

5.1 Environmental Information

The various subsections of Section 5.0 evaluate the Ridgecrest Solar Power Project's (RSPP or Project) environmental impacts in terms of 17 different environmental resource areas. Each resource area discussion also presents an evaluation of the potential cumulative impacts of the Project (i.e., the combined effects of the Project when considered together with other projects in the same area).

Section 5.1.1 discusses the California Energy Commission (CEC) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) joint review process and the requirements of NEPA and CEQA. Section 5.1.2 lists the 17 environmental resource areas and the order in which they are addressed. Section 5.1.3 establishes the overall cumulative scenario within which the Project is expected to occur and identifies the specific projects considered in the cumulative impact discussions in the various environmental resource areas.

Summary

This section defines projects that should be considered when evaluating possible cumulative effects of the Project. In a broad geographic context, solar and wind development projects are currently proposed on over one million acres of BLM lands in California and Nevada. The section notes that 65 solar applications covering approximately 577,000 acres have been submitted to the BLM, with all but one application occurring in the California Desert District (CDD). There are also 93 wind energy applications covering approximately 815,914 acres, with 64 of the applications, covering 462,462 acres in the CDD. Another seven solar thermal project applications covering approximately 14,434 acres are proposed on non-BLM lands throughout the State, under CEC jurisdiction.

The cumulative analysis is based on the study areas as they have been defined for each resource topic. For example, the Mohave Ground Squirrel (MGS) Conservation Area is the area used for evaluating cumulative impacts to the MGS for Biological Resources. The Last Chance Archeological District is the area of considered for Cultural Resources. Kern County is the basis for evaluating cumulative effects of solar development on Land Use and for Socioeconomics, the region encompassing Kern, Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties is the area considered. The Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Basin is the basis for the analysis of cumulative effects for Water Resources. As such, any proposed projects and indirectly regional growth within those areas have been included in the cumulative impact analysis.

For other resource topics with localized effects, cumulative analyses have been conducted for projects within a 6-mile radius of the Project. These projects include several wind monitoring projects (for which Right-of-Way [ROW] applications have been submitted to BLM), hotel construction, residential growth associated with the realignment of China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS), a Super Wal-Mart, improvements to U.S. Highway 395, and transmission line projects and corridors. Activities such as wind testing will have little effect on environmental resources. The Project with the greatest potential to result in cumulative impacts is the proposed Wal-Mart development project.

5.1.1 CEC and BLM Joint Review (CEQA and NEPA Compliance)

A "Memorandum of Understanding Between the U.S. Department of the Interior, BLM, CDD and the CEC Staff Concerning Joint Environmental Review for Solar Thermal Power Projects", as well as the "BLM & CEC Combined Processing Plan" guide the BLM's and CEC's joint process for discharging their

obligations under, respectively, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 United States Code (USC) Sections 4321-4347, and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), California Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 21000-21177. (Websites where the above materials can be found are provided below in Section 5.1.4, References).

Although CEQA and NEPA differ in several respects, they are sufficiently similar and flexible that a single environmental document can be prepared that will comply with both laws. Table 5.1-1 below summarizes and compares the content requirements for Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) under CEQA and Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) under NEPA, and identifies the corresponding sections of this Application for Certification (AFC). Please note that BLM and the CEC have specific procedures for complying with NEPA and CEQA, respectively (see Section 5.1.4, References).

Pursuant to this joint review process, this AFC, as supplemented by the CEC's Preliminary and Final Staff Assessments and Commission Decision, will serve as the CEC's CEQA-equivalent EIR. See PRC Section 21080.5, 25519(c) and Title 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15251(j).

This AFC also will serve to assist BLM in complying with its obligations as the Lead Federal agency under NEPA. NEPA requires Federal agencies to examine and disclose the environmental impacts of their proposed actions. NEPA does not mandate a particular substantive result, but simply prescribes a process for reviewing proposed Federal actions. In particular, NEPA requires Federal agencies to prepare an EIS for all "major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment." Under regulations promulgated by the Council on Environmental Quality to implement NEPA, an agency prepares a draft EIS in which it evaluates the proposed action and its environmental impacts and compares the proposed action with reasonable alternatives, including a "no action" alternative. The agency then circulates the draft EIS to the public for review and comment. These comments are responded to by the agency when they make any appropriate changes to the EIS, which is then circulated as the final EIS. Finally, the agency selects an alternative and issues a Record of Decision.

An EIS must "specify the underlying purpose and need to which the agency is responding in proposing the alternatives including the proposed action." A proposed project's purpose and need explain the nature of the problem or issue the proposed action seeks to address (i.e., the reasons the project is being considered), and set the parameters for identifying and analyzing alternatives. An agency may forego detailed analysis and/or selection of alternatives that are ineffective in meeting a project's stated purpose and need. A project's purpose and need also help ensure that the Federal agency complies with its substantive mandates. In this case, BLM must ensure that it complies with the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, 43 USC Sections 1701-1784, and in particular, FLPMA's ROW provisions at 43 USC Sections 1761-1771. Section 4.0, Alternatives, of this AFC discusses the proposed Project's objectives under CEQA and purpose and need under NEPA.

Regarding the scope of an agency's analysis of alternatives, NEPA requires an agency to "rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated." An agency's range of alternatives is evaluated under a "rule of reason" standard, which requires an agency to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. An agency's consideration of alternatives is sufficient if it considers an appropriate range of alternatives, even if it does not consider every available alternative. Section 4.0 of this AFC discusses alternatives to the proposed Project.

Table 5.1-1 Required EIR/EIS Contents and Corresponding AFC Section(s)

| Contents of an EIR (CEQA)¹ | AFC Section | Contents of an EIS (NEPA) |
|---|--|--|
| | N/A | A cover sheet enumerating the preparing agency, the project and its location, the agency contact person, a very brief abstract of the EIS, and final comment date. (Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1502.11) |
| Table of contents or index. (Guidelines [Title 14 CCR] Section 15122) | Table of contents | Table of contents and index. (Title 40 CFR 1502.10) |
| Summary of the EIR, including summaries of proposed actions, significant effects, mitigation, and alternatives. (Guidelines Section 15123) | Section 1.0, Executive Summary | A summary of the EIS, including conclusions, areas of controversy, issues raised (i.e., significant effects), and issues to be resolved (i.e., mitigation and alternatives). (Title 40 CFR 1502.12) |
| Project description, including location, physical characteristics, objectives, and permits required from other agencies. (Guidelines Section 15124) | Section 2.0, Project Description | Description of the purpose and need fulfilled by the project and its alternatives. (Title 40 CFR 1502.13) |
| Environmental setting of the project. (Guidelines Section 15125) | Sections 5.1 - 5.18, Environmental Information | A description of the affected environment. (Title 40 CFR 1502.15) |
| An analysis of the environmental consequences of the project, including: direct and indirect significant environmental effects of the proposal; cumulative effects (Guidelines Section 15130); unavoidable significant effects; proposed mitigation measures; feasible alternatives; relationship between local short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity; significant irreversible environmental changes; and growth-inducing impacts. (Guidelines Sections 15126, 15126.2, 15126.4, 15126.6) | Section 4.0, Alternatives | Discussion of a range of alternatives, including the proposed action and the no project alternative, comparatively analyzed and including mitigation measures. (Title 40 CFR 1502.14) |
| | Sections 5.1 - 5.18, Environmental Information | A description of the environmental consequences of the various alternatives, including: direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects (Title 40 CFR 1508.25); growth-inducing effects (Title 40 CFR 1508.8); unavoidable significant effects; proposed mitigation measures; relationship between local short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity; and significant irreversible environmental changes. (Title 40 CFR 1502.16) |
| Effects found not to be significant. (Guidelines Section 15128) | Sections 5.1 - 5.18, Environmental Information | |
| | Section 6.0, List of Contributors | A list of preparers. (Title 40 CFR 1502.17) |

Table 5.1-1 Required EIR/EIS Contents and Corresponding AFC Section(s)

| Contents of an EIR (CEQA)¹ | AFC Section | Contents of an EIS (NEPA) |
|---|--|---|
| Permits required from other agencies (Guidelines Section 15124) | Sections 5.1 - 5.18, Environmental Information | A list of the Federal permits required by the action. (Title 40 CFR 1502.25) |
| A list of organizations and persons consulted (Guidelines Section 15129) | Appendix K, Agency Correspondence | A list of agencies and organizations consulted. (Title 40 CFR 1502.10) |
| Appendices (Guidelines Section 15147) | Appendices A-L | Appendices. (Title 40 CFR 1502.18) |
| For a final EIR only, comments received on the draft, a list of commenters, and responses to comments, including revisions to the draft. (Guidelines Section 15132) | N/A | For a final EIS only, comments received on the draft and responses to comments, including revisions to the draft. (Title 40 CFR 1503.4) |
| ¹ For CEC AFC requirements see Appendix B to Title 20 CCR Division 2, Chapter, Article 1 (available at http://www.energy.ca.gov/2008publications/CEC-140-2008-003/CEC-140-2008-003.PDF) | | |

5.1.2 Introduction

The following 17 subsections of this AFC address the various resource areas identified in the CEC Energy Facilities Siting Regulations (Title 20, CCR, Section 1704, Appendix B):

- 5.2 Air Quality
- 5.3 Biological Resources
- 5.4 Cultural Resources
- 5.5 Geologic Hazards and Resources
- 5.6 Hazardous Materials Handling
- 5.7 Land Use
- 5.8 Noise
- 5.9 Paleontological Resources
- 5.10 Public Health
- 5.11 Socioeconomics
- 5.12 Soils
- 5.13 Traffic and Transportation
- 5.14 Transmission Line Safety and Nuisance
- 5.15 Visual Resources
- 5.16 Waste Management
- 5.17 Water Resources
- 5.18 Worker Safety

For consistency and ease of review, each of these discipline areas is presented in a standardized format under the following subheadings:

- Laws, Ordinances, Regulations and Standards (LORS) compliance (including involved agencies and agency contacts; permit requirements and permit schedules);
- Affected Environment;
- Environmental Impacts (including construction, operations, and cumulative impacts);
- Mitigation Measures; and
- References.

As mentioned earlier in the AFC, the CEC and BLM are conducting a joint review process for solar energy projects proposed on Federal lands in the California desert. This joint review will involve combined documentation that meets both CEQA and NEPA requirements. The analyses in the following sections are intended to support this combined review process by providing information that meets the requirements of the CEC power plant siting regulations and BLM's NEPA obligations.

5.1.3 Cumulative Evaluation Approach

The cumulative impacts discussion included in the impact analysis portion of each resource area (e.g., Air Quality, Noise, Biological Resources) addresses the potential cumulative impacts of the Project “when viewed in connection with the effects of probable future projects” (CEQA requirement), and/or “when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions” (NEPA requirement).

The approach to cumulative impacts of the Project considers “past” projects to be those that have completed construction and are in operation. These projects are included in the environmental baseline, described in the Affected Environment portion of each resource area. Since the Project impact analysis in each resource area assesses impacts in terms of changes to existing environmental conditions, past projects are not separately addressed in the cumulative analysis. “Present” projects include those that are currently under construction or have been fully permitted such that they are likely to be part of the existing environment when the Project has begun construction; such projects are considered appropriate for inclusion in the AFC cumulative analysis.

Past and present projects, because they already exist, are inherently part of the environmental baseline or “Affected Environment” discussed in detail in this AFC for each environmental area. For purposes of determining the Project's cumulative impacts, the impacts associated with past projects are inherent in the affected environment and represent the starting point to which impacts from the proposed Project are added, along with the reasonably foreseeable projects presented below. The area of interest for potential cumulative projects is a 6-mile radius around the Project and includes unincorporated Kern County and the City of Ridgecrest. A broader area was included when analyzing cumulative impacts in certain resource areas. For Biological Resources, the MGS Conservation Area is the area of interest for evaluating cumulative impacts to the MGS. The Project is partially in the Last Chance Archeological District and the District is the area of interest when evaluating Cultural Resources cumulative impacts. Kern County is the area of interest for evaluating cumulative effects for Land Use, and for Socioeconomics, the region of Kern, Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties is the area of interest. The Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Basin is the area of interest for Water Resources.

Cumulative impacts analysis also must consider the variable of time as well as geography. In some resource areas, the overlap in project construction schedules is particularly important because potential impacts that are driven by large overlapping construction work forces (e.g., impacts on traffic and socioeconomic conditions and infrastructure) can be significant.

5.1.3.1 Geographic Context for Cumulative Analysis

Cumulative impacts occur in a geographic context, but the area over which cumulative effects potentially would be of concern varies for different environmental resource areas. For example, noise and vehicular traffic impacts usually are evaluated in localized terms; impacts on protective services and utilities require evaluation of larger service areas; and the scope of Water Resources and Air Quality impacts can involve an entire groundwater basin and/or be affected by topographic features (e.g., mountains). In short, the scope of cumulative impacts evaluations varies spatially, with considerable variability based on the nature of the environmental resource area being considered.

The BLM has recently received a large number of utility-scale solar energy ROW applications, mainly in California, Nevada, and Arizona. The BLM has issued guidance to facilitate the processing of ROWs under the BLM's Solar Energy Policy (04/04/2007), which:

- describes options for generating electricity using solar power, and the land characteristics that make a site suitable for locating solar facilities and projects;
- identifies some of the potential environmental impacts associated with the large land requirements;
- directs BLM Field Offices to consider renewable resources — specifically solar energy development — when undertaking the land use planning process; and,
- places a priority on processing solar energy applications that are feasible and can reasonably meet environmental requirements.

The BLM and the Department of Energy (DOE) are currently preparing a Solar Energy Development Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS). The PEIS will evaluate the potential for large-scale solar development on BLM-managed lands in California, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah. In 2005, the BLM approved a comprehensive Wind Energy Development Program in western U.S. and prepared a Wind PEIS to evaluate issues associated with wind energy development.

In a broad geographic context, solar and wind development projects are currently proposed on over 1 million acres of BLM lands in California and Nevada. According to the BLM website, as of June 2009, there were a total of 65 solar applications covering approximately 577,075 acres, with a combined proposed generation of 47,480 megawatts (MW). All but one application occurs in the CDD. There are also 93 wind energy applications covering approximately 815,914 acres, with 64 of the applications covering 462,462 acres in the CDD.

Very few of these applications are for projects that would be located within the individual resource study areas affected by the Project. In fact, there are only a few wind monitoring projects and no solar projects proposed to be sited in the areas affected by the Project (described below in Section 5.1.3.7.) The proposed wind monitoring projects consist of a few meteorological (MET) towers placed on the site for a few years to test the potential for wind power generation. Thus, while the requested ROW may be large, the cumulative impact from the construction and operation of these towers when combined with the Project is insignificant. In the short-term, wind testing projects do not consume much land and future development over the short- to mid-term of these sites for wind-generated power is speculative. Although the development of this area for wind power is reasonable and foreseeable, it is not likely that all of these projects would develop into full proposals, once the data has been collected and project feasibility has been evaluated. The number of applications filed with the BLM for wind monitoring projects indicates a potential for wind power development near the Project area. However, no wind development projects have yet been proposed and thus the potential development of these wind-testing sites into wind power generation projects cannot be quantified and is not included in the analyses.

Several solar thermal projects are also proposed on private lands that are solely within the licensing jurisdiction of the CEC. As of August 2009, there were a total of seven solar thermal project applications, covering approximately 14,434 acres with a combined capacity of 2,806 MW, on non-BLM lands under CEC jurisdiction. There are also a few proposed non-renewable or hybrid combined-cycle/solar thermal power plants on private land which come under CEC jurisdiction. The closest proposed CEC solar projects include the Beacon Solar Energy Project (solar thermal, 25 miles from the RSPP site), the City of Palmdale Hybrid Power Plant (hybrid gas and solar, 70 miles from RSPP), the Victorville 2 Hybrid Power Project (hybrid gas and solar, 75 miles from RSPP), and the Stirling Energy Systems Solar One Project (solar thermal, 86 miles from RSPP).

Regional cumulative impacts could occur as a result of implementation of the Project in conjunction with solar or wind energy projects. However, solar and wind projects must successfully compete for Power Purchase Agreements with utility organizations who are working to meet their State-mandated Renewable Portfolio Standards. For this and other reasons, it is unlikely that all of the proposed projects will be built. To quote the CEC Staff in the Ivanpah Solar Electric Generation System Preliminary Staff Assessment:

“[While there is]...”a very large number of applications to BLM, it is unlikely that all of these projects will be constructed for the following reasons:

- Not all developers will develop the detailed information necessary to meet BLM and Energy Commission standards. Most of the solar projects with pending applications are proposing generation technologies that have not been implemented at large scales. As a result, preparing complete and detailed Plans of Development (POD) is difficult, and completing the required NEPA and CEQA documents is especially time-consuming.
- After approval by the appropriate Lead Agency under CEQA and NEPA, (generally the CEC and/or BLM), all permits must be obtained. The large size of these projects may result in permitting challenges related to endangered species mitigation requirements, and other issues.

5.1.3.2 Local Cumulative Projects

While the discussions in the various environmental resource areas often includes a very broad regional perspective, local cumulative impacts could occur if the Project's impacts combined with impacts of other projects located within the Project vicinity. The specific projects that are the primary focus of the local cumulative analyses are the projects identified within a six mile radius around the Project. This standard was used because it generally represents the Indian Wells Valley area, focused on the population center of the City of Ridgecrest and development associated with the City's growth, including developments associated with China Lake NAWS.

According to Kern County Planning Department staff, there are several open applications for development projects within six miles of the Project site. A search of the Kern County planning database uncovered 22 cases: three are Conditional Use Permit applications, seven are General Plan Amendments, one is a vacation (i.e. complete or partial abandonment or termination of the public right to use a street, highway, or public easement), nine are zoning classification changes, and two are zoning variances. All of these projects have either been terminated due to inactivity or are too small scale to be cumulatively considered in this analysis.

The Kern County Air Pollution Control District (KCAPCD) was contacted to obtain a list of permit applications currently being processed for development projects within six miles of the Project plant site or of projects recently permitted that have not yet been constructed. KCAPCD did not identify any recently permitted projects or applications being processed in this area.

The City of Ridgecrest Planning Department and Economic Development Department was contacted to identify development projects in the Project vicinity to include in the analysis. The City of Ridgecrest has been experiencing substantial hotel construction, especially along China Lake Boulevard. A Hampton Inn (96 units) located at North China Lake Boulevard and Ward Avenue is currently under construction. A La Quinta and Best Western, to be constructed mid-2010, will be located on North China Lake Boulevard in the northern portion of Ridgecrest. A Ramada Inn (43 units), expected to be constructed by April 2010, will be located at California Avenue and South China Lake Boulevard and a Days Inn (60 units) is proposed on Radar Avenue off of South China Lake Boulevard.

When the China Lake NAWS BRAC realignment (discussed below) study was published in 2005, there was an interest in residential development from developers. In 2006, the Ridgecrest Planning Commission approved 1,970 tract/housing lots on approximately 500 acres. As a result of the economic crisis that began in late 2008, few of these tracts have been built into housing units. The recent commitment of the Department of Defense to commit to the realignment has spurred renewed interest in residential and commercial development from developers, and the City believes new residential activity will occur within the near future. However, as of August 2009, no large residential projects have been proposed or approved by the City.

Based on discussions with the BLM Ridgecrest staff, development near the Project in the next 20 years may include wind-monitoring projects, widening of U.S. Highway 395, more power ROWs, potential geothermal development, and additional roadways. Some of these potential projects are described in greater detail below.

5.1.3.3 China Lake NAWS BRAC realignment

The growth of households and population in Ridgecrest has historically been tied to the growth of military and civilian employment at the China Lake NAWS. Population at Ridgecrest has grown and declined with NAWS employment. The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) plan of the United States Department of Defense, proposes to increase current test and training operations at the base, while achieving compliance with the California Desert Protection Act and the Sikes Act as amended. No construction or physical modifications to existing structures are proposed. Increases in operations would occur over a 5 year period.

A likely future employment growth scenario as a result of the BRAC realignment was conducted in consultation with NAWS. Increased operations are expected to generate 4,085 new jobs, including 2,100 at China Lake NAWS itself. The employment growth at NAWS is expected to generate additional housing demand in the Ridgecrest and surrounding area; and the Ridgecrest population will continue to grow in the future. Employment generated by the BRAC realignment is expected to be realized by 2011. The Department of Defense has prepared a final EIS to evaluate the potential effects of the BRAC plan. No significant impacts to any resource area were identified.

5.1.3.4 City of Ridgecrest Super Wal-Mart

Wal-Mart is proposing a new Super Wal-Mart store, along with a fueling station and two vacant out parcels, on a 28.5-acre site located immediately south of West Bowman Road and east of South China Lake Boulevard. The proposed site is located approximately five miles northeast of the Project site. The Wal-Mart would be approximately 205,000 square feet in size, with all appurtenant structures and facilities, and would offer groceries and general retail merchandise. The Wal-Mart would include a garden center, a pharmacy with two drive-through lanes, a vision and hearing care center, food service, a photo studio and photo finishing center, a banking center, a tire and lube facility, and an arcade.

A draft EIR under CEQA was published in May 2009. The project would create 85 new jobs and the project anticipates that those filling jobs will be new residents with families for a total of 226 new residents. No worker relocation or temporary housing for construction is anticipated. The 28.5-acre

conversion of undeveloped natural open space could have biological resources impacts. While no sensitive plant species were found on site, burrowing owl and evidence of desert tortoise were observed on the site and MGS has the potential to occur on the site. No archaeological or cultural resources impacts would be expected. Bowman Road will be widened from South China Lake Boulevard to Sunland Street, two new roads will be constructed, and Sunland Street will be paved from Upjohn Avenue to Dolphin Avenue.

Construction-related PM10 emissions would exceed the daily threshold and would be significant. For the Project's operational emissions, mass daily and annual impacts would be less than significant for ROC, NOx and SOx. The EIR concluded that the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts to air quality associated with CAA-defined nonattainment pollutants ROC (ozone) and PM10. These impacts would be cumulatively considerable. No construction timeframe has been given by the Applicant.

5.1.3.5 Inyokern Four-Lane Project, California Department of Transportation (CalTrans)

CalTrans is proposing to convert approximately 15.5 miles of the existing U.S. Highway 395, a two-lane conventional highway, into a four-lane, divided, controlled-access expressway. The proposed expansion is from post mile 13.9, 1.1 mile south of South China Lake Boulevard, to post mile 30.55 near Ridgecrest in Kern County. The stretch of U.S. Highway 395 adjacent to and included within the proposed Ridgecrest site boundary is included in this project.

An Initial Study with proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Environmental Assessment was circulated for a 180-day public review period on January 28, 2008. The CalTrans April 2009 "Status of Projects" report indicated that CalTrans anticipates approval of the final Environmental Document by July 1, 2010, and implementation of the Project Approval/Environmental Document by October 10, 2010. CalTrans has indicated no timeline yet exists for the expansion project and that the project will not occur for at least the next 10 years. No detailed design or engineering for the expansion has been initiated. Currently, two alternatives for the expansion have been discussed. The preferred alternative is to widen U.S. Highway 395 on the west side and the other alternative is to widen the east side. The current intersection of U.S. Highway 395 with China Lake Boulevard and Brown Road would be relocated westward and reengineered as a traffic circle. The Applicant is working with CalTrans to ensure that the design of the Project will be compatible with the proposed highway expansion.

5.1.3.6 West-Wide Energy Corridors PEIS Proposed Section 368 Energy Corridors

In response to Section 368 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the BLM, DOE, and United States Forestry Service have prepared a West-Wide Energy Corridor PEIS, which evaluated issues associated with designation of energy corridors on federal lands in 11 Western states. Section 368 energy corridors were designated in this document. As shown in the map titled "California Desert BLM District Offices, Renewable Energy Projects and Utility Corridors, Projects as of June 24, 2009" (Figure 5.1-1), the Project is located within one of these corridors, which have been designated as multi-modal. Upon finalization of the Section 368 project application process, various transmission projects could be developed near the Ridgecrest site. However, no projects have currently been proposed near the Ridgecrest site.

5.1.3.7 Local BLM Wind and Solar Projects

The BLM wind and solar projects considered in this AFC are included on Figure 5.1-1. There are three wind monitoring projects proposed within the immediate vicinity of the Project: Brewer Energy Co. (CACA 50020), Renewergy, LLC (CACA 48948), and Debehm Energy, LLC (CACA 50219). For all three projects, applications for three-year ROWs have been submitted to the BLM. No PODs have yet been submitted, so limited information regarding these projects is available. As stated above, the wind monitoring projects consist of a few MET towers placed on the site for a few years to test the potential for wind power generation, and the actual impact from these towers is negligible. Thus the potential development of these wind-testing sites into wind power generation projects cannot be quantified and is not included in the analyses.

5.1.4 References

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