Response to Comment Letter I17

Don and Kate Bloom
February 4, 2014
Potential adverse impacts of the project were addressed in the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR). The decision makers will consider all information in the Final Program Environmental Impact Report (FPEIR) and related documents before making a decision on the Proposed Project. The information in this comment will be provided in the FPEIR for review and consideration by the decision makers.

A portion of the Tierra del Sol solar farm site would require a rezone to remove the Special Area Designator “A” for certain portions of the site and to ensure compliance with Section 5100 et seq. of the Zoning Ordinance. Although the Tierra del Sol site is located on “Other Land” as determined by the San Diego County Important Farmland 2008 Map, agricultural operations do not currently occur on the site. The Special Area Designator “A” specifies that a portion of the Tierra del Sol site is located in a County-designated Agricultural Preserve. The Tierra del Sol Solar Farm applicant is processing an Agricultural Preserve Disestablishment application with the County in conjunction with the other project permit applications. (See DPEIR, Chapter 2.5, Land Use.)

Issues raised in this comment were considered and addressed in the DPEIR. The removal of vegetation is considered in Chapter 2.3, Biological Resources, construction noise is analyzed in Chapter 2.6, Noise,
The solar panels, if installed, will continue to both a public and private nuisance to ourselves, our families, and the community due to the massive height of the panels and the visible glare of the panels. You can hardly screen this project from our existing views of the property across the street. We would lose the beautiful rural views of the hills, the chaparral, sage brush, and the rocks.

Instead we would be staring at massive, glaring, monster solar panels.

Also, the operating of these solar panels will continue to be both a public and private nuisance. They generate excessive heat. We worry about the fire hazard with the excessive heat generated from these panels.

And what is the effect of “global warming”? These panels generate 200+ degrees of heat. There is so much recent concern of the industrial impact causing global warming and this is a prime example of that.

No one knows what the electrical charges or currents are generated from these massive sources generating electricity. When my daughter was in 6th grade, her science fair project was to measure the electromagnetic forces (EMFs) emitted from electrical sources. My daughter and I checked out an instrument from SDG&E, that measured the electromagnetic forces from all electrical sources.

The dial of the instrument registered much higher whenever you put the instrument next to electrical poles, utility substations, electrical wires on telephone wires, etc.

We don’t want those massive electromagnetic forces next to our homes. No one knows what the health and safety hazards are. We don’t want to hear in 20 years how dangerous these Electro-Magnetic forces are.

Another issue creating a public and private nuisance directly to our homes and the community, are the winds. We frequently have wind gusts in excess of 60 mph in Boulevard. Those panels could fly off in the wind and damage our homes or injure people in the area.

Lastly, which company will compensate the property owners like ourselves that would suffer real economic harm from the substantial loss of value of our two properties after a project like this is built literally across the street from us – 30 feet away?

If you do not agree these solar panels. The landowners in Boulevard do not want these massive industrial projects in their rural community. Projects like this would be best placed in the areas demanding the electricity – on rooftops, on parking garages, on buildings in the city demanding more electricity.

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and fugitive dust is analyzed in Chapter 2.2, Air Quality. Vegetation will not be removed by blasting but will be removed during the preparation of the site (grading) for the installation of the solar facility. Typical construction equipment such as graders and tractors will be used to remove the vegetation.

Refer to common response WR1 and the discussion in Chapter 3.1.5, Hydrology and Water Quality. The project will be conditioned to cap construction and operational water use from on-site wells to prevent drawdown below County significance thresholds. As such, the Proposed Project would not result in neighboring residential wells going dry or cause streams surrounding the area to run dry.

The County agrees that the Proposed Project will result in significant adverse effects related to aesthetics. The project will be conditioned with landscape screens for both the Rugged and Tierra del Sol projects. The landscaping proposed would break up the mass and scale of the trackers, block views of trackers and other project components from critical mobile and stationary viewpoints, and create visual interest to divert attention away from the trackers. Landscaping screening would only partially screen the views of the trackers. The trackers (approximately 30 feet in height) are taller than the recommended trees and shrubs. In addition, wildfire

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Response to Comments

I17-6

As described in Section 1.2.1.1 of the DPEIR and further clarified in the response to comment I1-1, heat from the solar panels dissipates quickly and would not affect ambient air temperatures. Therefore, the County disagrees that the panels would produce excessive heat that could pose a health risk to neighboring residents, vegetation, or wildlife around the Proposed Project sites.

The Proposed Project’s effects on global warming have been addressed in Section 3.1.3, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, of the DPEIR. Based on the evaluation conducted, all of the proposed projects (Rugged Solar, Tierra del Sol, LanWest, and LanEast) would have a less than significant effect of greenhouse gas emissions.

The County acknowledges the commenter’s concern associated with electric and magnetic fields (EMF). Recognizing there is a great deal of public interest and concern regarding potential health effects and hazards from exposure to EMFs, the DPEIR provides information regarding these potential issues; see Section 3.1.4.5 of the DPEIR. The DPEIR does not consider EMFs in the context of the CEQA for a determination of environmental impacts because there is no agreement among scientists that EMFs create a
health risk and because there are no defined or adopted CEQA standards for defining health risks from EMFs. As a result, the EMF information is presented for the benefit of the public and decision makers. Furthermore, in response to this comment and other comments regarding EMF, a memorandum was prepared by Asher R. Sheppard, PhD to support the information provided in the DPEIR and provide more detail; see Appendix 9.0-1 of the DPEIR. The memorandum concludes that EMF from the Proposed Project are highly localized and pose no known concern for human health.

I17-7 The County does not agree that the solar panels could pose a risk to homes or people in the areas by detaching during high winds. As described in the DPEIR, each tracker would be mounted on a 28-inch steel mast that would be installed to accommodate specific wind loading and soil conditions (DPEIR Section 1.2.1.1). In addition, during high wind or storm events, trackers would be positioned in a horizontal “stow mode” (DPEIR Section 1.2.1.1).

I17-8 This comment raises concerns regarding property values. This topic was not evaluated in the DPEIR since it is not related to an environmental impact (see 14 CCR § 15131; see also response to comment I76-2.). The information in this comment will be provided to the decision makers for their consideration during the hearing process for the Proposed Project.
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