Section 3.2
Agriculture and Forestry Resources

This section discusses the environmental setting, existing conditions, regulatory context, and potential impacts of the project in relation to agriculture and forestry resources. The information and analysis in this section is largely based on the *San Bernardino County Code*, Title 8, Development Code, Chapter 82.01, *Land Use Plan*, *Land Use Zoning Districts*, and *Overlays*; the *County of San Bernardino 2006 General Plan* Program *Final Environmental Impact Report* and Appendices (County of San Bernardino County 2007a); the *County of San Bernardino 2007 General Plan* (2007b); and a *Land Evaluation and Site Assessment* (LESA) study prepared by Tetra Tech and peer reviewed by Michael Baker International (2018a; see **Appendix C**).

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

REGIONAL SETTING

San Bernardino County supports a number of large-acreage national forests. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA), US Forest Service (USFS) manages the majority of the geographic area in the County's Mountain Region, which totals more than 671,000 acres in the San Bernardino Mountains and a portion of the San Gabriel Mountains (County of San Bernardino 2007a). The Angeles National Forest is approximately 54 miles to the southwest of the project site, with the San Bernardino National Forest approximately 34 miles to the southwest of the site. In the San Bernardino County portion of the San Bernardino National Forest are the Cucamonga Wilderness, San Gorgonio Wilderness, and Bighorn Mountain Wilderness. Other national forests in the county include the Cleveland National Forest and the Los Padres National Forest.

As indicated in the County General Plan EIR, agricultural use in the County has declined over the last several decades as the result of urban expansion and economic conditions. Agricultural development is generally located in areas where relatively level terrain and stable soil conditions are present. However, for these reasons, such lands are also desirable (and economically valuable) for urban development. As urban growth encroaches into agricultural areas, the remaining agricultural operations have often become surrounded by urban-type activities and/or have been converted to other nonagricultural uses.

Lands surrounding the project site include Prime Farmlands, Farmlands of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmlands, and Grazing Lands, as mapped by the California Department of Conservation (2016b) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). According to the San Bernardino County General Plan EIR (County of San Bernardino 2007a), agricultural development in the

Desert Region, in which the project site is located, is generally limited to areas bordering the Mojave River as far north as the community of Harvard-Newberry Springs. Information on the occurrence of important farmland in the Desert Region is limited to the areas near Lenwood, Yermo, Newberry Springs, and Lucerne Valley. Large areas of grazing land are also present in the southwestern portion of the Desert Region. Historic alfalfa production occurs on a limited basis in areas that previously had sufficient groundwater for irrigation, such as Lucerne Valley and Harper Dry Lake.

PROJECT SETTING

On-site soils are varied. Dominant soil types generally consist of Cajon Sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes, with other soils present including, but not limited to, Cajon Sand, 2 to 9 percent slopes; Cajon Loamy Sand, Loamy Substratum, 0 to 2 percent slopes; and Halloran-Duneland Complex, 0 to 15 percent slopes, among others. Refer to **Exhibit 3.2-1, Soils Map**.

In addition to the existing Coolwater Generating Station, land uses surrounding the project site generally include transportation infrastructure, agricultural lands, undeveloped land, the Sunray Solar Project (built in 2016), and Barstow-Daggett Airport (directly to the south of the project site). Route 66 is to the south of the project site and Interstate 15 (I-15) to the north. The BNSF (Burlington Northern Santa Fe) railroad tracks are located to the south of the project site, while the Union Pacific tracks are located to the north.

In the project area, agricultural areas consist of active and abandoned alfalfa and Bermuda grass fields, as well as an active pistachio orchard. The alfalfa and Bermuda grass fields are irrigated using center-pivot irrigation, resulting in circular fields easily identifiable on aerial photographs. Sites immediately adjacent to most fields are disturbed and consist of disturbed saltbush scrub or developed/disturbed/ruderal vegetation. Portions of the site that are less disturbed consist of saltbush scrub and creosote bush scrub with low shrub variety and sparse understories. The southeastern portion of the project area supports sand dunes with creosote bush scrub vegetation. The approximately 220-acre pistachio orchard on the site consists of rows of young pistachio trees with no understory, aside from some weeds growing near irrigation drips.

As shown in **Table 3.2-1, Existing Farmland Categories and Zoning Districts**, on-site Farmland as designated by the California Department of Conservation includes approximately 549 acres of Prime Farmland, 1,116 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, and 294 acres of Unique Farmland, in addition to 110 acres of Grazing Land and 1,324 acres of Other Land. Refer also to **Exhibit 3.2-2, Farmland Map**. With the exception of Grazing and Other Lands, the designated farmland on-site is considered to be an important state and local agricultural resource. Refer also to discussion of the California DOC Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program in the Regulatory Framework subsection, below.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

FEDERAL

Farmland Protection Policy Act

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981. The act is intended to minimize the extent to which federal programs contribute to the unnecessary conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. The act also requires these programs to be compatible with state, local, and private efforts to protect farmland.

STATE

California Civil Code Section 3482.5 (Right to Farm Act)

The Right to Farm Act is designed to protect commercial agricultural operations from nuisance complaints that may arise when an agricultural operation is conducting business in a "manner consistent with proper and accepted customs." The code specifies that established operations that have been in business for three or more years that were not nuisances at the time they began are not to be considered a nuisance as a result of a new land use.

California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act)

The Williamson Act of 1965 was designed as an incentive to retain prime agricultural land and open space in agricultural use, thereby slowing its conversion to urban and suburban development. The program requires a 10-year contract between the county and the landowner. While in contract, the land is taxed on the basis of its agricultural use rather than its market value. The land becomes subject to certain enforceable restrictions, and certain conditions need to be met prior to approval of an agreement. The goal of the Williamson Act is to protect agriculture and open space.

The project site is not covered by Williamson Act or Farmland Security Zone contract. Therefore, no such contract aimed at retaining prime agricultural land and/or open space as agricultural use in order to slow its conversion to urban and suburban development affects the project site.

Table 3.2-1:
Existing Farmland Categories and Zoning Districts

Farmland Category	Gross Acres	Zoning District	Zoning Category Description	Gross Acres
Prime Farmland	~ 549	AG	Agriculture	~ 287
Farmland of Statewide Importance	~ 1,116	RC	Resource Conservation	~ 2,455
Unique Farmland	~ 294	IR	Regional Industrial	~ 284
Grazing	~ 110	RL	Rural Living	~ 367
Other Land (i.e., forested, mined, restricted)	~ 1,324			
Total	**± 3,393**[1]			**± 3,393**

Source: HDR Engineering 2018

1. Although the total gross acreage of project parcels is ± 3,393 acres, the full project is described as ± 3,500 acres, which would include any easements, the gen-tie line, potentially temporary construction impacts, and any other miscellaneous project features. Where gen-tie routes are outside of existing rights-of-way, they traverse the same zoning districts identified above.

California Land Evaluation Site Assessment Model (LESA)

The USDA National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) developed the LESA to assist state and local officials in making sound decisions regarding land use. Combined with forest measures and rangeland parameters, a LESA can provide a technical framework to numerically rank land parcels through local resource evaluation. In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, the CEQA Guidelines reference the California Agricultural LESA Model prepared by the California Department of Conservation (DOC) as an optional methodology that may be used to assess the relative value of agriculture and farmland.

The LESA model evaluates land resources based upon two main factors: land evaluation and site assessment. Land evaluation considers two categories: land capability and storie index which rate the suitability of soils to support a diverse range of crops and their potential for intensive agricultural use, respectively. Site assessment considers three categories: project size, water resources availability and surrounding agricultural rating. Project size rates the acreage of the project to determine whether the proposed converted farmland could be a viable commercial agricultural operation. Water resource availability rates the project site based on available water sources in the area and whether the water supply would be consistent in periods of drought and non-drought. Surrounding agricultural land rating measures the level of agricultural land use for lands within the *zone of influence* of the project area; the LESA model assigns a greater significance rating of converted farmland if a project is surrounded by a high percentage of agricultural lands.

For a given project, the factors are rated, weighted, and combined, resulting in a single numeric score. The project score then becomes the basis for determining a project's potential significance relative to the loss or conversion of agriculture or farmland. The California Department of Conservation encourages local agencies to develop local agricultural models to account for the variability of local agricultural resources and conditions.

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP)

The FMMP, established in 1982, and implemented by and mapped by the California DOC, produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts to the state's agricultural resources. Agricultural land is rated according to soil quality and irrigation status, with the best quality land called Prime Farmland. Maps are updated every two years, with current land use information gathered from aerial photographs, a computer mapping system, public review, and field reconnaissance. The minimum mapping unit is 10 acres. The DOC Prime Farmlands, Farmlands of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmlands are referenced in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G as resources to consider in an evaluation of agricultural impacts.

Lands surrounding the project site include Prime Farmlands, Farmlands of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmlands, and Grazing Lands. According to available data from the FMMP, the project site includes lands in the following Important Farmland categories: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland. Additionally, lands are categorized as Grazing Land and Other Land (such as low-density rural, dense forested, mined, or government restricted), which are not Important Farmland categories. The acreage of each type of farmland is listed in **Table 3.2-1** and illustrated in **Exhibit 3.2-2, Farmland Map**.

LOCAL

San Bernardino County General Plan

The County's 2007 General Plan includes policies and programs that are intended to address agricultural and forestry resources and to guide future development in a way that lessens potential impacts. The Renewable Energy and Conservation Element of the General Plan includes relevant goals and policies aimed at the protection of such resources.

Conservation Element

GOAL CO 6 The County will balance the productivity and conservation of soil resources.

Policy CO 6.1 Protect prime agricultural lands from the adverse effects of urban encroachment, particularly increased erosion and sedimentation, trespass, and non-agricultural land development.

Policy CO 6.2 The County will allow the development of areas of prime agriculture lands supporting commercially valuable agriculture to urban intensity when it can be demonstrated that there is no long-term viability of the agricultural

uses due to encroaching urbanization, creating incompatible land uses in close proximity to each other.

Policy CO 6.3 Preservation of prime and statewide important soils types, as well as areas exhibiting viable agricultural operations, will be considered as an integral portion of the Open Space element when reviewing development proposals.

Desert Region Goals and Policies of the Conservation Element

GOAL D/CO 2 Encourage utilization of renewable energy resources.

GOAL D/CO 4 Protect agricultural lands from the effects of nonagricultural development.

Policy D/CO 4.2 The conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses shall be discouraged unless the proposed use can be demonstrated to be preferable in terms of economic development, and resource availability and resource conservation.

Policy D/CO 4.3 Encourage adequate buffering between agricultural and non-agricultural land use zoning districts.

Renewable Energy and Conservation Element

GOAL RE 5 Renewable energy facilities will be located in areas that meet County standards, local values, community needs and environmental and cultural resource protection priorities.

RE Policy 5.2 Utility-oriented RE generation projects on private land in the unincorporated County will be limited to the site-types below, in addition to meeting criteria established herein and in the Development Code:

i. Private lands adjacent to the federal Development Focus Areas supported by the Board of Supervisors that meet siting criteria and development standards

ii. Waste Disposal Sites

iii. Mining Sites (operating and reclaimed)

iv. Fallow, degraded and unviable agricultural lands

v. Airports (existing and abandoned or adaptively re-used)

vi. Brownfields

vii. California Department of Toxic Substance Control Cleanup Program Sites

viii. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Sites

ix. Sites within or adjacent to electric transmission and utility distribution corridors

x. Industrial zones proven to not conflict with economic development needs

xi. Other sites proven by a detailed suitability analysis to reflect the significantly disturbed nature or conditions of those listed above

RE Policy 5.8 Discourage conversion of productive or viable prime agricultural lands to RE generation facilities.

San Bernardino County Zoning Ordinance

The project site is not located within a County-designated forestry or timberland production zone. However, a portion of lands affected by the project (approximately 287 acres) are zoned as AG (Agriculture). The County's zoning districts for the project site are listed in **Table 3.2-1**.

Community Plans and Action Plans

The project site is not located within an area for which a community plan in support of the County's General Plan has been adopted. However, the County is currently preparing such a plan to address land use planning issues relative to the Daggett, Newberry Springs and Yermo areas. The policy-guiding documents will be included in the County Policy Plan if adopted by the Board of Supervisors. After the adoption of the County Policy Plan, the Development Code will be updated to reflect the new policies.

No specific goals or policies for guiding future development from these proposed plans are applicable to the project because the proposed plans are still being reviewed and have not been adopted.

IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

THRESHOLDS FOR DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, the effects of a project are evaluated to determine whether they would result in a significant adverse impact on the environment. An EIR is required to focus on these effects and offer mitigation measures to reduce or avoid any significant impacts that are identified. The criteria used to determine the significance of impacts may vary, depending on the nature of the project. According to Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project would have a significant impact related to agricultural and forestry resources if it would:

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use.
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.
- Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g)).
- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.
- Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

CONVERT FARMLAND TO NONAGRICULTURAL USE

Impact 3.2-1	**The project would convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use. Impacts would be less than significant.**

As discussed above, the project site supports a mixture of industrial-related uses; disturbed land associated with residential and agricultural uses; and lightly disturbed desert scrub areas.

Agricultural areas consist of active and fallow agricultural fields and orchards, with disturbed saltbush scrub, ornamental tamarisk windrows, and ruderal vegetation adjacent to the fields. Agricultural areas consist of active and abandoned alfalfa and Bermuda grass fields, as well as an active pistachio orchard.

On-site soils are varied. Dominant soil types generally consist of Cajon Sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes, with other soils present including, but not limited to, Cajon Sand, 2 to 9 percent slopes; Cajon Loamy Sand, Loamy Substratum, 0 to 2 percent slopes; and Halloran-Duneland Complex, 0 to 15 percent slopes, among others. Refer to **Exhibit 3.2-1, Soils Map**.

As shown in **Table 3.2-1**, on-site farmland as designated by the California Department of Conservation includes approximately 549 acres of Prime Farmland, 1,116 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, and 294 acres of Unique Farmland, in addition to 110 acres of Grazing Land and 1,324 acres of Other Land. Refer also to **Exhibit 3.2-2, Farmland Map**. With the exception of Grazing and Other Lands, the designated farmland on-site is considered to be an important state and local agricultural resource. Development of the site with the proposed solar facility would therefore result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance to a nonagricultural use.

A Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) for the proposed project was prepared by Tetra Tech, Inc. and peer reviewed by Michael Baker International, Inc. (Tetra Tech 2018a; see **Appendix C**).

As stated above, the LESA model evaluates land resources based upon two main factors: land evaluation and site assessment. The site assessment considers three categories: project size, water resources availability and surrounding agricultural rating. Water resource availability rates a project site based on available water sources in the area and whether the water supply would be consistent in periods of drought and non-drought. The water resources availability rating particularly affects the outcome of the LESA model. This rating is based upon identifying the various sources that may supply a project area and then determining whether different restrictions in supply are likely to occur in years that are characterized as being periods of drought and non-drought.

Table 3.2-2, Water Resources Availability, summarizes the limited water availability in the project area. The Water Resources Availability Score is scored on a scale of 1 to 100. Water for the current agricultural operations is pumped from the Mojave River Basin, specifically from the Baja Subarea of the Basin. The Basin is subject to adjudication under a Stipulated Judgment and pumping is controlled by a Water Master. The Water Master has determined that the Baja Subarea is in a condition of overdraft and as a result the Water Master has steadily reduced pumping rights over time. Pumping rights are expected to be further reduced in 2019. Dryland

agriculture is not feasible in the region due to an annual precipitation rate of 5 to 6 inches. Refer also to Section 3.9, Hydrology and Water Quality, for additional discussion on project impacts relative to groundwater resources.

Table 3.2-2:
Water Resources Availability

A	B	C	D	E
Project Portion	**Water Source**	**Proportion of Project Area**	**Water Availability Score[1]**	**Weighted Availability Score (C x D)**
1	Groundwater	0.69	30	20.7
2	None	0.31	0	0
			Total Water Resource Score	**20.7**

1. Water Resources Availability Score was determined from the scoring table from the LESA Instruction Manual (California Department of Conservation 1997).

Overall, as shown in **Table 3.2-3, Final LESA Score Sheet**, the proposed project was determined to have a land evaluation score of 27.58 and a site assessment score of 18.11, for a Final LESA score of 45.69. A Final LESA score ranging from 40-59 points is considered significant only if both the land evaluation and site assessment weighted factor subscores are each greater than or equal to 20 points (CDC 1997). For the proposed project, the land evaluation score exceeds 20 points; the site assessment score is below the 20-point threshold due to primarily a lack of water resource availability. Therefore, the project would not result in a significant loss of Farmland and impacts would be less than significant.

Table 3.2-3:
Final LESA Score Sheet

	Factor Scores	Factor Weight	Weighted Factor Scores
Land Evaluation Factors			
Land Capability Classification	61.40	0.25	15.35
Storie Index	48.92	0.25	12.23
Land Evaluation Subtotal		*0.5*	***27.58***
Site Assessment Factors			
Project Size	100	0.15	15.00
Water Resources Availability	20.7	0.15	3.11
Surrounding Agricultural Land	0	0.15	0.00
Protected Resource Land	0	0.05	0.00
Site Assessment Total		*0.5*	***18.11***
		Final LESA Score	**45.69**

Furthermore, development of the project site as proposed would not preclude future use for agricultural purposes. Once decommissioning occurs at the end of the operational life of the solar generating facility, and project-related elements are removed and properly disposed of, the affected lands could potentially be returned to their former agricultural use (refer to the discussion of decommissioning in Section 2.0, Project Description). Although the project would result in the installation of the solar panels and related transmission infrastructure, the actual footprint of the elements on the site would be limited to the footings (driven piers) for the solar arrays; concrete pads for the inverters/transformers, substations, battery storage, and supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) structures; gen-tie line infrastructure; perimeter security fencing; on-site access routes; and operations and maintenance (O&M) building, thereby reducing the actual disturbance to the property as compared to if it were fully developed with residential or commercial building pads or other such structures and supporting infrastructure.

Therefore, impacts related to the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Level of Significance: Less than significant.

CONFLICT WITH AGRICULTURAL ZONING OR A WILLIAMSON ACT CONTRACT

Impact 3.2-2	**The project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract. No impact would occur.**

Zoning districts for the project site are listed in **Table 3.2-1**. Approximately 287 acres of the site are zoned for agricultural use. County zoning for the project site allows for development of renewable energy generation facilities with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) in each of the zoning districts currently applicable to the project site. Rezoning of the site is not required to allow for the proposed use and the project would be compatible with the current zoning.

The County Board of Supervisors adopted an amendment to the General Plan Renewable Energy and Conservation Element on February 28, 2019 prohibiting utility-scale renewable energy development on lands designated as Rural Living or on lands that are located within the boundary of an existing community plan, unless an application for development of a renewable energy project has been accepted as complete in compliance with California Government Code Section 65943 before the effective date of the resolution. Therefore, the proposed project is not subject to this new policy because it was deemed complete on March 22, 2018.

None of the lands affected by the proposed improvements are currently subject to a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, no conflict would occur in this regard and no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Level of Significance: No impact.

CONFLICT WITH EXISTING ZONING FOR FOREST LAND OR TIMBERLAND

Impact 3.2-3	**The project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g)). No impact would occur.**

There are no lands zoned for forest or timber production on any lands affected by the proposed project. Therefore, the project would not conflict with existing zoning for or cause the rezoning of forest land. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Level of Significance: No impact.

LOSS OR CONVERSION OF FOREST LAND TO NON-FOREST USE

Impact 3.2-4	**The project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.**

Refer to the discussion of Impact 3.2-3. No forest lands are located on the project site; therefore, no such lands would be affected by the proposed improvements. The project would not result in the loss of forest land or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Level of Significance: No impact.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES RESULTING IN CONVERSION OF FARMLAND OR FOREST LAND

Impact 3.2-5	**The project would involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Impacts would be less than significant.**

As stated discussed under Impact 3.2-1, lands affected by the proposed development currently support active and fallow agricultural fields and an orchard, and designated Farmland is present on the site; refer to **Table 3.2-1**. Implementation of the project would result in the overall loss of approximately 1,959 acres of designated Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland. Typically, conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use would result in a significant impact. However, as discussed under Impact 3.2-1, the LESA model performed for the proposed project determined that implementation of the project would not result in a significant loss of Farmland. Additionally, no designated forest lands are present on the project site and no impact due to the conversion of forest land to non-forest use would occur.

Lands surrounding the project site are zoned for Regional Industrial, Resource Conservation, Industrial, Agriculture and Rural Living. Developing the project site as a solar facility would temporarily preclude the site from being used for agricultural production. However, use of the site for generation of electricity through passive conversion of sunlight is not anticipated to negatively affect nearby agricultural production.

Additionally, the project is not anticipated to affect existing surrounding growers and would not require additional restrictions and limitations on pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides used on crops grown on surrounding farmlands. In addition, restrictions would not be placed on noise, burning, and dust generation associated with these nearby uses.

The proposed project would not adversely affect adjacent farmers' water supply because water in this area is allocated under the Stipulated Judgment. See Stipulated Judgment, Section 3.9 Hydrology and Water Quality for additional discussion.

Vehicle emissions from adjacent transportation routes and increased roadways can impact the health and survival of the crops. It is anticipated that construction traffic would increase vehicle emissions; however, this would be a temporary situation and would cease once construction is completed.

Operation and maintenance activities associated with PV solar power plants are minimal. The project site would have an on-site staff of up to approximately 8 personnel to conduct preventative and corrective maintenance, and to maintain the security of the project site. Operational traffic would be minimal and would be limited to the approximately 8 on-site

employees and routine maintenance vehicles. The PV modules are non-reflective and convert sunlight directly into electricity; therefore, they consume no fossil fuels and emit no pollutants during operations. Therefore, the proposed project would not include activities that would restrict or impair agricultural production on adjacent land. Because the activities proposed on the sites are not anticipated to affect the existing environment, the proposed project is not expected to result in the conversion of farmland on adjacent or nearby properties to non-farmland uses. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Level of Significance: Less than significant.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Impact 3.2-6	**The project would contribute to a significant cumulative impact related to agriculture resources. However, the project's contribution to the significant impact is less than cumulatively considerable. The project would not result in, nor contribute to, any cumulative impacts related to forestry resources.**

The cumulative study area for agricultural resources is considered to be the County of San Bernardino. As indicated in the County of San Bernardino General Plan EIR, agricultural use in the County has declined over the last several decades as the result of urban expansion and economic conditions. Agricultural development is typically located in areas where relatively level terrain and stable soil conditions are present. However, for these reasons, such lands are also desirable (and economically valuable) for urban development. As urban growth encroaches into agricultural areas, the remaining agricultural operations often become surrounded by urban-type activities.

The introduction of sewer, water, and other utilities furthers conversion of agricultural land as the associated increase in potential land values for urban uses that rely on such infrastructure begins to exceed the agricultural value. Many of the County's agricultural areas have been converted to other uses due to declining economic viability, increasing water costs, and uncertainties related to long-term water supplies, among other factors.

As shown in **Table 3.2-1**, development of the project site with the proposed solar facility would result in the use of approximately 549 acres of Prime Farmland, 1,116 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, and 294 acres of Unique Farmland for non-agricultural purposes. While the conversion of approximately 1,959 acres of designated Farmland to nonagricultural use would contribute to a loss of the County's agricultural resources, the contribution is not cumulatively considerable.

As discussed under Impact 3.2-1, the LESA model performed for the proposed project determined that implementation of the project would not result in a significant direct impact from the loss of agricultural lands, due primarily to a lack of reliable water resources.

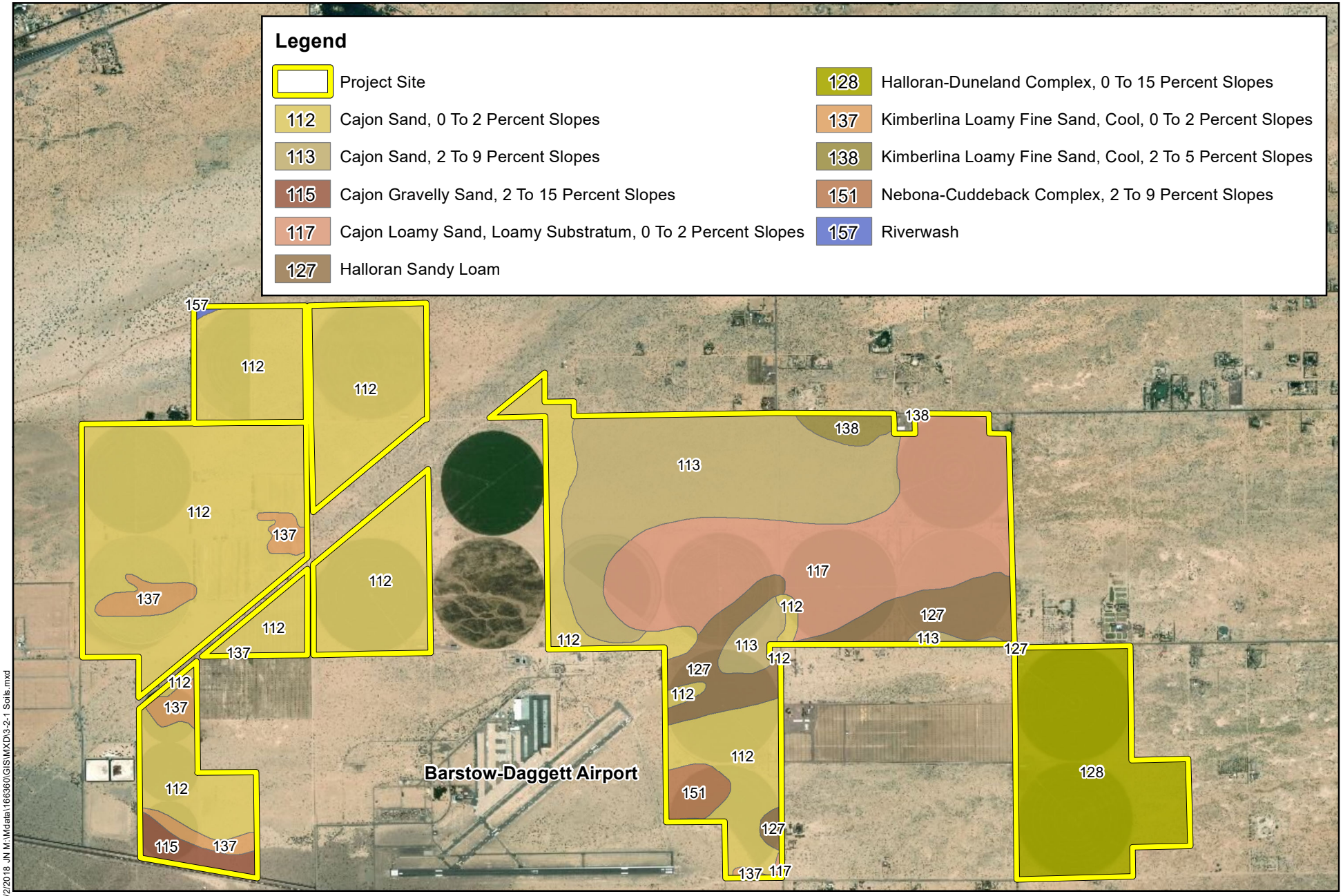
The characteristics, acreages, and associated value of the agricultural lands that would be converted to non-agricultural use with the proposed project is not considered cumulatively considerable relative to the County's overall stock of agricultural resources. Additionally, following required decommissioning of the solar PV facility after its useful life, potential exists to return the project site to agricultural use. For these reasons, while the County-wide cumulative impact associated with the conversion of agricultural lands is significant, the project's contribution to the significant cumulative impact would be less than cumulatively considerable.

Additionally, there are no designated forest lands present on the project site. Therefore, the project would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact due to the conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Level of Significance: Less than significant.

This page is intentionally blank.



8/2/2018 JN M:\Mdata\166360\GIS\MXD\3-2-1 Soils.mxd

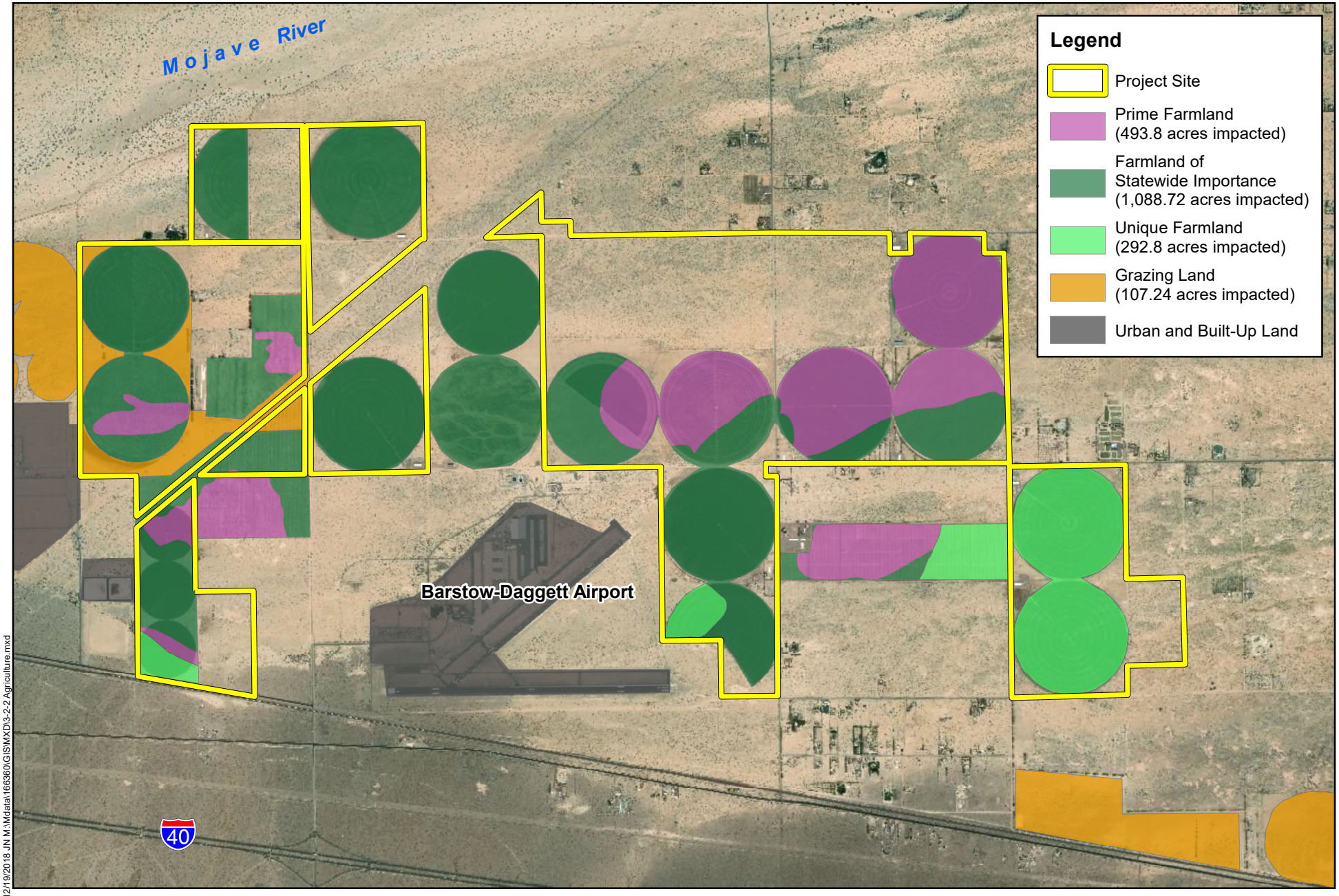
Source: San Bernardino County, Bonadiman & Associates, NRCS Soils Data Mart, ESRI World Map

DAGGETT SOLAR POWER FACILITY
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Soils Map

Exhibit 3.2-1

This page is intentionally blank.



12/19/2018 JN M:\Mdata\166360\GIS\MXD\3-2-2 Agriculture.mxd

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

0 1,500 3,000 6,000 Feet

Source: San Bernardino County, Bonadiman & Associates, CA Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, ESRI World Map

DAGGETT SOLAR POWER FACILITY
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Farmland Map

Exhibit 3.2-2

This page is intentionally blank.