APPLICANT'S SUPPLEMENTAL RESPONSE TO DATA REQUEST 16 AND 26: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING GEOLOGIC HAZARDS AND RESOURCES

In this section of Applicant's Supplemental Response to CEC Staff Data Requests 16 and 26, Applicant describes the changes to the Geologic Hazards and Resources section that will result from the changes to the Project Description relating to the removal of Unit 3. Per staff's request, Applicant uses a strike-out/underline format to identify changes to the Geologic Hazards and Resources section of the Application for Certification that will result from the changes to the Project Description.

The Geologic Hazards and Resources sub-sections that have been modified are listed in the table of contents below. If there has been no change to a Geologic Hazards and Resources sub-section relating to Applicant's Supplemental Response to Data Request 16 and 26, the section is labeled "no changes" in the table of contents below.

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5.4 GEOLOGIC HAZARDS AND RESOURCES

5.4.1 Introduction (See Section 2.1.1 for updated project description)

5.4.2 Laws, Ordinances, Regulations, and Standards

5.4.2.1 Federal LORS

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

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 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. Portions of the ~~The~~ Project gen-tie line, upgraded Bradshaw Trail access road, and 33kV construction/emergency backup power supply line ~~Rio Mesa Solar III plant and the~~ are located on lands administered and managed by the BLM. NEPA compliance is required for this~~ese~~ portion~~s~~ of the Project through preparation of a Draft and Final EIS. The Applicant anticipates that BLM may consider RMS 1 and 2 as a connected action under NEPA. BLM is also responsible for Native American consultation, including government to government consultation regarding project facilities on BLM land.

The President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) developed guidelines and procedures to assist Federal agencies with NEPA procedures so that environmental justice concerns are effectively identified and addressed. This includes guidelines for public participation, alternatives, and mitigation.

5.4.2.2 State LORS (no changes)

5.4.2.3 Local LORS (no changes)

5.4.3 Affected Environment

5.4.3.1 Regional Geology (no changes)

5.4.3.2 Local Geology (no changes)

5.4.3.3 Seismic Setting (no changes)

5.4.3.4 Geologic Resources of Recreational, Commercial, or Scientific Value

This subsection presents a discussion of the presence of geologic resources of recreational, commercial, or scientific value within two miles of the limits of the project site and linear elements.

The mineral commodities near the project site include metallic and non-metallic mineral deposits. The primary metallic mineral deposit is gold, which is restricted mostly to the Mule Mountains. The primary non-metallic deposits near the project site are aggregate (e.g., sand, gravel) and agate (e.g., semiprecious gem stones) (USGS, 2011). The Palo Verde Valley area has an aggregate production area of less than 0.5 million tons per year, as delineated by the 2006 Aggregate Availability Map (California Department of Conservation, SMGB, 2008).

Thirteen mineral resource sites within a two mile buffer of the Project site were identified by the USGS Mineral Resource Data System (USGS, 2011). Of these 13 sites, 10 are gold, one is uranium, one is agate, and one is sand and gravel. Two sites (gold), designated "Punch" and "Senate", are located within the project area, and one site, named "American Flag Mine" (gold) is within the gen-tie line right-of-way (ROW) (Figure 5.4-1). The Punch and Senate development status is designated as "occurrence" (e.g., grade and tonnage is unknown, no production has taken place and little/no activity has occurred since discovery, no economic significance.) The American Flag Mine is a "past producer" and has been closed. The other 10 sites within the two mile buffer are not producers or are past producers. The identified mineral resource sites are not considered active.

Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) are delineated in the area by the California Department of Conservation Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG, 1994). The majority of the project area is designated as MRZ-4. These are areas of no known mineral occurrences where geologic information does not rule out either the presence or absence of significant mineral resources. However, ~~a~~ portions of the Mule Mountains approximately one mile ~~near the north~~west ~~corner~~ of the main project site are~~is~~ designated MRZ-3a. MRZ-3a areas contain known mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral resource significance. Further exploration work within these areas could result in the reclassification of specific localities into more significant categories. The mineral occurrences in these~~is~~ zones are identified within the mountainous terrain~~; however~~, with the designated MRZ-3a areas extending~~s~~ east into the surrounding alluvial material; however, the MRZ-3a areas do not extend ~~and~~ onto the ~~northeast corner of the~~ project site.

There are no known oil or gas reserves identified to be present in the project vicinity (California Department of Conservation Division of Oil Gas and Geothermal Resources, 2011).

5.4.4 Environmental Analysis (no changes)

5.4.4.1 Geologic Hazards (no changes)

5.4.4.2 Other Soil Conditions (no changes)

5.4.4.3 Geologic Conditions and Topography (no changes)

5.4.4.4 Corrosion Potential (no changes)

5.4.4.5 Geologic Resources of Recreational, Commercial, and Scientific Value

~~The Project will not result in a loss of availability of a known significant mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state.~~ As discussed in Section 5.4.3.4, ~~a~~ MRZ-3a areas are

mapped ~~extends onto the north~~west ~~corner~~ of the project area, with ~~. However, the portion of the zone within the site contains alluvial deposits, while~~ the identified mineral occurrences ~~are~~ located in the Mule Mountains. It is unlikely that any similar mineral occurrences are present in the alluvial terrain on the site. Further, the Palo Verde Valley Area Plan of the RCGP (Riverside County, 2003) indicates there is no significant mineral resource within the project area. The Project will not result in a loss of availability of a known significant mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state. The Project is anticipated to have less than significant impact to geological resources.

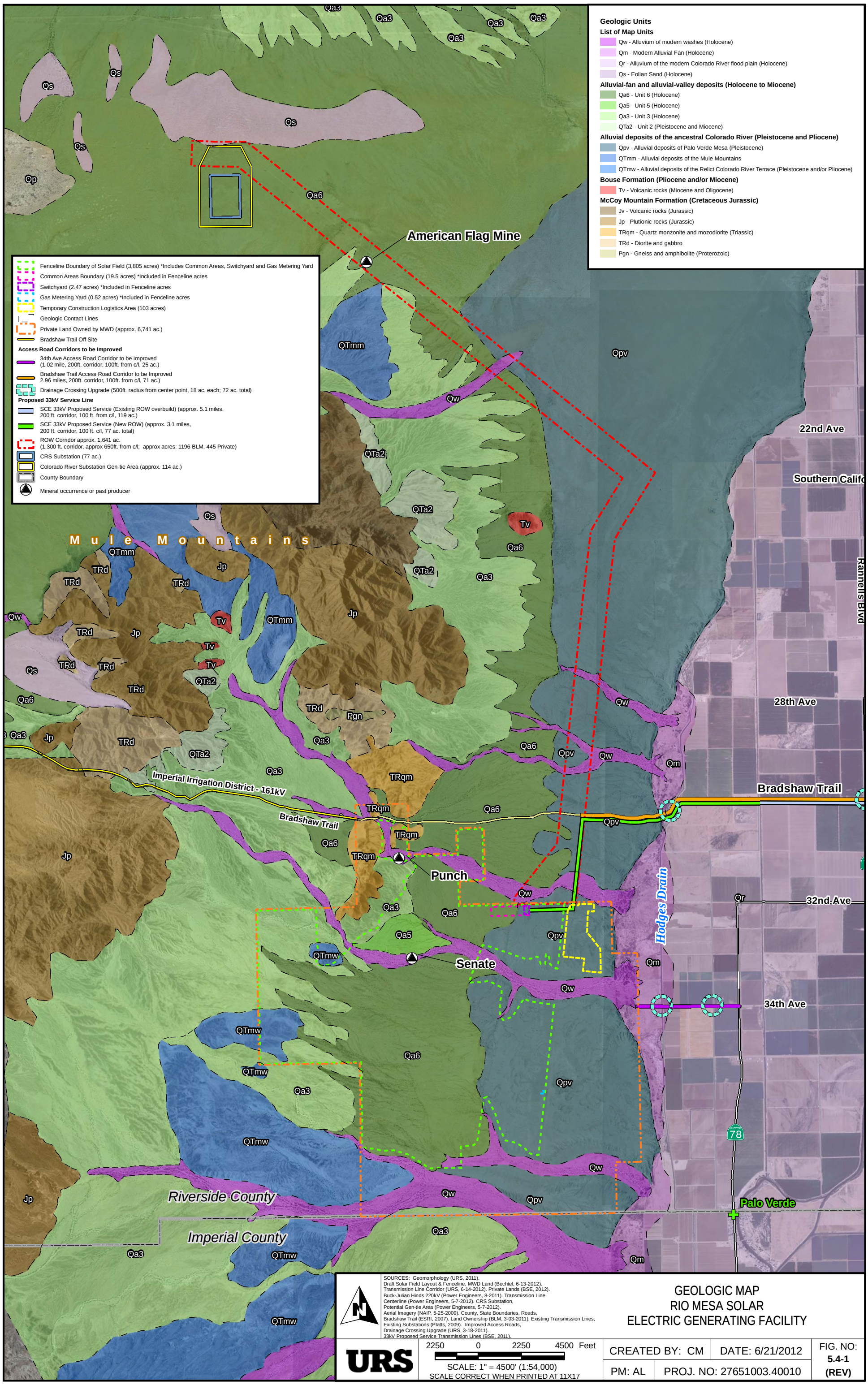
5.4.5 Cumulative Effects (no changes)

5.4.6 Mitigation Measures (no changes)

5.4.7 Involved Agencies and Agency Contacts (no changes)

5.4.8 Permits Required and Permit Schedule (no changes)

5.4.9 References (no changes)



SOURCES: Geomorphology (URS, 2011). Draft Solar Field Layout & Fenceline, MWD Land (Bechtel, 6-13-2012). Transmission Line Corridor (URS, 6-14-2012). Private Lands (BSE, 2012). Buck-Julian Hinds 220kV (Power Engineers, 8-2011). Transmission Line Centerline (Power Engineers, 5-7-2012). CRS Substation, Potential Gen-tie Area (Power Engineers, 5-7-2012). 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). 33kV Proposed Service Transmission Lines (BSE, 2011).

URS

2250 0 2250 4500 Feet

SCALE: 1" = 4500' (1:54,000)
SCALE CORRECT WHEN PRINTED AT 11X17

GEOLOGIC MAP
RIO MESA SOLAR
ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITY

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