

## Hingtgen, Robert J

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**From:** Donna Tisdale <tisdale.donna@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 31, 2014 4:16 PM  
**To:** Hingtgen, Robert J; Gungle, Ashley; Fogg, Mindy; Gretler, Darren M  
**Cc:** Jacob, Dianne; Wilson, Adam; Bennett, Jim; George Burmeister; Erin Malcolm Brandt  
**Subject:** Soitec in the news  
**Attachments:** Solar sale could revive Soitec 10-31-14.pdf

FYI

This article does not tell the whole story, as usual...I gave the reporter much more information. A pdf copy is attached. The Power Purchase Agreements for Soitec's Boulevard projects are moving to projects in Imperial Valley that have already been approved and have survived litigation efforts. That leaves Soitec's Boulevard projects with no Power Purchase Agreements!

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### **Solar sale could revive Soitec**

By Morgan Lee 6 A.M.OCT. 31, 2014



Soitec solar equipment at Newberry Springs.

Solar manufacturer Soitec said it is seeking to reignite production at its San Diego assembly line through the sale of power-purchase contracts for an unnamed solar project under development in California. The contracts, underwritten by San Diego Gas & Electric customers, were originally tied to four solar power plants in the Boulevard area that have run into extended delays in the planning and permitting process. The unnamed buyer would in turn deploy 150 megawatts of generating capacity, using 83,400 of Soitec's concentrated solar modules manufactured in the Rancho Bernardo area of San Diego. That's enough to supply some 80,000 homes with power. Soitec described the buyer as "one of the largest providers of solar energy services in North America," but said it could not name the company or the location of the related solar facilities while the agreement is being finalized. If consummated, the deal would boost production at Soitec's local factory, envisioned as a gateway to the sunny U.S. southwest for the France-based company. The Department of Energy contributed \$25 million to the factory's construction with the goal of boosting solar technology and creating skilled U.S.

jobs. Soitec's concentrated photovoltaic technology differs from the common silicon panel seen on residential rooftops and big solar farms. It uses a lens to focus light on a highly efficient cell no bigger than a ladybug.

The lenses and cells are bundled into panels the size of a double garage door, then mounted on trackers that follow the sun. Engineers at SDG&E embraced the technology because it provides a steadier electricity supply throughout the day, helping cope with high power demands late on summer days. Announcing its grant to Soitec in 2011, federal officials envisioned a plant with 450 employees producing 280 megawatts of solar capacity each year. The company has deployed about 75 megawatts of concentrated solar to date. Soitec's plant currently employs 250 workers. The company is nearing completion of a 6.5 megawatt solar array at Borrego Springs. Last year it finished a 1.5 megawatt plant in San Bernardino County. In August, a peer review of the Energy Department grant to Soitec raised concerns about the company's ability to compete with less-expensive conventional solar panels. The cheapest technology — not necessarily the most energy efficient — is likely to prevail, the experts said. As it pursues new orders, Soitec has continued to improve the efficiency of its solar cells, the crux of the company's business model, said Karen Hutchens, a company spokeswoman. She said the factory in Rancho Bernardo was selected for the Department of Energy grant after Soitec demonstrated that its technology could meet the agency's goal of \$1 per watt in the future. The sales agreement under negotiation would leave four solar power plant projects in the Boulevard area without any commitment from a utility buyer. Soitec said it will continue to pursue the four projects, known as Tierra del Sol, LanWest, LanEast and Rugged. The two larger projects, Tierra del Sol and Rugged, account for 140 megawatts of generating capacity. Energy from the new, unnamed solar plant would be purchased by customers of SDG&E. Terms of the 25-year power-purchase contracts remain confidential for at least three years of use, under state provisions designed to protect competition.

<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2014/oct/31/san-diego-solar-moves-east>