



RIVERSIDE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

John Hildebrand
Planning Director

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE – NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE IP EASLEY RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT

Date: January 26, 2024

Project: IP Easley Renewable Energy Project Draft Environmental Impact Report
(CUP220021/PUP230002/VAR230003/DA2200016/SCH 2022110240)

To: Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

Lead	County of Riverside	Contact Person: Tim Wheeler
Agencies:	TLMA Planning Department	Phone Number: (951) 955-6060
	4080 Lemon Street, 12th Floor	Email: TWheeler@rivco.org
	Riverside, California 92502-1409	Website: http://planning.rctlma.org

Transmittal Date: January 26, 2024

ALL COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN MARCH 11, 2024.

A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (Draft EIR) for the Easley Renewable Energy Project (Easley or Project) proposed by IP Easley, LLC (Applicant), as described below, has been completed and is now available for public review. The Draft EIR evaluates potentially significant adverse environmental impacts that could be associated with the Project and identifies project components, mitigation measures, and project alternatives that would avoid, reduce, or eliminate significant impacts. The Draft EIR does not set forth policy for the County of Riverside (County) about the proposed Project's desirability. Rather, it is an information document to be used by decision-makers, public agencies, and the public.

Project Location: 2 miles north of Desert Center, Riverside County, CA; moreover northeast of Highway 177/Orion Road and north of Oasis Road, east of Kaiser Road, south of Investor Avenue.

Project Description: The Applicant is proposing to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission an up to 400-megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station and up to 650 MW battery energy storage system (BESS) facility, electrical substation, gen-tie lines and associated access roads on 990 acres of private land and 2,745 acres of land administered by the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Riverside County, California. A 6.7-mile 500 kilovolt (kV) generation-tie (gen-tie) line would mainly traverse BLM-administered land across the Oberon Renewable Energy Project site and connect into an existing substation on the Oberon Project site, an adjacent solar and energy storage facility owned by Intersect Power. From the Oberon Substation, the power generated by the Easley Project would be transmitted to the electrical grid at the SCE Red Bluff Substation via the existing Oberon 500 kV gen-tie line. Project construction is anticipated to take approximately 20 months. Public lands administered by BLM within the Project solar application area include lands designated as Development Focus Area by the BLM Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) and associated Record of Decision, and thus, have been targeted for renewable energy development.

The Applicant would site the solar facility, battery energy storage system, onsite substation, and a short portion of a 500 kV gen-tie line within the County of Riverside's jurisdiction, requiring a Conditional Use Permit (CUP220021), Public Use Permit (PUP230002), Variance (VAR230003), and Development Agreement (DA2200016) for construction, operation, and decommissioning.

In addition to CUP220021, PUP230002, VAR230003, and DA2200016, the Applicant is planning to merge contiguous Project parcels within the Project area into a contiguous area. Roads along the Project perimeter on the solar facility lands would remain dedicated public access. Williamson Act contracts would need to be cancelled for 8 parcels that would be included as part of the Project.

The EIR will consider the environmental impacts of the Project as a whole, including components outside State and local agency jurisdiction. The BLM will prepare and rely on its own environmental review document in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and if approved, BLM will issue a Right-of-Way (ROW) Grant for portions of the Project on federal lands managed by BLM. Maps and project information may be viewed online at <http://planning.rctlma.org/>.

Significant Impacts on the Environment Anticipated as a Result of the Proposed Project:

The Draft EIR identifies the following issues as having one or more significant effects on the environment, despite the incorporation of all feasible mitigation. As a result, adoption of a Statement of Overriding Considerations will be required pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in order for the project to be approved.

- Project Specific: Aesthetics and Agriculture and Forestry
- Cumulative and Project Specific: Aesthetics

Public Review Period: The County of Riverside is the Lead Agency under CEQA and is holding a 45-day public review period of the Draft EIR, during which time the public and interested parties are invited to comment on the Draft EIR for the Project. Comments on the adequacy of the analysis and the appropriateness of the Project may be made in writing or email, indicating the section of concern. Comments may include additional or alternative mitigation measures to those proposed in the document. The project name and numbers should be noted on all correspondence and the comments should indicate if you would like to be notified of public hearings. At this time, public hearings have not yet been scheduled.

Please note that the public comment period for the Draft EIR is Friday January 26, 2024, to Monday March 11, 2024. All comments must be submitted to the County of Riverside at the address indicated below, and must be received no later than 5:00 pm on March 11, 2024.

Riverside County Planning Department

Attn: Tim Wheeler, Project Planner

4080 Lemon Street, 12th Floor

PO Box 1409

Riverside, CA 92502

(951) 955-0606

email: TWheeler@rivco.org

Locations Where the Draft EIR May be Reviewed: The Draft EIR and its technical appendices may be reviewed online at: <http://planning.rctlma.org/>. To request a hardcopy of the Draft EIR, technical appendices or other project documents, please reach out to Tim Wheeler whose contact information is above.