

LVEDA Recommends SB County Solar Moratorium

Feb 09, 2017

Projecting from my list below - known projects existing, filed or on the radar - are about 10 – (excluding potential multitudes on BLM Development Focus Areas and State Lands not yet filed on). About 3500 acres just for specific ones mentioned below – not including the 4 that SCE can't tell us about but are intended to hook up to Calcite Substation – so they must be local projects SCE is aware of.

PLUS:

@9 sections of State Lands in NW Lucerne Valley. If I remember right - per the DRECP - to be converted to BLM for DFA's.

@ 4 BLM sections along north slope of the SB Mts. – south of Lucerne Valley – most if not all designated DFAs.

@ 16 sections of State Lands around Old Woman Springs toward Johnson Valley. If I remember the DRECP right - to be consolidated via exchange? with BLM – intended for projects to help fund the State Teacher's Fund.

Worst case: Just for these BLM and State Lands alone: 29 sections (square miles) X 640 acres/section = 18,560 acres.

How many acres of all this would be developed – who knows. Might be telling to check out RETI to see what transmission systems are proposed in this region. But we don't need all the MWs anyway – all this acreage is native desert habitat triggering CEQA and NEPA - plus not enough water available to keep the dirt from flying off – plus a lot of opposition. And: Where do they find mitigation/compensation for habitat wipeout on all this acreage – even at a 1 to 1 ratio? However – It seems to be the DRECP plan.

Chuck

Feb 08, 2017

This request from the Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association (LVEDA) will make you uncomfortable – but these existing and proposed industrial-scale

solar projects have targeted Lucerne Valley and we need some help. We would appreciate a quick response. If “NO” is it – at least it is a response. But if it is – give us some other options.

LVEDA requests the County to impose a moratorium on approving any new industrial-scale Renewable Energy projects – with all current applications placed “on hold” - until the County’s Renewable Energy Element is approved and in place. And the County make the same request to BLM and the State Lands Commission. (The County and its residents have minimal influence affecting project approvals within BLM and State Lands Commission jurisdictions).

RATIONALE: Here’s what’s facing us:

NextEra’s Ord Mt. Solar’s 60 MWs. Aurora/Sorrell’s current application for 200 MWs on State School Lands in NW Lucerne Valley. SCE’s Calcite Substation for NextEra – and possibly for Sorrell – and with 4 additional LOCAL projects for connection to it that have yet to be divulged - per recent statements by SCE staff. (Note that SCE is actively pursuing Calcite before said solar projects have been approved – betting on the come - cart before the horse). Lone Valley Solar’s (formerly Agincourt and Marathon) existing 20 MW plants on the west side of Camprock Rd. (over 250 acres of native desert habitat totally wiped out). Pending 20 MW ‘Solar One’ under County jurisdiction on the east side of Camprock Rd. – with similar habitat - with EIR in progress. All the potential BLM ‘Development Focus Areas’ approved in the DRECP targeting Lucerne Valley - even on the N. Slope of the SB Mts. where solar insolation is marginal due to topography. Plus the DRECP decision to consolidate more State School Lands around Old Woman Springs Ranch in east Lucerne Valley specifically designated for many square miles of solar projects. Plus the likely resurgence of Chevron Solar (now called Celtic?) on BLM at the east end of our community south of Hwy 247. And who knows what else?

We are getting besieged project by project – a “death by a thousand cuts” – before the Renewable Energy Element (and our pending Community Plan) define where this stuff should be. By the time it gets adopted – the Element’s value will be drastically diluted if any of these projects get approved and on-line – with all the cumulative impacts adversely affecting our economic base, land-use integrity and community custom and culture.

Commenting on each one as it comes down the assembly line is necessary – we have to do it. It is the County’s obligation to fully comprehend the totality of all these current and proposed developments – the “whole being greater than the sum of its parts”:::

Acres consumed. Habitats lost. Water requirements in an overdrafted, adjudicated groundwater basin. Wind erosion and air quality (as evidenced by what occurred at the Lone Valley Solar sites). Effects on surrounding residences. Lack of economic benefit to Lucerne Valley and the County (non-local construction crews – minimal long-term jobs for operation, and usually not local – with minimal increase in assessed value due to property tax exemptions for solar facilities – consuming ground that could be used for real economic benefit). Loss of property values and difficulty of selling parcels and residences on the periphery of these sites. Glare from solar panels visible from all locations within the community. Disruption of desert soils that are known to be significant carbon sequesters. Transmission lines, substations, associated infrastructure. Etc.

It’s time for the County to step up and let the Renewable Energy Element do its job – especially in light of all the time, cost and effort that has gone into it. And remember that we have not adopted the typical NIMBY stance. Over the past 4 years we have advocated a suitable location for a commercial field – which we now propose for community based/oriented solar PV generation – which would free-up MWs for other County communities. And the County has no obligation to use its resources to provide power to the rest of California (especially s. Calif.) which also has plenty of solar potential.

And read this article from the LA Times: How much more power do we need? <http://www.latimes.com/projects/la-fi-electricity-capacity/>

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