

Imperial County  
Planning & Development Services Department

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) OF DRAFT EIR FOR WILDCAT ENERGY FARMS PROJECT AND  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC EIR SCOPING MEETING**

The Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Wildcat Energy Farm project as described below. Additionally, a public scoping meeting for the proposed EIR will be by the Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department on **December 12th, 2024, at 6:00 P.M.** This will be a hybrid scoping meeting with both a publicly accessible physical location and public access online or by phone through Zoom™. In-person participants may join the meeting at the Planning & Development Services building located at 801 Main Street, El Centro, CA 92243. Remote participants may join via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81790211820?pwd=LKrsFa80reIMqCKubDAcrflaXBDPRu.1> or via phone at +16694449171,,81790211820#,,,247336# US or login in at <https://zoom.us/> and enter the Meeting ID **817 9021 1820** and passcode **247336** and follow all prompts. Public comments regarding the scope of the EIR are welcomed at this meeting.

**SUBJECT:** Wildcat Energy Farm Project

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CONSIDERATION:** To Be Determined.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** The Wildcat Energy Farm Project consists of a solar photovoltaic (PV) facility, a battery energy storage systems (BESS), an on-site transmission line to connect to the Imperial Irrigation District's (IID) existing "L" Line and upgrades to IID's transmission and distribution lines that traverse approximately 46 miles of private and public lands. The Wildcat Energy Farm solar facility and BESS site is located on approximately 5,900 acres of privately-owned, vacant land in Imperial County, California. The solar facility and BESS site is located immediately south of the community of Salton City and is less than 1 mile west of the Salton Sea. State Route (SR) 86 transects the solar plant site and would provide local and regional site access.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The project applicant, Wildcat Energy Farms, LLC, proposes to construct and operate an 800-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) solar facility with an integrated 800 MW (3,200 MW hour) battery energy storage system (BESS) on approximately 5,900 acres of privately-owned land. The proposed project would comprise approximately 1,964,000 PV modules, associated collector and inverter facilities, a substation, and switchyard, an on-site water well, access roads and an on-site transmission line to connect to IID's existing "L" Line. In addition, the proposed project includes upgrades to the Imperial Irrigation District's (IID) existing "L" Line from 161 kilovolt (kV) to 230 kV and upgrades to IID's existing Wildcat Line from 12 to 24 kV to 230 kV within existing rights-of-way (ROW) to deliver the electrical energy produced to the planned IID Wixom Substation.

The County Land Use Ordinance, Division 17, includes the Renewable Energy (RE) Overlay Zone, which authorizes the development and operation of renewable energy projects with an approved conditional use permit (CUP). CUP applications proposed for specific renewable energy projects not located in the RE Overlay Zone would not be allowed without an amendment to the RE Overlay Zone. The entire solar plant site is located outside of the RE Overlay Zone.

Implementation of the project requires an amendment to the County's General Plan Renewable Energy and Transmission Element and the West Shores/Salton City Urban Area Plan (UAP), a Zone Change, and the approval of two CUPs, as described below:

- **General Plan Amendment:** The applicant is requesting a General Plan Amendment to include/classify all project parcels into the RE Overlay Zone. The underlying "Urban Area" General Plan designation would remain and areas designated as "Low Density Residential" would be changed to "Recreation/Open Space".

Additionally, the applicant is requesting an amendment to the West Shores/Salton City UAP to allow for the use of a solar facility and battery storage system within the UAP's planning area.

- **Zone Change:** The solar plant site is currently zoned Low Density Residential (R-1 and R-1-L-5), Medium Commercial (C-2), Open Space/Recreation (S-1), and Open Space/Preservation (S-2). The applicant is requesting a Zone Change to include/classify all project parcels into the Renewable Energy/Geothermal (REG) Overlay Zone (i.e., Zone Change from S-1 to S-1-RE, S-2 to S-2-RE, C-2 to C-2-RE). Pursuant to Title 9, Division 5, Chapter 2, solar facilities are not listed under uses permitted with a CUP in the R-1 or R-1-L-5 Zones. Therefore, the applicant is also requesting a Zone Change for the areas zoned as R-1 and R-1-L-5 to be rezoned to S-1-RE.
- **Conditional Use Permits:** Implementation of the project would require the approval of two CUPs by the County to allow for the construction and operation of the proposed solar energy facility with an integrated BESS and an on-site groundwater well.
- **Water Supply Assessment:** Implementation of the project would require the approval of the Water Supply Assessment.

**Probable Environmental Impacts:** Based on the Initial Study prepared for the proposed project, potentially significant impacts may result with project implementation. Therefore, the following environmental topics will be further analyzed in the EIR: Aesthetics, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Utilities and Service Systems.

**PROJECT APPLICANT:** Wildcat Energy Farms, LLC

**URBAN AREA PLAN:** Portion of project includes the West Shore/Salton Sea Urban Area Plan

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DISTRICT:** District 4, Supervisor Ryan Kelley

**ANTICIPATED SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS:** The EIR will analyze potential impacts associated with the following: Aesthetics; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Geology/Soils; Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology/Water Quality; Land Use/Planning; Noise and Vibration; Public Services; Transportation/Circulation; Tribal Cultural Resources; Utilities and Service Systems including water supply; Cumulative Impacts; and, Growth-Inducing Impacts.

**COMMENTS REQUESTED:** The Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department would like to know your ideas about the potential effects this project might have on the environment and your suggestions as to mitigation or ways the project may be revised to reduce or avoid any potentially significant environmental impacts. Your comments will guide the scope and content of potential environmental issues to be examined in the EIR. Your comments may be submitted in writing to David Black, Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department, 801 Main Street, El Centro, CA 92243. Available project information may be reviewed at this location and on the County's website at <https://www.icpds.com/planning/notice-of-completion-orni30llc-cup20-0030/2024-notices>.

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) COMMENT PERIOD: NOVEMBER 18, 2024 THRU DECEMBER 23, 2024**

s:\allusers\apn\007\110\024\gpa23-0006 zc23-0008 cup23-0032 cup23-0033 is23-0039\nop\updated nop attachments 11-12-24\nop for press 11 13 24.docx