

Response to Comment Letter I12

P. Charvat

I12-1 The comment states the commenter is a resident of Jacumba and strongly opposes the JVR Energy Park as described in the 2020 Draft EIR. The comment also states the Project would place thousands of solar panels in Jacumba Valley adjacent to the village. In response, the County acknowledges the commenter’s opposition to the Proposed Project. The comment does not raise an issue regarding the adequacy of the analysis contained within the Draft EIR; therefore, no further response is required.

I12-2 The comment states the project is wrong for rural Jacumba. The comment also states the project will lower property values, destroy scarce wildlife habitat, destroy the rural community character, block scenic vistas, introduce fire danger risk into the neighborhood, and squander the remaining land that could be used for Jacumba’s future growth.

In response to the comment regarding property values, CEQA requires analysis of physical changes to the environment. Please refer to Global Response GR-1 in the Final EIR for a discussion of CEQA and socioeconomic impacts. Regarding impacts to wildlife habitat, Section 2.3 Biological Resources of the Draft EIR analyzes the impacts to wildlife habitat and other biological resources. The Draft EIR determined that with implementation of mitigation measures, impacts to biological resources would be less than significant.

Regarding impacts to community character and scenic vistas, Section 2.1 Aesthetics of the Draft EIR includes an analysis of visual impacts to community character and focal or panoramic vistas. The Draft EIR concluded that the Proposed Project would conflict with the established visual character of Jacumba Hot Springs (**Impact AE-1**) and would conflict with the small-town characteristics and open characteristics of the Project site (**Impact AE-2**). The Draft EIR also determined that the Proposed Project result in significant impacts to focus or panoramic vistas. Implementation of mitigation measures (**M-AE-1 through M-AE-6**) would reduce the visual impacts, but not to a level of less than significant. The impacts would remain significant and unavoidable. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the decision-making agency to balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits of a proposed project against its significant and unavoidable impacts when determining whether to approve the project. When a lead agency approves a project, the agency must state in writing the specific reasons to support its action; this statement is referred to a

Volume II – Individual Responses to Comments

“Statement of Overriding Considerations.” Under CEQA, the County must make a Statement of Overriding Considerations” to approve the Proposed Project.

Fire risks are discussed in the Fire Protection Plan (Appendix N) and Section 2.12 Wildfire of the Draft EIR. With implementation of mitigation measures **M-WF-1** (Fire Protection Plan), **M-WF-2** (Construction Fire Protection Plan), and **M-WF-3** (Fire Protection and Mitigation Agreement), impacts associated with wildfire risk would be less than significant.

Regarding Jacumba’s future growth, as stated in the Draft EIR the lifespan of the Proposed Project is 35 years, not including construction and decommissioning. Accordingly, the Project is not a permanent land use and will not preclude the potential for the Project site from being used differently in the future.

- I12-3** The comment states the Project is not in keeping with land use descriptions in the Mountain Empire Sub-Regional Plan adopted in 2011. In response, an analysis of the Proposed Project’s consistency with the Mountain Empire Subregional Plan is included in Section 3.1.4 Land Use and Planning of the Draft EIR. Specifically, please refer to Table 3.1.4-5. The Draft EIR concluded that the Proposed Project would not conflict with applicable land use plans and policies, including the Mountain Empire Subregional Plan.
- I12-4** The comment states “If built, this project’s closeness to a rural village would set a bad precedence that would similarly affect other backcountry communities.” The comment does not raise an issue regarding the adequacy of the analysis contained within the Draft EIR; therefore, no further response is required.
- I12-5** The comment states “For those reasons, the County Planning Commission and County Supervisors must reject this project by choosing the no project alternative.” The comment does not raise an issue regarding the adequacy of the analysis contained within the Draft EIR; therefore, no further response is required.