

GR-1 Socioeconomic Impacts

A number of commenters stated that implementation of the Campo Wind Project with Boulder Brush Facilities (Project) and other cumulative projects would result in socioeconomic impacts, including reduced home and property values in the area, and environmental justice impacts.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires an analysis of physical impacts to the environment; it does not require analysis of social and economic impacts. Under CEQA, “an economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment” (14 CCR 15131 and 15382). Effects analyzed under CEQA must be related to a physical change (14 CCR 15358[b]). Property value loss and environmental justice impacts in and of themselves are not physical impacts required to be included in a CEQA analysis. The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) includes adequate analysis under CEQA for community services and population and housing, including Chapter 3.1.8, Public Services; Chapter 3.1.9, Utilities and Service Systems; Section 3.2.2, Population and Housing; and Chapter 8, Other CEQA Considerations, as well as the impacts that physical changes of the Project may have on a community, including Chapter 2.1, Aesthetics; Chapter 2.2, Air Quality; Chapter 2.5, Hazards and Hazardous Materials; and Chapter 2.6, Noise.

Although not required under CEQA, as part of the analysis of the Project under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the Project includes Section 4.7, Socioeconomic Conditions, which addresses potential socioeconomic impacts to the community. The EIS found no significant socioeconomic impacts (see impact indicators SOCIO-1 through SOCIO-4 in the Final EIS¹). The Final EIS specifically evaluated the concern that the presence of wind turbines located near existing homes or property could negatively impact home or property values (please refer to Final EIS Section 4.7.2, Effects, Impact SOCIO-2). The Final EIS determined, based on several non-Project-specific literature reviews completed for numerous other recent wind energy projects (e.g., the 2016 Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan, the 2010 Tule Wind project, and the 2008 Sunrise Powerlink project)^{2,3,4} and data on home listings and sales submitted by commenters on

¹ The Final EIS prepared for the Project can be found at <http://campowind.com/>

² BLM (Bureau of Land Management). 2016. *Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP): Land Use Plan Amendment to the California Desert Conservation Plan, Bishop Resource Management Plan, and Bakersfield Resources Management Plan*. BLM/CA/PL-2016/03+1793+8321. September 2016. <https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/plans-in-development/california/desert-renewable-energy-conservation-plan/>.

³ Iberdrola Renewables. 2010. *Applicant’s Environmental Document for the Tule Wind Project*. Draft. September 2010. https://www.dudek.com/ECOSUB/AEDTule_ECOSUB.htm.

⁴ CPUC and BLM (California Public Utilities Commission and Bureau of Land Management). 2008. *FINAL Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Land Use Amendment San Diego Gas & Electric Company Application for the Sunrise Powerlink Project SCH No. 2006091071*. DOI Control No. FES-08-54. Prepared by Aspen Environmental Group. October 2008. <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/aspen/sunrise/toc-feir.htm>.

Responses to Comments

the Final EIS, that existing or planned wind energy projects have not significantly impacted overall property prices in the area. The Final EIS analysis of impacts to property values is incorporated by reference and provided for informational purposes.

With respect to property values, several commenters submitted studies suggesting that wind projects generally result in decreased property values; however, even the studies submitted by the commenters do not demonstrate a consensus view pointing to a consistent and quantifiable relationship between wind projects and property values. It is up to the lead agency to evaluate the presented material and data and make its own determinations regarding the material's competence and accuracy. It is the responsibility of the lead agency to weigh the evidence, and it may accept one expert opinion over another, so long as the decision is supported by substantial evidence. In general, claims of diminished property value through decreased marketability are based on the reported concern about hazards/public health, increased noise, and visual impacts associated with living in proximity to wind energy projects and high-voltage transmission lines. These issues are analyzed extensively in Chapter 2.1, Chapter 2.5, and Chapter 2.6 of the Draft EIR. Additional responses concerning public health, noise, and aesthetics are contained in Global Responses GR-2, GR-4, and GR-8, respectively.

Over the last 3 years, the number of single-family residences listed for sale annually in the Boulevard area has remained relatively consistent despite the construction of several large-scale energy projects in the area. Of the 57 home sales since 2017, half have closed at the listing price or higher. Boulevard is a unique sub-market, and there is considerable disparity in the square footage of the homes, condition of the properties, and associated acreage sold in this period; however, similar to other markets within the broader San Diego market, the sales price per square foot within the Boulevard area has continued to increase annually (please refer to PROP-1 in Section 2.21 of Appendix T, Responses to Comments, to the Final EIS).

Lastly, some commenters stated that Senate Bill 1000 requires the EIR for the Project to include an environmental justice analysis. Senate Bill 1000 is inapplicable to the Project. Senate Bill 1000 amended Section 65302 of the Government Code to require the County of San Diego to include an environmental justice element in its General Plan whenever it updates two or more elements of the General Plan concurrently. The County of San Diego General Plan does not include an environmental justice element because it has not yet amended two or more elements. Additionally, the Project does not trigger the requirement for the County of San Diego to add an environmental justice element to the General Plan under the new law. The Final EIS identifies significant and unavoidable impacts because low-income, disadvantaged communities would experience significant and unavoidable aesthetic and noise impacts (while also experiencing economic benefits in the form of construction-related job opportunities and spending).