
SECTION 7: EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

7.1 - Introduction

This section is based on the Notice of Preparation (NOP), dated Friday, July 20, 2012, and contained in Appendix A of this Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The NOP was prepared to identify the potentially significant effects of the proposed projects and was circulated for public review between July 20, 2012 and August 20, 2012. In the course of this evaluation, certain impacts were found to be less than significant because the proposed project's characteristics would not create such impacts. This section provides a brief description of effects found not to be significant or less than significant, based on the NOP comments or more detailed analysis conducted as part of the EIR preparation process. Note that a number of impacts that are found to be less than significant are addressed in the various EIR topical sections (Sections 3.1 through 3.14) to provide more comprehensive discussion of why impacts are less than significant, in order to better inform decision makers and the general public.

7.2 - Aesthetics, Light, and Glare

7.2.1 - Scenic Resources

There are no state scenic highways near the project sites. The scenic highway nearest to the Grasslands site is South River Road from Jefferson Boulevard in the City of West Sacramento to the Sacramento County line, east of Clarksburg. The scenic highway nearest to the Beamer/Cottonwood site is the State Route 16 (SR-16) from the Colusa County line to Capay, west of the project. Both are sufficiently far from the project sites that the proposed project will not be visible from the sections of scenic highway. Visibility was confirmed by site reconnaissance conducted by a qualified environmental professional. In addition, there are no rock outcroppings or historic buildings located on the project sites. Therefore, no potential impacts associated with damaging scenic resources within a state scenic highway would occur.

7.3 - Agriculture Resources

7.3.1 - Loss or Conversion of Forest Land

Both sites are currently undeveloped fields with little to no native vegetation or trees. Therefore, no forest or timberland is present on the project sites, and no forest or timberland would be affected by the project. The County does not contain any forest land zoning. Therefore, no potential impacts to forest land would result during project construction or operation.

7.3.2 - Other Farmland or Forest Land Conversion

As stated above, the project sites do not contain forest lands or active agricultural activities. The Grasslands site is designated as Open Space by the County's General Plan, and zoned Agricultural General. The site would be developed with a PV facility and an experimental plot to research the

compatibility of agricultural production, such as the sheep grazing. Therefore, the project would include agriculturally compatible energy uses in addition to educational and parks uses. Further, land uses on the project site are restricted by the National Park Service through a quitclaim deed. Deed restrictions on the site require the property to be used and maintained for public purposes in perpetuity. As such, exclusive agricultural activities are not allowed onsite.

The Beamer/Cottonwood site is located in an urban setting within the City of Woodland. The site is surrounded by developed residential and public services uses. In addition, the site is designated Public Services and zoned Single-Family Zone by the City of Woodland. Therefore, construction and operation of the Beamer/Cottonwood PV facility would not result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Therefore, the project would not result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

7.4 - Air Quality

7.4.1 - Objectionable Odors

PV facilities are not sources of objectionable odor. In addition, the agricultural, educational and park uses that would occur at the Grasslands site would not generate noticeable quantities of objectionable odor. Therefore, no potential impact associated with creating objectionable odors that would affect a substantial number of people would occur.

7.5 - Geology, Soils, and Seismicity

7.5.1 - Exposure to a Known Earthquake Fault

The East Valley fault terminates approximately 4 miles west of the Grasslands site. In addition, the Dunnigan Hills faults are located approximately 6 miles northwest of the Beamer/Cottonwood site. Therefore, the project sites are not subject to rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map.

7.5.2 - Exposure to Landslides

The relatively flat, featureless topography of the project sites and adjacent properties reduces the opportunities for landslides to occur; therefore, no impacts would result during the project construction or operation.

7.6 - Hazards and Hazardous Materials

7.6.1 - Hazardous Materials Sites

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was prepared for the Grasslands site, which includes a review of federal and state databases, and confirmed that the site would not contain a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to the California Government Code Section 65962.5. In addition, a review of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control

Envirostor database confirmed that there are no identified hazardous materials sites on the Beamer/Cottonwood site. Therefore, no impact associated with hazardous material sites would occur during the project construction or operations phase.

7.6.2 - Airports

Neither project site is located within an airport land use plan area or located within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport. This condition precludes the potential to result in a safety hazard for people residing or working at the project site.

7.6.3 - Private Airstrips

Neither project site is located near a private airstrip or located within 2 miles of a private strip. This condition precludes the potential to result in a safety hazard for people residing or working at the project site.

7.6.4 - Interference with Emergency Response Plans

The Yolo Operational Area Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan addresses threats from potential hazards and identifies possible strategies to reduce impacts in Yolo County, including the City of Woodland. The Yolo Operational Area Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies an implementation strategy to develop evacuation routes to be used in case of disasters and how they are managed by the County. The plan identifies SR-113, US Highway 50, and Interstates 5, 80, and 505 as routes that would be used during an emergency evacuation. The Grasslands and Cottonwood/Beamer sites are not located adjacent to or close to any of the identified emergency evacuation routes, and the site access points would meet all emergency access requirements of Yolo County. As such, the project would not impair or interfere with the adopted emergency response plan. No impact would occur.

7.7 - Hydrology and Water Quality

7.7.1 - Erosion or Siltation

Both project sites are relatively flat. Although the project would involve a minimal amount of grading, construction activity would not alter the existing drainage pattern of the project site areas. Each site would be designed and constructed such that precipitation would continue to percolate into the ground on the project site; therefore, the project would result in no impact to the drainage pattern of the area and would not result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite.

7.7.2 - Surface Runoff

Both project sites are relatively flat. Although the project would involve a minimal amount of grading, construction activity would not alter the existing drainage pattern of the project site areas. Each site would be designed and constructed such that precipitation would continue to percolate into the ground on the project site; therefore, the project would result in no impact to the drainage pattern of the area, and would not result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite.

7.7.3 - Housing within a 100-Year Flood Hazard Area

The project would not construct any permanent housing. This condition precludes the possibility of placing housing within a 100-year flood plain.

7.7.4 - Structures within a 100-Year Flood Hazard Area

A review of revised Figure HS-4 of the Yolo County General Plan and the Yolo County Online Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Viewer shows the Grasslands site is located outside the 100-year floodplain in Flood Zone D. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines Flood Zone D as an area in which flood hazards are undetermined. The Grasslands site does contain the remnants of a former flood control channel of Putah Creek; however, Putah Creek no longer floods the area because flood control levees are now in place. As such, the Grasslands site is not subject to flooding. The Beamer/Cottonwood site is located outside the 100-year floodplain in Flood Zone X. FEMA defines Flood Zone X as areas determined to be outside the 0.2 percent annual chance of floodplain. Therefore, no impacts related to a 100-year flood hazard area would occur.

7.7.5 - Seiches, Tsunamis, or Mudflows

People or structures would not be exposed to hazards associated with seiche, tsunami, or mudflow since no large bodies of water exist near the project sites. The Pacific Ocean is approximately 70 miles from the project sites. No water bodies capable of producing a seiche are located near the project sites. The relatively flat, featureless topography of the project sites and adjacent properties reduces the opportunities for landslides to occur and, as such, reduces the opportunity for mudflow to occur. Therefore, no impacts would result during the project construction or operation.

7.8 - Land Use and Planning

7.8.1 - Division of an Established Community

The Grasslands site is surrounded by general agricultural and recreational land uses and is not located within any designated planning boundary. Only limited residential uses occur in the vicinity of the Grasslands site, consisting of scattered rural farm residences. As a whole, the Grasslands site area lacks any established community. The Beamer/Cottonwood site is located within the City of Woodland and is surrounded by existing residential and public services land uses. However, development of the Beamer/Cottonwood site would not split neighborhoods or divide an existing identifiable community of interest. As such, development of the proposed project would not physically divide any community, and no impacts would occur.

7.9 - Mineral Resources

7.9.1 - Mineral Resources of Statewide or Local Importance

The project sites do not contain any known mineral deposits or active mineral extraction operations. This condition precludes the possibility of the loss of important mineral resources as a result of development of the proposed project.

7.10 - Noise

7.10.1 - Aviation Noise

Neither project site is located within an airport land use plan area or is located within 2 miles of a public airport or private-use airport. This condition precludes the potential for exposure of people residing or working at the project site to excessive aviation noise.

7.11 - Population and Housing

7.11.1 - Growth Inducement

The proposed project would generate temporary construction jobs that would be expected to be filled by the local workforce. Maintenance of the proposed project would be minimal and conducted by existing county employees or contractors. Therefore, the proposed project would not have the potential to cause substantial direct or indirect population growth.

7.11.2 - Displacement of Persons or Housing

The project sites do not contain any residential uses. Therefore, the proposed project would not have the potential to displace people or housing.

7.12 - Public Services

7.12.1 - Schools

The proposed project would not increase either directly or indirectly the school-age population in the region and, thus, would not require the construction of new or the expansion of existing school facilities. Therefore, project would not result in potential impacts associated with schools.

7.12.2 - Other Public Facilities

Other public facilities include public libraries, public hospitals and medical centers, and community centers. A considerable workforce is available within the project region and local residents are expected to serve the labor requirements of the proposed project, negating the need for a significant percentage of outside labor. As a result, the proposed project is not anticipated to induce substantial population growth in the area either directly or indirectly, and the existing number of other public facilities would continue to adequately serve the regional population. Therefore, there would be no impacts associated with other public facilities.

7.13 - Transportation

7.13.1 - Surrounding Roadways

Project construction would have overlapping phases, with the total number of construction workers expected to range between 5 and 15 personnel per day. In addition, during the 4-month construction period, approximately 200 deliveries are expected to be required to deliver panels and construction

materials to both project sites combined, representing an average of fewer than five delivery trips per construction workday. However, no construction activities are anticipated to occur within the public right of way, and no physical changes to surrounding roadways would occur.

Project operation would result in periodic trips for solar facility site inspection and panel washing for both project sites. In addition, the Grasslands site would maintain an onsite park host and receive seasonal trips from Yolo County schools. Based on the number of K-12 students in Yolo County, an average bus capacity of 52 students, and assuming that educational trips to the Grasslands site would only occur half of the school year, the Grasslands site could host up to 28 peak-day trips, assuming PV site inspectors and panel washers would also visit the project site at the same time. However, the average daily trip generation would be less than 10 trips per day, conservatively.

Although the project requires discretionary permits, the land uses and proposed land use intensities are such that the project would be less than the County's Vehicle and Truck Trip Equivalencies for auto and small truck vehicle classifications, even when aggregated together. As provided within the County of Yolo Transportation Impact Study Guidelines, the trigger for requiring a project-specific Transportation Impact Study (TIS) is 100 new vehicle trips per day for autos of 2 axles, and 50 new trips per day for small trucks (which are 2 axles/6 tires and include buses). At up to 28 peak-day trips and less than 10 annual average daily trips, the project would generate substantially fewer trips than the County's trigger for requiring a TIS. As such, no transportation impacts would occur.

7.13.2 - County Transportation Facilities

As stated above, the project would not result in offsite construction activities and, therefore, would not affect offsite transportation facilities or services, including transit, rail crossings, roadways, bikeways, or sidewalks. The project would not alter physical or operational conditions on a county roadway, bikeway, sidewalk, or other transportation facility. The project would not increase hazards due to a design feature (such as sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses, nor would it result in inadequate emergency access. The project does not have the potential to create a significant environmental impact for the transportation impact criteria.

7.13.3 - Air Traffic Patterns

The project would not conflict with an applicable transportation plan, congestion management plan, or result in a change in air traffic patterns.

7.14 - Utilities and Service Systems

7.14.1 - Stormwater Facilities

No existing stormwater drainage infrastructure is currently found on the project sites, and no backbone infrastructure would be required as part of the proposed project. In addition, the project sites would be designed and constructed such that precipitation would percolate onsite and would not

contribute to new stormwater runoff. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, and no impact would occur.

7.14.2 - Landfill Capacity

Both project sites would not generate any substantial quantity of construction or operational waste and the waste that is generated would be separated and recycled onsite and then delivered to a County landfill facility. The Grasslands site has the potential to generate occasional waste and recycling needs; however, these needs will be serviced by the Yolo County General Services, Facilities and Parks Department. Specifically, the educational activities on the Grasslands site would be seasonal and periodic in nature, and not result in a substantial quantity of operational waste. Therefore, the project would create no impact to the available capacity of existing landfills.

7.14.3 - Solid Waste Regulations

All solid waste generated by the proposed project would be handled, transported, and disposed of according to all applicable federal, state, and local regulation pertaining to municipal waste disposal. The collection of solid waste from the proposed project, the transportation of the waste to the disposal facility, and the eventual disposal of the waste would be conducted by a licensed and permitted agent. Therefore, no potential impacts associated with solid waste statutes and regulations would occur as a result of the project.

