Potential impacts related to groundwater use were considered and addressed in the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR); see Sections 3.1.5.3.4, Groundwater Resources, and 3.1.9.3.1, Water. As stated in Section 3.1.9.3.1, conditions will be placed on the Major Use Permit that will restrict the amount of water that is permitted to be withdrawn from the on-site wells in order to prevent interference with off-site wells. As such, it is not anticipated that wells of neighboring residents will experience any significant impacts as a result of the Proposed Project.

Please also refer to common response WR1 and WR2.

Related to the use of the Rough Acres Ranch property for the Proposed Project, the Rugged solar farm will be sited in part on Rough Acres Ranch. The proposed solar use for this site complies with the current zoning of the site (DPEIR Section 2.5.3.2) with the issuance of a Major Use Permit.

Potential impacts to biological resources, including effects on groundwater dependent habitat not directly affected by the Project and the direct loss of habitat, were also addressed in the DPEIR (see Chapter 2.3) and mitigated to less than significant. Fugitive dust
control is addressed in the context of the protection of biological resources (DPEIR Section 2.3.3), as well as air quality (Section 2.2.3.2). Based on the environmental analysis, it has been determined that there would be less than significant impacts related to fugitive dust.

In response to the comment related to siting the project in other locations, alternative sites were evaluated for the Proposed Project and were included the DPEIR analysis of alternatives. Also, please refer to common response ALT1.

The Rough Acres property is zoned General Agriculture (A72) which allows for solar farms (Major Impact Service and Utilities) with the approval of a Major Use Permit. Zoning for the Rough Acres property did not change with the approval of the General Plan update.

The County acknowledges the commenter’s opposition to the Project. The information in this comment will be provided in the Final Program Environmental Impact Report for review and consideration by the decision makers.