the following conditions occur:

- The proposal has the potential to substantially degrade quality of the environment.
- The proposal has the potential to achieve short-term environmental goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals.
- The proposal has possible environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable.
- The proposal could cause direct or indirect adverse effects on human beings.

According to Section 15070(a), a **Negative Declaration** is deemed appropriate if the proposal would not result in any significant effect on the environment.

According to Section 15070(b), a **Mitigated Negative Declaration** is deemed appropriate if it is determined that though a proposal could result in a significant effect, mitigation measures are available to reduce these significant effects to insignificant levels.

This Initial Study has determined that the proposed applications will result in potentially significant environmental impacts and therefore, an Environmental Impact Report is deemed as the appropriate document to provide necessary environmental evaluations and clearance for the proposed project.

This Initial Study and Notice of Preparation are prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et. seq.); Section 15070 of the State & County of Imperial's Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000, et. seq.); applicable requirements of the County of Imperial; and the regulations, requirements, and procedures of any other responsible public agency or an agency with jurisdiction by law.

Pursuant to the County of Imperial Guidelines for Implementing CEQA, depending on the project scope, the County of Imperial Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission and/or Planning Director is designated the Lead Agency, in accordance with Section 15050 of the CEQA Guidelines. The Lead Agency is the public agency which has the principal responsibility for approving the necessary environmental clearances and analyses for any project in the County.

C. INTENDED USES OF INITIAL STUDY AND NOTICE OF PREPARATION

This Initial Study and Notice of Preparation are informational documents which are intended to inform County of Imperial decision makers, other responsible or interested agencies, and the general public of potential environmental effects of the proposed applications. The environmental review process has been established to enable public agencies to evaluate environmental consequences and to examine and implement methods of eliminating or reducing any potentially adverse impacts. While CEQA requires that consideration be given to avoiding environmental damage, the Lead Agency and other responsible public agencies must balance adverse environmental effects against other public objectives, including economic and social goals.

The Initial Study and Notice of Preparation, prepared for the project will be circulated for a period of 30 days for public and agency review and comments.

D. CONTENTS OF INITIAL STUDY & NOTICE OF PREPARATION

This Initial Study is organized to facilitate a basic understanding of the existing setting and environmental implications of the proposed applications.

SECTION 1

I. INTRODUCTION presents an introduction to the entire report. This section discusses the environmental process, scope of environmental review, and incorporation by reference documents.

SECTION 2

II. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM contains the County's Environmental Checklist Form. The checklist form presents results of the environmental evaluation for the proposed applications and those issue areas that would have either a significant impact, potentially significant impact, or no impact.

PROJECT SUMMARY, LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTINGS describes the proposed project entitlements and required applications. A description of discretionary approvals and permits required for project implementation is also included. It also identifies the location of the project and a general description of the surrounding environmental settings.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS evaluates each response provided in the environmental checklist form. Each response checked in the checklist form is discussed and supported with sufficient data and analysis as necessary. As appropriate, each response discussion describes and identifies specific impacts anticipated with project implementation.

SECTION 3

III. MANDATORY FINDINGS presents Mandatory Findings of Significance in accordance with Section 15065 of the CEQA Guidelines.

E. SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

For evaluation of environmental impacts, each question from the Environmental Checklist Form is summarized and responses are provided according to the analysis undertaken as part of the Initial Study. Impacts and effects will be evaluated and quantified, when appropriate. To each question, there are four possible responses, including:

1. **No Impact:** A “No Impact” response is adequately supported if the impact simply does not apply to the proposed applications.
2. **Less Than Significant Impact:** The proposed applications will have the potential to impact the environment. These impacts, however, will be less than significant; no additional analysis is required.
3. **Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated:** This applies where incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact”.
4. **Potentially Significant Impact:** The proposed applications could have impacts that are considered significant. Additional analyses and possibly an EIR could be required to identify mitigation measures that could reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

F. POLICY-LEVEL or PROJECT LEVEL ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This Initial Study will be conducted under a policy-level, project level analysis.

Regarding mitigation measures, it is not the intent of this document to “overlap” or restate conditions of approval that are commonly established for future known projects or the proposed applications. Additionally, those other standard requirements and regulations that any development must comply with, that are outside the County’s jurisdiction, are also not considered mitigation measures and therefore, will not be identified in this document.

G. TIERED DOCUMENTS AND INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

Information, findings, and conclusions contained in this document are based on incorporation by reference of tiered documentation, which are discussed in the following section.

1. Tiered Documents

As permitted in Section 15152(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, information and discussions from other documents can be included into this document. Tiering is defined as follows:

“Tiering refers to using the analysis of general matters contained in a broader EIR (such as the one prepared for a general plan or policy statement) with later EIRs and negative declarations on narrower projects; incorporating by reference the general discussions from the broader EIR; and concentrating the later EIR or negative declaration solely on the issues specific to the later project.”

Tiering also allows this document to comply with Section 15152(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, which discourages redundant analyses, as follows:

“Agencies are encouraged to tier the environmental analyses which they prepare for separate but related projects including the general plans, zoning changes, and development projects. This approach can eliminate repetitive discussion of the same issues and focus the later EIR or negative declaration on the actual issues ripe for decision at each level of environmental review. Tiering is appropriate when the sequence of analysis is from an EIR prepared for a general plan, policy or program to an EIR or negative declaration for another plan, policy, or program of lesser scope, or to a site-specific EIR or negative declaration.”

Further, Section 15152(d) of the CEQA Guidelines states:

“Where an EIR has been prepared and certified for a program, plan, policy, or ordinance consistent with the requirements of this section, any lead agency for a later project pursuant to or consistent with the program, plan, policy, or ordinance should limit the EIR or negative declaration on the later project to effects which:

(1) Were not examined as significant effects on the environment in the prior EIR; or

(2) Are susceptible to substantial reduction or avoidance by the choice of specific revisions in the project, by the imposition of conditions, or other means.”

2. Incorporation By Reference

Incorporation by reference is a procedure for reducing the size of EIRs/MND and is most appropriate for including long, descriptive, or technical materials that provide general background information, but do not contribute directly to the specific analysis of the project itself. This procedure is particularly useful when an EIR or Negative Declaration relies on a broadly-drafted EIR for its evaluation of cumulative impacts of related projects (*Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation v. County of Los Angeles* [1986, 177 Ca.3d 300]). If an EIR or Negative Declaration relies on information from a supporting study that is available to the public, the EIR or Negative Declaration cannot be deemed unsupported by evidence or analysis (*San Francisco Ecology Center v. City and County of San Francisco* [1975, 48 Ca.3d 584, 595]).

When an EIR or Negative Declaration incorporates a document by reference, the incorporation must comply with Section 15150 of the CEQA Guidelines as follows:

- The incorporated document must be available to the public or be a matter of public record (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[a]). The General Plan EIR is available, along with this document, at the County of Imperial Planning & Development Services Department, 801 Main Street, El Centro, CA 92243 Ph. (760) 482-4236.
- This document must be available for inspection by the public at an office of the lead agency (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[b]). These documents are available at the County of Imperial Planning & Development Services Department, 801 Main Street, El Centro, CA 92243 Ph. (760) 482-4236.
- These documents must summarize the portion of the document being incorporated by reference or briefly describe information that cannot be summarized. Furthermore, these documents must describe the relationship between the incorporated information and the analysis in the tiered documents (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[c]). As discussed above, the tiered EIRs address the entire project site and provide background and inventory information and data which apply to the project site. Incorporated information and/or data will be cited in the appropriate sections.
- These documents must include the State identification number of the incorporated documents (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[d]). The State Clearinghouse Number for the ‘County of Imperial General Plan EIR is SCH #93011023.
- The material to be incorporated in this document will include general background information (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[f]).

SECTION II. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

1. **Project Title:** Mount Signal Solar Farm and Calexico Solar Farms EIR
2. **Lead Agency:** Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department
3. **Contact person and phone number:** Angelina Havens, Planner III, (760) 482-4236, ext. 4984
4. **Address:** 801 Main Street, El Centro CA, 92243
5. **E-mail:** angelinahavens@co.imperial.ca.us
6. **Project location:** The proposed Mount Signal Solar Farm Project and the Calexico Solar Farm Projects (collectively, the "Projects") are located on privately owned, undeveloped agricultural land encompassing approximately 4,228-acres of land, six miles west of the City of Calexico, California in southern Imperial County. The Projects are generally located between Kubler Road to the north and the US-Mexico border to the south, and between Pulliam Road to the west and Hammers Road to the east.
7. **Project sponsor's name and address:** 82LV 8ME, LLC, 88FT 8ME, LLC, 89MA 8ME, LLC, 10100 Santa Monica Blvd, Suite 300, Los Angeles, CA 90067
8. **General Plan designation:** Agriculture
9. **Zoning:** A-2 (General Agriculture), A-2-R (General Agricultural Rural Zone), A-3 (Heavy Agriculture)
10. **Description of project:** The proposed Mount Signal Solar Farm Project and the Calexico Solar Farm Projects involve the construction of a three Photo Voltaic (PV) solar facilities, composed of three contiguous but independent sites, which would include solar PV panels, inverter modules, pad mounted transformers, and an on-site substation(s). Each Project site will have its own O&M building and onsite substation(s).

Mount Signal Solar Farm I: The solar array field will encompass a total of 1,431 acres on ten parcels of land, as shown on Figure 1. This particular project site is anticipated to generate up to 200 megawatts (MW) of energy. The project site includes the following Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs): 052-210-013; 052-210-016; 052-210-034; 052-210-035; 052-210-036; 059-130-001; 059-130-002; 059-130-004; 059-130-005; and 052-190-012. The project site would connect to a shared 230 kilovolt (kV) overhead transmission line which may be shared with one or more neighboring solar project(s).

Calexico Solar Farm I: The solar array field will encompass a total of 1,332 acres within the nine parcels of land identified on Figure 1. This particular project site will be developed in two phases: Phase A and Phase B, each applying for its own Conditional Use Permit (CUP), and each intended to generate up to 100 MW; however, each phase may produce up to 200 MW (total for both phases combined will not exceed 200 MW). Each phase is intended have its own operations and maintenance (O&M) building and onsite substation. The project site includes the following APNs: 052-210-001; 052-210-002; 052-210-015 (Phase A); 052-190-011; 052-210-014; 052-210-037; 052-210-038; 052-210-039; 052-210-018 (Phase B). The project site would connect to a shared 230 kV overhead transmission line with one or more neighboring solar project(s).

Calexico Solar Farm II: The solar array field will encompass a total of 1,465 acres within the ten parcels of land identified on Figure 1. This particular project site will be developed in two phases: Phase A and Phase B, each applying for its own Conditional Use Permit (CUP), and each intended to generate up to 100 MW; however, each phase may produce up to 200 MW (total for both phases combined will not exceed 200 MW). Each phase is intended

have its own O&M building and onsite substation. The project site includes the following APNs: 059-110-006; 059-110-008; 059-130-003; 059-110-003; 059-110-007; (Phase A); 052-180-043; 052-180-044; 052-180-022; 052-180-050; and 052-180-051 (Phase B). The project site would connect to a shared 230 kV overhead transmission line with one or more neighboring solar project(s)

11. Surrounding land uses and setting: Briefly describe the project's surroundings:

The project site is adjacent to agricultural land to the north, south, east and west with the US-Mexico border is located directly to the south.

12. Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.):

- Bureau of Land Management – Authorization of Right-of-Way Grant
- Caltrans – Encroachment Permit
- Imperial Irrigation District – Right of Way Permit

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology /Soils |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE (EEC) DETERMINATION

After Review of the Initial Study, the Environmental Evaluation Committee has:

- Found that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- Found that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- Found that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- Found that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- Found that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME DE MINIMIS IMPACT FINDING: Yes No

<u>EEC VOTES</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
PUBLIC WORKS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OFFICE EMERGENCY SERVICES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
APCD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SHERIFF DEPARTMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ICPDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Armando G. Villa, Director of Planning/EEC Chairman

Date: _____

PROJECT SUMMARY

A. Project Location:

The Mount Signal Solar Farm Project and the Calexico Solar Farm Projects are located on privately owned, undeveloped agricultural land encompassing 4,228-acres approximately six miles west of Calexico, California in southern Imperial County. The project includes three facilities: Mount Signal Solar Farm I, Calexico Solar Farm I and Calexico Solar Farm II.

Mount Signal Solar Farm I: The Mount Signal Solar I site consists of ten parcels totaling approximately 1,431-acres. As shown on Figure 1, the project site is generally located between State Route (SR) 98 to the north and the US-Mexico border to the south, and between Pulliam Road to the west and Weed Road to the east. Primary access to the project site can be obtained via SR-98 and Ferrell Road. The project site includes the following Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs): 052-210-013; 052-210-016; 052-210-034; 052-210-035; 052-210-036; 059-130-001; 059-130-002; 059-130-004; 059-130-005; and 052-190-012.

Calexico Solar Farm I: The Calexico Solar Farm I project site consists of nine parcels totaling 1,332-acres. As shown on Figure 1, the project site is generally located between State Route (SR) 98 to the north and the US-Mexico border to the south, and between a private road to the west (just east of Pulliam Road) and a private road to the east (just west of Ferrell Road). Agricultural lands lie to the immediate north, south, east, and west of the project site, with the exception of isolated residential and/or commercial structures. Primary access to both phases of the project site can be obtained via SR-98 and Brockman Road. The project site includes the following APNs: 052-210-001; 052-210-002; 052-210-014; 052-210-015 (Phase A); 052-190-011; 052-210-037; 052-210-038; 052-210-039; 052-210-018 (Phase B).

Calexico Solar Farm II: The Calexico Solar Farm II project site consists of ten parcels totaling 1,465-acres. As shown on Figure 1, the project site is generally located between Kubler Road to the north and the US-Mexico border to the south, and between Hammers Road to the east and a private road to the west (just west of Corda Road). Agricultural lands lie to the immediate north, south, east, and west of the project site, with the exception of isolated residential and/or commercial structures and a small crop duster airstrip that transects a portion of Calexico Solar Farm-II Phases A and B. Primary access is via SR-98 and Weed Road for Phase A, and via SR-98 and Ferrell Road for Phase B. The project site includes the following APNs: 059-110-006; 059-110-008; 059-130-003; 059-110-003; 059-110-007; (Phase A); 052-180-043; 052-180-044; 052-180-022; 052-180-050; and 052-180-051 (Phase B).

B. Project Summary:

The Mount Signal Solar Farm Project and the Calexico Solar Farm Projects (collectively the "Projects") are the development of multiple solar energy farms on approximately 4,228-acres of agricultural land.. The Projects would include a facility consisting of ground mounted photovoltaic solar power generating system, supporting structures, up to five O&M buildings, up to five onsite substations, water treatment systems, plant control systems, access roads and fencing. The Projects would connect to the existing Imperial Valley Substation via a shared overhead 230kV transmission line, which may also be shared with on or more neighboring solar project(s). The EIR will address the potential environmental effects associated with the proposed Projects. Although this Initial Study evaluates the significance of environmental issue areas for the Projects as a whole, the three facilities (Mount Signal Solar Farm I, and Calexico Solar Farm I, and the Calexico Solar Farm II) as described above may be evaluated separately within each section of the EIR depending on the environmental issue area and potential impacts. Project phasing within the Projects will also be discussed in the EIR.

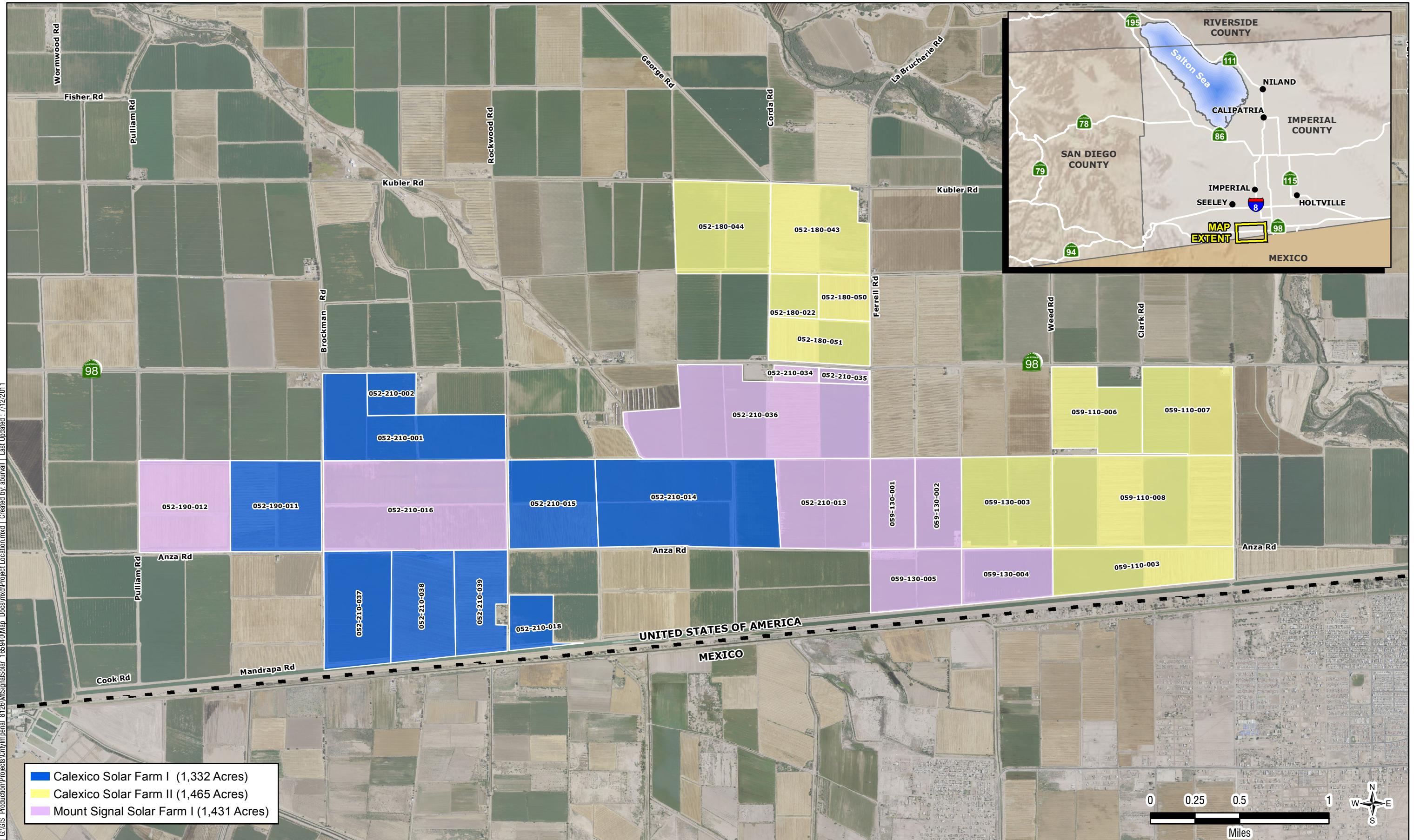
C. Environmental Setting:

The Projects are located in a rural part of southern Imperial County. The surrounding land uses include agricultural land to the north, south, east and west with the US-Mexico border located directly to the south. There are no established residential neighborhoods within the general vicinity of the Projects; however, there are rural residences adjacent to the boundary of the Projects.

D. General Plan Consistency:

The proposed Projects are located within an unincorporated area of the County. The existing General Plan land use designation is "Agriculture." The project sites are currently zoned A-2 (General Agriculture), A-2-R (General Agricultural Rural Zone), and A-3 (Heavy Agriculture). Construction of a solar facility would be allowed within the existing zoning under a Conditional Use Permit.

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- Calexico Solar Farm I (1,332 Acres)
- Calexico Solar Farm II (1,465 Acres)
- Mount Signal Solar Farm I (1,431 Acres)



EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
- 2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
- 5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
- 7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
- 8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
- 9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a) The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)</i>	<i>No Impact (NI)</i>
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I. AESTHETICS

Would the project:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista or scenic highway?
- b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?
- c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?
- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

a,b) The proposed Projects are the construction of separate PV solar facilities, composed of three contiguous but independent project sites, which would include solar PV panels, inverter modules, pad mounted transformers, and on-site substation(s). Each Project site will have its own O&M building and it may include an onsite substation(s). The proposed Projects are not located near any scenic vista or scenic highway, nor would it damage or degrade any designated scenic resources. Thus, no impact is identified for this issue area.

c) Although the Projects are not located near a scenic highway and is not designated as a scenic vista, and the proposed Projects are not expected to change the look and rural character of the area. This issue nevertheless will be further analyzed under the EIR. Therefore, a potentially significant impact is identified for this issue area and will be addressed in the EIR.

d) Lighting would be installed on the O&M buildings for safety and security. However, all lighting would be directed downward or at a narrow beam angle, in order to focus all light only on the desired areas. The solar panels will not be constructed of reflective materials; therefore, it is not anticipated that they would result in creating a glare. The Projects are located in a rural agricultural area of Imperial County. There are no established residential neighborhoods within the project area or vicinity; however, there are rural residences adjacent to the boundary of the Projects. Although the proposed Projects are not expected to create a new source of substantial light or glare affecting day or nighttime views, this issue will be analyzed further in the EIR. Therefore, a potentially significant impact is identified for this issue area.

II. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. --Would the project:

- a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

	Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
--	--------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	----------------

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) 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))? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, 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? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

a,e) According to the farmland maps prepared by the California Department of Conservation (2008), the project site contains prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance. Therefore, a potentially significant impact would result from the conversion of Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use, as proposed on the Projects sites. A Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) shall be prepared for the proposed Projects that are under a Williamson Act Contract and this issue will be addressed in the EIR.

b) The land is currently zoned A-2 (General Agriculture), A-2-R (General Agricultural Rural Zone), and A-3 (Heavy Agriculture) and designated by the General Plan as "Agriculture." Solar energy facilities are allowed within these zones subject to a Conditional Use Permit. However, three parcels of land within the Calexico Solar Farm I site (APNs 052-210-01; 052-210-38; 052-210-39) and four parcels of land within the Calexico Solar Farm II site (APN 059-110-007; 052-180-02; 052-180-050; 052-180-051) are under Williamson Act contracts. The proposed Projects would conflict with the agricultural preservation intended under the Williamson Act for these parcels. A cancellation of the contracts will be required; therefore, a potentially significant impact is identified. As mentioned above, a LESA report will be prepared for the proposed Projects. This issue will be addressed in the EIR.

c) There are no existing forest lands, timberlands, or timberland zoned Timberland Production either on-site or in the immediate vicinity that would conflict with existing zoning or cause rezoning. Therefore, no impact is identified for this issue area.

d) There are no existing forest lands either on-site or in the immediate vicinity of the site. The proposed Projects would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Therefore, no impact is identified for this issue area.

III. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to the following determinations. Would the Project:

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

	Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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- c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?
- d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutants concentrations?
- e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

a) **The Projects are located within the jurisdiction of Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) in the Salton Sea Air Basin (SSAB). Construction of the proposed project would create temporary emissions of dust, fumes, equipment exhaust, and other air contaminants that may conflict with the ICAPCD Rules and Regulations. No stationary source emissions are proposed from the project; however, temporary construction emissions have the potential to result in a significant air quality impact.**

b) **Currently, the SSAB is either in attainment or unclassified for all federal and state air pollutant standards with the exception of O₃ (8-hour) and PM₁₀ (total suspended particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter). Air pollutants transported into the SSAB from the adjacent South Coast Air Basin (Los Angeles, San Bernardino County, Orange County, and Riverside County) and from Mexicali (Mexico) substantially contribute to the non-attainment conditions in the SSAB. A potentially significant impact is identified for this issue area. An air quality impacts analysis that will address the proposed project's potential air quality impacts is being prepared and will be included in the EIR analysis.**

c) **The proposed construction phases of the Projects may result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of one or more criteria pollutants as a result of point, and non-point source emissions, for which the project region is in non-attainment under applicable federal and state ambient air quality standards. Thus, a potentially significant impact is identified for this issue area.**

An air quality impacts analysis that will address the proposed Projects' potential air quality impacts is being prepared and will be included in the EIR analysis.

d) **The Projects are located in a rural agricultural area of Imperial County. There are no established residential neighborhoods within the project area or vicinity; however, there are rural residences adjacent to the project boundaries. There are no schools, hospitals or senior homes within or adjacent to the project site. Although the proposed project would not expose a significant number of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, this issue will be addressed in the air quality impacts analysis and EIR.**

e) **The proposed Projects include the installation of solar energy facilities. It is not anticipated to generate objectionable odors. No impact is identified for this issue area.**

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)</i>	<i>No Impact (NI)</i>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local polices or ordinances	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Protecting biological resource, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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a,d,e) A California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) search was conducted to identify federally and state endangered, threatened species and CDFG species of special concern with the potential to occur within the project area. No federally listed species were identified on the project site; however, one state-listed bird was evaluated based on known occurrences in Imperial County and habitat availability in the project area: Greater sandhill crane. The Greater sandhill crane is state listed as threatened and is also on the Migratory Bird Treaty Act list of sensitive birds. The Greater sandhill crane could be found foraging in alfalfa or bermuda fields found on site. The Projects sites also may have the potential to be used as burrowing owl foraging habitat as agricultural fields on site support prey for owls. Burrowing owls and burrows are commonly found along canals and drains. Although there are no IID canals or drainage structures located within the Projects sites, IID Right-of-Way, access roads, canal and other drainages are located immediately adjacent to the Projects sites. Thus, a potentially significant impact is identified for this issue area. A biological resources technical study that will address the proposed project's potential impacts on biological resources is being prepared and will be included in the EIR analysis.

b,c) The Projects are in an agricultural vegetative community. No Imperial Irrigation District (IID) canal or drain structures will be removed; therefore, there will be no impact to riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities. No IID drains or canals will be removed or relocated and no washes are found within the project; therefore, no Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), CDFG, Regional Water Quality Control Boar (RWQCB) resources will be affected.

f) The Projects are not located in a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. No impact is identified.

	Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

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| a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

a,b,c,d) An archival records search was conducted at the South Coastal Information Center located at San Diego State University. The records search indicated that 11 previous cultural investigations have been conducted within a 1-mile radius of the proposed Projects. The records search indicated that two cultural resources have been recorded within a 1-mile radius of the proposed project area. In addition, many paleontological fossil sites are recorded in Imperial County and have been discovered during construction activities. Paleontological resources are typically impacted when earthwork activities such as mass excavation cut into geological deposits (formations) with buried fossils. It is not known if any paleontological resources are located on the project site. A cultural resources report is under preparation and will address the potential for the project to impact paleontological, historic and prehistoric resources. Although unlikely, there is also a potential for unknown human remains to be unearthed during earthwork activities. A potentially significant impact is identified for these issues areas and they will be addressed in the EIR.

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

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| a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including risk of loss, injury, or death involving: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2) Strong Seismic ground shaking? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction and seiche/tsunami? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4) Landslides? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)</i>	<i>No Impact (NI)</i>
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| c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in the latest Uniform Building Code, creating substantial risk to life or property? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

a1) **The Projects do not lie within a State of California, Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. Surface fault rupture at the Project is considered to be low. No impact is identified.**

a2) **The primary seismic hazard at the project site is the potential for strong ground shaking during earthquakes along the Imperial, Brawley, Laguna Salada, Cerro Prieto, and Superstition Hills Faults. This is identified as potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR.**

a3,c) **Liquefaction occurs when granular soil below the water table is subjected to vibratory motions, such as produced by earthquakes. With strong ground shaking, an increase in pore water pressure develops as the soil tends to reduce in volume. If the increase in pore water pressure is sufficient to reduce the vertical effective stress (suspending the soil particles in water), the soil strength decreases and the soil behaves as a liquid (similar to quicksand). Liquefaction can produce excessive settlement, ground rupture, lateral spreading, or failure of shallow bearing foundations.**

Four conditions are generally required for liquefaction to occur:

- (1) The soil must be saturated (relatively shallow groundwater);**
- (2) The soil must be loosely packed (low to medium relative density);**
- (3) The soil must be relatively cohesionless (not clayey); and**
- (4) Groundshaking of sufficient intensity must occur to function as a trigger mechanism.**

All of these conditions may exist to some degree at the sites. Thus, the impact is identified as potentially significant. This issue will be evaluated in the EIR.

However, the sites do not lie near any large bodies of water, so the threat of tsunamis, seiches, or other seismically-induced flooding is considered unlikely. No impact is identified for these issue areas.

a4) **The hazard of landsliding is unlikely due to the relatively planar topography of the Projects sites. No ancient landslides are shown on geologic maps of the region and no indications of landslides were observed during our site investigation. No impact is identified.**

b) **Soil erosion can result during construction as grading and construction can loosen surface soils and make soils susceptible to wind and water movement across the surface. Impacts are not considered significant since erosion would be controlled on-site in accordance with County standards including preparation, review and approval of a grading plan by the County Engineer. Implementation of County standards would reduce the potential impacts to below a level of significance.**

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- d) In general, much of the near surface soils within the Projects sites consist of silty clays and clays having a high to very high expansion potential. The clay is expansive when wetted and can shrink with moisture loss (drying). This is a potentially significant impact. This issue will be analyzed in the EIR.
- e) The near surface soils at the Projects sites generally consist of silty clays and clays having a very low to low infiltration rate. The near surface soils are considered poor in supporting onsite septic systems and leach fields for wastewater disposal. Therefore, a potentially significant impact has been identified for this issue area, and this issue will be addressed in the EIR.

VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

- a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?
- b) Conflict with an applicable plan or policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

a,b) The proposed project has the potential to generate greenhouse gas emissions during construction of the proposed project, in addition to construction worker trips to and from the project site. A potentially significant impact is identified and will be evaluated in the EIR. In the long-term, the project is expected to provide a benefit with respect to reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. A Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Climate Change technical report is being completed for the proposed project.

VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

- a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?
- b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonable foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?
- c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?
- d) Be located on a site, which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)</i>	<i>No Impact (NI)</i>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>a,b) Operation of the proposed Projects may result in the potential to handle hazardous materials. The hazardous materials handled on-site would be limited to small amounts of everyday use cleaners and common chemicals used for maintenance. Handling of these materials could result in the potential release of these materials during accidental or unforeseen conditions. The applicant will be required to comply with State laws and County Ordinance restrictions, which regulate and control hazardous materials handled on-site. Such hazardous wastes would be transported off-site for disposal according to applicable State and County restrictions and laws governing the disposal of hazardous waste during construction and operation of the project. Disposal of hazardous wastes on the project site is not part of the proposed project. However, a potentially significant impact remains and will be addressed in the EIR.</p>				
<p>c) The Projects are not located within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. No impact is identified for this issue area.</p>				
<p>d) The Projects sites are not listed as a hazardous materials site pursuant to Government Code, Section 65962.5. No impact is identified for this issue area.</p>				
<p>e,f) The Projects are located within two miles of a public airport or a private airstrip. However, no impacts are anticipated for these issue areas.</p>				
<p>g) The Projects are not expected to impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The applicant will be required to prepare a street improvement plan for the project site that will include emergency access points and safe vehicular travel. In addition, local building codes would be followed to minimize flood, seismic, and fire hazard. A street improvement plan will be prepared and will include emergency access and vehicular travel. Therefore, no impact is identified for this issue area.</p>				
<p>h) According to the Imperial County Natural Hazard Disclosure (Fire) Map prepared by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (2000), the project site is not in a hazard area for wildland. However, construction and operation activities may result in an increased need for fire-fighting personnel and facilities in the area. This impact will be evaluated in the EIR under Public Services for Fire.</p>				

	Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Substantially alter the existing drainage patterns of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Create or contribute runoff water, which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect the flood flows? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

a,f) The proposed Projects have the potential to create urban non-point source discharge (e.g. synthetic/organic chemicals). No waste discharge requirements have been issued for the proposed site or proposed project. Potentially significant impacts have been identified. A water quality technical report is being prepared for the proposed project. Water quality and waste discharge requirements will be addressed in the EIR.

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- b) During construction, potable water would be brought to the site for drinking and domestic needs, while construction water would be brought to the site for soil conditioning and dust suppression. Depending on whether municipal water is available for use, water for operational use may also be trucked to the site. Because the solar panels will be mounted approximately up to 15 feet above ground, they are not considered “hardscape”, such as roads, building foundations, or parking areas, as they do not require a substantial amount of impervious material. The panels and their mounting foundation would not impede groundwater recharge. Impacts would be less than significant.

- c,d,e) The proposed Projects are not anticipated to generate a significant increase in the amount of runoff water from water use involving solar panel washing. Water will continue to percolate through the ground, as a majority of the surfaces on the project site will remain pervious. The proposed Projects would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site, substantially increase the rate of runoff, or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems. No IID drains or canals will be removed or relocated and no washes were found within the project; therefore, the proposed Projects would not alter the course of a stream or river. A less than significant impact is identified for these issue areas.

- g,h,i) According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), the Projects sites are located in Zone C which is an area determined to be of minimal flood hazard, usually depicted on FIRMs as above the 500-year flood level. Zone C may have ponding and local drainage problems that do not warrant a detailed study or designation as base floodplain. A less than significant impact is identified for floodplains. The sites’ potential drainage issues will be addressed through a drainage report and discussed in the EIR.

- j) The Projects do not lie near any large bodies of water, so the threat of tsunami or seiches is unlikely. The project site and surrounding area is relatively flat; therefore, the threat of mudflow is less than significant.

X. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

- a) Physically divide an established community?

- b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (include, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

- c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?

- a) The proposed project is located in a rural area within Imperial County. Although the site does not contain housing and is surrounded on all sides by agricultural lands, the removal of the project site from agricultural production may be perceived as dividing a community since the site is entirely surrounded by agricultural uses. Therefore, a potentially significant impact is identified. This issue area will be evaluated in the EIR.

- b) The project site is currently designated by the General Plan as “Agriculture.” The County identifies agricultural land as a form of open space that could be used as passive recreation. The land is currently zoned A-2 (General Agriculture), A-2-R (General Agricultural Rural Zone), and A-3 (Heavy Agriculture). Solar energy facilities are allowed within these zones subject to a

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Conditional Use Permit. Although the proposed project is allowed under the zoning, the proposed project would remove the land from public use as passive recreation. This may result in a potentially significant impact. Land use will be addressed in the EIR.

- c) The proposed project site is not located in a HCP or NCCP. Thus no impact is identified.

XI. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Result in 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? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

a,b) The Projects sites are not used for mineral resource production. According to the Conservation and Open Space Element of the County of Imperial General Plan, no known mineral resources occur within the project site nor does the project site contain mapped mineral resources. As such, the proposed Projects would not adversely affect the availability of any known mineral resources within the Projects sites. No impact is identified.

XII. NOISE

Would the project result in:

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

<i>Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)</i>	<i>No Impact (NI)</i>
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a,c,d)

The Imperial County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2, Section 90702.00 - Sound level limits, establishes one-hour average sound level limits for the County's land use zones. Agricultural/industrial operations are required to comply with the noise levels prescribed under the general industrial zones. Therefore, the project is required to maintain noise levels below 75 decibels (dB) (averaged over one hour) during any time of day. The Noise Element of the General Plan states that Construction noise, from a single piece of equipment or a combination of equipment, shall not exceed 75 dB, when averaged over an eight hour period, and measured at the nearest sensitive receptor. Construction equipment operation is also limited to the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. A less than significant impact is identified for this issue area. No further analysis is warranted.

b) Groundborne vibration and groundborne noise could originate from earth movement during the construction phase of the proposed project. However, significant vibration is typically associated with activities such as blasting or the use of pile drivers, neither of which would be required during project construction. The Projects would be expected to comply with all applicable requirements for long-term operation, as well as with measures to reduce excessive groundborne vibration and noise to ensure that the Projects would not expose persons or structures to excessive groundborne vibration. No further analysis is warranted.

e,f) The Projects are located within two miles of a public airport or a private airstrip. The potential Projects' impacts will be further analyzed under the EIR.;

XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

a,b,c) The Projects sites are currently used for agricultural production. Development of housing is not proposed as part of the project. Mount Signal Solar Farm I will be staffed with up to six full time employees to maintain the facility seven days a week during normal daylight hours. Typically, up to three staff will work during the day shift (sunrise to sunset), and the remainder during the night shifts and weekend.

Calexico Solar Farm I & II will be staffed with up to twelve full-time employees for both phases combined (split roughly evenly between phases). The facilities will operate seven days per week, generating electricity during normal daylight hours when the solar energy is available. To ensure optimal PV output, the solar panels will be maintained 24-hours a day/seven days a week. The proposed projects would not result in a substantial population growth, as the number of employees required to operate and maintain the facilities is minimal. Therefore, no impact is identified for population and housing.

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)</i>	<i>No Impact (NI)</i>
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XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES

- a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, 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 any of the public services:

- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1) | Fire protection? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2) | Police protection? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3) | Schools? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4) | Parks? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5) | Other public facilities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

a1) Fire protection and emergency medical services in the area are provided by the Imperial County Fire Department. The proposed Projects would be required to comply with all existing regulations and requirements of the Imperial County Fire Department and would be reviewed for adherence to prevention measures for wildland fires. According to the Imperial County Natural Hazard Disclosure (Fire) Map prepared by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (2000), the project site is not in a hazard area for wildland. However, construction and operation activities may result in an increased need for fire-fighting personnel and facilities in the area. Therefore, the potential impact on fire services from construction and operation of the proposed Projects will be further evaluated in the EIR.

a2) Police protection services in the proposed Projects' area are provided by the Imperial County Sheriff's Department. Although the potential is low, the proposed Projects may attract vandals or other security risks. The increase in construction related traffic could increase demand on law enforcement services. On-site security would be provided and access would be limited to the areas surrounding the Projects sites during construction and operation, thereby minimizing the need for police surveillance. However, the Projects' impacts on sheriff services will be further evaluated in the EIR.

a3) The proposed Projects do not include the development of residential land uses that would result in an increase in population or student generation. Construction of the proposed Projects would not result in an increase in student population within the Imperial County's School District since it is anticipated that construction workers would commute in during construction operations. The proposed Projects would have no impact on Imperial County schools. No further analysis is warranted.

a4) Parks/Libraries/Other Public Facilities: Operation of the proposed Projects would require minimal full-time staff (for security, maintenance, etc.). Therefore, substantial permanent increases in population that would adversely affect local parks, libraries and other public facilities (such as post offices) are not expected. The Projects are not expected to have an impact on public services such as post offices, and libraries. Therefore, no further analysis of these issue areas is warranted.

a5) The Projects are not anticipated to have an adverse effect on local parks. Therefore no further analysis of these issue areas is warranted.

	Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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XV. RECREATION

- a) Would the project increase the use of the existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?
- b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse effect on the environment?

a and b)

The proposed Projects would employ a total combined staff of up to 18 employees, which would not significantly increase the use or accelerate the deterioration of regional parks or other recreational facilities. The temporary increase of population during construction that might be caused by an influx of workers would be minimal and not cause a detectable increase in the use of parks. Additionally, the Projects do not include or require the expansion of recreational facilities. No impact will occur and no further analysis is warranted.

XVI. TRANSPORTATION / TRAFFIC

Would the project:

- a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?
- b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including but not limited to level of service standard and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion/management agency for designated roads or highways?
- c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?
- d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?
- e) Result in inadequate emergency access
- f) Conflicts with adopted policies, plans, programs, regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?

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- a,b) The construction phases of the proposed Projects would result in an increase of traffic to the area, which may result in a potentially significant impact. A traffic impact study is being prepared. Thus a potentially significant impact is identified for this issue area. This issue will be addressed in the EIR.
- c,d) The proposed Projects include solar panels that may be elevated up to 15 feet above ground, but would not be at a height that would interfere with air traffic patterns. Additionally, the proposed Projects do not include changes to the existing roadways. The proposed solar PV panels will be arranged in continuous rows of up to approximately 500-feet in length and arrays will be grouped together to form 500-feet by 500-feet grids. An additional 20-foot wide, all weather access roads will be implemented into the project design and located within each 500-foot “grids” to provide emergency units vehicle access and to allow access to the inverter modules. Additionally, a 20-foot wide all weather gravel road with additional clearance area in the corners of the project sites will exist between the perimeter fence and solar panels allowing easy facility access and maneuverability for emergency unit vehicles. These access roads would not increase hazards due to design features or incompatible uses. No impact is identified.
- e) The proposed street improvement plan for the Projects sites will be required to provide emergency access points and safe vehicular travel. Thus, no impact is identified for this issue area.
- f) The proposed Projects are solar array farms. There are currently no pedestrian or bicycle right-of-ways within the Projects areas that the project would interfere with. There are currently no bus stops located within the Projects boundaries or surrounding area and the proposed Projects do not include changes to the existing county roadway network. The proposed Projects would not conflict with any adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities. Thus, no impact is identified for this issue area.

XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Require or result in the construction of new water or water treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project’s projected demand in addition to the provider’s existing commitments? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project’s solid waste disposal needs? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

	Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

a,e) The Projects would generate a minimal volume of wastewater during construction. During construction activities, wastewater would be contained within portable toilet facilities and disposed of at an approved site. Operation of the proposed Projects would require a total of up to 18 on-site full time employees and could include up to five O&M buildings. Wastewater generation would be minimal. The Projects' wastewater will be treated via on-site septic systems. The proposed Projects would not exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board. A less than significant impact is identified for this issue area.

b,d) The Projects are not anticipated to result in a significant increase in water demand/use; however, water will be needed for domestic use within the O&M buildings, solar panel washing and fire protection once the project facilities are fully operational. An onsite water treatment facility is proposed for each component of the Projects. Mount Signal Solar Farm I would potentially draw water from IID controlled Wistaria and Woodbine canals. Calexico Solar Farm I would potentially draw water from the Woodbine Main canal and Calexico Solar Farm II would potentially draw water from Wistaria Canal. The Projects sites are currently used for agricultural production. The onsite water treatment facilities will be evaluated in the EIR. A Water Supply Assessment is being prepared for the proposed Projects and will be included in the EIR.

c) The Projects do not include the construction of a storm drainage system or the alteration of the existing system. No impact is identified for this issue area. However, site drainage will be discussed in the Hydrology and Water Quality section of the EIR.

f, g) During construction and operation of the Projects, waste generation will be minor. Solid waste will be disposed of using a locally-licensed waste hauling service, most likely Allied Waste. There are over 40 solid waste facilities listed in Imperial County in the CalRecycle database. Trash would likely be hauled to the Calexico Solid Waste Site located in Calexico or the CR&R Material Recovery Transfer Station located in El Centro. The Calexico Solid Waste site has approximately 2 million cubic yards of capacity (reporting date July 2009) and is estimated to remain in operation through 2071. The CR&R Material Recovery and Transfer station has a maximum permitted throughput of 15 tons/day. No closure date has been reported for this facility (<http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/SWFacilities/Directory/13-AA-0004/Detail/>). Therefore, there is ample landfill capacity throughout the County to receive the project's minor amount of solid waste generated by project construction and operation.

Additionally, because the proposed Projects would generate solid waste during construction and operation of the project, it will be required to comply with waste reduction and recycling measures. The 1989 California Integrated Waste Management Act (AB 939) requires Imperial County to attain specific waste diversion goals. In addition, the California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Access Act of 1991, as amended, requires expanded or new development projects to incorporate storage areas for recycling bins into the proposed project design. The Projects would be required to comply with the 1989 California Integrated Waste Management Act and the 1991 California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Access Act of 1991. Also, conditions of the CUP will require recycling and diversion of construction waste per policies of the County. A less than significant impact is identified for this issue.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21083.05, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 65088.4, Gov. Code; Sections 21080(c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21083, 21083.05, 21083.3, 21093, 21094, 21095, and 21151, Public Resources Code; Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino, (1988) 202 Cal.App.3d 296; Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors, (1990) 222 Cal.App.3d 1337; Eureka Citizens for Responsible Govt. v. City of Eureka (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 357; Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th at 1109; San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656.

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III. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following are Mandatory Findings of Significance in accordance with Section 15065 of the CEQA Guidelines.

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

a,b,c) The Projects have the potential to result in significant environmental effects, which could directly or indirectly cause adverse effects on human beings and or the environment. Implementation of the proposed Projects has the potential to result in aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, sensitive biological resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality; land use and recreation, public services, transportation/circulation impacts, and water supply. These issues will be further evaluated in the EIR. In addition, the proposed Projects have the potential to result in cumulative impacts with regards to the identified issue areas. Cumulative impacts will be discussed and further analyzed in the EIR.