TABLE OF CONTENTS

5.6 Land Use 5.6-1
5.6.1 Introduction 5.6-1
5.6.2 Laws, Ordinances, Regulations, and Standards 5.6-2
5.6.2.1 Federal 5.6-4
5.6.2.2 State 5.6-8
5.6.2.3 Local 5.6-10
5.6.3 Affected Environment 5.6-13
5.6.3.1 General Description of the Vicinity 5.6-14
5.6.3.2 Existing Land Use, Planning, and Zoning Designations 5.6-14
5.6.3.3 Land Uses in the Study Area and Vicinity 5.6-15
5.6.3.4 Recent or Proposed Development Code and General Plan Amendments 5.6-26
5.6.3.5 Recent Discretionary Reviews by Public Agencies 5.6-27
5.6.4 Environmental Analysis 5.6-27
5.6.4.1 Potential Effects on Land Use 5.6-28
5.6.4.2 Other Potential Effects 5.6-30
5.6.4.3 Compatibility with Plans and Policies 5.6-30
5.6.5 Cumulative Effects 5.6-32
5.6.5.1 Current Setting 5.6-33
5.6.5.2 Past, Present, or Reasonably Foreseeable Future Projects 5.6-33
5.6.5.3 Summary of Cumulative Effects 5.6-33
5.6.6 Mitigation Measures 5.6-33
5.6.6.1 LAND-1 ..... 5.6-33
5.6.7 Involved Agencies and Agency Contacts 5.6-33
5.6.8 Permits Required and Permit Schedule 5.6-34
5.6.9 References 5.6-36

Tables

Table 5.6-1 Laws, Ordinances, Regulations and Standards (LORS)
Table 5.6-2 Multiple-Use Classes
Table 5.6-3 Riverside County General Plan and Palo Verde Valley Area Plan Land Use Policies and Goals Relevant to the Project
Table 5.6-4 County of Riverside Zoning
Table 5.6-5 Recreational Areas and Opportunities in the Project Vicinty
Table 5.6-6 Farmlands within the Study Area
Table 5.6-7 Verde Irrigation District Field Crops 2010
Table 5.6-8 Use Conformity with County Plans, Policies and Goals
Table 5.6-9 Agency Contacts
Table 5.6-10 Applicable Permits

Figures

Figure 5.6.1 Land Use
Figure 5.6.2 Recreational Land Uses
Figure 5.6.3 Farmlands of Importance
Figure 5.6.4 Zoning
Figure 5.6.5 Change of Zone Application Primary Exhibit

Appendices

Appendix 5.6A Obstacle Evaluation Study
Appendix 5.6B Department of Defense Comment Letter
Appendix 5.6C September 1, 2011 Email from Southern California Edison

5.6 LAND USE

5.6.1 Introduction

This Application for Certification (AFC) for the Rio Mesa Solar Electric Generating Facility (Rio Mesa SEGF or Project) has been prepared in accordance with the California Energy Commission's (CEC) Power Plant Site Certification Regulations (CEC-140-2008-001-REV1, current as of July 2008). In addition, this AFC includes elements necessary for the United States (U.S.) Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to permit the Project through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The "Applicant" for purposes of this AFC comprises Rio Mesa Solar I, LLC, Rio Mesa Solar II, LLC, and Rio Mesa Solar III, LLC, owners of the three separate solar plants and certain shared facilities being proposed. These three Delaware limited liability companies will hold equal one-third shares in the ownership of shared facilities and will separately own their respective plants. They are wholly owned by Rio Mesa Solar Holdings, LLC (a Delaware limited liability company) which is in turn wholly owned by BrightSource Energy, Inc. (BrightSource) a Delaware corporation and the ultimate parent company. The Applicant will use BrightSource's solar thermal technology for the Rio Mesa SEGF.

The proposed project site is situated on the Palo Verde Mesa in Riverside County, California, 13 miles southwest of the City of Blythe, and is located partially on private land and partially on public land administered by BLM. The project will include three solar concentrating thermal power plants and a shared common area to include shared systems. The first plant, a 250 megawatt (MW) (nominal) facility known as Rio Mesa I, will be constructed at the south end of the project and owned by Rio Mesa Solar I, LLC. The second plant, another 250 megawatt (MW) (nominal) facility known as Rio Mesa II, will be located in the central portion of the project site and owned by Rio Mesa Solar II, LLC. Rio Mesa III, a third 250 megawatt (MW) (nominal) facility, will be constructed in the northern portion of the project site and owned by Rio Mesa Solar III, LLC. These three plants will be connected via a common overhead 220 kilovolt (kV) generator tie-line (gen-tie line) to the Southern California Edison (SCE) Colorado River Substation (CRS) approximately 9.7 miles to the north.

Each plant will utilize a solar power boiler (referred to as a solar receiver steam generator or SRSG), located on top of a dedicated concrete tower, and solar field based on proprietary heliostat mirror technology developed by BrightSource. The reflecting area of an individual heliostat (which includes two mirrors) is about 19 square meters [205 square feet (sq. ft.)]. The heliostat (mirror) fields will focus solar energy onto the SRSG which converts the solar energy to superheated steam. In each plant, a Rankine cycle non-reheat steam turbine receiving this superheated steam will be directly connected to a rotating generator that generates and pushes the electricity onto the transmission system steam. Each plant will generate electricity using solar energy as its primary fuel source. However, auxiliary boilers will be used to operate in parallel with the solar field during partial load conditions and occasionally in the afternoon when power is needed after the solar energy has diminished to a level that no longer will support solar generation of electricity. These auxiliary boilers will also assist with daily start-up of the power generation equipment and night time preservation.

This section addresses the potential for land use impacts of the Rio Mesa SEGF. It describes the existing and planned land uses within the Project Study Area (Study Area), which encompasses lands within a one mile radius of the project site and within a 0.25 mile radius of the linear features. The linear features

evaluated for impacts to land use are the proposedcommon gen-tie line, the 33 kV service line, and the proposed access roads. The proposed Bradshaw Trail access road corridor to be improved will be evaluated as part of the 33 kV service line Study Area as these two Project features share a similar route. In addition to analysis of land uses within the Study Area, this section will also address land uses covering a larger vicinity of the Study Area, where relevant.

This subsection describes the applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards (LORS) related to Land Use, and the environmental setting. It provides an analysis of the Project impacts that could occur as a result of Project construction and operation. This subsection also presents protection and mitigation measures that will avoid, minimize, or compensate for adverse impacts, when required. A list of agency contacts and permits that will be required is included at the end of the section.

5.6.2 Laws, Ordinances, Regulations, and Standards

The applicable federal, state, and local LORS related to land use are summarized in Table 5.6-1 below. The Project will be constructed and operated in compliance with all applicable land use LORS.

Table 5.6-1
Laws, Ordinances, Regulations and Standards (LORS)

LORS	Applicability	AFC Section Explaining Conformance
Federal		
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969	NEPA establishes a public, interdisciplinary framework for federal decision-making and ensures that Federal agencies take environmental factors into account when considering federal actions.	Section 5.6.2.1
Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA): 43 United States Code (USC) Sections 1761-1771 and Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 2800	Establishes the authority of BLM to manage land within its jurisdiction, and to provide management direction including planning, environmental, and right-of-way (ROW) grant requirements.	Section 5.6.2.1
California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan of 1980 as amended; Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert (NECO) Coordinated Management Plan	Under FLPMA, BLM is required to develop Resource Management Plans (RMP). All activities proposed for public land must be consistent with the approved Resource Management Plan(s). The relevant land use plan for this Project is the CDCA Plan, as amended by NECO Plan.	Sections 5.6.2.1; 5.6.3.2; and 5.6.3.3
Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971, as amended	Herd Areas (HAs) are those geographic areas where wild horses and/or burros were found at the passage of the Wild Horse and Burros Act in 1971. Herd Management Areas (HMAs) are those areas within HAs where the decision has been made, through Land Use Plans, to manage for populations of wild horses and/or burros.	Sections 5.6.2.1 and 5.6.4.2
Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR), Part 77: Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace	Requires notification of construction or alteration to regional Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) office based on notification requirements.	Section 5.6.2.1

Table 5.6-1
Laws, Ordinances, Regulations and Standards (LORS)

LORS	Applicability	AFC Section Explaining Conformance
U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991; 162 USC, Title 23	Established to help recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. The policy sets forth the procedures for the designation by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation of certain roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based on their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities. BLM manages scenic byways as Back Country Byways.	Sections 5.6.2.1 and 5.6.3.3
State		
Warren-Alquist State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Act, California Public Resources Code, § 25000, et seq.	Gives the CEC licensing authority in lieu of state, regional and local permits and requirements.	Sections 5.6.2.2 and 5.6.4
California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) California Public Resources Code, Division 13, §§ 21000-21177, as amended 2010.	Requires that all agencies of the State government that regulate activities of private individuals, corporations, and public agencies, which are found to affect the quality of the environment, shall regulate such activities so that major consideration is given to preventing environmental damage.	Sections 5.6.2.2 and 5.6.4
California Government Code 51200 through 51207, California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act)	Regulations pertaining to Williamson Act contract agricultural lands.	Sections 5.6.2.2; 5.6.3.3; and 5.6.4
Local		
Riverside County General Plan (2003 and 2008 update)	Provides land use designations, goals, vision statements, and policies for the development and conservation of non-federal land within the unincorporated areas of Riverside County.	Sections 5.6.2.3; 5.6.3.2; 5.6.4.2; and 5.6.4.3
Palo Verde Valley Area Plan (2003)	Provides land use designations, goals, vision statements, and policies for the Palo Verde Valley.	Sections 5.6.2.3; 5.6.3.2; and 5.6.4.3
Riverside County Land Use Ordinance (Ordinance 348)	Provisions for issuance of building and grading permits, grading plans, change of zone, and land use applications, such as parcel mergers.	Sections 5.6.2.3; 5.6.3.2; 5.6.4.3; and 5.6.7

BLM = Bureau of Land Management
CCR = California Code of Regulations
CDCA = California Desert Conservation Area
CEC = California Energy Commission
CEQA = California Environmental Quality Act
CFR = Code of Federal Regulations
DOT = United States Department of Transportation
FAA = Federal Aviation Administration
FAR = Federal Aviation Regulations
FHWA = Federal Highway Administration
FLMPA = Federal Land Policy and Management Act
HAs = Herd Areas
HMAs = Herd Management Areas
MOU = Memorandum of Understanding
NECO = Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan
NEPA = National Environmental Policy Act
RMP = Resource Management Plan
ROW = Right of Way
USC = United States Code

5.6.2.1 Federal

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) establishes a public, interdisciplinary framework for Federal agencies reviewing projects under their jurisdiction to consider environmental impacts. NEPA's basic policy is to assure that all branches of government give proper consideration to the environment prior to undertaking any major federal action that significantly affects the environment.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), as lead Federal agency for the Project, is responsible for preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in compliance with NEPA to evaluate the environmental impacts of the portions of the Rio Mesa SEGF on federal lands. The Rio Mesa Solar III plant and the Project gen-tie line are located on lands administered and managed by the BLM. NEPA compliance is required for these portions of the Project through preparation of a Draft and Final EIS. BLM is also responsible for Native American consultation, including government to government consultation.

Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976

The Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) provides a framework for the BLM to manage lands in perpetuity for the benefit of present and future generations. The law provides direction for land use planning, administration, range management, right-of-way (ROW) grants, designated management areas (including specific locations and general designation of wilderness areas), and effects on existing rights. FLPMA establishes critical planning requirements, such as observation of principles of multiple-use and sustained yield; use of a systematic interdisciplinary approach (physical, biological, economic, cultural); designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC); areas in which special management attention is required to protect and prevent impacts to historic, cultural, scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazard; consideration of present and potential uses; and coordination with other Federal, State, tribal, and local government entities.

The Project requires a ROW grant from the BLM for construction and operation. A ROW grant is an authorization to use public land for a specific project, such as transmission lines, power plants, and communication sites. A ROW grant authorizes rights and privileges for a specific use of the land for a certain period of time, with appropriate terms and conditions.

The Project will be processed as a ROW authorization under FLPMA Subchapter V and Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 43 Part 2800. The Project must comply with the BLM's planning, environmental, and ROW application requirements. The BLM will consider information about the Project, existing land use information, and environmental impacts.

Pursuant to CFR Title 43 § 1610.5-3, a ROW granted by BLM must be consistent with the relevant Resource Management Plan(s) (RMP). The RMPs relevant to the Project are the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan and the Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert (NECO) Coordinated Management Plan.

California Desert Conservation Area Plan and Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan

The management principles contained in the FLPMA are achieved through the implementation of the CDCA Plan. The specific intent of the CDCA Plan covers approximately 25 million acres of land in Southern California designated by Congress through the Federal Land Policy Management Act. The CDCA Plan was originally prepared in 1980 and last updated in 1999. The Plan recognizes the desert as an important public resource, seeks to preserve desert assets, and considers multiple uses, including power plant siting and utility corridors. The Plan requires that proposed development projects are compatible with policies set forth in the plan. New power plant sites will be evaluated by BLM through an amendment process to the CDCA Plan. The BLM manages the CDCA to include economic, educational, scientific, and recreational use, in a manner that enhances and does not diminish the environmental, cultural, and aesthetic values of the California Desert and its productivity.

The management principles of the CDCA Plan include: multiple-use, sustained yield, and the overall maintenance of environmental quality. Guidance is stated on a geographic basis, in the guidelines for each of the four multiple-use classes. Within those multiple-use class guidelines, further refinement of the guidance is expressed in each Plan element. Direction is also expressed in certain site-specific Plan decisions such as ACECs (BLM, 1980).

The CDCA Plan organizes BLM-managed lands into one of four multiple-use class (MUC) designations: Controlled Use (C), Limited Use (L), Moderate Use (M), and Intensive Use (I). The project site and linear features, with the exception of privately-owned parcels, are designated MUC-L and MUC-M (see Figure 5.6-1).

Table 5.6-2
Multiple-Use Classes

Multiple Use Class	Guidelines	Approximate Project Acreage	
Limited (L)	Protects sensitive, natural, scenic, ecological, and cultural resource values. Public lands designated as Class L are managed to provide for generally lower-intensity, carefully controlled multiple use of resources, while ensuring that sensitive values are not significantly diminished. Electrical generation facilities can be permitted on MUC-L lands provided that BLM undertakes the necessary review under NEPA.	Gen-tie Line Corridor	Project Site
		37	1,473
Moderate (M)	Based upon a controlled balance between higher intensity use and protection of public lands. This class provides for a wide variety of present and future uses such as mining, livestock grazing, recreation, energy, and utility development. Class M management is also designed to conserve desert resources and to mitigate damage to those resources which permitted uses may cause.	Gen-tie Line Corridor	Project Site
		795	124

Sources: BLM, 1980
L = Limited
M = Moderate

The class designations govern the type and degree of land-use actions allowed within the areas defined by class boundaries. Sites associated with power generation or transmission not identified in the CDCA Plan must apply for a CDCA Plan Amendment in order for those uses to be allowed. The Project and its linear facilities are not identified in the existing CDCA Plan. A CDCA Plan Amendment will be required in accordance with Chapter 7 of the CDCA Plan (BLM, 1980).

The Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan (NECO, Plan) is a landscape-scale, multi-agency planning effort that protects and conserves natural resources while balancing human uses of the California portion of the Sonoran Desert ecosystem. The NECO Plan amended the CDCA Plan in 2002.

The major plan amendments of the NECO Plan are as follows: to establish regional standards for Public Land Health and set forth guidelines for grazing management; establish two Desert Wildlife Management Areas (DWMAs) encompassing approximately 1.75 million acres that are managed as ACECs for recovery of the desert tortoise; establish the Southern Mojave and Sonoran Wildlife Habitat Management Areas (WHMAs) for bighorn sheep totaling over one million acres and 13 multi-species WHMAs totaling over one half million acres such that 80 percent of the distribution of all special status species and all natural community types are included in conservation management areas; combine Herd Management Areas (HMAs) for wild horses and burros and adjust the Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs); designate routes of travel (approximately 95 percent of existing routes will remain available for vehicle access); identify priorities for potential acquisition of private lands and disposal of public lands; provide access to resources for economic and social needs; incorporate 23 wilderness areas (totaling over a million acres) established by the 1994 California Desert Protection Act in the CDCA (BLM, 2002).

The project Study Area is located in unincorporated eastern Riverside County approximately 13 miles southwest of Blythe, California. The Study Area is located on the southeastern extent of the large Southern Recovery Unit for desert tortoise (NECO Map 1-2). The BLM has identified two federally-listed species affected by the CDCA Plan in the NECO Planning Area: the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and the Coachella milkvetch (*Atragalus lentiginosus* var. *coachellae*). Special-status wildlife and plant species are discussed in Section 5.2, Biological Resources. The Study Area is not subject to a Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Community Conservation Plan or located within the boundaries of a wildlife preserve. The Study Area is located within the draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan area. The Chuckwalla DWMA is approximately four miles west of the Study Area. According to NECO Map 2-4, the Mule Mountains ACEC is outside of the Study Area, approximately 0.8 miles west and southwest of the transmission line (BLM, 2002) (see Figure 5.6-2).

Wild Horse and Burro Act

According to NECO Map 2-25, the Chocolate-Mule Mountains Herd Area (HA) is within the Study Area (BLM, 2002). HAs are limited to areas of the public lands identified as being habitat used by wild horses and burros at the time of the passage of the Wild Horse and Burro Act in 1971. HA boundaries may only be changed when it is determined that areas once listed as HAs are later found to be used only by privately-owned horses or burros, or the HA boundary does not correctly portray where wild horses and burros were found in 1971.

According to NECO Map 2-25, the Chocolate-Mule Mountains Herd Management Area (HMA) is approximately 10 miles south of the Project. The HMA is established only in HAs, within which wild horses and/or burros can be managed for the long term. The BLM manages the HMAs by establishing AMLs based on monitoring and evaluations, including the population range within which the herd size will be allowed to fluctuate (BLM, 2005).

During project field work, five burros were incidentally sighted on the project site. The burros were sighted in the Chocolate-Mule Mountains HA, which is not managed by the BLM. As the project site is located approximately 10 miles from the Chocolate-Mule Mountains HMA, the Project will be in compliance with the Wild Horse and Burro Act.

Federal Aviation Regulations

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 77, establish standards and notification requirements for objects affecting navigable airspace. This notification serves as the basis for evaluating the effects of construction or alteration on operating procedures; determining the potential hazardous effect of the proposed construction on air navigation; identifying mitigating measures to enhance safe air navigation; and charting of new objects. The following regulations apply to the Project:

- Any construction or alteration exceeding 200 feet above ground level;
- Any construction or alteration:
  - A horizontal distance of the 100 to 1 slope has been restricted to 20,000 feet for airports with the longest runway more than 3,200 feet in length.
  - For airports with the longest runway 3,200 feet or shorter, a 50 to 1 slope is prescribed for a horizontal distance of 10,000 feet.
  - A distance of 5,000 feet of a public use heliport that exceeds a 25 to 1 surface.

The Study Area is located approximately 4.7 miles from Blythe Municipal Airport. Blythe Airport has two runways. The Blythe Airport runways are 5,800 and 6,543 feet in length. The proposed gen-tie line structures will be located approximately 25,000 feet from the end of the nearest runway. According to the FAA horizontal distance equation for a runway greater than 3,200 feet, a 100 to 1 imaginary slope extending from the nearest point of a runway nearest to the site of the proposed structure is restricted to 20,000 feet. Accordingly, a distance of approximately 25,000 feet will allow a structure of up to 125 feet. The Project gen-tie line structure will be approximately 85 feet in height. The Project gen-tie line structures will not pierce the imaginary slope of 100 to 1. Additionally, they will be located adjacent to and south (opposite from the airport) of an existing 500 kV SCE transmission line and the 220 kV gen-tie line from the Blythe Combined Cycle Power Plant. Therefore, the Project gen-tie line will not pose a new impediment for aircraft taking off or landing at the Blythe Municipal Airport.

The Project proposes three power tower structures of approximately 760 feet in height (750 feet for the tower inclusive of the SRSG and an additional 10-foot tall lightening rod) that will exceed the 200 feet above ground level; therefore, FAA aeronautical review will be required. The nearest power tower to the airport is approximately 8.1 miles from the end of the Blythe Municipal Airport runway.

The Project must also comply with the guidance set forth in FAA Advisory Circular (AC) 70/7460-1K, Obstruction Marking and Lighting. The number and type of lights and marking per structure are based on the height of the structure and width of the structure at its highest point. Various lighting systems will be used to identify structures through an aeronautical study with the FAA to determine added conspicuity.

The Project is located within the lateral boundaries of Visual Route (VR)-296, a visual military training route used for terrain following operations originating at March Air Reserve Base in California. This route may be used by military pilots to conduct operation as low as 300 feet above ground level. One of the three 760-feet solar power towers will be located on federal land. The FAA is the sole agency with regulatory approval for the Project. Capital Airspace Group performed an Obstacle Evaluation Study for the Project to evaluate the impacts from the Project on airspace (Appendix 5.6A). The Department of Defense (DOD) commented with a letter dated August 30, 2011 that while they believe there will be impacts, that those impacts are mitigable and that they will not oppose the Project (Appendix 5.6B). Additionally, the BLM will confer with the DOD on the Project.

Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 set forth the policy for establishment of certain roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based on their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities. The BLM manages these scenic roads as Back Country Byways. Bradshaw Trail is a BLM Back Country Byway that intersects the Study Area.

5.6.2.2 State

Warren-Alquist State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Act

The California Public Resources Code (PRC) establishes the CEC, through the Application for Certification (AFC) process, as the decision-making authority over land use decisions and environmental determinations in accordance with the Warren-Alquist State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Act (Warren-Alquist Act) codified in Section 25000 et seq. of the PRC. The CEC has exclusive jurisdiction over thermal power plant (50 MW or greater) siting, including California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) implementation. The Project will demonstrate conformity with state, regional, and local laws, including land use laws.

California Environmental Quality Act

The CEC will be the lead CEQA agency for the Project. Under California law, the CEC is responsible for reviewing the AFCs filed for projects, and also has the role of lead agency for the environmental review of these projects under CEQA (PRC, §§ 25500 et seq; PRC, §§ 21000 et seq.). The CEC conducts this review in accordance with the administrative adjudication provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act (Government Code Regulations, Title 20, §§11400 et seq.) and its own regulations governing site certification proceedings (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 20, §§ 1701 et seq.). These provisions require the staff to conduct an independent analysis of AFCs and prepare an independent assessment of a project's potential environmental impacts, feasible mitigation measures, and alternatives as part of this process.

The CEC considers the staff assessments, along with those of the applicant, interested local, regional, state, and Federal agencies, intervenors, and interested Native American tribes, in developing its decision on an AFC. The CEC has a certified regulatory program under CEQA that exempts the agency from having to draft an environmental impact report (EIR) and, instead, requires a final staff assessment, evidentiary hearings, and a decision based on the hearing record, which includes the staff's and other parties' assessments.

California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act)

The California Land Conservation Act, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, was passed in 1965 to preserve agricultural and open space lands by enabling local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments that are much lower than normal because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value.

The California Department of Conservation's (CDC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts on agricultural resources. Agricultural land is rated based on soil quality and irrigation status. No special agricultural land use designations have been assigned as Farmland of Statewide Importance, Prime Farmland, or Unique Farmland on the project site or gen-tie line, as indicated on the FMMP. However, the proposed 34th Avenue access road and Bradshaw Trail access road improvements, and the proposed 33 kV service line new construction and overbuild are adjacent to farmlands mapped as Farmland of Statewide Importance, Prime Farmland, and Unique Farmland. The Study Area contains all three classifications of farmland. The Study Area for the 33 kV service line also runs adjacent to farmland under Williamson Act Contract. However, as discussed in Section 5.6.3.3 below, the portion of the 33 kV Study Area that contains Williamson Act contracts is the segment of the service line that will only require an overbuild (stringing of additional transmission lines) on existing transmission line structures. Southern California Edison confirmed via an email from Peter Lennon on September 1, 2011, that no new construction will be necessary for the portion of the service line from the Blythe substation to Neighbors at 28th Avenue (Appendix 5.6C).

The County of Riverside is the local government agency responsible for Williamson Act Contract implementation and administration. Potential impacts to agricultural land are discussed below in Section 5.6.3, Section 5.6.6, and indicated on Figure 5.6-3, however the project will not require cancellation of a Williamson Act contract.

5.6.2.3 Local

Riverside County General Plan

The Riverside County General Plan (RCGP) was originally adopted in 2003. An update was prepared in 2008. This subsection draws primarily upon the most current, 2008 update. The RCGP consists of a vision statement and the following elements: Land Use, Circulation, Multi-purpose Open Space, Safety, Noise, Housing, Air Quality, and Administration. The RCGP sets forth County land use policies and guidance for implementation. The RCGP is augmented by more detailed Area Plans covering the County's territory. Area Plans provide a clear and more focused opportunity to enhance community identity within the County and stimulate quality of life at the community level.

Policies at the General Plan and Area Plan levels implement the vision and goals of Riverside County. The County of Riverside Vision details the physical, environmental, and economic qualities that the County aspires to achieve by the year 2020. Using that Vision as the primary foundation, the RCGP establishes policies for development and conservation within the entire unincorporated County territory (Riverside, 2008). Table 5.6-3, below, provides the Plan's policy goals most relevant to land use for the Project.

The Project is located in the Palo Verde Valley within unincorporated Riverside County. The Project is within the planning area for the Palo Verde Valley Area Plan. The Palo Verde Valley Area Plan provides customized direction specifically for this easternmost reach of the County.

Palo Verde Valley Area Plan

The Palo Verde Valley Area Plan guides the evolving character of the agricultural and desert area. The Palo Verde Valley Area Plan focus is on the Colorado River and is anchored in the City of Blythe. The Area Plan planning area borders Imperial County to the south. Desert lands border the area to the north and west. The Colorado River borders the planning area to the east. The Palo Verde Valley Area Plan is an extension of the RCGP and vision. Table 5.6-3 below provides the Area Plan policy goals most relevant to land use for the Project.

Table 5.6-3
Riverside County General Plan and Palo Verde Valley Area Plan Land Use Policies and Goals Relevant to the Project

Riverside County General Plan 2008	
Multi-Purpose Open Space Element Policy OS 15.2	Development of renewable resources should be encouraged.
Land Use Element Policy LU 6.1	Requires land uses to develop in accordance with the Riverside County General Plan (RCGP) and area plans to ensure compatibility and minimize impacts.
Land Use Element Policy LU 8.2	Requires that development protect environmental resources by compliance with the Multipurpose Open Space Element of the RCGP and federal and state regulations such as CEQA, NEPA, the Clean Air Act, and the Clean Water Act.
Land Use Element Policy LU 9.1	Requires that new development contribute their fair share to fund infrastructure and public facilities such as police and fire facilities.
Land Use Element Policy LU 14.7	Ensures that no structures or activities encroach upon or adversely affect the use of navigable airspace.
Land Use Element Policy LU 16.4	Encourages conservation of productive agricultural lands. Preserve prime agricultural lands for high-value crop production.
Palo Verde Valley Area Plan 2003	
Agricultural Preservation Policy PVVAP 4.1	Protects farmland and agricultural resources in the Palo Verde Valley through adherence to the Agriculture sections of the RCGP Multipurpose Open Space and Land Use Elements.
Recreational Vehicle Development Policy PVVAP 5.4	Allows remote recreational vehicle developments within the following land use designations: Very Low Density Residential, Estate Density Residential, Rural Residential, Rural Mountainous, Rural Desert, Open Space-Recreation, and Open Space-Rural.
Trails and Bikeway System Policy PVVAP 9.1	Develops a system of multi-purpose trails that enhances the Colorado River's recreational values and connects with the adopted trails system of Riverside County.
Scenic Highways Policy PVVAP 10.1	Protects the scenic highways in the Palo Verde Valley planning area from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of adjacent properties in accordance with the Scenic Corridors sections of the RCGP Land Use, Multipurpose Open Space, and Circulation Elements.
Scenic Highways Policy PVVAP 10.2	Encourages the designation of Interstate 10 and U.S. Highway 95 as eligible and subsequently Official Scenic Highways in accordance with the California State Scenic Highway Program.

Sources: County of Riverside General Plan, 2008; Palo Verde Valley Area Plan, 2003

CEQA = California Environmnetal Quality Act
FAA = Federal Aviation Administration
LU = Land Use
NEPA = National Environmental Policy Act
PVVAP = Palo Verde Valley Area Plan
OS = Open Space

Riverside County Land Use Ordinance

The Riverside County Land Use Ordinance (Ordinance 348) includes provisions for issuance of building and grading permits, grading plans, and zoning requirements, and standards and procedures for building review. Ordinance 348 includes guidance for amendments to zones and amendments to the RCGP.

There are private parcels within the project site under the jurisdiction of Riverside County, located in the Palo Verde Valley Area Plan of unincorporated Riverside County. These parcels are zoned Controlled Development with a 10-acre minimum parcel size per residence (W-2-10) and Natural Assets (N-A), (see Figure 5.6-4). Table 5.6-4 describes the permitted uses in these zones relevant to the Project.

Table 5.6-4
County of Riverside Zoning

Zone District	Description of Permitted Uses and Development Regulations
Controlled Development Areas (W-2)	W-2-10 zoning classification is within the W-2 zone and requires a minimum of 10-acres per dwelling. This zone permits, upon Conditional Use Permit (CUP), "public utility uses, such as structures and installations necessary to the conservation and development of water such as dams, pipelines, water conduits, tanks, reservoirs, wells and the necessary pumping and water production facilities; structures and the pertinent facilities necessary and incidental to the development and transmission of electrical power and gas such as hydroelectric power plants, booster or conversion plants, transmission lines, pipe lines and the like; and telephone transmission lines, telephone exchanges and offices."
Natural Assets (N-A)	This zone permits, "one-family dwellings, field and tree crops, apiaries, limited grazing of cattle, horses, sheep or goats. With a Plot Plan and parcel of appropriate size: public utility substations, menageries, museums, agricultural mobile homes. Uses with a CUP: recreational vehicle parks, hotels, extraction and bottling of well water, riding academies, golf courses and appurtenant facilities, fishing lakes, camps, guest ranch."

Sources: County of Riverside Ordinance 348, 2009.
CUP = Conditional Use Permit
N-A = Natural Assets
W-2 = Controlled Development Areas

Riverside Zoning and County Land Use Designation

Rio Mesa Solar Holdings, LLC, submitted an application to Riverside County for a change of zone for certain parcels in the project site. There are approximately 1,536 acres of parcels zoned W-2-10 on the project site. Additionally, there are approximately 146 acres of private parcels on the BLM portion of the project site and approximately 386 acres of private parcels within the proposed gen-tie line corridor zoned as W-2-10 (see Figure 5.6-4). As indicated in Table 5.6-4, the W-2-10 Zone allows for public utility uses with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The County has found this zone suitable for solar electricity development in the past. While the Project is not considered a public utility, it was determined during the permitting of the Rice Solar Energy Project (northern Riverside County) that such projects are substantially the same in character and intensity as public utility uses from a Land Use perspective. The Rice Solar Energy Project utilizes solar thermal power tower technology, similar to the Rio Mesa SEGF. It was also conveyed by the County that W-2-10 is suitable for development of the Project (Riverside County July 14, 2011).

There are approximately 4,224 acres of parcels zoned N-A on the project site, for which the application for change of zone will change to W-2-10. The County is anticipated to approve the change of zone application before the Energy Commission Staff Assessment is released.

The current project site zoning is both "Conditionally Consistent" and "Generally Inconsistent" with the RCGP land use designations on the project site. The project site has both "Agriculture" (AG) and "Open-Space Rural" (OS-RUR) RCGP land use designations (see Figure 5.6-1). Parcels zoned W-2-10 are located on both OS-RUR (project site) and AG (gen-tie line corridor) land use designations. The W-2-10 zone is "Conditionally Consistent" with the AG land use designation, and "Generally Inconsistent" with the OS-RUR land use designation. The W-2-10 Zone and OS-RUR designation requires a density suffix for consistency. This suffix pertains to a 20 acre minimum development required within the OS-RUR land use designation. As all parcels within the project site will be merged into one parcel per CEC siting regulations, the W-2-10 zone is expected to be consistent with the OS-RUR land use designation (20 acre minimum development). Furthermore, the County found during the Rice Solar Energy Project that OS-RUR, while not specifically allowing solar energy projects, could be consistent with the OS-RUR designation policies, which expressly encourage the development of renewable resources in Open Space designations (see Table 5.6-3; Riverside 2008; Figure 5.6-1). This combination of W-2-10 with OS-RUR was allowed for the Rice Solar Power Project. Furthermore, it was determined through consultation with the County that this combination is suitable for development of the Project (Riverside County July 14, 2011).

Imperial County General Plan and Land Use Ordinance

The project site is located in Riverside County with its southern boundary on the border between Riverside and Imperial Counties. The Study Area for the project site incorporates lands within Imperial County (see Figure 5.6-1). However, no Project features will be developed on these lands. Therefore, Imperial County will not be an agency with jurisdiction over the Project. For this reason, Imperial County LORS were not included in Table 5.6-1 and will not be evaluated further. Below is a brief discussion of Imperial County Land Use Plans.

The Imperial County General Plan consists of ten elements: Land Use, Housing, Circulation and Scenic Highways, Noise, Seismic and Public Safety, Agricultural, Conservation and Open Space, Geothermal/Alternative Energy and Transmission, Water, and Parks & Recreation. Also included in the Imperial County General Plan is a Land Use Map designating various land use categories which identify locations, and describes the type and anticipated maximum allowable density of development.

The Imperial County Land Use Ordinance, Title 9, Land Use Code includes provisions for issuance of building and grading permits, grading plans, and zoning requirements, and standards and procedures for building review. The Land Use Code includes guidance for amendments to zones and amendments to the Imperial County General Plan.

5.6.3 Affected Environment

This subsection discusses existing land use conditions in the area potentially affected by the Project. The following analysis will focus primarily on existing land use conditions within the project Study Area, which is defined as a one mile radius from the project site and a 0.25 mile radius from offsite linear

features. This subsection will also address existing land uses within the Project area to facilitate BLM's review under NEPA.

The Project is proposed to be constructed on both public and private land. A detailed map and list of property owners within 1,000 feet of the project site and offsite linear features is attached to this AFC as Appendix 1A (in the Executive Summary).

5.6.3.1 General Description of the Vicinity

The proposed project site is located in eastern Riverside County approximately 13 miles southwest of Blythe, California. The project site is located partially on private land and partially on public land administered by BLM (see Figure 5.6-1). The project site and linear features are located in the Palo Verde Valley, south of Interstate 10 (I-10) freeway and north of the Imperial County line.. The site is west of State Route 78. There is an existing SCE transmission line along State Route 78 through agricultural fields. The existing Imperial Irrigation District (IID) transmission line and the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) transmission line border the project site on the northwest and east, respectively. The existing TransCanada Gas Transmission Company (TCGT) North Baja Pipeline borders the site on the east. Bradshaw Trail intersects the project site at an east-west orientation (see Figure 5.6-1). The Colorado River borders eastern Riverside County and Arizona approximately 5 miles to the southeast at its nearest point.

The Palo Verde Valley is situated between the project site on the Palo Verde Mesa to the west and the Colorado River to the east. The area is comprised primarily of open space and agricultural land. There is some very low density residential use in the vicinity of the project site. Palo Verde is the closest community to the project site, which is approximately 2.3 miles east of the southeast corner of the project site boundary on the border of Riverside and Imperial Counties but located within Imperial County. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Palo Verde had a population of 171 in 2010 (U.S. Census, 2010). The community of Ripley is approximately 6.8 miles from the project site. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Ripley had a population of 692 in 2010 (U.S. Census, 2010). The population of Blythe was 20,817 in 2010 (U.S. Census, 2010). See Section 5.10, Socioeconomics, for further information on population within Palo Verde Valley. See Section 5.3, Cultural Resources, for a historical context of the Palo Verde Valley.

5.6.3.2 Existing Land Use, Planning, and Zoning Designations

As mentioned above, the Project is located on lands administered by the BLM and private lands under the jurisdiction of Riverside County.

BLM Land Use Designations

The Study Area is designated MUC L and M by the CDCA Plan (see Figure 5.6-1). The Study Area is located within the planning area of the CDCA Plan and the NECO Plan. BLM land management plans provide for the management of a defined resource area that includes goals and policies for that area. All of the public lands in the CDCA Plan under BLM management have been designated geographically into four MUCs. The classification is based on the sensitivity of resources and kinds of uses for each geographic area. As indicated in Table 5.6-2 and discussed above, the MUC lands within the Study Area

do not allow for projects not identified in the CDCA Plan. The Project will need an amendment to the CDCA Plan.

Riverside County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance

The project site is located in the Palo Verde Valley. The Project requires the development of certain private parcels under the jurisdiction of Riverside County. The land use designations on the project site under the jurisdiction of Riverside County are OS-RUR and AG. The private parcels within the project site will be zoned W-2-10, pending the County's approval of the zone change application. Table 5.6-3 and Section 5.6.2.3 illustrates the allowable uses of each zone classification.

The RCGP and the Palo Verde Valley Area Plan are the primary documents applicable to the Project. Permitted land uses associated with General Plan land use classifications applicable to the Project are identified in the Land Use and Open Space Elements of the RCGP. Definitions of the Planning Designations in the Study Area are identified and defined in Section 5.6.2.3. Existing land uses and RCGP land use designations for the Study Area are shown on Figure 5.6-1.

Implementation of the RCGP occurs through classification and regulation of land uses and structures in County Ordinance 348. The provisions of Ordinance 348 applicable to the Project are identified in Table 5.6-4. A discussion of the change of zone necessary for Project approval is discussed in Sections 5.6.2.3 and 5.6.4.

5.6.3.3 Land Uses in the Study Area and Vicinity

CCR Title 20, Division 2, Chapter 5, Article 6(3)(A)(i) defines the regulations for CEC site certification for Land Use. The regulations require, at minimum, a discussion of the existing environment within one mile of the proposed site and within one-quarter mile of any project-related linear facilities (Study Area). According to the siting regulations, the following land uses should be identified: residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, scenic, agricultural, natural resource protection, natural resource extraction, educational, religious, cultural, and historic areas, and any other area of unique land uses. Below is a discussion of these existing land uses in the Study Area. In addition, a brief discussion of existing land uses within the vicinity of the Project (Project Vicinity) is included for certain land uses. This additional analysis should provide a more complete understanding of the land uses in the area and help facilitate BLM's review under NEPA.

Residential Land Use

There are no residential communities within the Study Area. The nearest residential community to the Study Area is the community of Palo Verde, approximately 2.3 miles to the east. The town of Ripley is located along State Route 78 approximately 6.8 miles from the portion of the Study Area that surrounds the 33 kV upgrade. The City of Blythe is within the Project Vicinity approximately 13 miles from the Study Area. The eastern area of Riverside County comprises nearly 40 percent of the County's acreage but contains only approximately two percent of the entire population of Riverside County. Eastern Riverside County had a population of 466,422 in 2010 compared to 2,139,535 in Riverside County. (see Section 5.10, Socioeconomics, for more information on demographics in the Study Area and Project Vicinity.)

Commercial and Industrial

There are no commercial or industrial land uses existing within the Study Area. The Study Area is comprised primarily of previously disturbed land and agricultural land uses. The nearest commercial and industrial land uses are located in the City of Blythe, approximately 13 miles from the project site.

Recreational Land Use in the Study Area

BLM:

The types of recreational uses in the Study Area are governed by the CDCA Plan and the NECO Plan. The Study Area is designated as MUC L and M. MUC L and M are suitable for recreation activities that generally involve low to moderate uses, including backpacking, primitive unimproved site camping, hiking, horseback riding, rockhounding, nature study and observation, photography, rock climbing, hunting, noncompetitive vehicle touring, and events only on "approved" routes of travel (BLM, 1980; BLM, 2002). There are no recreation facility structures or campsites in the Study Area. However, there are off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreational attractions in the Study Area.

Bradshaw Trail is a 65-mile BLM Back Country Byway that begins about 35 miles southeast of Indio, California near the Salton Sea. The trail's eastern end is within the Study Area on the eastern side of the proposed project site. The portion of the trail that traverses through the Study Area is primarily used for OHV purposes (BLM, 2011).

The CDCA Plan and the NECO Plan Amendment created a detailed inventory and designation of routes within the NECO Plan area that are officially designated as *Open*, *Limited* or *Closed* as part of the NECO Plan routes of travel system. Under the CDCA Plan routes are defined as follows:

- Open Route: Access by motorized vehicles is allowed.
- Limited Route: Access by motorized vehicles is limited to use by number of vehicles, type of vehicle, time or season, permitted or licensed, or speed limits.
- Closed Route: Access by motorized vehicles is prohibited except for authorized use.

The Study Area contains NECO Plan-designated "open" and "limited" routes of travel. Bradshaw Trail and the road that follows the existing WAPA transmission line are defined in the NECO Plan Route Designations as "Maintained Dirt-Proposed Open." The road that follows the existing IID transmission line is designated as "Unmaintained Dirt-Proposed Open." There are other routes in the Study Area, such as Opal Hill mining road and roads that access the historic Hodge Mine that are designated "Unmaintained Dirt-Proposed Open." Motorized vehicle use within MUC L and M are allowed on existing routes of travel. There are no BLM-designated open OHV areas in Riverside County where riding off of designated routes is permitted.

Riverside County:

Riverside County Documented Trails and Bikeway System designate two trails within the Study Area. The County of Riverside contains multi-purpose bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian trails that traverse

urban, rural, and natural areas. These trails accommodate hikers, bicyclists, equestrian users, and others as an integral part of the County's circulation system. These trails serve both as a means of connecting the unique communities and activity centers throughout the County and as an effective alternate mode of transportation (Riverside, 2008; Palo Verde, 2003). Bradshaw Trail is defined as a "Historic Trial", but the path on the Trails and Bikeway System figure travels much farther north of the current location (Riverside County Trails and Bikeway System figure is located at http://www.rivcoparks.org/trails/riverside-county-general-plan-update/).

Recreational Land Use in the Project Vicinity

Table 5.6-5 lists the federal recreational areas and opportunities within the Project Vicinity, but outside the Study Area radius. For the purposes of analyzing additional recreational opportunities outside of the Study area and to facilitate BLM's review under NEPA, the Project Vicinity will be defined as approximately 18 miles from the project site (13 miles plus an additional five mile buffer). The Midland Long Term Visitor Area (LTVA) is approximately 13 miles northeast of the project site (see Figure 5.6-2). This additional Project Vicinity boundary incorporates the Midland LTVA because Project construction workers may potentially stay in the LTVA during the approximate 36-month construction period, or a portion thereof. This may result in increased use of this recreation area (see Section 5.10, Socioeconomics, for additional discussion on temporary housing during project construction and LTVA discussion below). This distance also incorporates the BLM wilderness areas, LTVAs and camping opportunities, and ACEC areas further from the project site. Additionally, below is a discussion of Riverside County recreational areas and opportunities within the Project Vicinity.

Table 5.6-5
Recreational Areas and Opportunities in the Project Vicinty

Recreation Area	Approximate Distance from the Project or Project Linear Boundary	Approximate Size
Bureau of Land Management		
Mule Mountains Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)	0.8 miles northwest and west	4,101 acres
Palo Verde Mountains Wilderness	3 miles south	31,939 acres
Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC	4 miles northwest	2,273 acres
Chuckwalla Desert Wildlife Management Area	4 miles west	623,940
Mule Mountains Long-Term Visitor Area (LTVA)	5 miles west	3,424 acres
Wiley's Well Campground	5 miles west	21 units
Coon Hollow Campground	5 miles west	28 units
Oxbow Campground	5 miles southeast	Not Available
Palen/McCoy Wilderness	7 miles northwest	236,488 acres
Little Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness	9 miles west	28,034 acres
Midland LTVA	13 miles northeast	512 acres

Table 5.6-5
Recreational Areas and Opportunities in the Project Vicinty

Recreation Area	Approximate Distance from the Project or Project Linear Boundary	Approximate Size
Big Maria Mountains Wilderness	16 miles northeast	45,384 acres
Palen Dry Lake ACEC	18 miles northwest	3,632 acres
U.S Fish and Wildlife		
Cibola National Wildlife Refuge	5 miles southeast	18,142 acres

Sources: Wilderness.net, 2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2011d; BLM, 2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2011d; U.S. FWS, 2011; Wilderness, 2011.
ACEC = Area of Critical Environmental Concern
LTVA = Long Term Visitor Area

BLM:

The BLM administers wilderness areas, LTVAs, ACECs, and other recreational areas and opportunities in the Project Vicinity. Generally, recreation use on BLM lands in the vicinity of the Project is limited to the cooler months of September to May, with the summer months being too hot. Popular recreation activities include car and RV camping, rockhounding, OHV riding and touring, hiking, photography, hunting (dove, quail, and deer), sightseeing and visiting cultural sites.

Wilderness Areas

Wilderness areas are shown on Figure 5.6-2. As indicated in Table 5.6-5, four wilderness areas are located in the Project Vicinity: the Palo Verde Mountains Wilderness, the Palen/McCoy Wilderness, Big Maria Mountains Wilderness, and Little Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 (16 USC 1131-1136) limits allowable types of recreation in wilderness areas to those that are primitive and unconfined, depend on wilderness setting, and do not degrade the wilderness character of the area. Motorized vehicles or equipment are not permitted in wilderness areas. The BLM regulates recreational uses on such lands in accordance with the policies, procedures, and technologies set forth in the 43 CFR 6300, BLM Manual 8560 (*Management of Designated Wilderness Areas*) (BLM, 1983), BLM Handbook H-8560-1 (*Management of Designated Wilderness Areas*) (BLM, 1986), and BLM's Principles for Wilderness Management in the California Desert (BLM 1995). Camping, hiking, rockhounding, hunting, fishing, non-commercial trapping, backpacking, climbing, and horseback riding are permissible. OHV activity is generally prohibited except as authorized in the Wilderness Act, the California Desert Protection Act of 1994, and approved wilderness management plans (BLM, 2002).

The four wilderness areas in the Project vicinity have no developed trails, parking/trailheads, or other visitor use facilities (Wilderness.net 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, and 2011d). These areas are generally steep, rugged mountains, with no permanent natural water sources, thus limiting extensive hiking or backpacking. There is some vehicle camping along roads that are adjacent to these wilderness areas.

Long Term Visitor Areas

The BLM manages seven LTVAs: five are in California; two are in Arizona. Within the NECO Planning Area, there are three LTVAs: Mule Mountains (2,554 acres); Midland (512 acres); and Pilot Knob (158 acres). LTVAs accommodate visitors who wish to camp for as long as seven consecutive months. Winter visitors who wish to stay in a LTVA must purchase either a long term permit for $180 that is valid for the entire season or any part of the season (which runs from September 15 through April 15), or a short term permit for $40 that is valid for 14 consecutive days. Permit holders may move from one LTVA to another within the permitted timeframe.

As indicated in Table 5.6-5 and Figure 5.6-2, two LTVAs are located in the Project Vicinity: Mule Mountains LTVA and Midland LTVA. These LTVAs provide long-term camping opportunities. Additional recreational activities include hiking, OHV use, rockhounding; viewing cultural sites, wildlife and unique desert scenery; and solitude (Wildernet, 2011).

While the Mule Mountains LTVA is very large, 90 percent of the use is contained in two campgrounds within areas about three miles apart from each other: Wiley's Well and Coon Hollow Campgrounds. Both are year-round facilities with campsites, picnic tables, grills, shade ramadas, and handicapped-accessible vault toilets (BLM, 2002; Wildernet, 2011).

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

As indicated in Table 5.6-5 and Figure 5.6-2, there are three ACECs located in the Project Vicinity. Recreation activities allowed in ACECs are determined by the resources and values for which the ACECs were established. Most ACECs allow low-intensity recreation use that is compatible with protection of the relevant values.

The Mule Mountains ACEC is located approximately 0.80 mile southwest of the northwestern most extent of the Study Area along the proposed gen-tie line. Recreation activities allowed in ACECs are determined by the resources and values for which the ACECs were established. Most ACECs allow low-intensity recreation use that is compatible with protection of the relevant values. The Mule Mountains ACEC was established primarily to protect cultural resources (see Section 5.3, Cultural Resources). This ACEC does not have recreation use facilities.

The Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket and Palen Dry Lake ACECs protect both natural and cultural resources. These ACECs do not have recreation use facilities, but are signed to inform visitors of the special values of the areas and associated protection measures (BLM, 1980; BLM, 2002).

Other BLM Recreation Area

The BLM, Yuma Field Office, operates the Oxbow Campground approximately five miles southeast of the project site in Arizona. The site provides RV and tent camping sites, boat launch, and day use area on an old river channel of the Colorado River. The site is heavily used on summer and holiday weekends, and is popular with winter visitors. The BLM provides certain facilities, including an off-channel boat ramp with access to Colorado River, day use and boat trailer parking, two vault toilets, trash dumpster, and RV and tent camping (BLM, 2011c).

United States Fish and Wildlife Service:

The Cibola National Wildlife Refuge (Cibola NWR) was established in 1964 as mitigation for the loss of fish and wildlife habitat due to dam construction and channelization of the Lower Colorado River. Cibola NWR is working to restore and conserve historic fish and wildlife habitat and provide opportunities for compatible wildlife-oriented recreational activities. The refuge provides important habitat for migratory birds, wintering waterfowl, and resident species (see Section 5.2, Biological Resources). Cibola NWR offers a variety of recreational opportunities. Cibola NWR offers hunting opportunities for a variety of species including quail, white-winged and mourning dove, cottontail rabbit, mule deer, geese, ducks, coots, and gallinules. There is a one-mile loop auto tour and nature trail through a restored riparian forest and mesquite bosque. The refuge offers a Birds of Nature Trail. Fishing and boating are permitted in designated areas during specific times of the year. There is no camping at the Cibola NWR.

Riverside County:

The Palo Verde Valley offers many outdoor recreational opportunities, such as boating, water skiing, jet skiing, swimming, fishing, canoeing, camping, rockhounding, hiking, archery, hunting, horseback riding, trapping, trap and skeet shooting, and OHV use. Within the Palo Verde Valley, the City of Blythe provides for year-round sporting activities. The Blythe Parks Department oversees eight parks, including five neighborhood parks, two community parks, and one regional park (City of Blythe, 2007). Other recreational opportunities in the Palo Verde Valley include the Blythe Municipal Golf Course.

Recreational opportunities along the Colorado River include power boating, canoeing, camping, fishing, hunting, and other water sports. Riverside County parks and wildlife areas are indicated on Figure 5.6-2.

Goose Flats Wildlife Area is located on 230 acres, approximately 11 miles east of the project site at 18th Avenue and the Colorado River. The wildlife area is managed by Riverside County and allows boating and fishing. Miller Park is located on five undeveloped acres on the Colorado River, approximately eight miles east of the project site at State Route 78 and 38th Avenue. Miller Park offers boating, fishing, and primitive camping, but has no facilities. Palo Verde Park is located approximately three miles southeast of the project site on California State Route 78 along an oxbow of the Colorado River. It is adjacent to Cibola NWR; it is approximately two miles west of the Palo Verde Oxbow BLM site on the Colorado River, which has a launch ramp and primitive camping. Other recreational activities at Palo Verde Park include boating, fishing, camping, and a playground. The park provides water and flush-toilet facilities (Riverside, 2011).

McIntyre Park is an 87-acre park approximately 11 miles east of the project site on 26th Avenue and the Colorado River. The park has large grassy sites with shady trees on a protected riverfront beach area. The recreational activities and amenities include: boating and fishing, picnic facilities, showers, a dump station, swimming, a boat launch ramp, a snack bar, grocery store, fishing supplies, RV camping, and tent camping (Riverside, 2011).

Mayflower Park is located on 24 acres, approximately 15 miles northeast of the Project just north of 6th Avenue and Colorado River Road. The park includes grassy campsites, covered picnic ramadas on the river, and a small lagoon. Recreational activities and amenities include: boating and fishing, picnic

facilities, showers, heated swimming pool, swimming lagoons, a boat launch ramp, electric and water amenities, RV camping, and tent camping (Riverside, 2011).

Scenic Land Use within the Study Area

BLM:

Bradshaw Trail is managed by the BLM as a Back Country Byway. The United States (U.S.) DOT FHWA established byways to help recognize, preserve, and enhance selected roads throughout the U.S. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 sets forth the procedures for the designation by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation of certain roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based on their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities. The BLM manages its scenic byways as Back Country Byways.

According to the NECO Plan, a Back Country Byway is a vehicle route that traverses scenic corridors utilizing secondary or back country road systems. National Back Country Byways are designated by the type of road and vehicle needed to travel the byway. (see Section 5.13, Visual Resources, for a further discussion of the scenic qualities of Bradshaw Trail. See Section 5.3, Cultural Resources, for a further discussion about the history and cultural significance of Bradshaw Trail, particularly in the area of the Project.) The NECO Plan does not identify additional scenic resources in the Project Study Area.

Riverside County:

The Palo Verde Valley Area Plan designates two highways that have been nominated for County Scenic Highway status due to their scenic value: U.S. Highway 95 and I-10. They currently have status as Eligible County Scenic Highways. U.S Highway 95 as it extends north from I-10 to the San Bernardino County line, and I-10 from the western boundary of the Palo Verde Valley Area Plan planning boundary to the Colorado River are within the Project Vicinity, but outside of the Study Area boundary (see Figure 5.6-2). These segments have not been designated as eligible for official Scenic Highways in accordance with the California Scenic Highways Program. There are no eligible or designated State Scenic Highways in the Study Area or the Project Vicinity.

Agricultural Land Use within the Study Area and the Palo Verde Valley

The following discussion evaluates the existing agricultural uses in the Study Area and the existing agricultural uses within the Palo Verde Valley in general. The Project Vicinity for the purposes of this discussion is defined as the portion of the Palo Verde Valley, framed by the Palo Verde Mesa on the west, Colorado River to the east, the I-10 freeway to the north, and the Imperial County boundary to the south. A larger discussion of the Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) is included as well.

The 0.25 mile Study Area for the 34th Avenue project access road, as indicated on Figure 5.6-3, is primarily covered within the one-mile project site Study Area. The remainder of the 34th Avenue access road Study Area is included in Table 5.6-6. This was done to avoid double-counting effects to agricultural land from the project site Study Area and the 34th Avenue Study Area boundaries. The Study Area for Bradshaw Trail access road improvements, as indicated on Figure 5.6-3, is entirely covered in the 0.25 mile Study Area for the proposed 33 kV service line, and, therefore is not included or counted in

Table 5.6-6. The Study Area for Bradshaw Trail access road improvements and the portion of this linear that follows alongside the 33 kV service line Study Area, are evaluated as one linear corridor with the same Study Area.

Table 5.6-6 and Figure 5.6-3 indicate the designation of farmland within the Study Area.

Table 5.6-6
Farmlands within the Study Area

	Designation	Acreage within Study Area Radius(acres approximate)
Project Site Study Area (one mile buffer)	Prime Farmland	645 acres
	Farmland of Statewide Importance	315 acres
	Unique Farmland	27 acres
	Farmland of Local Importance	6,271 acres
	Williamson Act Contract	None
Gen-tie line Study Area (0.25 mile buffer)	Prime Farmland	None
	Farmland of Statewide Importance	None
	Unique Farmland	None
	Farmland of Local Importance	1,388 acres
	Williamson Act	None
34th Avenue Access Road Study Area (0.25 mile buffer)	(1)Prime Farmland	36 acres
	(1)Farmland of Statewide Importance	36 acres
	Unique Farmland	None
	Farmland of Local Importance	None
	Williamson Act Contract	None
(2)33 kV Service Line (0.25 mile buffer)		
New right-of-way (ROW)	Prime Farmland	128 acres
Overbuild in Existing ROW		867 acres
New ROW	Farmland of Statewide Importance	61 acres
Overbuild in Existing ROW		767 acres
New ROW	Unique Farmland	5 acres
Overbuild in Existing ROW		15 acres
New ROW	Farmland of Local Importance	None
Overbuild in Existing ROW		None
New ROW	Williamson Act Contract	None
Overbuild in Existing ROW		786 acres

Sources: CDC FMMP, 2008
ROW = Right-of-Way
(1) Acreages reflect the portion of the Study Area not included within the project site one-mile Study Area boundary.
(2) The 33 kV service line Study Area is evaluated as two different ROWs. The "New ROW" portion is the portion of the service line that will require approximately 3.12 miles of new transmission line structures (this 3.12 mile section is inclusive of Bradshaw Trail access road improvements Study Area). The "Existing ROW" portion is the portion of the service line that will require approximately 5.1 miles of overbuild onto an existing SCE transmission line. This overbuild requires no new transmission structures.

According to the CDC FMMP, portions of the Study Area have been mapped for agricultural purposes. The mapped farmland, as indicated in Table 5.6-6 and Figure 5.6-3, includes every type of important farmland.

- Prime Farmland is land best suited for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is available for these uses: cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, or other land, but not urban land or water. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed (including water management) according to modern farming methods (Riverside, 2008).
- Farmland of Statewide Importance is land other than Prime Farmland that has a good combination of physical and biological characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is available for these uses (the land could be cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land or other land, but not urban land or water) (Riverside, 2008).
- Unique Farmland is land other than Prime and Statewide Important Farmland that is currently used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high quality of a specific crop when treated and managed according to modern farming methods. Examples of such economically important crops are citrus, olives, and avocados (Riverside, 2008).
- Riverside County Farmland of Local Importance is locally significant farmlands not covered under the CDC categories (Riverside, 2008). They include the following:
  - Lands with soils that would be classified as Prime or Statewide Important Farmlands but lack available irrigation water.
  - Lands planted in 1980 or 1981 in dry land grain crops such as barley, oats, and wheat.
  - Lands producing major crops for Riverside County but that are not listed as Unique Farmland crops. Such crops are permanent pasture (irrigated), summer squash, okra, eggplant, radishes, and watermelon.
  - Dairylands including corrals, pasture, milking facilities, and hay and manure storage areas if accompanied with permanent pasture or hayland of 10 acres or more.
  - Lands identified by the County with Agriculture land use designations or contracts.
  - Lands planted with jojoba that are under cultivation and are of producing age.

According to aerial images and site visits, the farmland within the Study area is both active and inactive. The farmland of Local Importance nearest the project site Study Area boundary is not productive. The farmland nearest the proposed access roads and 33-kV service line Study Area is active.

The Palo Verde Valley is well known for its agricultural land. The Palo Verde Valley surrounding Blythe and Ripley is heavily farmed (see Figure 5.6-3). The history of the Palo Verde Valley is entwined with the history of the Colorado River. According to the Palo Verde Valley Area Plan, the agricultural lands found in the Palo Verde Valley area were created by periodic floods from the Colorado River. Agriculture is the major economic activity here (Palo Verde, 2008).

The Palo Verde Valley is home to the PVID. The PVID occupies about 189 square miles of territory in Riverside and Imperial Counties, California. The PVID contains approximately 131,298 acres, 26,798 acres of which are on the Palo Verde Mesa. The Mesa lies just west of the Palo Verde Valley. The eastern portion of the Palo Verde Mesa lies within the Study Area nearest the Project. The Colorado River forms the eastern and southern boundaries of the PVID (PVID, 2011).

The Palo Verde Valley, with its long, hot growing season, is ideal for agriculture; crops are grown and harvested year round. The main crops grown in the Study Area are hay and cotton. The primary field crops used for production of hay in the Study Area and the Palo Verde Valley nearest the Project are alfalfa and sudan (Personal conversation between Darin Neufeld at URS and a staff member at Hayday Farms, Blythe, CA). According to the PVID 2010 Crop Report, these crops comprised 42,975 and 3,876 acres respectively (PVID, 2010). Table 5.6-7 details the field crops grown in the entire PVID.

Table 5.6-7
Verde Irrigation District Field Crops 2010

Field Crops	Acreage	Field Crops	Acreage
Alfalfa	42,975	Oats	1,009
Barley	214	Orchard	111
Bermuda Grass	1,837	Palm Trees	147
Citrus	1,956	Rye	5
Corn	121	**Sudan**	3,876
Cotton-Short	9,129	Timothy Grass	402
Golf Course	127	Wheat	1,548
Klein Grass	2,122	MSCP Habitat	619
Milo	92		
Subtotal: 66,290 Acres			

Sources: PVID, 2010.
Notes:
Acreages are for the entire Palo Verde Irrigation District. Field crops in bold represent those most prevalent within the Study Area and the Project Vicinity.

Natural Resource Protection and Natural Resource Extraction Areas

No natural resource protection or active extraction areas exist within the Study Area. The western portion of the Study Area is near Roosevelt and Hodge mines, as well as associated borrow pits and a large open pit mine. The Opal Hill mine is just outside of the Study Area. These historic mines were used to extract gold, copper, Manganese ore, uranium, agate, and other natural minerals. The Roosevelt and Hodge mines are abandoned and no longer active. The Opal Hill mine is currently used for tourist mining purposes. There is a make-shift sign south of Bradshaw Trail and Wiley's Well Road, approximately five miles west of the Project that points would be visitors east towards the Opal Hill mine with a pictorial indication that tourists and campers can mine for gold, though very few visitors take advantage. (see Section 5.3.6.4, Cultural Resources, for more information on the history of the mines in the Study Area.)

The BLM has an Abandoned Mine Site Inventory, which indicates that the Roosevelt and Hodge mines, as well as associated borrow pits and a large open pit mine, are abandoned mines in need of further study

(BLM, 2011b). According to the BLM Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Program, eastern Riverside County is a priority recreation area with key AML physical hazard sites. The AML Program is meant to close all abandoned mines that pose safety threats to recreationists. The BLM Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA), Abandoned Mine Lands Remediation and Closure Process, was developed to guide closure of unsafe abandoned mines. The primary goal of the PEA is to provide a safe experience to the public when they are visiting public lands, as well as assuring that mining related features and facilities abandoned on public land are remediated to minimize damage to the natural environment, while recognizing and protecting the historical importance of selected features and facilities (BLM, 2010; BLM, 2011b). (see Section 5.2, Biological Resources, for a discussion on bats and mines.)

The CDC Office of Mine Reclamation has a similar program for the closure of unsafe abandoned mines. The CDC's Abandoned Mine Lands Unit (AMLU) implements a field program to inventory abandoned mines, provide a preliminary assessment of any hazards observed, and remediate hazards on public lands to preserve and protect human life and safety and any associated wildlife and cultural values (CDC, 1991).

Educational and Religious Land Use

There are no schools, day-care facilities, convalescent centers, or hospitals within, or in the immediate vicinity of, the Study Area. These facilities are located in Blythe, California, approximately 13 miles from the project site (see Section 5.10, Socioeconomics for a further discussion of these land uses.)

Cultural and Historic Land Use

URS conducted archival research, reviewed cultural resource investigation reports within the project area, contacted interested agencies, Native American groups, and historic societies, and conducted a cultural resources and architectural history field investigation for Project and buffer. Refer to Section 5.3, Cultural Resources, for information on cultural and historic resources near the Project.

Unique Land Uses

BLM:

The Project and Study Area is located within the Chocolate-Mule Mountains HA. The Chocolate-Mule Mountains HMA is approximately 10 miles south of the project site. As mentioned previously, HAs are limited to areas of the public lands identified as being habitat used by wild horses and burros at the time of the passage of the Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971, as amended. HMAs are established only in HAs within which wild horses and/or burros can be managed for the long term. HMAs identify initial and estimated herd size that can be managed while still preserving and maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationships for that area. HMAs also identify guidelines and criteria for adjusting herd size (BLM, 2002; BLM, 2005).

Department of Defense:

The Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range (CMAGR) is approximately 15.9 miles southwest of the Project in portions of Riverside and Imperial counties. The facility is used by the U.S. Navy and Marines for aerial bombing and live fire aerial gunnery practice. The CMAGR Range is closed to public access.

The project area was used during World War II as a live practice range. See Section 5.3, Cultural Resources, for a discussion of the historic use of the area as a military training ground. As a result of this historic land use, unexploded ordnance (UXO) were encountered within the project Area. During URS field investigations, several UXOs and military remnants were discovered. (see Section 5.3, Cultural Resources, and Section 5.14.2, Waste Management, for further discussion on UXO)

Riverside County:

There are no unique land uses as defined by Riverside County.

5.6.3.4 Recent or Proposed Development Code and General Plan Amendments

Recent or proposed amendments applicable to the project Study Area within the past 18 months are discussed below.

BLM

The NECO Plan amends the CDCA Plan as described in Section 5.6.2.1. There have been no additional recent amendments within the last 18 months within the Study Area.

County of Riverside

There have been no amendments to the RCGP or Ordinance 348 within the last 18 months within the Study Area. As mentioned previously, a change of zone is pending with the County. The Applicant anticipates receiving a zone change prior to the release of the Staff Assessment.

As outlined below the Applicant will undertake the following actions after certification, prior to construction. The Rio Mesa site, exclusive of gen-tie line and access roads, currently consists of 30 legally created parcels, as well as land controlled by the BLM. In order to create one legal parcel, excluding the linears, a Reversionary Map in accordance with the California Subdivision Map Act, Chapter 6, Article, "reversion to acreage" will need to be prepared. Once the Reversionary Map is prepared, it will be submitted to Riverside County for review and comment. Prior to submittal to the County, all parcels to be included in the Reversionary Map will need to be in common ownership. The estimated timeframe for review, comment, and processing time by the County is expected to run between 90 and 120 days.

Once Riverside County has performed its review process and all comments are addressed, the Reversionary Map can be recorded and the reverted acreage for the Rio Mesa project area would be in one lot containing approximately 6,741 acres, not including the land managed by the BLM. The recordation of the Reversionary Map will be done through the Riverside County Recorder's Office.

It has not yet been determined whether the reversion will result in one single legal parcel, or more than one parcel. It is important to note that the Applicant holds an option to a leasehold interest for the portion of the project site that is owned by the Metropolitan Water District. As described in AFC Section 2.1.3:

> Rio Mesa Solar Holdings, LLC holds an option agreement with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California for approximately 6,741 acres in which the area is planned for development of the southern portion of the Project. In addition, Rio Mesa Solar III, LLC has applied for ROW grants from BLM for two areas: a 2,800 acre parcel in which the northern portion of the project site is located, and an additional 1,300 acre study area in which the common gen-tie line will be located.

Given the leasehold interest, BLM managed land, and the three distinct legal entities with an interest in the project site (Rio Mesa Solar I, LLC, Rio Mesa Solar II, LLC, Rio Mesa Solar III, LLC, individually, and collectively as tenants in common for the common area), reversion may result in three or more parcels. In addition, merger is typically required where a building or a structure crosses a property line between two parcels under common ownership. It is not clear however, where the development consists of a field of heliostats that merger is required under either the County development ordinances or under the Subdivision Map Act. The process, if applicable will be started immediately after the project certification is final and no longer subject to further administrative challenge or judicial review.

The Project is also requesting a height variance to be processed as part of the CEC licensing process. The proposed height of the three solar towers of 760 feet (inclusive of 10 foot lightning rod) will require approval of a height variance from Riverside Country Planning Department not withstanding the CEC's siting process. The current height limitation in the W-2 zone is 105 feet. A height variance for the proposed towers will be pursuant to Section 18.27 of Ordinance 348, but is anticipated to be processed through the CEC's CEQA-equivalent regulatory review.

5.6.3.5 Recent Discretionary Reviews by Public Agencies

Discretionary reviews are actions that require review and approval by an overseeing regulatory agency. There have been no discretionary reviews by BLM within the Study Area within the past 18 months (BLM, 2011d). There have been no discretionary reviews by Riverside County within the Study Area within the past 18 months.

5.6.4 Environmental Analysis

The land use impact evaluation was determined through review of applicable federal, state, and local LORS. Because the Warren-Alquist Act is equivalent to a CEQA review, the criteria from the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, CEQA Checklist, were used to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the Project:

1. Will the project physically divide an established community?
2. Will the project conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, 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?

3. Will the project conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?
4. Will the project 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 nonagricultural use?
5. Will the project involve other changes in the existing environment which, given their location and nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use?

5.6.4.1 Potential Effects on Land Use

1. Will the project physically divide an established community?

No impact: The Project will not physically divide an established community. The project site, consisting of the three plants and common facilities area, will be located on previously disturbed land west of any existing community. The gen-tie line route will parallel two existing transmission lines and will not be located on or near an existing community. The access roads and 33 kV service line will not be located through an established community. Therefore, the Project will result in a finding of no impact under this criterion.

2. Will the project conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, 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?

No impact: The Project does not conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The project site is partially located on land zoned by Ordinance 348 as N-A and W-2-10. The Applicant has submitted a Change of Zone Application to the Riverside County Planning Department as indicated above. The Applicant expects this zone change to be processed and approved prior to the release of the Staff Assessment. The Project will request a variance for allowable heights in the W-2-10 Zone to be processed through the CEC licensing process.

Based on the information in this Section, the Project will be consistent with applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations.

3. Will the project conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?

No impact: The Project is not located within a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan planning area. Therefore, the Project will not conflict with an applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. Hence, the Project will result in a finding of no impact under this criterion.

4. Will the project 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 nonagricultural use?

Less Than Significant Impact:

The development of the project site, inclusive of the three plants and common facilities, will be constructed primarily on previously disturbed desert land that is not currently used for farming or agricultural purposes. Therefore, the project site will have a less than significant impact on agricultural land.

There are no Prime Farmlands, Farmlands of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland within 0.25 mile of the gen-tie line. The gen-tie line will parallel an existing transmission line through previously disturbed lands. Therefore, there will be no impacts to Farmland from the gen-tie line.

There are Prime Farmlands and Farmlands of Statewide Importance within the 0.25 mile of the 34th Avenue access road. The access road will require improvements and paving of 34th Avenue, which is an existing dirt road within a County 60 ft. ROW. However, the improvement and use of the 34th Avenue Project access road will convert a small amount of farmland to nonagricultural uses pursuant to the existing easement. There is a small portion of farmland currently in production along 34th Avenue that will be taken out of production. However, this land is subject to a current 60 ft. county ROW for purposes of road improvements. Therefore, the impact to agricultural land from the access road is anticipated to be less than significant.

The proposed 33 kV service line will require construction of new transmission poles as it leaves the common facilities area and heads east approximately 3.12 miles along Bradshaw Trail to a point approximately half way between the common facilities and State Route 78 (as discussed previously, this portion of the 33 kV Study Area is the same as the Study Area for Bradshaw Trail access road improvements). From this point, the Project will require an existing ROW overbuild on an existing SCE transmission line that runs along Bradshaw Trail to State Route 78. From here, the overbuild portion of the service line will parallel State Route 78 until it reaches South Neighbors Boulevard (see Figure 5.6-3). The entire distance of the overbuild portion of the service line is approximately 5.1 miles. The Study Area for the approximate 3.12 mile portion of the service line that requires construction of a new line affects parcels with Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland designations. Construction of new transmission structures is proposed adjacent to an existing road and will not directly impact farmlands. Construction of new transmission structures may indirectly impact these farmlands through temporary construction staging. The portion that requires Bradshaw Trail access road improvements may indirectly impact these farmlands through increased vehicle trips on this road. The impact to agricultural land from the portion of the 33 kV service line that requires new construction and Bradshaw Trail access road improvements is anticipated to be less than significant. The Study Area for the remainder of the service line that requires overbuild of an existing transmission line affects parcels with Farmland designations. However, this portion is simply an upgrade and requires no new structures, and therefore, will result in a finding of no impact.

There are approximately 786 acres of agricultural land under Williamson Act Contract within the Study Area of the 5.1 mile overbuild portion of the proposed 33 kV service line. However, there will be no new

transmission line poles constructed within lands under Williamson Act Contract. The Project will not require a cancellation of any Williamson Act Contracts. Therefore, the Project will result in a finding of no impact to Williamson Act Contract lands.

In conclusion, the Project will result in a finding of less than significant impact under this criterion because a small portion of active farmland will be converted to nonagricultural use as a result of the access road improvements and paving of 34th Avenue. However, the small amount of farmland necessary for road improvements will result in a small effect to agricultural land that is within a County ROW for purposes of road improvements, and will not significantly alter agricultural uses in the Study Area. Additionally, there may be some indirect impacts due to construction staging and increase vehicle trips along the 33 kV service line.

5. Will the project involve other changes in the existing environment which, given their location and nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use?

No Impact: The Project will not require other changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use. Therefore, the Project will result in a finding of no impact under this criterion.

5.6.4.2 Other Potential Effects

In addition to the criterion required above for impacts to Farmland, the project site will convert some parcels designated as Farmland of Local Importance by Riverside County to nonagricultural use. However, this farmland is currently inactive and has been allowed to lie fallow by the site owner, Metropolitan Water District (MWD). There are no future plans to use the farmland on the project site for agricultural purposes. There is also land designated Farmland of Local Importance within the gen-tie portion of the Project. The gen-tie line will parallel existing transmission lines in a disturbed area of desert land. The land designated Farmland of Local Importance in the Study Area is not currently used for agricultural purposes and is not anticipated to be converted to nonagricultural use. The Project will result in a finding of no impact to locally important farmland.

As discussed previously, the Project is located within the Chocolate-Mule Mountains HA. The project site will be fenced, closing off a portion of this HA (see Figure 5.6-2). However, the closing of this portion of the HA is not anticipated to cause a significant impact. The Chocolate-Mule Mountains HMA is approximately 10 miles south of the project site. The Project will result in a finding of no impact to the HMA.

5.6.4.3 Compatibility with Plans and Policies

The Project is consistent with policies and goals set forth in the RCGP and Palo Verde Valley Area Plan. The Project will be consistent with Ordinance 348 as indicated previously. Compatibility with Plans and Policies is described in Table 5.6-2 and Table 5.6-3. The Project's conformity with these policies and goals is summarized in Table 5.6-8 below.

Table 5.6-8
Use Conformity with County Plans, Policies and Goals

Riverside County General Plan 2008		
Multi-Purpose Open Space Element Policy Open Space (OS) 15.2	Development of renewable resources should be encouraged.	Yes: The Project will provide 750 MW of renewable solar energy.
Land Use Element Policy Land Use (LU) 6.1	Requires land uses to develop in accordance with the Riverside County General Plan (RCGP) and area plans to ensure compatibility and minimize impacts.	Yes: The Project is compatible with the RCGP and the Palo Verde Valley Area Plan.
Land Use Element Policy LU 8.2	Requires that development protect environmental resources by compliance with the Multipurpose Open Space Element of the RCGP and federal and state regulations such as California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Clean Air Act, and the Clean Water Act.	Yes: The Project will comply with NEPA and CEQA and all necessary compliance measures.
Land Use Element Policy LU 9.1	Requires new development contribute their fair share to fund infrastructure and public facilities such as police and fire facilities.	Yes: The Project is not anticipated to cause additional impacts to public facilities. See Section 5.10, Socioeconomics, for further analysis.
Land Use Element Policy LU 14.7	Ensures that no structures or activities encroach upon or adversely affect the use of navigable airspace.	Yes: The Project will require Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) review and compliance prior to approval.
Land Use Element Policy LU 16.4	Encourages conservation of productive agricultural lands. Preserve prime agricultural lands for high-value crop production.	Yes: The Project is not anticipated to impact Farmlands.
Palo Verde Valley Area Plan 2003		
Agricultural Preservation Policy Palo Verde Valley Area Plan (PVVAP) 4.1	Protects farmland and agricultural resources in the Palo Verde Valley through adherence to the Agriculture sections of the RCGP Multipurpose Open Space and Land Use Elements.	Yes: The Project is not anticipated to impact Farmlands.
Recreational Vehicle Development Policy PVVAP 5.4	Allows remote recreational vehicle developments within the following land use designations: Very Low Density Residential, Estate Density Residential, Rural Residential, Rural Mountainous, Rural Desert, Open Space-Recreation, and Open Space-Rural.	Yes: The Project will not close open recreational vehicle routes of travel.
Trails and Bikeway System Policy PVVAP 9.1	Develops a system of multi-purpose trails that enhances the Colorado River's recreational values and connects with the adopted trails system of Riverside County.	Yes: The Project will not close or neither remove trails, nor will it impact trails near the Colorado Rivers.
Scenic Highways Policy PVVAP 10.1	Protects the scenic highways in the Palo Verde Valley planning area from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of adjacent properties in accordance with the Scenic Corridors sections of the RCGP Land Use, Multipurpose Open Space, and Circulation Elements.	Yes: The Project may have views from County eligible scenic highways 95 and I-10.

Table 5.6-8
Use Conformity with County Plans, Policies and Goals

Riverside County General Plan 2008		
Scenic Highways Policy PVVAP 10.2	Encourages the designation of Interstate 10 and U.S. Highway 95 as eligible and subsequently Official Scenic Highways in accordance with the California State Scenic Highway Program.	Yes: The Project may have views from County eligible scenic highways 95 and Interstate 10.
Riverside County Zoning Ordinance (Ordinance 348)		
Controlled Development (W-2-10)	This zone permits upon Conditional Use Permit (CUP), "public utility uses, such as structures and installations necessary to the conservation and development of water such as dams, pipelines, water conduits, tanks, reservoirs, wells and the necessary pumping and water production facilities; structures and the pertinent facilities necessary and incidental to the development and transmission of electrical power and gas such as hydroelectric power plants, booster or conversion plants, transmission lines, pipe lines and the like; and telephone transmission lines, telephone exchanges and offices."	Yes: The Project is an allowable use under this zone. However, a height variance is necessary for proposed Project structures that exceed 105 feet.
Natural Assets (N-A)	Uses with a CUP: "recreational vehicle parks, hotels, extraction and bottling of well water, riding academies, golf courses and appurtenant facilities, fishing lakes, camps, guest ranch."	Yes, a change of zone is currently pending with the County.

Sources: Riverside County, 2008; Palo Verde, 2003; Riverside, 2009.

CEQA = California Environmental Quality Act
CUP = Conditional Use Permit
FAA = Federal Aviation Administration
LU = Land Use
N-A = Natural Assest
NEPA = National Environmental Policy Act
OS = Open Space
PVVAP = Palo Verde Valley Area Plan
RCGP = Riverside County General Plan

5.6.5 Cumulative Effects

According to CEQA Guidelines (§15355), "Cumulative impacts" refers to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects. The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment that results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

Cumulative land use impacts could occur if the development of the Project and other related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects impact any of the land uses described in Section 5.6.3.3 or any applicable land use pans and policies.

5.6.5.1 Current Setting

The project site is located south of Interstate 10 and south and west of BLM-designated energy corridors. This area is generally recognized as suitable for solar energy development, based in part on the presence/proximity of necessary infrastructure (transmission lines and highways), solarity of the desert region, and relatively flat topography. This area of eastern Riverside County is primarily characterized by existing industrial and commercial development, agriculture, and major infrastructure.

5.6.5.2 Past, Present, or Reasonably Foreseeable Future Projects

The past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future projects within the vicinity of the Project are detailed in Table 5.17-4. The geographic scope for Section 5.17, Cumulative Impacts, is generally inclusive of all of eastern Riverside County. The impacts from the Project on land use are analyzed in Section 5.17.5.6 and summarized below.

5.6.5.3 Summary of Cumulative Effects

The Project will be consistent with applicable plans and policies, will not physically divide an established community, and will not significantly impact the land uses described above in Section 5.6.3.3. Therefore, the Project will not result in significant land use impacts. In addition, the Project will not convert farmland to nonagricultural uses or significantly impact farmland. Therefore, the Project will not result in a cumulative farmland impact. Furthermore, it is expected that reasonably foreseeable projects considered in Section 5.17 and Table 5.17-4 will also not contribute to a significant impact on land use in the vicinity of the Project because each of these projects will receive discretionary approvals that could not be issued without a determination of consistency with applicable plans and policies, including policies pertaining to farmland, development, and habitat conservation.

5.6.6 Mitigation Measures

The following measures are proposed to mitigate the Project's land use impacts:

5.6.6.1 LAND-1

Prior to construction, the Applicant will obtain and provide to the CEC's Compliance Project Manager a copy of the BLM ROW Grant and an amendment to the CDCA Plan to comply with BLM's CDCA Plan/NECO Plan and Title 43 CFR §§ 2800 and 2880.

5.6.7 Involved Agencies and Agency Contacts

The agencies with jurisdiction to process land use entitlements for the Project are listed in Table 5.6-9.

Table 5.6-9
Agency Contacts

Agency Contact	Phone/E-mail	Permit/Issue
Carolyn Syms-Luna Planning Director County of Riverside 4080 Lemon Street, 9th Floor P.O. Box 1409 Riverside, CA 92501	(951) 955-3200 khernand@rctlma.org	Compatibility with County land use requirements (zoning, parcel merger, height variance, and land use plans and policies)
Cedric Perry Bureau of Land Management 22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos Moreno Valley, CA 92553-9046	cperry@blm.gov (951) 697-5200	Right-of-Way Application
Cedric Perry Bureau of Land Management 22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos Moreno Valley, CA 92553-9046	cperry@blm.gov (951) 697-5200	California Desert Conservation Area Plan Amendment
Pierre Martinez California Energy Commission 1516 Ninth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-5512	PMartine@energy.state.ca.us (916) 651-3765	Application for Certification
Karen McDonald Federal Aviation Administration Western-Pacific Regional Office 15000 Aviation Blvd. Lawndale, CA 90260	Karen.mcdonald@faa.gov (310) 725-6557	Federal Aviation Administration Determination

5.6.8 Permits Required and Permit Schedule

BLM is the lead agency responsible for the federal land use decisions for the Project. Land use decisions will be consistent with the CDCA Plan and the NECO Plan. A ROW grant from BLM will be required for the Project. BLM is responsible for the approval or denial of a ROW grant application based on review of environmental impacts and mitigation requirements, and existing land use information for the Project.

The Project is proposed to be constructed partly on private parcels under the jurisdiction of Riverside County. Figure 5.6-5 (from the Change of Zone Application filed with the County of Riverside) depicts the parcel numbers and locations requiring a zone change. These parcels will be merged prior to construction of the Project, so that the Project will be located on a single legal parcel.

The legal description of the private lands under lease from MWD on which the Project will be located is:

All of Section 28 and portions of Sections 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 29, 33, and 34, Township 08 South, Range 21 East, San Bernardino Meridian, Riverside County, California.

Some permits such as encroachment permits, zone change, and construction and building permits might be required for Project components on private lands. County land use issues will be addressed as part of the CEC licensing process.

Land use permits and related schedule are indicated in Table 5.6-10 below.

Table 5.6-10
Applicable Permits

Permit	Agency	Schedule
Right-of-Way (ROW) Grant	Bureau of Land Management	Approximately 60 calendar days following NEPA review
California Desert Conservation Area Plan Amendment		Prior to construction
Change of Zone	Riverside County	Prior to construction
County ROW Encroachment Permit		Prior to construction
Land Use Application-Parcel Merger		Prior to construction
Encroachment Permit	California Department of Transportation	Prior to construction

ROW = Right-Of-Way

5.6.9 References

Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 1980. U.S. Bureau of Land Management - California Desert Conservation Plan 1980, as amended

BLM, 1983, Manual 8560 (Management of Designated Wilderness Areas) http://www.blm.gov/ca/pa/wilderness/wilderness_pdfs/wa/8560_-_MODWA.pdf

BLM, 1986, Handbook H-8410-1 (Visual Resource Inventory) http://www.blm.gov/nstc/VRM/8410.html Accessed on July 28, 2011.

BLM, 1988, Handbook H-8560-1 (Management of Designated Wilderness Areas) http://www.blm.gov/ca/pa/wilderness/wilderness_pdfs/wa/ManagementofDesignat.pdf.

BLM, 1995, Principles For Wilderness Management In The California Desert http://www.blm.gov/ca/pa/wilderness/wilderness_pdfs/wa/PrinciplesforWildern.pdf

BLM, 2002, Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan

BLM, 2005, Land Use Planning Handbook.

BLM, August, 2010. Programmatic Environmental Assessment, Abandoned Mine Lands Remediation and Closure Process. http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/ca/pdf/cdd/aml.Par.12989.File.dat/Draft_AML_PEA_Final_for_Pub%5B1%5D.pdf

BLM, 2011a. Learning Landscapes, Bradshaw Trail. http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/res/Education_in_BLM/Learning_Landscapes/For_Travelers/go/scenic_drives/bradshaw_trail.print.html. Accessed on July 26, 2011.

BLM, 2011b. Abandoned Mine Lands Program (Inventory) http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/Abandoned_Mine_Lands.html. Accessed on July 27, 2011).

BLM, 2011c. Oxbow Campground (Information). http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/recreation/camping/dev_camps/oxbow.html, Accessed on July 31, 2011.

BLM, 2011d. Land & Mineral Legacy Rehost 2000 System. http://www.blm.gov/lr2000/. Accessed on September 19, 2011.

Blythe, 2007, City of Blythe General Plan 2025 (Parks and Recreation Element).

California Department of Conservation (CDC), 2008. Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.

CDC Office of Mine Reclamation, 1991. http://www.conservation.ca.gov/omr/Pages/Index.aspx. Accessed on July 28, 2011.

Imperial County. 2006. Imperial County General Plan, Imperial County, California.

Imperial County. 2008. County of Imperial Codified Ordinances, Title 9, Land Use Code.

Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID), 2011 (History) http://www.pvid.org/history.aspx. Accessed on July 15, 2011.

PVID, 2010 Crop Report. http://www.pvid.org/1new-page.aspx. Accessed on July 15, 2011.

Palo Verde Valley Area Plan, 2003, updated 2008. http://www.rctlma.org/genplan/general_plan_2008/area_plan_vol_2/Palo_Verde_Valley_Area_Plan_2008.pdf

Riverside County General Plan, 2003. http://www.rctlma.org/genplan/default.aspx

Riverside County General Plan Update, 2008. http://www.rctlma.org/genplan/general_plan_2008/general_plan_2008.aspx

Riverside County Land Information System, 2011. http://www.rctlma.org/gis/content/apps_reports.aspx

Riverside County Zoning Ordinance 348, 2009. Amended March 12. http://www.rctlma.org/planning/content/zoning/ordnance/ord348_toc.html

Riverside County, July 14, 2011. Communication between Applicant and Bob Lyman, Regional Office Manager for County's Transportation and Land Management Agency, and Ken Baez, Principal Planner.

Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District, 2011. Riverside County Parks (Information) http://www.rivcoparks.org/. Accessed on July 31, 2011.

U.S Census Bureau, 2010 Census. Population for Palo Verde accessed on July 31, 2010: http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_SF1_P1&prodType=table; Population for Ripley accessed on July 31, 2011: http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_SF1_P1&prodType=table; Population for Blythe accessed on July 31, 2010: http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_SF1_P1&prodType=table.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2011. Cibola National Wildlife Refuge (Overview) http://www.fws.gov/refuges/profiles/index.cfm?id=22540. Accessed on July 27, 2011.

Wilderness.net 2011a, Palo Verde Mountains Wilderness Fact Sheet. http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=NWPS&sec=wildView&WID=442. Accessed on July 28, 2011.

Wilderness.net 2011b, Palen-McCoy Wilderness Fact Sheet. http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=NWPS&sec=wildView&WID=441. Accessed on July 28, 2011.

Wilderness.net, 2011c, Big Maria Mountains Wilderness Fact Sheet. http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=NWPS&sec=wildView&WID=44. Accessed on July 9, 2011.

Wilderness.net 2011d, Little Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness Fact Sheet. http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=NWPS&sec=wildView&WID=320. Accessed on July 9, 2010.

Wildernet, 2011, Midland Long Term Visitor Area, Coon Hollow Campground, and Wiley's Well Campground. http://activities.wildernet.com/pages/rectype.cfm?areaID=CABLPS&rectype=Camping&CU_ID=1. Accessed on July 28, 2011.

Adequacy Issue: Adequate ____ Inadequate ____ DATA ADEQUACY WORKSHEET Revision No. 0 Date ____

Technical Area: **Land Use** Project: ____ Technical Staff: ____

Project Manager: ____ Docket: ____ Technical Senior: ____

SITING REGULATIONS	INFORMATION	AFC PAGE NUMBER AND SECTION NUMBER	ADEQUATE YES OR NO	INFORMATION REQUIRED TO MAKE AFC CONFORM WITH REGULATIONS
Appendix B (g) (1)	...provide a discussion of the existing site conditions, the expected direct, indirect and cumulative impacts due to the construction, operation and maintenance of the project, the measures proposed to mitigate adverse environmental impacts of the project, the effectiveness of the proposed measures, and any monitoring plans proposed to verify the effectiveness of the mitigation.	Section 5.6.3 pages 5.6-13 to 5.6-27; Section 5.6.5 pages 5.6-32 to 5.6-33; Section 5.6.6 page 5.6-33.		
Appendix B (g) (3) (A)	A discussion of existing land uses and current zoning at the site, land uses and land use patterns within one mile of the proposed site and within one-quarter mile of any project-related linear facilities. Include:	Section 5.6.2.3 pages 5.6-10 to 5.6-13; Section 5.6.3 pages 5.6-13 to 5.6-27; Section 5.6.3.2, pages 5.6-14 to 5.6-15; Section 5.6.3.4, pages 5.6-26 to 5.6-27.		
Appendix B (g) (3) (A) (i)	An identification of residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, scenic, agricultural, natural resource protection, natural resource extraction, educational, religious, cultural, and historic areas, and any other area of unique land uses;	Section 5.6.3 pages 5.6-15 to 5.6-25.		
Appendix B (g) (3) (A) (ii)	A discussion of any recent or proposed zone changes and/or general plan amendments; noticed by an elected or appointed board, commission, or similar entity at the state or local level;	Section 5.6.2.3, pages 5.6-10 to 5.6-13; Section 5.6.3.4, pages 5.6-26 to 5.6-27; Section 5.6.4.1, page 5.6-28; Section 5.6.8, pages 5.6-34 to 5.6-35.		
Appendix B (g) (3) (A) (iii)	Identification of all discretionary reviews by public agencies initiated or completed within 18 months prior to filing the application for those changes or developments identified in subsection (g)(3)(A)(ii); and	Section 5.6.3.4, pages 5.6-26 to 5.6-27; Section 5.6.3.5, page 5.6-27.		

Adequacy Issue: Adequate ____ Inadequate ____ DATA ADEQUACY WORKSHEET Revision No. 0 Date ____

Technical Area: **Land Use** Project: ____ Technical Staff: ____

Project Manager: ____ Docket: ____ Technical Senior: ____

SITING REGULATIONS	INFORMATION	AFC PAGE NUMBER AND SECTION NUMBER	ADEQUATE YES OR NO	INFORMATION REQUIRED TO MAKE AFC CONFORM WITH REGULATIONS
Appendix B (g) (3) (A) (iv)	Legible maps of the areas identified in subsection (g)(3)(A) potentially affected by the project, on which existing land uses, jurisdictional boundaries, general plan designations, specific plan designations, and zoning have been clearly delineated.	Figures 5.6-1 through 5.6-5.		
Appendix B (g) (3) (B)	A discussion of the compatibility of the proposed project with present and expected land uses, and conformity with any long-range land use plans adopted by any federal, state, regional, or local planning agencies. The discussion shall identify the need, if any, for land use decisions by another public agency or as part of the commission's decision that would be necessary to make the project conform to adopted federal, state, regional, or local coastal plans, land use plans, or zoning ordinances. Examples of land use decisions include: general plan amendments, zoning changes, lot line adjustments, parcel mergers, subdivision maps, Agricultural Land Conservation Act contracts cancellation, and Airport Land Use Plan consistency determinations.	Section 5.6.2 pages 5.6-2 to 5.6-13; Section 5.6.3.2, pages 5.6-14 to 5.6-15; Section 5.6.4 pages 5.6-27 to 5.6-32; Section 5.6.4.1 pages 5.6-27 to 5.6-29; Section 5.6.4.2, page 5.6-30; Section 5.6.4.3, pages 5.6-30 to 5.6-32; Table 5.6-10, page 5.6-35.		
Appendix B (g) (3) (C)	A discussion of the legal status of the parcel(s) on which the project is proposed. If the proposed site consists of more than one legal parcel, describe the method and timetable for merging or otherwise combining those parcels so that the proposed project, excluding linears and temporary laydown or staging area, will be located on a single legal parcel. The merger need not occur prior to a decision on the Application but must be completed prior to the start of construction.	Section 5.6.3.4, pages 5.6-26 to 5.6-27; Section 5.6.8, page 5.6-34; Figure 5.6-5.		

Adequacy Issue: Adequate ____ Inadequate ____ DATA ADEQUACY WORKSHEET Revision No. 0 Date ____

Technical Area: **Land Use** Project: ____ Technical Staff: ____

Project Manager: ____ Docket: ____ Technical Senior: ____

SITING REGULATIONS	INFORMATION	AFC PAGE NUMBER AND SECTION NUMBER	ADEQUATE YES OR NO	INFORMATION REQUIRED TO MAKE AFC CONFORM WITH REGULATIONS
Appendix B (g) (3) (D)	A map at a scale of 1:24,000 and written description of agricultural land uses found within all areas affected by the proposed project. The description shall include:	Section 5.6.3.3 pages 5.6-21 to 5.6-24; Section 5.6.2.2, page 5.6-9; Section 5.6.4.1, pages 5.6-28 to 5.6-30; Section 5.6.4.2, page 5.6-30; Figure 5.6-3. *** Note: Scale modified to 1:72,000 due to size of Project and extent of linears.**		
Appendix B (g) (3) (D) (i)	Crop types, irrigation systems, and any special cultivation practices;	Section 5.6.3.3 pages 5.6-21 to 5.6-24.		
Appendix B (g) (3) (D) (ii)	Whether farmland affected by the project is prime, of statewide importance, or unique as defined by the California Department of Conservation; and	Section 5.6.3.3 pages 5.6-21 to 5.6-24; Section 5.6.4.1, pages 5.6-27 to 5.629; Figure 5.6-3.		
Appendix B (g) (3) (D) (iii)	Direct, indirect, and cumulative effects on agricultural land uses. If the proposed site or related facilities are subject to an Agricultural Land Conservation contract, provide a written copy and a discussion of the status of the expiration or canceling of such contract.	Section 5.6.4.1, pages 5.6-27 to 5.6-29; Section 5.6.4.2, page 5.6-30; Section 5.6.5, pages 5.6-32 to 5.6-33; Figure 5.6-3.		
Appendix B (i) (1) (A)	Tables which identify laws, regulations, ordinances, standards, adopted local, regional, state, and federal land use plans, leases, and permits applicable to the proposed project, and a discussion of the applicability of, and conformance with each. The table or matrix shall explicitly reference pages in the application wherein conformance, with each law or standard during both construction and operation of the facility is discussed; and	Table 5.6-1 pages 5.6-2 to 5.6-3; Section 5.6.2 pages 5.6-2 to 5.6-13; Section 5.6.4.3 pages 5.6-30 to 5.6-32; Table 5.6.8 pages 5.6-30 to 5.6-32.		

Adequacy Issue: Adequate ____ Inadequate ____ DATA ADEQUACY WORKSHEET Revision No. 0 Date ____

Technical Area: **Land Use** Project: ____ Technical Staff: ____

Project Manager: ____ Docket: ____ Technical Senior: ____

SITING REGULATIONS	INFORMATION	AFC PAGE NUMBER AND SECTION NUMBER	ADEQUATE YES OR NO	INFORMATION REQUIRED TO MAKE AFC CONFORM WITH REGULATIONS
Appendix B (i) (1) (B)	Tables which identify each agency with jurisdiction to issue applicable permits, leases, and approvals or to enforce identified laws, regulations, standards, and adopted local, regional, state and federal land use plans, and agencies which would have permit approval or enforcement authority, but for the exclusive authority of the commission to certify sites and related facilities.	Table 5.6-9, pages 35.6-3 to 5.6-34; Table 5.6-10, page 5.6-35.		
Appendix B (i) (2)	The name, title, phone number, address (required), and email address (if known), of an official who was contacted within each agency, and also provide the name of the official who will serve as a contact person for Commission staff.	Table 5.6-9, pages 5.6-33-5.6-34.		
Appendix B (i) (3)	A schedule indicating when permits outside the authority of the commission will be obtained and the steps the applicant has taken or plans to take to obtain such permits.	Section 5.6.3.4, pages 5.6-26 to 5.6-27; Section 5.6.8, pages 5.6-34 to 5.6-35; Table 5.6-10 page 5.6-35.		

LAND USE
RIO MESA SOLAR
ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITY

Southern California Edison 161kV

Southern California Edison - 500 kV

Buck- Julian Hinds - 220kV

Imperial Irrigation District - 161kV / W. Area Power Administration - 161kV

Southern California Edison - 500kV

Bradshaw Trail

Hodges Drain

W. Area Power Administration 161kV

Existing Gas line

Blythe Airport

Palo Verde

Riverside County

Imperial County

OS-RUR

AG

CITY

RR

PF

BP

CR

CT

FWY

LI

RC-LDR

RC-EDR

MDR

Project Features

- Project Site (approx. 7,529 ac.; approx. acres: 5,604 MWD, 1,615 BLM, 310 Private)
- Private Land Owned by MWD (approx. 6,741 ac.)
- Bradshaw Trail within Project Site (2.15 miles, 200ft. corridor, 100ft. from c/l, 53 ac.)
- Proposed Bradshaw Trail Re-route (5.2 miles)
- Bradshaw Trail Off Site
- Existing Gas Line (50 ft. easement corridor, gas line is off-centered, 12.5 ft. west of eastern easement boundary)
- 34th Ave Access Road Corridor to be Improved (1.02 mile, 200ft. corridor, 100ft. from c/l, 25 ac.)
- Bradshaw Trail Access Road Corridor to be Improved 2.96 miles, 200ft. corridor, 100ft. from c/l, 71 ac.)

Proposed 33kV Service Line

- SCE 33kV Proposed Service (Existing ROW overbuild) (approx. 5.1 miles, 200 ft. corridor, 100 ft. from c/l, 119 ac.)
- SCE 33kV Proposed Service (New ROW) (approx. 3.12 miles, 200 ft. corridor, 100 ft. c/l, 78 ac. total)

Proposed Project 230kV Transmission Line Corridor - (approx. 10 mi)

- Proposed Project 230kV Transmission Line Centerline (approx. 10 mi offsite)
- Proposed Re-route of Imperial Irrigation District 161 kV (approx. 2.22 mi)
- ROW Corridor approx. 1,228 ac. (1,300 ft. corridor, 650ft. from c/l; approx acres: 841 BLM, 387 Private)
- Colorado River Substation (88 ac.)
- Colorado River Substation Gen-tie Area (approx. 124 ac.)

Existing Substations

- 161 kV
- 230 kV
- 500 kV

Existing Transmission Lines

- 161 kV
- 220 kV
- 500 kV
- City/Town
- County Boundary

Note: Project is within Palo Verde Valley Area Plan.

- Land Use Study Area (One Mile Project Site, 0.25 Mile All Linears)

BLM Multiple Use Classification

- Limited (approx. 1473 ac. on Project Site, and 37 ac. in Gen-tie Corridor)
- Moderate (approx. 124 ac. on Project Site, and 795 ac. in Gen-tie Corridor)

Riverside County Landuse

- Agriculture (AG)
- Business Park (BP)
- City (CITY)
- Commercial Retail (CR)
- Commercial Tourist (CT)
- Freeway (FWY)
- Light Industrial (LI)
- Medium Density Residential (MDR)
- Open Space Rural (OS-RUR)
- Public Facilities (PF)
- Rural Community - Estate Density Residential (RC-EDR)
- Rural Community - Low Density Residential (RC-LDR)
- Rural Residential (RR)

SOURCES: Project Site, Transmission Line Centerline, Transmission Line Corridor, MWD Land, Private Lands, Existing Gasline (VTN, 3-15-2011). CRS Substation, Potential Gen-tie Area (Aspen, 3-11-2011). Landuse (Counties of Riverside, 2011). Aerial Imagery (NAIP, 5-25-2009). County, State Boundaries, Roads, Bradshaw Trail (ESRI, 2007). Land Ownership (BLM, 3-03-2011). Existing Transmission Lines, Existing Substations (Platts, 2009). PLSS Sections, Multiple use classification (BLM, 12-11-2007). Improved Access Roads, Drainage Crossing Upgrade (URS, 3-18-2011). Bradshaw Trail Re-route, Imperial Irrigation District Re-route (URS, 6-2011). 33kV Proposed Service Transmission Lines (BSE, 2011).

URS

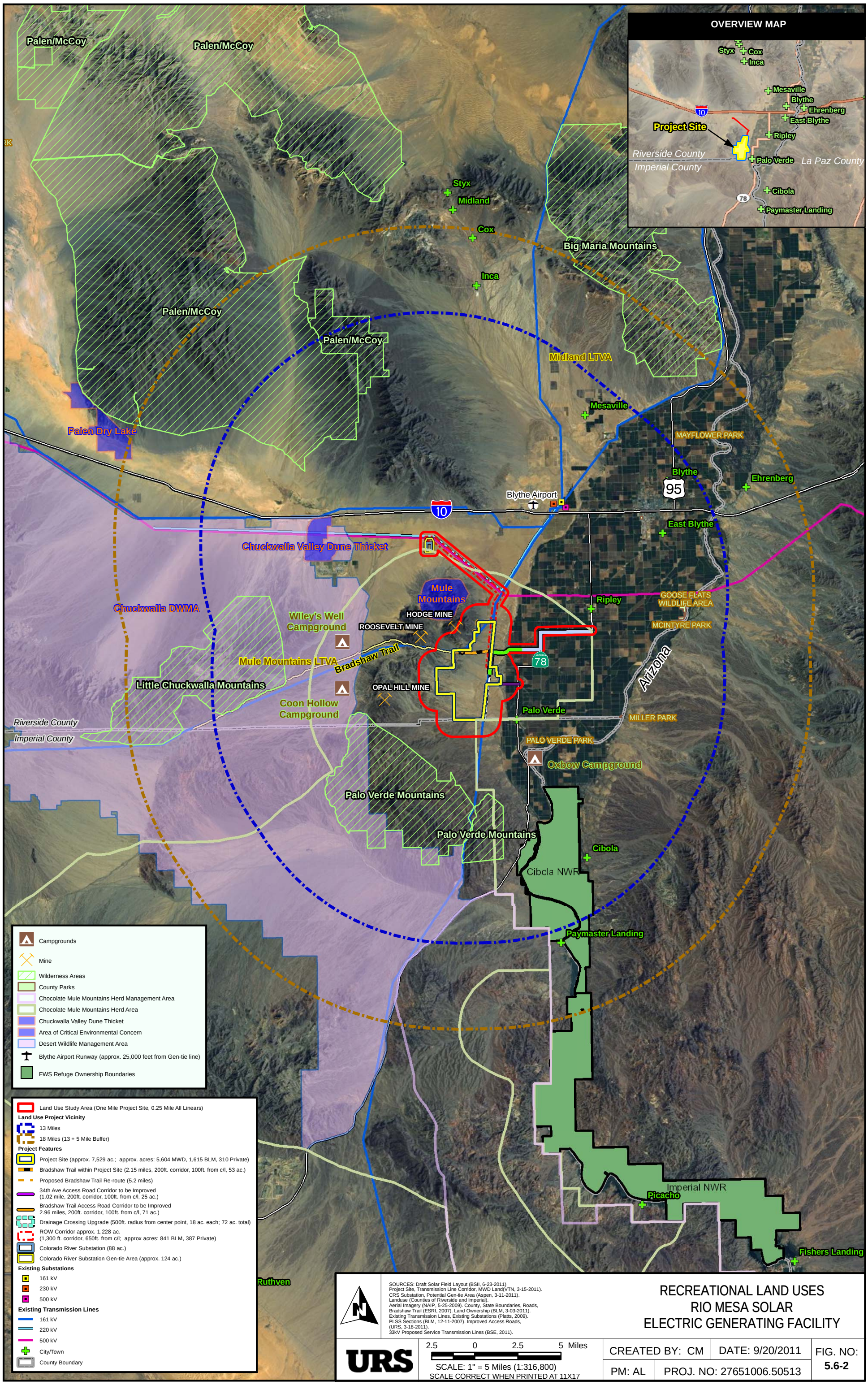
0.5 0 0.5 1 Miles

SCALE: 1" = 1 Mile (1:63,360)

SCALE CORRECT WHEN PRINTED AT 11X17

CREATED BY: CM	DATE: 9/19/2011	FIG. NO: 5.6-1
PM: AL	PROJ. NO: 27651006.50513	

Path: G:\gis\projects\1577\27651002\map_docs\mxd\AFC\LandUse\Landuse.mxd, paul_moreno, 9/19/2011, 12:14:45 PM



SOURCES: Draft Solar Field Layout (BSII, 6-23-2011)
Project Site, Transmission Line Corridor, MWD Land(VTN, 3-15-2011).
CRS Substation, Potential Gen-tie Area (Aspen, 3-11-2011).
Landuse (Counties of Riverside and Imperial).
Aerial Imagery (NAIP, 5-25-2009). County, State Boundaries, Roads,
Bradshaw Trail (ESRI, 2007). Land Ownership (BLM, 3-03-2011).
Existing Transmission Lines, Existing Substations (Platts, 2009).
PLSS Sections (BLM, 12-11-2007). Improved Access Roads,
(URS, 3-18-2011).
33kV Proposed Service Transmission Lines (BSE, 2011).

RECREATIONAL LAND USES
RIO MESA SOLAR
ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITY

URS

2.5 0 2.5 5 Miles

SCALE: 1" = 5 Miles (1:316,800)
SCALE CORRECT WHEN PRINTED AT 11X17

CREATED BY: CM	DATE: 9/20/2011	FIG. NO: 5.6-2
PM: AL	PROJ. NO: 27651006.50513	

Path: G:\gis\projects\1577\27651002\map_docs\mxd\AFC\LandUse\Recreational_Land_Uses.mxd, paul_moreno, 9/20/2011, 11:09:45 AM

Project Study Area (One Mile Project Site, 0.25 Mile All Linears)

Farmland in Project Study Area

Project Site:
- Prime: 645 ac.
- State: 315 ac.
- Unique: 27 ac.
- Local: 6,271 ac.

Gen-tie Line:
- Local: 1,388 ac.

New 33kV Transmission Line
- Prime: 128 ac.
- State: 61 ac.
- Unique: 5 ac.

Existing 33kV Transmission Overbuild
- Prime: 867 ac.
- State: 767 ac.
- Unique: 15 ac.
- Williamson: 786 ac.

Farmland of Importance

- Statewide (approx. 0.3 mi. from Project Site, 0.7 mi. from Gen-tie Corridor)
- Prime (approx. 0.3 mi. from Project Site, 0.7 mi. from Gen-tie Corridor)
- Unique (approx. 0.2 mi. from Project Site, 0.9 mi. from Gen-tie Corridor)
- Local (present on Project Site and Gen-tie Corridor)

California Williamson Act

- Prime (approx. 2.3 mi. from Project Site)

Project Features

- Project Site (approx. 7,529 ac.; approx. acres: 5,604 MWD, 1,615 BLM, 310 Private)
- Private Land Owned by MWD (approx. 6,741 ac.)
- Bradshaw Trail within Project Site (2.15 miles, 200 ft. corridor, 100 ft. from c/l, 53 ac.)
- Proposed Bradshaw Trail Re-route (5.2 miles)
- Bradshaw Trail Off Site
- Existing Gas Line (50 ft. easement corridor, gas line is off-centered, 12.5 ft. west of eastern easement boundary)

Access Road Corridors to be Improved

- 34th Ave Access Road Corridor to be Improved (1.02 mile, 200 ft. corridor, 100 ft. from c/l, 25 ac.)
- Bradshaw Trail Access Road Corridor to be Improved 2.96 miles, 200 ft. corridor, 100 ft. from c/l, 71 ac.)
- Drainage Crossing Upgrade (500ft. radius from center point, 18 ac. each; 72 ac. total)

Proposed Project 230kV Transmission Line Corridor - (approx. 10 mi)

- Proposed Project 230kV Transmission Line Centerline (approx. 10 mi offsite)
- Proposed Re-route of Imperial Irrigation District 161 kV (approx. 2.22 mi)

Proposed 33kV Service Line

- SCE 33kV Proposed Service (Existing ROW overbuild) (approx. 5.1 miles, 200 ft. corridor, 100 ft. from c/l, 119 ac.)
- SCE 33kV Proposed Service (New ROW) (approx. 3.12 miles, 200 ft. corridor, 100 ft. c/l, 78 ac. total)
- ROW Corridor approx. 1,228 ac. (1,300 ft. corridor, approx 650 ft. from c/l; approx acres: 841 BLM, 387 Private)
- Colorado River Substation (88 ac.)
- Colorado River Substation Gen-tie Area (approx. 124 ac.)

Existing Substations

- 161 kV
- 230 kV
- 500 kV

Existing Transmission Lines

- 161 kV
- 220 kV
- 500 kV
- City/Town
- County Boundary

Land Ownership

- US Bureau of Land Management (2,598 ac. within project)
- Unclassified (5,749 ac. within project)

Blythe Airport
Buck- Julian Hinds - 220kV
Imperial Irrigation District - 161kV / W. Area Power Administration - 161kV
22nd Ave
Southern California Edison - 500kV
Rannells Blvd
28th Ave
Bradshaw Trail
30th Ave
Imperial Irrigation District - 161kV
Bradshaw Trail
Hodges Drain
32nd Ave
34th Ave
W. Area Power Administration 161kV
Existing Gas Line
Palo Verde
Riverside County
Imperial County
78

Path: G:\gis\projects\1577\27651002\map_docs\mxd\AFC\LandUse\Farmland.mxd, paul_moreno, 9/19/2011, 3:47:45 PM

SOURCES: Project Site, Transmission Line Centerline, Transmission Line Corridor, MWD Land, Private Lands, Existing Gasline (VTN, 3-15-2011). CRS Substation, Potential Gen-tie Area (Aspen, 3-11-2011). Aerial Imagery (NAIP, 5-25-2009). County, State Boundaries, Roads, Bradshaw Trail (ESRI, 2007). Land Ownership (BLM, 3-03-2011). Existing Transmission Lines, Existing Substations (Platts, 2009). Improved Access Roads, Drainage Crossing Upgrade (URS, 3-18-2011). Bradshaw Trail Re-route, Imperial Irrigation District Re-route (URS, 6-2011). 33kV Proposed Service Transmission Lines (BSE, 2011). Farmland (CDC, 2008).

FARMLANDS OF IMPORTANCE
RIO MESA SOLAR
ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITY

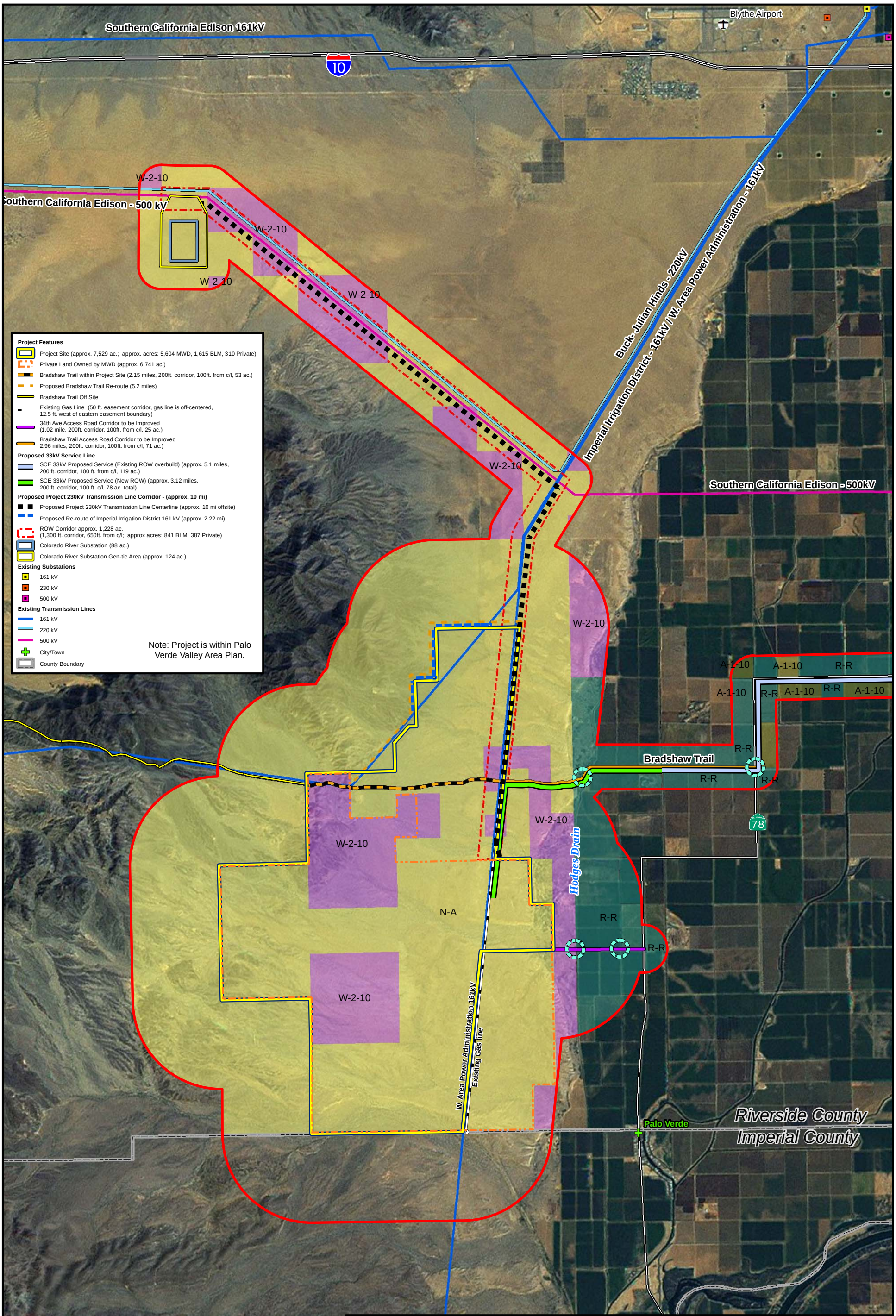
URS

3000 0 3000 6000 Feet

SCALE: 1" = 6,000' (1:72,000)

SCALE CORRECT WHEN PRINTED AT 11X17

CREATED BY: CM	DATE: 9/19/2011	FIG. NO: 5.6-3
PM: AL	PROJ. NO: 27651006.50509	



SOURCES: Project Site, Transmission Line Centerline, Transmission Line Corridor, MWD Land, Private Lands, Existing Gasline (VTN, 3-15-2011). CRS Substation, Potential Gen-tie Area (Aspen, 3-11-2011). Aerial Imagery (NAIP, 5-25-2009). County, State Boundaries, Roads, Bradshaw Trail (ESRI, 2007). Land Ownership (BLM, 3-03-2011). Existing Transmission Lines, Existing Substations (Platts, 2009). PLSS Sections (BLM, 12-11-2007). Improved Access Roads, Drainage Crossing Upgrade (URS, 3-18-2011). Bradshaw Trail Re-route, Imperial Irrigation District Re-route (URS, 6-2011). 33kV Proposed Service Transmission Lines (BSE, 2011). Zoning (County of Riverside, 2006).

ZONING
RIO MESA SOLAR
ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITY

URS

0.5 0 0.5 1 Miles

SCALE: 1" = 1 Mile (1:63,360)

SCALE CORRECT WHEN PRINTED AT 11X17

CREATED BY: CM	DATE: 9/19/2011	FIG. NO: 5.6-4
PM: AL	PROJ. NO: 27651006.50513	

Path: G:\gis\projects\15772\27651002\map_docs\mxd\AFC\LandUseZoning.mxd, paul_moreno, 9/19/2011, 1:21:33 PM

Approximate Dimensions

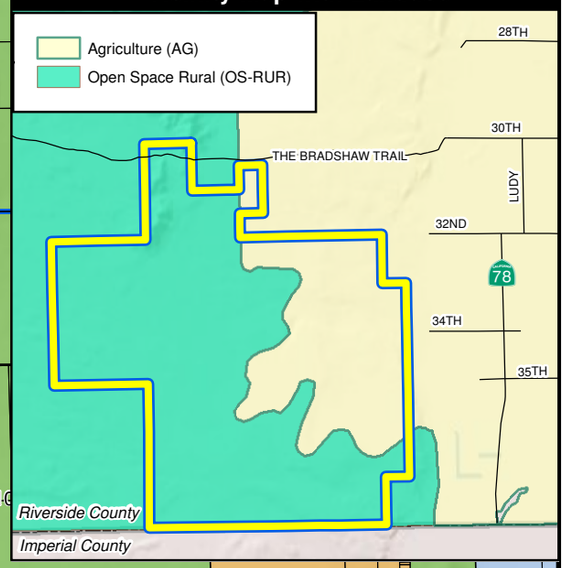
W-2-10

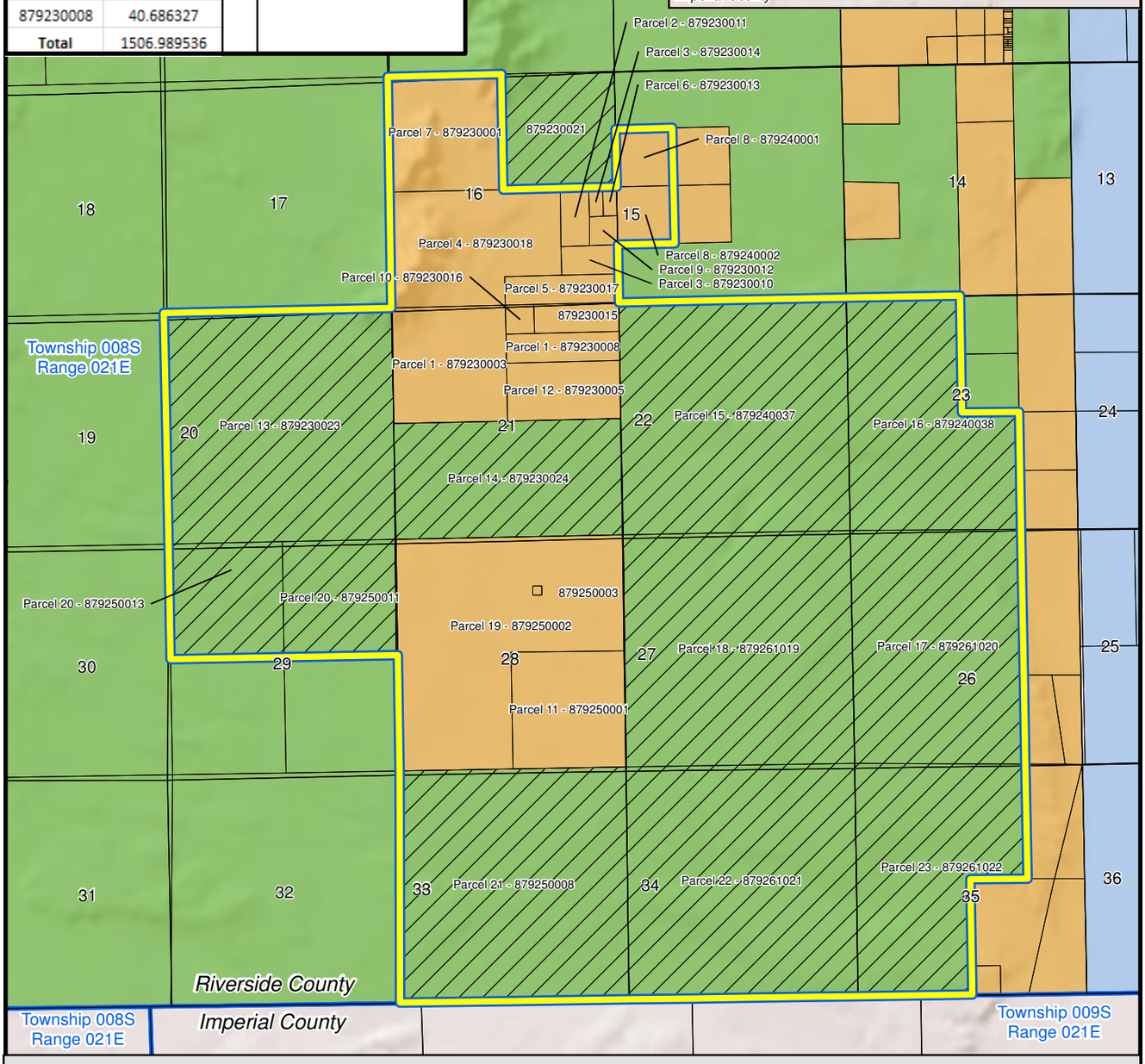
APN	Acres
879240002	40.324632
879230001	161.299207
879230011	20.607652
879250001	162.817837
879230005	81.327158
879250002	484.195086
879230018	222.367025
879240001	40.340442
879230013	5.022642
879230003	162.542055
879230010	20.247217
879230017	39.934044
879230012	10.024233
879230016	10.195105
879230014	5.058876
879230008	40.686327
Total	1506.989536

N-A

APN	Acres
879250011	161.565135
879261019	650.573133
879261020	491.092875
879261022	406.184114
879250008	650.255820
879240037	649.551403
879230021	161.270428
879261021	653.630382
879250013	161.305130
879240038	408.765690
879230023	646.726027
879230024	324.106692
Total	5365.026828

Vicinity Map with Landuse





CHANGE OF ZONE PRIMARY EXHIBIT

APPLICANT:
RIO MESA SOLAR HOLDINGS, LLC.
1999 HARRISON STREET, SUITE 2150
OAKLAND, CA 94612
PHONE: 510-550-8460

LANDOWNER:
METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
700 N. ALAMEDA ST.
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

PREPARER:
URS CORPORATION
4225 EXECUTIVE SQUARE, SUITE 1600
LA JOLLA, CA 92037
PHONE: 858-812-8283

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:
T. 8S.,R. 21E,
SEC. (ALL: 20-22, 27,28, 33,34;
PORTIONS: 15,16,23,26,29,35)
S.B.B.& M

ASSESSORS PARCEL NO.:
879230001-03, 05, 08, 10-14, 16-18, 21, 23-24
879240001, 02, 37-38
879250001, 02, 08, 11, 13
879261019-22

MISC. INFO.:
DATE EXHIBIT PREPARED: 8/03/11
UTILITIES: NONE
SCHOOL DISTRICT: PALO VERDE UNIFIED
UTILITIES PURVEYOR: NONE
FEMA: FLOOD ZONE D
THOMAS BROS.: PAGE # 412 (A2, A3), 2001

Legend

- Private Land (6742.3 Acres)
- Township
- PLSS Section Line
- Parcels Needing Change of Zone (from NA to W-2)

County of Riverside Zoning

- N-A
- R-R
- W-2-10

SOURCES: Zoning (Riverside County, 2010),
Township, Sections (BLM, 2007), County, Roads (ESRI, 2007).

URS

N

0 3,500 Feet

1 inch = 3,500 feet

FIG. NO: **5.6-5**

Path: \\S0i82-GIS-01\gis\gisprojects\577\27651002\map_docs\mxd\Zoning\8x14.mxd, diana_smith, 10/10/2011, 11:52:41 AM