Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal

Mail to: State Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 (916) 445-0613
For Hand Delivery/Street Address: 1400 Tenth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

SCH #

Project Title: California Flats Solar Project
Lead Agency: County of Monterey RMA - Planning Department
Mailing Address: 168 W. Alisal St., 2nd Floor
City: Salinas
Zip: 93901
County: Monterey

Project Location:
County: Monterey
City/Nearest Community: Parkfield
Cross Streets: Highway 41 & Highway 46
Zip Code: 93426

Longitude/Latitude (degrees, minutes and seconds): 35°51'14.89" N / -120°20'24.5" W Total Acres: 2,675
Assessor's Parcel No.: 24 parcels
Section: 10
Twp.: 24S
Range: 15E
Base: 
Within 2 Miles: State Hwy #: 41, 46
Waterways: Cottonwood Creek (on-site)
Airports: none
Railways: none
Schools: none

Document Type:
CEQA: ☑ NOP
☑ Early Cons
☑ Neg Dec
☑ Mit Neg Dec
☐ Draft EIR
☐ Supplement/Subsequent EIR
☐ NEPA:
☑ NOI
☐ Draft EIS
☐ FONSI
☐ Other:

Local Action Type:
☐ General Plan Update
☐ General Plan Amendment
☐ General Plan Element
☐ Community Plan
☐ Specific Plan
☐ Master Plan
☐ Planned Unit Development
☐ Site Plan
☐ Use Permit
☐ Rezone
☐ Prezone
☐ Land Division (Subdivision, etc.)
☐ Annexation
☐ Redevelopment
☐ Coastal Permit
☐ Other:

Development Type:
☐ Residential:
☐ Acres
☐ Units
☐ Office: Sq.ft.
☐ Acres
☐ Employees
☐ Commercial: Sq.ft.
☐ Acres
☐ Employees
☐ Industrial: Sq.ft.
☐ Acres
☐ Employees
☐ Transportation:
☐ Type
☐ Mining:
☐ Mineral
☐ Power:
☐ Type Solar
☐ MW280
☐ Waste Treatment:
☐ Type MGD
☐ Hazardous Waste:
☐ Other:

Project Issues Discussed in Document:
☐ Aesthetic/Visual
☐ Agricultural Land
☐ Air Quality
☐ Archaeological/Historical
☐ Biological Resources
☐ Coastal Zone
☐ Drainage/Absorption
☐ Economic/Jobs
☐ Fiscal
☐ Flood Plain/Flooding
☐ Forest Land/Fire Hazard
☐ Geologic/Seismic
☐ Minerals
☐ Noise
☐ Population/Housing Balance
☐ Public Services/Facilities
☐ Recreation/Parks
☐ Schools/Universities
☐ Septic Systems
☐ Sewer Capacity
☐ Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading
☐ Solid Waste
☐ Toxic/Hazardous
☐ Traffic/Circulation
☐ Vegetation
☐ Water Quality
☐ Water Supply/Groundwater
☐ Wetland/Riparian
☐ Growth Inducement
☐ Land Use
☐ Cumulative Effects
☐ Other:

Present Land Use/Zoning/General Plan Designation:
Grazing/Farmland/160 (F/160) and Permanent Grazing/160 (PG/160)/Agricultural

Project Description: (please use a separate page if necessary)
The proposed project is a 280-megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) photovoltaic (PV) solar power facility over approximately 2,030 acres of a 2,670-acre site (including a 135 acre transmission line corridor). Infrastructure improvements would include: an internal electrical collector system; pad-mounted inverters and transformers; two substations; a 4,000 square foot operations and maintenance (O&M) building; security fencing; security lighting (at the O&M facility, switching station, substations and main project entry location at Highway 41); and improvements to and reconfiguration of existing internal access roads, as well as Highway 41 site access. PG&E would construct a switching station at the site connecting the proposed project to the existing Morro Bay-Gates 230 kilovolt (kv) transmission line, which transsects the site.

Note: The State Clearinghouse will assign identification numbers for all new projects. If a SCH number already exists for a project (e.g. Notice of Preparation or previous draft document) please fill in.

Revised 2010
Reviewing Agencies Checklist

Lead Agencies may recommend State Clearinghouse distribution by marking agencies below with an "X". If you have already sent your document to the agency please denote that with an "S".

X Air Resources Board
X California Emergency Management Agency
X California Highway Patrol
X Caltrans District #5
X Caltrans Division of Aeronautics
X Caltrans Planning
X Central Valley Flood Protection Board
X Coachella Valley Mtns. Conservancy
X Coastal Commission
X Colorado River Board
X Conservation, Department of
X Corrections, Department of
X Delta Protection Commission
X Education, Department of
X Energy Commission
X Fish & Game Region #4
X Food & Agriculture, Department of
X Forestry and Fire Protection, Department of
X General Services, Department of
X Health Services, Department of
X Housing & Community Development
X Native American Heritage Commission
X Office of Historic Preservation
X Office of Public School Construction
X Parks & Recreation, Department of
X Pesticide Regulation, Department of
X Public Utilities Commission
X Regional WQCB #3
X Resources Agency
X Resources Recycling and Recovery, Department of
X S.F. Bay Conservation & Development Comm.
X San Gabriel & Lower L.A. Rivers & Mtns. Conservancy
X San Joaquin River Conservancy
X Santa Monica Mtns. Conservancy
X State Lands Commission
X SWRCB: Clean Water Grants
X SWRCB: Water Quality
X SWRCB: Water Rights
X Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
X Toxic Substances Control, Department of
X Water Resources, Department of

Local Public Review Period (to be filled in by lead agency)

Starting Date April 10, 2013
Ending Date May 10, 2013

Lead Agency (Complete if applicable):

Consulting Firm: Rincon Consultants, Inc.
Address: 437 Figueroa Street, Suite 203
City/State/Zip: Monterey, CA 93940
Contact: Megan Jones, Senior Planner
Phone: 831-915-9757

Applicant: Element Power Solar
Address: 421 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1000
City/State/Zip: Portland, OR 97204
Phone: (928) 607-1691

Signature of Lead Agency Representative: [Signature]
Date: April 9, 2013

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: Responsible Agencies/Interested Parties

Date: April 9, 2013

From: Taven M. Kinison Brown, Senior Planner, Monterey County Resource Management Agency – Planning Department

Subject: Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report for the California Flats Solar Project Development Application
Planning File Number: PLN120294

The County of Monterey will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the California Flats Solar Project (Planning File Number: PLN120294) proposed by Element Power.

We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency’s statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. Due to time limits mandated by state law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please submit your response to the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Sincerely,

Taven M. Kinison Brown,
Senior Planner
(831) 755-5173

Attachments: Project and Scoping Meeting Information, including Potential Environmental Effects
Project Location/Vicinity Map and Site Plan

Cc: State Clearinghouse, Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 212
P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044
April 9, 2013

NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND SCOPING MEETING

SUBJECT: Notice of preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the California Flats Solar Project. The County of Monterey will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an EIR for the project identified below. The County would like input on the scope and content of the environmental analysis.

PROJECT NAME: California Flats Solar Project

PROJECT LOCATION: The proposed project would be located in the southeastern corner of Monterey County; approximately 7 miles southeast of the community of Parkfield and 25 miles northeast of the City of Paso Robles, near the borders of Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Kings and Fresno counties (refer to Figure 1). The proposed project would be built and operated on a 2,670-acre portion of an existing 72,000-acre cattle ranch, known as “Jack Ranch.” The proposed project would be located on all or a portion of 24 parcels (Assessor’s Parcel Numbers 143-011-001-000 through 143-011-003-000, 423-191-037-000 through 423-191-039-000, 424-181-012-000 through 424-181-016-000, 424-081-018-000, 424-081-036-000, 424-181-038-000, 424-191-015-000, 424-191-016-000, 424-201-007-000, 424-201-009-000 through 424-211-001-000, and 424-211-004-000). The Monterey County General Plan designates the site as agricultural, and the site is zoned Farmland/160 (F/160) and Permanent Grazing/160 (PG/160). The site is located in the South County Area Plan.

Primary vehicle access to the project site is available off of California State Route 41 (Highway 41), by way of an existing 5.6-mile private driveway that would be improved as part of the proposed project. Emergency access to the project site is also available from an existing County road, Turkey Flat Road.

DUE DATE FOR COMMENTS: Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than: **May 10, 2013**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed project is a 280-megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) photovoltaic (PV) solar power facility. The project would consist of poly crystalline PV solar panels and single-axis trackers to position PV panels with the sun’s movement, or fixed-tilt supports, clustered in a series of blocks distributed over approximately 2,030 acres of the approximately 2,670-acre site (including a 135 acre transmission line corridor). Primary infrastructure improvements would include: an internal electrical collector system; pad-mounted inverters and transformers; two substations; a 4,000 square foot operations and maintenance (O&M) building; security fencing; security lighting (at the O&M facility, switching station, substations and main project entry location at Highway 41); improvements to and reconfiguration of existing internal access roads; and other infrastructure needed to serve the proposed project. In addition, Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) would construct a switching station at the site connecting the proposed project to the existing Morro Bay-Gates 230 kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The Morro Bay-Gates transmission line currently transsects the project site (refer to Figure 2), and connects the Morro Bay power plant in San Luis Obispo County to PG&E’s Gates substation in Fresno County. The proposed project also would include improvements to the existing private access road and within California Department of Transportation (“Caltrans”) right-of-way at Highway 41.

Construction. Construction of the proposed project would take approximately 12 to 18 months, and the projectponent proposes to begin construction in 2014 and conclude construction by early 2016. All construction staging would occur within the proposed project site, and a 38-acre designated construction staging/laydown area would be provided in the southeastern corner of the project site. Project construction would begin with the
initial site preparation work, such as grading (approximately 470,000 cubic yards of cut and 470,000 cubic yards of fill) and vegetation removal (no trees are proposed for removal) and the construction of general site improvements, such as access road improvements and water infrastructure. The solar system (solar arrays, substations, and collection and transmission systems) would likely be installed next along with access roads within the arrays. The solar facilities would be constructed in 20 MW blocks and multiple blocks could be constructed simultaneously.

**Operation and Maintenance.** The proposed project would operate seven days a week during daylight hours. On-site staff would include a site manager, approximately six technicians, and about four staff, on an average daily basis, to clean and maintain the PV panels and other equipment. Panel cleaning or equipment maintenance and repair may require additional personnel on a temporary, as-needed, basis. Other operational activities would include meter reading, production reporting, equipment inspecting and testing, and similar activities. General site maintenance would include vegetation and landscaping management, road maintenance, and general upkeep of the O&M facility.

**Decommissioning and Site Restoration.** At the end of the project’s useful life (anticipated to be 30 to 40 years), it would be decommissioned. Decommissioning would include removing the solar arrays, transformers, electrical collection system, underground lines, fencing, lighting and substations, and possibly the O&M facility from the site. Standard decommissioning practices would be utilized, including dismantling and repurposing, salvaging/recycling, or disposing of its solar energy improvements, and site restoration. However, actual decommissioning and site restoration activities would be conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements in effect at the time of project termination, and a final decommissioning plan, based on then-current technology, site conditions, and regulations, would be prepared prior to actual decommissioning.


**PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING:** Pursuant to the public participation goals of CEQA, the County of Monterey will host an EIR Scoping Meetings to gather additional input on the content and focus of the environmental analysis to be conducted and presented in the EIR. The date, time, and location of the scoping meetings are listed below.

Wednesday, April 17, 2013, 7:00 PM
Bradley Union School District Community Building
65600 Dixie Street (formerly 224 Dixie St.)
Bradley, CA

**COMMENTING ON THE SCOPE OF THE EIR:** The County of Monterey welcomes all comments regarding the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. All comments will be considered in the preparation of the EIR. **Written comments** must be submitted by **May 10, 2013**. Please direct your comments to:

Taven M. Kinison Brown, Senior Planner
Monterey County Resource Management Agency – Planning Department
168 W. Alisal St., 2nd Floor
Salinas, CA 93901
kinisonbrowntm@co.monterey.ca.us
**California Flats Solar Project**

**Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report**

**Figure 2**

**County of Monterey**

**Base map source:** Denise Duffy and Associates, 2013, NAIP 2010 (Imagery); US Fish & Wildlife Service (Wetlands), Intermap DEM (Contours); Eoni (Roads).

**Legend**
- Wells
- Proposed 230kV Overhead
- Existing Transmission Lines
- Existing PG&E Easement
- Proposed Fence
- 25' Contours
- Existing Paved Road
- Existing Unpaved Road
- Proposed Access Road
- Existing Private Access Road
- Oak Woodlands
- Substation
- O&M Facility
- Loading Dock
- Seawall/Floodproofed Trestle
- Temporary Construction Laydown
- Water Supply/Storage Area
- Wetlands/Streams
- Panes
- Solar Panel Development Area
- Project Area

**Site Plan**

**Project Data Summary Table**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Area</th>
<th>2,670 acres*</th>
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<td>General Plan Land Use Designation</td>
<td>Farmlands/Permanent Grazing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning Designation</td>
<td>F160/PG/160</td>
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</table>

*Project area includes the approximately 2,335 acres project site plus an 35 acre transmission line corridor for the proposed 230kV overhead line (shown in blue).