

Comment Letter I20

Hingtgen, Robert J

From: Cherry Diefenbach <csdiefenbach@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 05, 2014 9:11 AM
To: Hingtgen, Robert J
Cc: Jacob, Dianne
Subject: Soitec Solar PEIR

Dear Mr. Hingtgen:

I strongly oppose all four of the solar projects as described in the Soitec Solar PEIR.

I oppose these projects because of their significant impacts to the natural environment, sensitive biological and cultural resources, and on adjacent residents' quality of life, property values, and wells. These industrial solar farms will negatively transform the community character of Boulevard and will as a minimum, displace established wildlife corridors. I am also concerned about the placement of large scale solar farms in a wildfire-prone area that has limited firefighting capabilities and staffing.

Specifically I am appalled that the County would consider the Lanwest and Laneast projects which would place more than 1100 CPV trackers adjacent along Historic Highway 80, a designated scenic highway. This would place them in a wetlands area near where a large grove of coast live oak trees is currently thriving.

Regarding the Rugged project site, the proposed placement of 3500 or so of these huge trackers in the Tule Creek area will do irreparable damage to the water table and the stunning natural landscape in this sensitive resource area. How will the excessive heat generated by the solar panels be mitigated and how will the scrapping of 765 acres impact the natural vegetation and wildlife around the project site?

With the Tierra Del Sol location, I am concerned about the negative impact of glare from out-of-alignment trackers on residents and railway operations also the potential drawdown that the solar facility wells will have on the local aquifer. (In Pine Valley for instance, our 2013 annual rainfall totals were measured as less than 2/3 of our normal rainfall totals.) Recently Governor Jerry Brown declared the California was facing a severe drought. How can the County possibly justify the consideration of these expensive and water-thirsty projects?

As a property owner in both Pine Valley and Jacumba, I am convinced that these huge solar projects will lower property values, impact the precious aquifers and potentially add additional fire danger to adjacent residences and communities. **They do not fit our rural landscapes!**

For those stated reasons, I support the NO PROJECT alternative listed in the Soitec Solar PEIR.

Sincerely,

Cherry Diefenbach

Response to Comment Letter I20

**Cherry Diefenbach
February 5, 2014**

I20-1

The County of San Diego (County) acknowledges the commenter's opposition to the Proposed Project. Environmental issues raised in this comment were considered and addressed in the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR). Specific comments on the Proposed Project are addressed below.

I20-2

The County agrees that the Proposed Project may have substantial adverse effects related to scenic highways including Historic Highway 80 (referred to as Old Highway 80 in the DPEIR). The issues raised in this comment were considered and addressed in Section 2.1.3.1, Scenic Vistas, of the DPEIR.

I20-3

The County agrees that the Proposed Project may have potentially adverse effects related to wetlands and groundwater. However, as described in Section 2.3.3.2 of the DPEIR, a 50-foot buffer would be maintained around wetland features in accordance with the County's Resource Protection Ordinance. Regarding the Rugged site, an open space designation in the Major Use Permit is proposed for Tule Creek to avoid impacts to biological resources. Based on the evaluation prepared, it has been determined that the Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on biological resources.

	<p>Impacts to groundwater resources were considered and addressed in Section 3.1.5.3.4, Groundwater Resources, of the DPEIR. The DPEIR determined that the because the solar farms would each individually have less-than-significant impacts with respect to groundwater resources and with implementation of M-BI-PP-15 (Groundwater Monitoring and Mitigation Plans), the Proposed Project as a whole would result in a less than significant impact to groundwater resources.</p> <p>As described in Section 1.2.1.1 and further clarified in response 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.</p> <p>Direct habitat impacts were considered and addressed in Chapter 2.3, Biological Resources, of the DPEIR.</p> <p>I20-4 The County agrees that the Proposed Project may have potential adverse effects related to glare. This was analyzed in Section 2.1.3.3, Light and Glare, of the DPEIR.</p> <p>I20-5 Refer to common response WR1 and WR2. Construction and operational water use from on-site wells has been capped to prevent drawdown below County significance thresholds. Therefore, the</p>
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	<p>Proposed Project would not result in drawdown of the local aquifer. The County acknowledges Governor Jerry Brown's drought declaration. The comment information will be provided in the FPEIR for review and consideration by the decision makers.</p> <p>I20-6 The County acknowledges the commenter's support for the No Project Alternative. The decision makers will consider all information in the FPEIR and related documents before making a decision on the Proposed Project. The information in this comment letter will be provided in the FPEIR for review and consideration by the decision makers prior to making a decision on the Proposed Project.</p> <p>Related to the commenter's concern regard additional fire danger, please refer to the responses to comments I2-2 and I19-1.</p>
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