

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

San Luis Solar Project

FONSI-14-059



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
South-Central California Area Office

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Mission Statements

The Department of the Interior protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
South-Central California Area Office, Fresno, California

FONSI-14-059

San Luis Solar Project


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Date


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05/01/2018

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5/1/2018

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Introduction

In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has released this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) which is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment (EA)-14-059, *San Luis Solar Project*, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

Reclamation provided the public with an opportunity to comment on the Draft FONSI and Draft EA between December 14, 2015 and January 22, 2016. Reclamation received thirteen comment letters. The comment letters and Reclamation's response to comments are included in Appendix A of EA-14-059.

Background

Reclamation has made the bringing online of non-hydro renewable energy sources one of its top five priorities. In June 2011, Reclamation issued a Request for Interest in a lease arrangement to construct a renewable resource generation project on Federal lands in the vicinity of the San Luis Reservoir. Horus Central Valley Solar 1, LLC and/or their Assignee(s) (Applicant) has requested a 30-year Land Use Authorization from Reclamation to access, install, operate, maintain and remove on its Federal lands a 26-megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) solar photovoltaic (PV) energy generating project known as the San Luis Solar Project (Project).

The Project would be constructed on three sites along O'Neill Forebay in and adjacent to the San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area (SRA) in Gustine, Merced County, California.

Alternatives Considered

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed solar facilities would not be constructed, and its non-hydropower renewable energy sources would not be provided in the Project area.

Proposed Action

Reclamation proposes to issue to the Applicant a 30-year Land Use Authorization to access, install, operate, maintain, and remove a 26 MW AC solar PV energy generating project in and adjacent to San Luis Reservoir SRA as described in Section 2.2 of EA-14-059.

Environmental Commitments

Reclamation and the Applicant shall comply with the terms and conditions of the Biological Opinion issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the Project (Appendix B of EA-14-059). Also, Reclamation and the Applicant shall implement the environmental protection measures listed in Table 6 of EA-14-059 to reduce environmental consequences associated with

the Proposed Action. Environmental consequences for resource areas assume the measures specified would be fully implemented.

Findings

In accordance with NEPA, Reclamation has determined that the approval of the Proposed Action is not a major federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment; consequently, an environmental impact statement is not required.

The following reasons are why the impacts from the proposed action are not significant:

- The proposed action will not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)).
- The proposed action will not significantly affect natural resources and unique geographical characteristics such as proximity to historic or cultural resources; parks, recreation, and refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order (EO) 11990); flood plains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3) and 43 CFR 46.215(b)).
- There is no potential for the effects to be considered highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).
- The proposed action will not have possible effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).
- The proposed action will neither establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).
- The proposed action will not have cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).
- The proposed action will not significantly affect historic properties (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)).
- The proposed action will not significantly affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species, or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).
- The proposed action will not threaten a violation of Federal, State, tribal or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).
- The proposed action will not affect any Indian Trust Assets (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993).

- Implementing the proposed action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities (EO 12898).
- The proposed action will not limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007 and 512 DM 3).