

Comment Letter I34

Jeffrey A. and Paula G. Byrd  
 39376 Opalocka Road  
 Boulevard, CA 91905  
 619-742-5095



February 7, 2014

Mr. Robert Hingtgen  
 Planning & Development Services  
 5510 Overland Avenue, Ste. 110  
 San Diego, CA 92123

Re: Proposed Soitec Solar Projects

Dear Robert Hingtgen:

First, it was a pleasure meeting you at the Boulevard Planning meeting on February 6. Also, thank you for taking the time to visit Rancho Boulevard Estates and the surrounding community.

My husband and I would like to take this opportunity to state our many concerns and opposition regarding the proposed four Boulevard Soitec projects with 7,409-8415 CPV Solar Trackers.

My husband and I purchased a ranch located at 39376 Opalocka Road approximately eight years ago. I took all my pension money and used it to purchase our home, shortly after, the market tanked. We live in Boulevard because of its beauty and organic lifestyle, so we decided to stay.

This situation is not new to my husband and I, and we thought we would never have to experience a similar situation again. In 1988 we built a home in Lakeside off of Wildcat Canyon Road on 5 acres to raise our two sons. In 1991 (approximately) a developer submitted a permit to the county to build a sub-division called High Meadow Ranch in which several homes would be built. At the same time, the Barona Reservation was building their casino. Between the High Meadow Ranch project and the Barona Casino project they were pumping gallons upon gallons of water day and night, which eventually dried our well up. Eight homes were impacted. This was a terrible nightmare, our home was now worthless, no water means inhabitable. The only recourse we had was

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## Response to Comment Letter I34

**Jeffrey and Paula Byrd**  
**February 10, 2014**

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The County of San Diego (County) acknowledges the commenters' opposition to the Proposed Project. The information in this comment letter will be provided in the Final Program Environmental Impact Report (FPEIR) for review and consideration by the decision makers. This comment is preliminary in nature and does not raise specific issues related to the Proposed Project or the adequacy of the environmental analysis in the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR). Specific concerns related to groundwater supply and traffic are addressed in the responses to comments below.

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| <p>the County annexed the eight homes into the Padre Water District for a future waterline, which never happened. So at our expense, we had to drill another well. Thereafter due to the bad experience, and high density of traffic from the Barona Casino, we put our home up for sale. Wildcat Canyon Road was now an extremely dangerous road to travel on due to all the traffic from the casino. We just can't go through this nightmare again!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>1. Water:</b> Water is a MAIN concern and very precious to all residents of the Boulevard area. Real people and families live in Boulevard. The community depends on the water resources for consumption, watering livestock, and plants. To allow large companies such as Soitec to pump and use billions of gallons of water for construction then after the panels are installed, continue to pump water to clean panels is very frightening and disturbing. Real people live here! If our wells dry up, our homes will be worthless. For most of us, this is all we have, without water, we having nothing! Again, another nightmare!</li> <li>2. <b>2. Property Values:</b> When the real estate market took a dive, property values decreased significantly, however, we as loyal homeowners still make our mortgage payments because we love Boulevard for its beautiful, serene lifestyle. To permit Soitec Solar to proceed and install the solar panels will create a MAJOR eyesore and will turn Boulevard into an undesirable place to live and our homes again will decrease even more in value.</li> <li>3. <b>3. Traffic:</b> Ribbonwood, the two-lane road was never designed for the large trucks, and construction equipment and large panel delivery trucks, which will create an extremely dangerous situation for homeowners going to and from home.</li> <li>4. <b>4. Who Benefits:</b> The only beneficiary of the Soitec project would be Soitec and the power company. The residents and families in Boulevard would have zero benefits as discussed and confirmed by Mr. Pat Brown on February 6<sup>th</sup> at the Boulevard Planning meeting.</li> <li>5. <b>5. Visuals/Aesthetics:</b> The EIR does not reflect our community. Please find the attached photos (last two) of our home and surroundings, which reflects the TRUE beauty of our home and community. Rancho Boulevard Estates is a gated housing development consisting of approximately 27 homes. On pg. 60, Sec. 4.3.1, why weren't we included in the CEQA process? The first two photos were taken from our back yard, which faces east directly at the Rough Acres proposed project site. We will be viewing this terrible site from our back yard every day, if the project goes through.</li> </ol> <p>In closing, please deny Soitec their request for permit because there are far better places to build their project. To allow them to build in Boulevard would ruin a beautiful valley, devalue our homes significantly, as well as our way of life.</p> <p>Respectfully,<br/>Jeff and Paula Byrd</p> | <p><b>I34-2</b> Potential impacts to groundwater were considered and addressed in the DPEIR; refer to Section 3.1.5.3.4, Groundwater Resources, and Section 3.1.9.3.1, Water. Also, see common response WR1. Based on the environmental analysis, it was determined that the Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on groundwater supply. As stated in Section 3.1.9.3.1, conditions will be placed on the Major Use Permit that will restrict the amount of water that is permitted to be withdrawn from the on-site wells in order to limit interference with off-site wells. As such, it is not anticipated that wells of neighboring residents will be significantly affected as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p><b>I34-3</b> This comment raises concerns regarding property values. This topic was not evaluated in the DPEIR since it is not related to environmental impacts. As such, no changes to the environmental document are required. The County acknowledges that the Proposed Project would have a significant and unmitigable impact on visual character and quality (DPEIR Section 2.1.7). See response to comment I17-5 for details related to impacts and mitigation.</p> <p><b>I34-4</b> Based on the environmental analysis, it has been determined that the Proposed Project construction would not result in dangerous use conflicts between construction vehicles and local traffic. In addition, it</p> |
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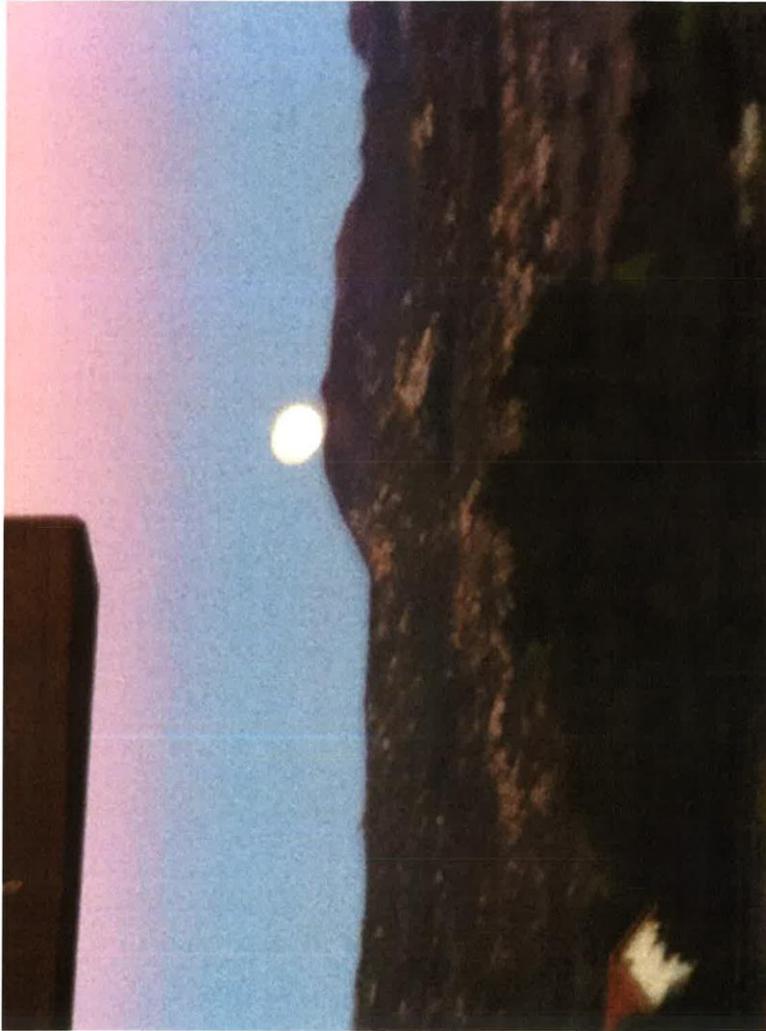




was also determined that Ribbonwood Road was could accommodate construction vehicles. Potential traffic hazards during construction were considered and addressed in Section 3.1.8.3.4, Traffic Hazards Due to Design Feature. It was determined that the Proposed Project would have less than significant impacts related to traffic. Project design features, such as a traffic control plan and notification of residents would ensure that the Proposed Project would not create local driving hazards (see PDF-TR-1).

**I34-5** This comment raises concerns related to who benefits from the Proposed Project. This topic was not evaluated in the DPEIR since it is not related to environmental impacts. Social and economic effects are not environmental issues that require consideration in an environmental impact report (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064(e)).

**I34-6** The County does not agree that the DPEIR does not reflect the community surrounding the Proposed Project. Please refer to Section 2.1.1.1 of the DPEIR, which discusses the environmental setting of the Proposed Project and surrounding area. The commenters refer to Section 4.3.1 of Appendix 2.1-2 of the DPEIR. This section describes the viewer groups that were considered in the visual analysis. The viewer groups include residents, which are generally described and intended to be inclusive of all rural



residential land uses in the area. The report acknowledges that local residents are anticipated to have high sensitivity to changes in visual resources of the area. As indicated in the DPEIR, potential impacts to visual character and quality would be reduced through implementation of Mitigation Measure M-AE-PP-1, which includes landscape screening measures. In addition, project design features described in the DPEIR would lessen aesthetic impacts. For example, PDF-AE-1 would pull back grading and would avoid the installation of trackers in the low topographical saddle occurring in the southernmost extent of the Rugged solar farm site. However, impacts related to visual character and quality would remain significant and unavoidable after implementation of mitigation measures and project design features. Should the decision makers wish to adopt the Proposed Project, a Statement of Overriding Considerations will have to be included in the record.

In addition to potential impacts to existing visual character and quality, the DPEIR analyzes potential glare impacts. See Section 2.1.3.3, Light and Glare. Furthermore, the Boulevard Glare Study (referenced in the Section 2.1.3.3 of the DPEIR) identified private residences near the Proposed Project that would be exposed to glare during operations. Where operational glare is anticipated to be received, the Boulevard Glare Study provides the anticipated daily glare exposure.



The County appreciates the photos submitted by the commenters. These will be included in the FPEIR for review and consideration by the decision makers. It should be noted that per CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq.) and County guidelines for determining significance, visual analysis of Proposed Project effects is required only from public viewpoints. CEQA analysis is not required for views from private property. However, considerations of community character and local visual resources were analyzed in the DPEIR, as previously described in this response.

**I34-7** The commenters' opposition to the Proposed Project is noted and will be included in the administrative record for review and consideration by the decision makers.

**References**

14 CCR 15000–15387 and Appendices A–L. Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, as amended.

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