

## **D. Cumulative Scenario**

### **D.1 CEQA Requirements**

Under the CEQA Guidelines, “a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts.” 14 Cal Code Regs §15130(a)(1). CEQA Pub. Res. Code §21000 et seq., an EIR must discuss cumulative impacts if the incremental effect of a project, combined with the effects of other projects is “cumulatively considerable.” 14 Cal Code Regs §15130(a). Such incremental effects are to be “viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.” 14 Cal Code Regs §15064(h)(1). Together, these projects comprise the cumulative scenario which forms the basis of the cumulative impact analysis.

There are two commonly used approaches, or methodologies, for establishing the cumulative impact setting or scenario. One approach is to use a “list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts.” 14 Cal Code Regs §15130(b)(1)(A). The other is to use a “summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan or related planning document” or “in an adopted or certified prior environmental document for such a plan.” 14 Cal Code Regs §15130(b)(1)(B).

This EIR uses the list approach to provide a tangible understanding and context for analyzing the potential cumulative effects of a project. General plans and other planning documents were used as additional reference points in establishing the cumulative scenario for the analysis. This section of the SEIR updates the 2010 Final EIR list to identify other past, present and probable future projects since 2010 that forms the basis of the cumulative impacts analysis that is included in each environmental resource section of Chapter 3.

### **D.2 Cumulative Development Scenario**

The cumulative impact assessment for the incremental changes associated with the Revised Project considers both projects in the general project area around the Panoche Valley, and also other large solar projects where similar resources would be affected. As documented throughout the SEIR, the impacts of the Revised Project will generally occur during the temporary construction period. The impact analysis for each discipline presented in Section C of the 2010 Final EIR defines the geographic area for which impacts could combine with those of the proposed PVSP project, and impact analysis is updated in this SEIR.

Past, present or probable future projects that could contribute to one or more cumulative effects are listed in Table D-1. Collectively, these projects represent known and anticipated activities that may occur in the project vicinity that have the potential to contribute to a cumulative impact on the environment. However, most projects are outside of the local Panoche Valley region and would be unlikely to contribute to cumulative considerable impacts for most resource areas. The table indicates the project name and project type, as well as its location and status.

**Table D-1. New Cumulative Projects**

Project	Location	Distance from Revised Project	Type	Status
Westlands Solar Farm	Huron, CA, on 85 acres adjacent to I-5	50 miles southeast	Solar PV 18 MW	Operational, 1.5 MW expansion under consideration
Stroud Solar Station	Helm, near the intersection of SR 145 and W. Kamm Ave, on 123 acres	40 miles east, southeast	Solar PV 20 MW	Operational
Five Points Solar Station	Five Points near the intersection of SR 145 and SR 269, on 105 acres	45 miles east, southeast	Solar PV 15 MW	Operational
Westlands Solar Station	Five Points, on 100 acres	45 miles east, southeast	Solar PV 15 MW	Operational
Cantua Solar Station	Cantua Creek, west Fresno County	30 miles east, southeast	Solar PV 20 MW	Operational
Huron Solar Station	Cantua Creek, west Fresno County	30 miles east, southeast	Solar PV 20 MW	Operational
Giffen Solar Station	North side Mountain View between Oil City Ave and S. Stanislaus on 160 acres	30 miles southeast	Solar PV 10 MW	Operational
West Gates Solar Station	Adjacent to the PG&E Gates Substation	50 miles southeast	Solar PV 10 MW	Operational
Gates Solar Station	Adjacent to the PG&E Gates Substation	50 miles southeast	Solar PV 20 MW	Operational
North Star Solar	Near Mendota Federal Prison in Mendota, CA on 640 acres	25 miles east, northeast	Solar PV 60 MW	Under Construction as of October 2014
RE Adams East, LLC	SR 33 and South Avenue on 319 acres	25 miles east, northeast	Solar PV	Under construction as of 5/19/14, scheduled to be complete December 2014
Gasna 16P, LLC (Gestamp)	Corner of Fig and Central on 19 acres	60 miles east	Solar PV 1.5 MW	Online as of December 2012
Wellhead Renewable Energy. LLC	Muscat Avenue, 4 miles southwest of City of Kerman on 102.5 acres	45 miles east	Solar PV	MND
Whitney Point Solar	S. Lake Avenue, 3.3 miles southwest of Five Points on 320 acres	45 miles east, southeast	Solar PV	Approved 7/21/11, extension to use CUP granted 7/17/14
Fresno Solar	Lassen Ave, 4.5 miles east of city limits of City of San Joaquin on 50 acres	40 miles east	Solar PV	Approved 9/18/14

**Table D-1. New Cumulative Projects**

Project	Location	Distance from Revised Project	Type	Status
RE Tranquility #1 through #8 (Recurrent Energy)	Seven miles southwest of Tranquility, 5.5 miles east of I-5, 5 miles north of Three Rocks on 3,732 acres	25 miles southeast	Solar PV up to 400 MW	Approved 10/9/14
Gasna 52P LLC (Gestamp Helm 1)	W. Springfield, 0.25 miles south of San Joaquin on 280 acres	40 miles east	Solar PV 23 MW	Under environmental review (7/15/14)
Gestamp Power	Nees Avenue, 7 miles southwest of City of Firebaugh on 197 acres	30 miles northeast	Solar PV	Approved 7/26/12, extension to use CUP granted 8/7/14
Three Rocks Solar, LLC	Three Rocks	25 miles southeast	Solar PV 13 MW	Approved 6/4/13; PPA from PG&E 11/15/13
Frontier Renewables, LLC (Five Points Solar Park and Giffen Solar Park)	Paige between Sonoma and Napa on 500 acres	45 miles southeast	Solar PV 80 MW	Approved 4/10/14, PPA with Univ of California September 2014, expected online 2016
FPC Solar (Fresno Cogeneration Partners)	Lassen, 1 mile north of Manning on 50 acres	35 miles east	Solar PV	Approved 9/18/14
Westlands Solar Park Master Plan	West-central Kings County on 24,000 acres	60 miles southeast	Solar PV 2,400 MW	Notice of Preparation of EIR March 13, 2013
Wright Solar Park	Western Merced County near Santa Nella, CA, southwest of intersection of I-5 and SR 33/152	35 miles northwest	Solar PV 200 MW	Draft EIR published July 2014, not yet in construction, final EIR not yet publically available
Quinto Solar Project	Merced County	40 miles northeast	Solar PV 110 MW	Under construction as of July 29, 2014 (16 month timeframe for construction, complete approx. Nov 2015)

Source: Fresno County, 2014; Westlands Irrigation District, 2013; Monterey County, 2014.

### D.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis Methodology

The 2010 Final EIR analyzed the cumulative impacts of the Approved Project based on the project list that was presented in the 2010 Final EIR. The SEIR considers whether any of these new projects that were not previously identified in the 2010 Final EIR when combined with the incremental impact of the Revised Project would create a new significant cumulative impact or would cause a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified cumulatively significant impact.

The area within which a cumulative effect can occur for these new projects varies by resource. For example, air quality impacts tend to disperse over a large area, while traffic impacts are typically more localized. For this reason, the geographic scope for the analysis of cumulative impacts must be identified for each resource area. The impact analysis for each discipline presented in Section C of the 2010 Final EIR defines the geographic area for which impacts could combine with those of the proposed PVSP

project. The geographic area considered in the 2010 Final EIR has not changed for the Revised Project analysis.

The SEIR's analysis of cumulative effects considers a number of variables including geographic (spatial) limits, time (temporal) limits, and the characteristics of the resource being evaluated. The geographic scope of each analysis is based on the topography surrounding the Revised Project and the natural boundaries of the resource affected, rather than jurisdictional boundaries.

Each new project (as shown in Table D-1) has its own implementation schedule, which may or may not coincide or overlap with the Revised Project's schedule. This is a consideration for short-term impacts from the Panoche Valley Solar Farm. However, to be conservative, the cumulative analysis assumes that all projects in the cumulative scenario are built and operating during the operating lifetime of the Revised Project. Because these cumulative projects will all be subject to environmental regulations similar to the Revised Project analyzed in this SEIR, the cumulative analysis focuses on determining whether the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts would be cumulatively considerable.

## D.4 References

CEC (California Energy Commission). 2014. Tracking Progress: Renewable Energy – Overview. [http://www.energy.ca.gov/renewables/tracking\\_progress/documents/renewable.pdf](http://www.energy.ca.gov/renewables/tracking_progress/documents/renewable.pdf). Accessed November 11, 2014.

Fresno County. 2014. Solar Projects Submitted to Fresno County. <http://www.co.fresno.ca.us/ViewDocument.aspx?id=57304>. Accessed November 11, 2014.

Monterey County. 2014. California Flats Solar. [http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/planning/major/California%20Flats%20Solar/California\\_Flats\\_Solar.htm](http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/planning/major/California%20Flats%20Solar/California_Flats_Solar.htm). Accessed November 11, 2014.

Westlands Water District. 2013. Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Pursuant to the Requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). March.