RIVERSIDE COUNTY
FIRE DEPARTMENT
In cooperation with the
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

210 West San Jacinto Avenue • Perris, California 92570 • (951) 940-6900 • Fax (951) 940-6910

John R. Hawkins
Fire Chief

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August 4, 2010

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09-AFC-10
DATE AUG 04 2010
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County of Riverside Transportation & Land Management Agency
Planning Department
Raymond Juarez, Urban Regional Planner IV
4080 Lemon Street, 9th Floor
PO Box 1409
Riverside, CA 92502

RE: Rice Solar Energy Project Application for Certification (09-AFC-10)

With respect to the referenced project, the Riverside County Fire Department has the following comments:

The proposed project will have a cumulative impact on the Fire Department's ability to provide an acceptable level of service. These impacts include an increased number of emergency and public service calls due to the increased presence of structures, traffic and population during construction and plant operation. The applicants and developers shall participate in the Development Impact Fee Program (DIF Ord. 659), as adopted by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors to mitigate a portion of these impacts. This will provide funding for capital improvements such as land, equipment purchases and fire department infrastructure support. The Fire Department reserves the right to negotiate developer agreements associated with the development of land and/or construction of fire facilities to meet service demands through the regional integrated fire protection response system.

Mitigation measures, as defined by the County of Riverside, should be considered in order to help reduce these impacts. Examples of mitigation measures may include:

- Equipment upgrade and/or purchase; ***(i.e. specialized fire apparatus associated with specialized rescue)***.
- Participation in the Development Impact Fee program which would allow one-time capitol improvements such as equipment purchases, and construction development.
- Participation in re-occurring operation and maintenance costs.

Costs necessary to maintain the increased level of service may be at least partially offset by taxes acquired by the new construction; however additional funding sources may have to be identified to cover any shortfalls.

All water mains and fire hydrants providing required fire flows shall be constructed in accordance with the appropriate sections of Riverside County Ordinance No. 460 and/or No. 787, subject to review and approval by the Riverside County Fire Marshal.

Fire flow requirements within commercial projects are based on **square footage and type of construction** of the structures. The minimum fire flow for **any** commercial structure is **1500** gallons per minute, at a residual operating pressure of 20-psi, and can rise to **8000** gallons per minute, (per Table A-III of the California Fire Code).

The proposed project's land use would be a Category IV – Outlying. The 3 closest Fire Stations that would respond to an incident at the proposed Rice Solar Energy Project (09-AFC-10), located adjacent to the former Rice Army Airfield in Rice, CA are:

RCO Station # 49, Lake Tamarisk, 43880 Lake Tamarisk, Desert Center, CA. 92239

RCO Station # 43 Blythe, 140 West Barnard Street, Blythe, CA. 92225

RCO Station # 45 Blythe Air Base, 17280 W. Hobson Way, Blythe, CA 92225

Riverside County Fire Station 49 is located approximately 60 miles form the project site, the second Riverside County Fire Station is located approximately 75 miles and the third Riverside County Fire Station is located approximately 77 miles from the proposed site.

From the above listed fire stations, the response time for engine 49 is approximately 1:00 hour to 1:15 after dispatch. The second unit, engine 43 will respond to the project area in approximately 1:30, the third unit, engine 45 will respond to the project area in approximately 1:30. Riverside County Fire Department Fire Stations are staffed full-time, 24 hours/7 days a week, with a minimum 3 person crew, including Paramedics, operating a "Type-1" structural fire fighting apparatus. The closest San Bernardino County Fire station is located approximately 32 miles away, Big River Station 17. Station 17 consists of "2-paid staff" providing Basic Life Support (BLS) services. Riverside County Fire Department, Lake Tamarisk Fire Station 49 is staffed full-time, 24 hours/7 days a week, with a minimum 3 person crew, including 2-Paramedics, operating a "Type-1" structural fire fighting apparatus.

While San Bernardino County Fire Department, (Big River Station 17) is closer geographically and they work under a mutual aid agreement, the mutual aid and/or auto aid agreements do not guarantee equipment will be available, nor do these agreements require the department to release the resources to respond. If the Big River unit was to be dispatched and the request honored, the Lake Tamarisk unit would also respond. The Riverside County Fire Department is the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) and will provide the primary response to the project area.

Based on the adopted Riverside County Fire Protection Master Plan, the Category IV – Outlying, specifies that a full alarm assignment be operating on the fire ground within 30 minutes and the fire station to be located within 8 miles. The primary station serving this area would ***not*** be within the 8 mile objective. These times are approximate based on conditions and currently ***do not*** meet the Outlying Land Use protection goals.

The proposed Rice Solar project will create a **"cumulative"** increase in requests for service and impact the Fire Department's ability to provide an acceptable level of service. These services include increased emergency and public service calls.

Due to the remote location and climate conditions, a response by the fire department would require multiple units to respond. In the event of a fire, medical emergency, hazardous material or technical rescue incident, the fire department will be required to cover or *back fill* stations left uncovered in order to meet service demands and support the region. If an incident were to occur, fire units would be dispatched from Blythe, Indio and the lower Coachella Valley as part of the regional integrated fire protection response system.

The proposed project identifies approximately 1, 410 acres of land, the construction of 17,500 tracking heliostats, and a receiving tower with an overall height of 653 feet of industrial development at build out. The onsite conditions create a high risk potential for a technical rescue situation which would require specialized equipment and trained staff to respond. Extended response times from specialized equipment can be anticipated to the project area.

Based on the adopted Riverside County Fire Protection Master Plan, one new fire station and/or engine company is recommended for every 3.5 million square feet of industrial occupancy. Given the proposed development plan, a new fire station ***may not be*** required to meet anticipated demands. However, a cumulative impact through future development will prompt the need for future fire facilities to serve the area, as determined by the fire department. The Fire Department reserves the right to negotiate developer agreements associated with the development of land and/or construction of fire facilities to meet service and support demands.

The provided exhibit's show primary and secondary access to the site, which appear to be adequate. Secondary access as approved by the fire department shall be required for the life of the project.

The California Fire Code outlines fire protection standards for the safety, health, and welfare of the public. These standards will be enforced by the Fire Chief.

If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me at (951) 940-6349 or e-mail at jason.neumann@fire.ca.gov

Sincerely,

Jason Neuman, Captain
Strategic Planning Bureau
Riverside County Fire Department

cc: John Kessler, Project Manager CEC

Wes Alston, Pacific Development