Comment Letter C1

BOULEVARD PLANNING GROUP

P.O. BOX 1272, BOULEVARD, CA 91905

San Diego County Planning & Development Services
5500 Overland Avenue, Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92122

May 3, 2015

VIA PDS PROJECT MANAGER: ashley.gungle@sdcounty.ca.gov

RE: COMMENTS ON DRAFT EIR: JACUMBA SOLAR MAJOR USE PERMIT, PDS 2014-MUP-14-041; PDS2014-ER-14-22-001

The Jacumba Solar project, DEIR, and related documents were discussed at our May 1st Boulevard Planning Group meeting. A brief report was also made by a community member who had attended the DEIR presentation at the April 28th Jacumba Sponsor Group meeting.

The following motion was approved unanimously:

- M/S: Strand/Byrd: *Authorize Chair to submit comments in opposition to Jacumba Solar due to cumulatively significant adverse impacts, including groundwater resources*: Passed: 5-0-0 (Keane was excused due to work & Seat 7 is vacant)

DEIR specific issues, concerns, and comments are detailed below:

1. *The brevity of these comments is due to time constraints and vacation schedules rather than a lack of issues/concerns.*
2. It was reported that during the April 28th DEIR presentation, County Groundwater Geologist, Jim Bennett, responded to a groundwater sustainability question by stating that the backcountry has about two years of groundwater remaining if the current extreme drought conditions continue—This is very alarming to those of us who are fully reliant on local drought-stressed groundwater resources for our homes and small ranch operations.
3. **Lack of Need and adequate transmission capacity availability for the project:**
   a. *SDG&E has not signed a Power Purchase Contract for Jacumba Solar.*
   b. *Jacumba Solar's position that that they can sell energy to anyone may not be entirely accurate due to constrained transmission facilities, and projects already in line ahead of them in the CAISO grid queue as of April 24, 2015*[1].

C1-1

C1-2

C1-3

[1] http://www.caiso.com/Documents/ISOGeneratorInterconnectionQueue.pdf

Response to Comment Letter C1

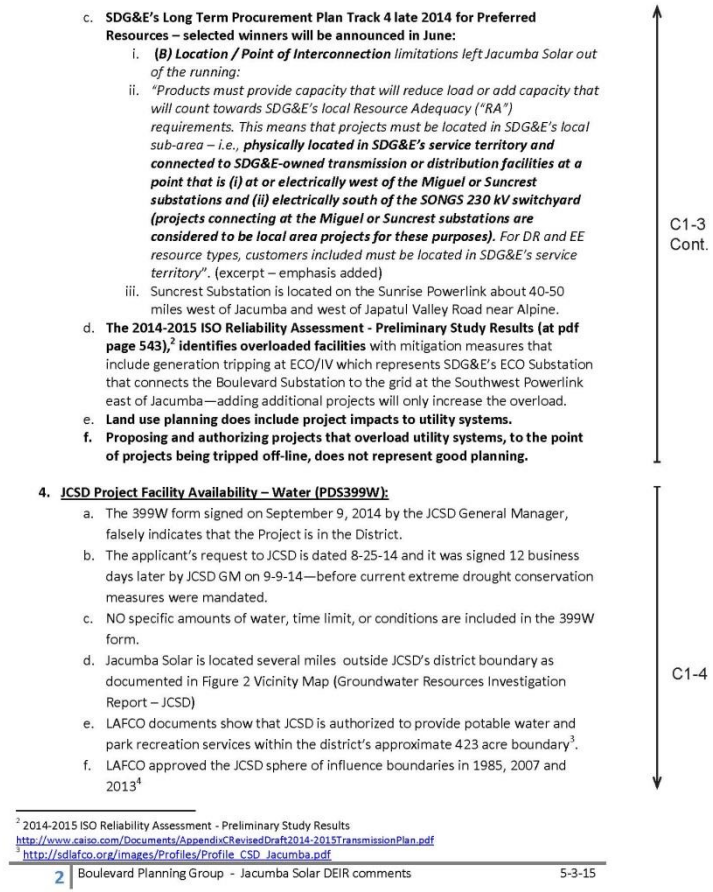
Boulevard Planning Group
Donna Tisdale, Chair
May 3, 2015

C1-1 The County acknowledges receipt of the Boulevard Planning Group's input and appreciates their comments regarding the potential impacts associated with implementation of the Project. This comment does not address the adequacy of the DEIR, therefore no further response is required.

C1-2 The DEIR demonstrates that adequate groundwater exists to serve the Project, other planned renewable energy construction projects in the vicinity of the Project (including Rugged solar facility), existing in-service area demands and future demands based on the entire groundwater basin being developed to the maximum density and intensity permitted by the General Plan. (DEIR, p. 3.1.4-27 to 31.) This analysis was based on historical precipitation records from July 1982 through June 2012 to estimate recharge within the groundwater basin, which included several years of drought. (DEIR, p. 3.1.4-28 to 29.) In order to ensure extended drought conditions were analyzed as part of the project's proposal to obtain groundwater from a non-potable well owned and operated by the JCSD, the water supply analysis was based on historical precipitation records from July 1982 through June 2012 to estimate recharge within the

	groundwater basin. (DEIR, p. 3.1.4-28 to 29.) Using 30 years of historical precipitation data ensures that a reasonably foreseeable drought condition will be evaluated. The period from 1983 to 1990 (seven years) and 1998 to 2004 (six years) were two extended drought periods that were included in the analysis. Based on groundwater levels that have been measured at JCSD Well 4, the historic all time recorded low water level of about 22.5 feet below the top of casing was recorded in September 2005 following six years of drought. As of June 18, 2015, the water level in Well 4 was 10 feet below top of casing which indicate current drought conditions have not impacted water levels in this well as severely as the previous drought from 1998 to 2004 which was included the groundwater analysis for this project.. . The Commenter's comments regarding what the County Groundwater Geologist's stated about the limits of sustainability are a mis-interpretation of what was stated. The County Groundwater Geologist never stated that the backcountry has two years of groundwater remaining if the current extreme drought conditions continue. Substantial evidence in the DEIR and the Groundwater Resources Investigation Report for Jacumba Community Services District included as Appendix 3.1.4-3 of the EIR ("JCSD Groundwater Report") support the availability to serve the Project's water needs from Jacumba Community Services District (JCSD) groundwater without adversely affecting the environment. Furthermore, even in an unlikely scenario where there was not a surplus of non-

		potable water, the DEIR has already evaluated the environmental impacts of obtaining non-potable water from Padre Dam Municipal Water District (PDMWD). For further discussion of the Project's impacts on groundwater, see DEIR, Section 2.2.3 (Biological Resources), Section 3.1.4.3.4 (Groundwater Resources), and Section 3.1.8 (Utilities). Additionally, Appendix 3.1.4-3 and Appendix 3.1.4-4 to the DEIR are technical reports that further outline the potential impacts to groundwater resources. The County takes this opportunity to clarify the comments made by the County Groundwater Geologist Jim Bennet at the DEIR public meeting and correct the accuracy of the commenter's interpretation of his statements. The question asked and responded to at the meeting was not directed at the Jacumba Solar Project. The question asked about the status of the groundwater resources in the eastern portion of San Diego County as part of expressed concern with the current drought status. Mr. Bennett's response was that there would be a few years before the area would start seeing impacts from the drought and further stated that those upper areas along ridgelines or at the fringes of groundwater basins could start to see problems in a couple of years.
	C1-3	The County acknowledges this comment. Whether or not the Project applicant has a PPA with SDG&E does not affect the environmental analysis. The County does not



c. **SDG&E's Long Term Procurement Plan Track 4 late 2014 for Preferred Resources – selected winners will be announced in June:**
   i. ***(B) Location / Point of Interconnection*** *limitations left Jacumba Solar out of the running:*
   ii. *"Products must provide capacity that will reduce load or add capacity that will count towards SDG&E's local Resource Adequacy ("RA") requirements. This means that projects must be located in SDG&E's local sub-area – i.e.,* ***physically located in SDG&E's service territory and connected to SDG&E-owned transmission or distribution facilities at a point that is (i) at or electrically west of the Miguel or Suncrest substations and (ii) electrically south of the SONGS 230 kV switchyard (projects connecting at the Miguel or Suncrest substations are considered to be local area projects for these purposes).*** *For DR and EE resource types, customers included must be located in SDG&E's service territory".* (excerpt – emphasis added)
   iii. Suncrest Substation is located on the Sunrise Powerlink about 40-50 miles west of Jacumba and west of Japatul Valley Road near Alpine.

d. **The 2014-2015 ISO Reliability Assessment - Preliminary Study Results (at pdf page 543),[2] identifies overloaded facilities** with mitigation measures that include generation tripping at ECO/IV which represents SDG&E's ECO Substation that connects the Boulevard Substation to the grid at the Southwest Powerlink east of Jacumba—adding additional projects will only increase the overload.
e. **Land use planning does include project impacts to utility systems.**
f. **Proposing and authorizing projects that overload utility systems, to the point of projects being tripped off-line, does not represent good planning.**

C1-3 Cont.

4. **JCSD Project Facility Availability – Water (PDS399W):**
   a. The 399W form signed on September 9, 2014 by the JCSD General Manager, falsely indicates that the Project is in the District.
   b. The applicant's request to JCSD is dated 8-25-14 and it was signed 12 business days later by JCSD GM on 9-9-14—before current extreme drought conservation measures were mandated.
   c. NO specific amounts of water, time limit, or conditions are included in the 399W form.
   d. Jacumba Solar is located several miles outside JCSD's district boundary as documented in Figure 2 Vicinity Map (Groundwater Resources Investigation Report – JCSD)
   e. LAFCO documents show that JCSD is authorized to provide potable water and park recreation services within the district's approximate 423 acre boundary[3].
   f. LAFCO approved the JCSD sphere of influence boundaries in 1985, 2007 and 2013[4]

C1-4

[2] 2014-2015 ISO Reliability Assessment - Preliminary Study Results
http://www.caiso.com/Documents/AppendixCRevisedDraft2014-2015TransmissionPlan.pdf
[3] http://sdlafco.org/images/Profiles/Profile_CSD_Jacumba.pdf

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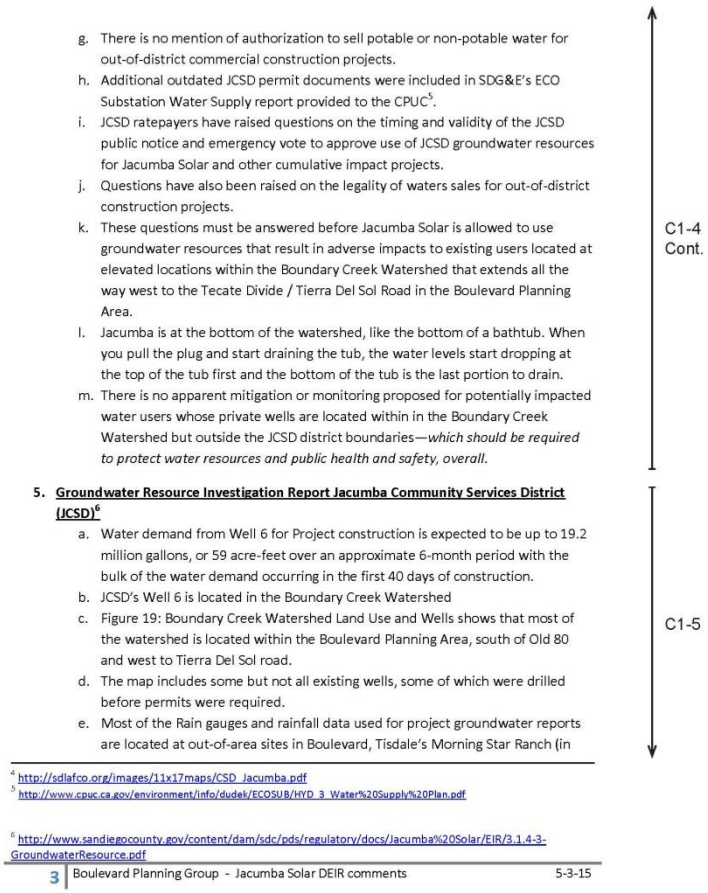
have land use jurisdiction over transmission planning or permitting. The comment does not address the adequacy of the DEIR, therefore no further response is required.

C1-4 This comment recites facts about the timeline for the Project's 399W form, which did not identify specific amounts of water or time limits and was executed prior to extreme drought conservation measures being mandated. Form 399W is intended to identify that the source water for the Project (construction) is available within the District. Drought-related water conservation measures are primarily aimed at reducing use of potable water supplies. The Project proposes to use non-potable water from JCSD's Well No. 6 to serve its construction and operational needs. The comment also notes that the 399W does not reference specific amounts of water, time limits or conditions. However, the DEIR clearly indicates that the Project proposes to use approximately 58.6 acre-feet of water during construction and 3.4 acre-feet of water per year during the operational phases (DEIR, p. 3.1.4-26.). Options for supplying the Project's construction water include JCSD and PDMWD. (DEIR, pp. 3.1.4-26 to 27.) Peak construction water demand, requiring approximately 1-acre foot of water per day) is expected to be during the first 40 days when grading occurs. (JCSD Ground Water Report, p. ES-1.)

	The comment also correctly notes that the Project is outside of the JCSD district boundaries and outside of its sphere of influence. Indeed, the Project site is not within the boundaries or sphere of influence of any water district. The law generally prohibits a water district from serving *potable* water to those outside of its territorial boundaries, but such a restriction does not apply to the delivery of surplus, non-potable water supplies. Water Code section 22259 allows a water district to sell surplus water for use outside of its boundaries. The water the Project proposes to purchase from JCSD is surplus water, as the DEIR demonstrates that JCSD has an excess supply of water available to serve the Project. (See RTC, C1-2 and DEIR, pp. 3.1.4-28 to 3.1.4-29, 3.1.4-31.) The Government Code ordinarily requires LAFCO approval to provide water service outside of a CSD's territorial boundaries, but an exception exists if the CSD is providing non-potable or untreated water.[1] (Gov. Code 61100(a), 61101, 56133.) Because the Project proposes to obtain untreated, non-potable water from JCSD, it does not require LAFCO approval. The Project will be required, however, to enter into a water supply agreement with JCSD documenting the terms by which JCSD would be willing to provide surplus, non-potable water to the Project. JCSD understands this agreement is needed for projects outside its service area and is not under the illusion the Project is within its service area

	despite the 399W form. The comments about outdated JCSD permit documents in the ECO Substation Water Supply Report and ratepayer concerns about JCSD providing water for construction projects do not concern physical impacts on the environment for which a response is required. As further explained in the DEIR and JCSD Groundwater Report, providing up to 100,000 gallons of non-potable groundwater per day during the Project's construction phase will not result in adverse impacts to the existing groundwater users in the Boundary Creek Watershed. (See DEIR, pp. 3.1.4-26 to 3.1.4-32; JCSD Groundwater Report.) JCSD wells are monitored and the non-potable well proposed for construction use (Well 6) was analyzed to have an insignificant 2.18-foot draw down on one of the wells that JCSD uses for servicing the potable water needs within the JCSD (Well 4) as identified in Appendix 3.1.4-3. As demonstrated in the well records presented in Appendix 3.1.4-3, use of water for the proposed Project's construction would not result in significant impacts to groundwater. As demonstrated by the pumping records and supported by the fact that no alteration in capacity is proposed, the groundwater use from the JCSD well would not result in a significant decline of surrounding wells nearby. Monitoring of wells by the JCSD for JCSD Wells 4, 7, 8 and Park Monitoring Well is ongoing. Monitoring during project



g. There is no mention of authorization to sell potable or non-potable water for out-of-district commercial construction projects.
h. Additional outdated JCSD permit documents were included in SDG&E's ECO Substation Water Supply report provided to the CPUC[5].
i. JCSD ratepayers have raised questions on the timing and validity of the JCSD public notice and emergency vote to approve use of JCSD groundwater resources for Jacumba Solar and other cumulative impact projects.
j. Questions have also been raised on the legality of waters sales for out-of-district construction projects.
k. These questions must be answered before Jacumba Solar is allowed to use groundwater resources that result in adverse impacts to existing users located at elevated locations within the Boundary Creek Watershed that extends all the way west to the Tecate Divide / Tierra Del Sol Road in the Boulevard Planning Area.
l. Jacumba is at the bottom of the watershed, like the bottom of a bathtub. When you pull the plug and start draining the tub, the water levels start dropping at the top of the tub first and the bottom of the tub is the last portion to drain.
m. There is no apparent mitigation or monitoring proposed for potentially impacted water users whose private wells are located within in the Boundary Creek Watershed but outside the JCSD district boundaries—*which should be required to protect water resources and public health and safety, overall.*

C1-4 Cont.

5. **Groundwater Resource Investigation Report Jacumba Community Services District (JCSD)[6]**
   a. Water demand from Well 6 for Project construction is expected to be up to 19.2 million gallons, or 59 acre-feet over an approximate 6-month period with the bulk of the water demand occurring in the first 40 days of construction.
   b. JCSD's Well 6 is located in the Boundary Creek Watershed
   c. Figure 19: Boundary Creek Watershed Land Use and Wells shows that most of the watershed is located within the Boulevard Planning Area, south of Old 80 and west to Tierra Del Sol road.
   d. The map includes some but not all existing wells, some of which were drilled before permits were required.
   e. Most of the Rain gauges and rainfall data used for project groundwater reports are located at out-of-area sites in Boulevard, Tisdale's Morning Star Ranch (in

C1-5

[4] http://sdlafco.org/images/11x17maps/CSD_Jacumba.pdf
[5] http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/dudek/ECOSUB/HYD_3_Water%20Supply%20Plan.pdf

[6] http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/regulatory/docs/Jacumba%20Solar/EIR/3.1.4-3-GroundwaterResource.pdf

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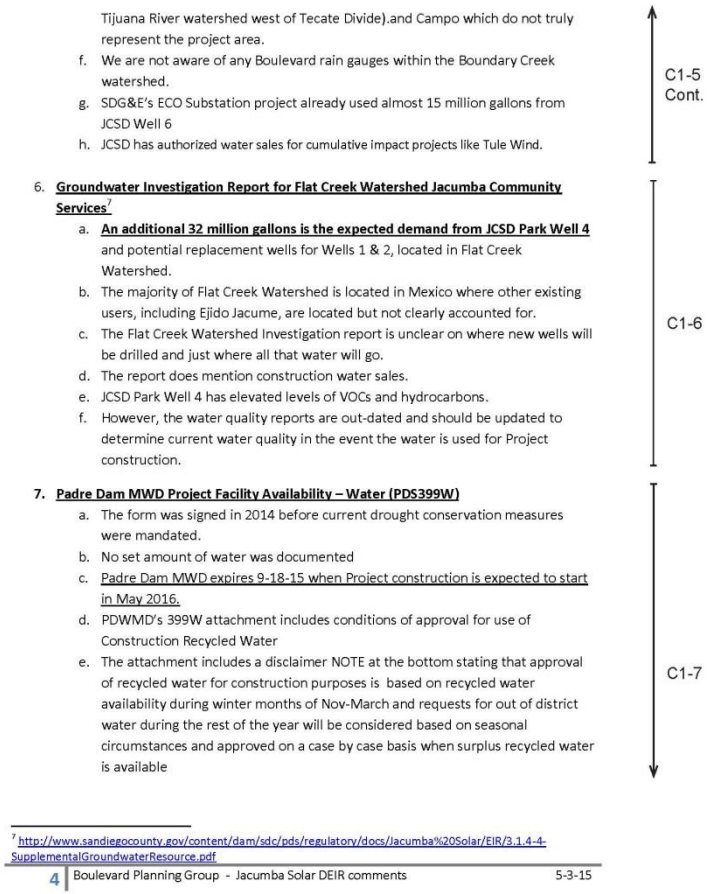
construction is required by the County MUP conditions and in accordance with the Groundwater Mitigation Monitoring Plans for Boundary Creek and Flat Creek watersheds (new well and replacements well), as provided as Appendices 3.1.4-3 and 3.1.4-4 of the FEIR respectively. If baseline water levels at the JCSD wells included in the groundwater monitoring program are exceeded by their respective thresholds, pumping of JCSD Well 6 shall cease and the County PDS notified via letter and electronic mail within one working day. The County has included conditions of the MUP that give enforcement ability to the County to protect the groundwater resource including limits on the total acre feet, gallons per day pumping, and monitoring of groundwater levels. No groundwater is proposed to be pumped on-site. The commenter's speculation that drawing water from Well 6 will lead to a significant decline in water in Well 4 is rebutted by the expert analysis in the DEIR or the JCSD Groundwater Report.

C1-5 The comments recites facts from the DEIR and Groundwater Resources Investigation Report for Jacumba Community Services District included as Appendix 3.1.4-3 of the DEIR ("JCSD Groundwater Report") concerning matters such as the Project's water demand, the location of JCSD Well, the Boundary Creek Watershed and rain gauges. Such comments do not address the adequacy of the Draft EIR and therefore do not require a response under

	CEQA. The comment also notes that JCSD has authorized water sales to other projects, including the Tule Wind project. The 2011 Final EIR/EIS for the East County Substation/Tule Wind/Energia Sierra Juarez Gen-Tie Projects identifies that the Tule project has exclusive permission to use the water extracted from groundwater wells on Rough Acres Ranch and in Thing Valley on the Ewiiaapaayp Reservation. The potential availability of water from JCSD was inferred to be back up water and no volume was estimated. The DEIR and JCSD Groundwater Report analyze the impacts of providing groundwater to the Project and other renewable energy development projects identified on the list of cumulative projects, including the Rugged and Tierra del Sol solar facilities and the ECO substation (which is now complete and will no longer require a supply of construction water). (DEIR, pp. 3.1.4-27 to 28.) The DEIR and JCSD Groundwater Report demonstrate that adequate groundwater exists to serve all of these projects, though construction schedules have to be coordinated because JCSD will only draw 100,000 gallons per day from Well 6. Though an adequate supply of groundwater exists to serve the Project and others, it should be noted that the JCSD has not yet committed to providing water to the identified cumulative projects. For the Proposed Project, JCSD has indicated it has the availability and no objection to the Groundwater Resource Investigation report. Since the comment was provided,



Tijuana River watershed west of Tecate Divide).and Campo which do not truly represent the project area.

f. We are not aware of any Boulevard rain gauges within the Boundary Creek watershed.
g. SDG&E's ECO Substation project already used almost 15 million gallons from JCSD Well 6
h. JCSD has authorized water sales for cumulative impact projects like Tule Wind.

C1-5 Cont.

6. **Groundwater Investigation Report for Flat Creek Watershed Jacumba Community Services**[7]
   a. **An additional 32 million gallons is the expected demand from JCSD Park Well 4** and potential replacement wells for Wells 1 & 2, located in Flat Creek Watershed.
   b. The majority of Flat Creek Watershed is located in Mexico where other existing users, including Ejido Jacume, are located but not clearly accounted for.
   c. The Flat Creek Watershed Investigation report is unclear on where new wells will be drilled and just where all that water will go.
   d. The report does mention construction water sales.
   e. JCSD Park Well 4 has elevated levels of VOCs and hydrocarbons.
   f. However, the water quality reports are out-dated and should be updated to determine current water quality in the event the water is used for Project construction.

C1-6

7. **Padre Dam MWD Project Facility Availability – Water (PDS399W)**
   a. The form was signed in 2014 before current drought conservation measures were mandated.
   b. No set amount of water was documented
   c. Padre Dam MWD expires 9-18-15 when Project construction is expected to start in May 2016.
   d. PDWMD's 399W attachment includes conditions of approval for use of Construction Recycled Water
   e. The attachment includes a disclaimer NOTE at the bottom stating that approval of recycled water for construction purposes is based on recycled water availability during winter months of Nov-March and requests for out of district water during the rest of the year will be considered based on seasonal circumstances and approved on a case by case basis when surplus recycled water is available

C1-7

[7] http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/regulatory/docs/Jacumba%20Solar/EIR/3.1.4-4-SupplementalGroundwaterResource.pdf

the County notes that JCSD entered into a Water Supply Agreement with Jacumba Solar LLC, which could be used for the construction of the Proposed Project. The commenter also states it was not aware of rain gauges in Boulevard within the Boundary Creek watershed; the location of these rain gauges and others in Jacumba, Boulevard and Campo (identified by latitude/longitude coordinates) and other rain data used in development of the groundwater analysis is identified as set forth in the JCSD Groundwater Report at pages 2-2 to 2-3.

C1-6 This comment recites information from the Groundwater Resources Investigation Report – Flat Creek Watershed Analysis, Jacumba Community Services District prepared by Dudek and dated April 2015, which is incorporated as Appendix 3.4.4-4 of the DEIR ("Flat Creek Groundwater Report"). Facts recited include the expected demand from the potential Park Well and a new production well as a means of providing a secondary source of supply, the location of the Flat Creek Watershed, and that water may have elevated levels of VOCs and hydrocarbons. The Flat Creek Ground Water Report discloses current known data for the JCSD's planned development of an existing monitoring well as a full service well (Park Well) and replacement of one well as a means of providing a secondary source of water and ensuring a redundant back up supply. (Flat Creek Groundwater Report, p. 1-1 to 1-

	2.) These planned wells have utility to JCSD users independent of the Project and are not part of the Project. They are evaluated as cumulative projects in the DEIR. The Project does not rely upon development of these planned new wells to avoid or mitigate a potential significant impact on the environment. As discussed in RTC C1-2 and 5, JCSD and PDMWD have adequate capacity to serve the Project's water demands without constructing new or altering existing facilities. If JCSD puts the planned new wells into production, then the Project would use the water, but it is not dependent on the new water. The comment notes that the Flat Creek Groundwater Report is unclear on where new wells will be drilled and where water will go. The location of the Park Well is APN 660-140-07. (Flat Creek Groundwater Report, p. 1-1 to 1-2; the location of Wells 1 and 2 is available at Figure 9 see also Figure 1 JCSD Well Replacement Project Site.) Because these planned wells have utility to JCSD users independent of the Project, they are properly analyzed as a cumulative project and are not discussed in the same level of detail as the Project. (14 Cal Code Regs §15130(b) [An EIR's discussion of cumulative impacts need not provide the same level of detail as is provided for project-specific effects.]) As JCSD moves forward with these planned well projects in the future, it will be required to demonstrate compliance with CEQA at that time. As noted, water

		from the Park Well may contain some contaminates that would need to be treated prior to potable use. The treatment approach will be determined by JCSD as it proceeds with development of the planned new wells. The County has included conditions of the MUP that give enforcement ability to the County to protect the groundwater resource including limits on the total acre feet, gallons per day pumping, and monitoring of groundwater levels.
	C1-7	This comment concerns the Project's proposal to obtain surplus, recycled water from PDMWD to serve its construction needs. (See RTC C1-5.) As with the JCSD 399-W form, the form PDS 399W form provides that the agency is willing to serve the Project with available water, no contract or agreement for specific water amounts entered into. As PDMWD's practice is to identify intent for a period of no more than 12 months, a further PDS 399-W form or more formal agreement for service of surplus, non-potable water will be utilized to document those details in the future. However, the DEIR discloses that the Project proposes to import approximately 35.9 acre-feet (or 64 percent of total construction demand) of water to support construction activities. (DEIR, p. 3.1.4-27) The comment also notes that the PDS 399-W was signed before drought tolerant measures were mandated, but as noted in RTC C1-5 above, such measures do not restrict non-potable water supplies. On June 3, 2015, Padre Dam's Board of

f. This information raises questions on the validity of relying on PDMWD water being available. C1-7 Cont.

8. **The list of cumulative impact projects contains outdated project status**. It should be updated for accuracy. Both ECO Substation and Sempra's Energia Sierra Juarez Wind Phase 1 are constructed and operational. C1-8

9. **Figure 1-7 Fire Station locations provides a false sense of full coverage**: C1-9
   a. Boulevard Fire and Jacumba Fire are currently covered with reserve personnel and Boulevard has been dark for at least a few days in late April early May.
   b. Recently, Boulevard Fire has been unstaffed for days in a row. This has been a chronic problem in our underserved rural areas.

10. **FPP @ page 39[8] incorrectly states that construction of the new Boulevard Fire station will add to additional fire fighting resources to the Project.** C1-10
    a. NOT TRUE.
    b. The new Boulevard Fire station will replace the existing volunteer station and once operational will result in the closure of the old Boulevard Volunteer Station and CalFire's White Star station on Tierra Del Sol Road in Boulevard, *resulting in reduced resources not additional resources.*
    c. Appendix C Fire Facilities Availability Form is not filled out or signed by County.

11. **FPP Appendix D Battery Storage downplays overall significant and cumulatively significant risk, but they do admit the following critical and alarming information @ page D-8[9]:** C1-11
    a. The energy storage containers include electric hazard
    b. The energy storage containers are adjacent to energized solar panels
    c. There is extra energy that may be released from polymeric materials burning (binder, separator, etc.)
    d. Burning batteries would present smoke toxicity and environmental issues
    e. There is no known way to eliminate "ignition sources"; e.g.: fire initiated from an internal short, subsequent to a manufacturing defect
    f. There may be re-ignitions and post-fire monitoring will be required.

12. **Jacumba Solar includes 4.7 million square feet of overall improvements according to Minor Storm Water Management Plan[10]** C1-12

[8] http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/regulatory/docs/Jacumba%20Solar/EIR/2.4-2-FireProtectionPlan.pdf
[9] http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/regulatory/docs/Jacumba%20Solar/EIR/2.4-2-FireProtectionPlan.pdf
[10] http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/regulatory/docs/Jacumba%20Solar/EIR/3.1.4-2-MinorSWMP.pdf

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Directors adopted amendments to its Water Supply Management regulations in response to state requirements that it conserve 20 percent of its potable water demand compared to 2013 levels. (See Ordinance 2015-05.) Section 5.1.3(a) entitled "Application" clearly states, "The provisions of this policy do not apply to use of water from private wells or to recycled water." In fact supplying projects such as this Project with recycled water for construction is part of Padre Dam's potable water conservation strategy, which states, "[u]se recycled or non-potable water for construction purposes, such as dust control and soil compaction, when available and required by Padre Dam." The DEIR substantiates that PDMWD is expected to have sufficient recycled water surplus to service the proposed Project during construction as PDMWD can treat 2,000,000 gallons per day and in 2010 was only producing 1,673,000 gallons per day on average, or about 84 percent of production capacity. Accordingly, the EIR does not rely solely on a timely and unexpired PDS 399 was evidence that PDMWD has sufficient water supplies to provide the Project with construction water.

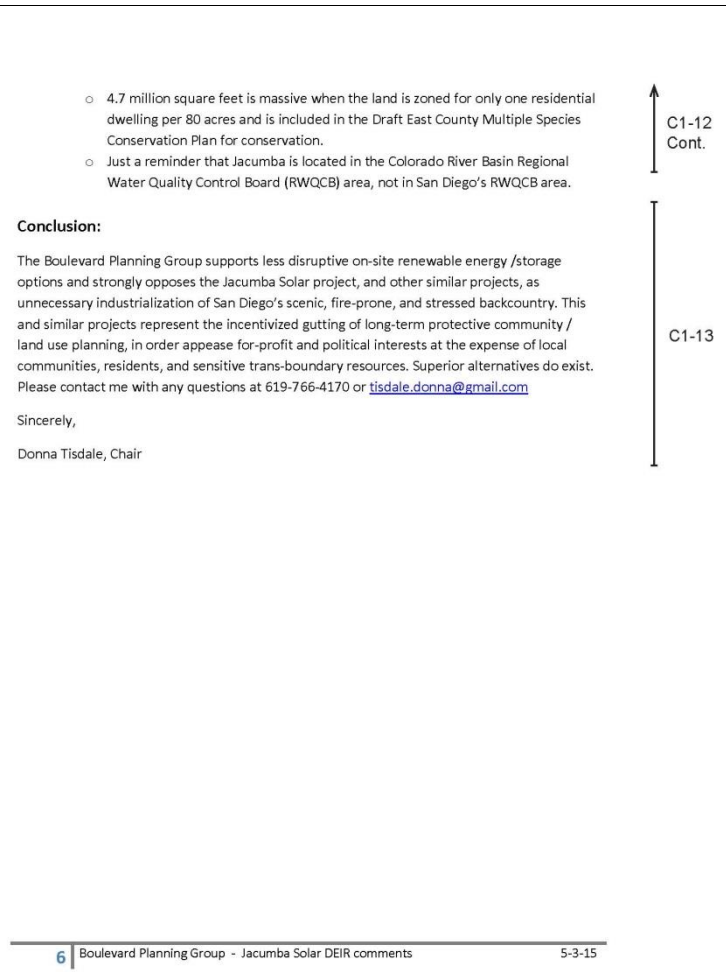
C1-8 The FEIR has been revised to include the most up to date status of both the ECO substation and ESJ Phase 1 projects.

	C1-9	This comment states that the Boulevard Fire and Jacumba Fire stations may not always be adequately staffed. The County acknowledges this comment; however the comment does not address the adequacy of the DEIR. The level of staffing in the fire stations would not affect the need for physical improvements that would drive potential effects on the environment. Table 3.1.6-1 within Section 3.1.6 of the DEIR includes information provided by San Diego County Fire Authority (SDCFA) regarding the personnel at each fire station. It also bears noting that the average fire response time to the Project site is 9 minutes, well within the General Plan response time goal of 20 minutes. (DEIR, p. 2.4-7). Moreover, the Boulevard and Jacumba fire stations are not the only fire stations available to serve the Project site. Pursuant to various mutual aid agreements and arrangements, multiple fire-fighting resources are available to serve the Project site, including fire stations owned and staffed by San Diego County Fire Authority, CAL FIRE, San Diego Rural Fire Protection District, the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the Campo Indian Tribe's Campo Reservation Fire Station. (DEIR, p. 3.1.6-2, 2.4-29.) Other proximate fire stations that can serve the Project include the SDCFA's Campo Fire Station, CAL FIRE's Campo Station, and San Diego Rural Fire Protection District's (SDRFPD) Lake Moreno Fire Station

	As required by Mitigation Measure M-HZ-2, the Project will also provide fair share funding to ensure adequate emergency services, equipment and personnel are available to maintain emergency response times of less than 20 minutes, particularly during construction and decommissioning activities. (DEIR, p. 2.4-38.) The Project will also implement a fire protection plan pursuant to Mitigation Measure M-HZ-1 to reduce the risk of a fire onsite and improve the effectiveness of an emergency response should a fire occur, which will require providing specialized training to local firefighting forces about the solar facility, maintaining specified access ways, maintaining defensible space, providing two-10,000 gallon water tanks onsite for fire protection, using non-combustible materials for Project installations, and implementing battery storage protections (discussed further below). (DEIR, pp. 2.4-26 to 28; see also Draft Fire Protection Plan.) Additionally, the Project will not use any flammable heating oil used in older generation facilities which have a documented emergency call rate of 0.83 emergency calls per year. (DEIR, p. 2.4-29 to 30.) With all of the protections described above, the Project is expected to average far fewer than one emergency call per year (particularly during operations when the facility will be unmanned). Substantial evidence supports the adequacy of fire services for the Project even if the Boulevard and Jacumba fire stations are not fully staffed at all times.

	See the Draft Fire Protection Plan (Appendix 2.4-2) for additional analysis demonstrating that the Project will not result in significant fire risks.
	C1-10 In response to this comment, the FEIR has been revised to clarify that the previously planned construction of the new fire station is expected to provide improved fire response services to the region, rather than additional. The co-location of the Boulevard Fire Department station, apparatus and staff and the CAL FIRE White Star resources will result in a more streamlined, cost efficient operation for fire and emergency medical response in the area. The location of the station is within the General Plan travel time standard for the Project, and the resources anticipated at the new co-located station will be at least equivalent to the existing, in terms of apparatus. It is expected that staffing capabilities will be complimented by the closer day to day training and interactions resulting from the co-location of career and reserve firefighters. The Fire Protection Plan, included as Appendix 2.4-2 of the DEIR, has now been finalized with the San Diego Rural Fire Protection District. The completed approval form is included within the Final EIR/Errata.
	C1-11 This comment recites fire risks associated with lithium ion batteries as set forth on Page D-9 of the Fire Protection Plan. Potential electrical hazards associated

	with battery storage are identified in Section 2.4.3.1 and 2.4.3.3 of the DEIR, as well as Section 4.4 of the Fire Protection Plan. These sections have been revised to describe measures that will be implemented to ensure that the battery storage components do not result in significant fire hazards. For example, the DEIR explains that newer battery technologies reduce the occurrence of thermal runaway (which can lead to fire) through a system of protections including internal cell monitoring and partitioning; use of non-flammable chemicals; container design features; ventilation, and air conditioning systems; inert gas fire suppression systems; requiring battery components to be on concrete to avoid contact with ignition sources; and not including liquids that could spill. (DEIR, p. 2.4-25.) The Project's fire protection plan will require implementation of these battery storage protection measures. (See Mitigation Measure M-HZ-1.) The battery storage units are enclosed and the enclosures include a fire suppression system. Battery storage would be enclosed and adjacent to the substation. While they would be in proximity to solar panels they would not be immediately adjacent to solar panels. Please refer to the Fire Protection Plan section 4.4 for further discussion of battery storage protection features. The DEIR accurately discloses that there is some fire risk, but also properly concludes that with M-HZ-1, the risk is reduced to a level of insignificance. Due to the fact that an EIR has been prepared, the County is permitted



- 4.7 million square feet is massive when the land is zoned for only one residential dwelling per 80 acres and is included in the Draft East County Multiple Species Conservation Plan for conservation.
- Just a reminder that Jacumba is located in the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) area, not in San Diego's RWQCB area.

C1-12 Cont.

Conclusion:

The Boulevard Planning Group supports less disruptive on-site renewable energy /storage options and strongly opposes the Jacumba Solar project, and other similar projects, as unnecessary industrialization of San Diego's scenic, fire-prone, and stressed backcountry. This and similar projects represent the incentivized gutting of long-term protective community / land use planning, in order appease for-profit and political interests at the expense of local communities, residents, and sensitive trans-boundary resources. Superior alternatives do exist. Please contact me with any questions at 619-766-4170 or tisdale.donna@gmail.com

C1-13

Sincerely,

Donna Tisdale, Chair

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under CEQA to rely on this expert analysis even if a commenter disagrees with the analysis.

C1-12 Chapter 2 of the DEIR consistently identified that approximately 108 acres of disturbance would result from implementation of the Proposed Project, which correlates to 4.7 million square feet. Commenter states that the land is zoned for one dwelling unit per 80 acres and implies that this is the only proper use of the site. The County notes that it is not the only allowed use of the site. Solar development is also authorized with a Major Use Permit (MUP) and the applicant properly applied for Project includes an application for a MUP.

Section 3.1.4 of the DEIR notes that the surface water bodies associated with the Project are located within the Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board, as noted. The County acknowledges this comment; however it does not address the adequacy of the DEIR, therefore no further response is required.

C1-13 The County acknowledges this concluding comment; however it either does not address the adequacy of the DEIR or has been addressed through the responses above or elsewhere in the administrative record. Therefore, no further response is required.

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