COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

RENEWABLE ENERGY & CONSERVATION ELEMENT GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

CEQA ADDENDUM

PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
GENERAL PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT CODE

SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT AND
GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION PLAN

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2005101038

Prepared by:
COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO
LAND USE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
385 N. ARROWHEAD AVENUE, FIRST FLOOR
SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92415

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CEQA Addendum for a General Plan Amendment and Development Code Update to add a Renewable Energy & Conservation Element

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

In conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act ("**CEQA**"), this Addendum to the Program Environmental Impact Report for the San Bernardino County General Plan Update ("**Program EIR**") has been prepared to describe the impacts expected to occur as a result of the addition of a new Renewable Energy & Conservation Element ("**REC Element**") to the 2007 General Plan, as Amended ("**General Plan**"). Considering the broad scope of the General Plan, an Environmental Impact Report ("**Program EIR**") was prepared and certified in conjunction with the General Plan. A Supplement to the General Plan EIR was certified with the adoption of the County's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan ("**GHG Plan**") by the Board of Supervisors ("**Board**") in 2011 ("**GHG Plan SEIR**") . The GHG Plan SEIR was utilized (as opposed to a stand-alone EIR) to evaluate whether the GHG Plan would result in new significant environmental effects not previously addressed in the General Plan EIR, or whether the GHG Plan would result in a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant environmental effects.
The GHG Plan SEIR and the Program EIR collectively comprise the foundational documents to which this document is addended, and are referred to herein as the "**General Plan EIR**".

Since the GHG Plan was adopted, the County of San Bernardino ("**County**") has processed numerous solar energy generation projects. This activity has caused the County to reconsider its legislative framework for the evaluation of these projects, culminating in the adoption by the Board on December 17, 2013, of additional criteria to be met before these projects can be approved.[1] These legislative adjustments were seen as temporary and in anticipation of the adoption of the REC Element.

The REC Element presents a vision for the future of renewable energy in the County, provides goals and policies to encourage renewable energy development that will meet the vision, and incorporates recommended actions and approaches for its implementation. Recommended actions include administrative procedures and processes, incentives, design standards, and collaboration with other agencies and utilities.

In addition to the REC Element, the Addendum evaluates associated changes to the County Development Code, as Amended ("**Development Code**"). Changes to the Development Code are required in order to implement the policies in the REC Element. Development Code amendments work in tandem to codify the rules and strategies associated with and guided by the vision, goals, policies and objectives identified in the REC Element. Both the General Plan and the Development Code amendments are referred to herein as the "**Proposed Project**".

The nature of the Proposed Project is to guide and direct the development of renewable energy generation facilities within the County by adding the REC Element to the County's General Plan. The REC Element is a programmatic planning document, created to guide and direct the development and operation of renewable energy generation facilities within the County. The REC Element does not approve or authorize any particular development or project that will alter the environment. Rather, it

[1] See Chapter 84.29 of the County Development Code

outlines the need for, and commits the County to, plans and programs to advance the goals and policies of the REC Element.

Although the General Plan is solely a policy document and, in and of itself, does not authorize future construction without subsequent environmental review, it none the less "paves the way" for future development to occur. As such, its policies have "potential for a direct physical change or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment" and thus it can be defined as a "project" under CEQA. Adoption of the REC Element will not directly cause any new construction, nor would it directly impose other changes that would create significant environmental impacts. All new development proposals will also be evaluated under CEQA at the time of application and processing through County's routine planning and building permitting process and will also comply with existing policies and requirements in the County's General Plan and Development Code.

Purpose and Scope of the Addendum

This Addendum addresses the environmental effects of the Proposed Project in light of previous environmental review in the General Plan EIR (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15163). Section 15164(b) allows the preparation of an addendum to a previously certified EIR "if only minor technical changes or additions are necessary or none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for the preparation of a subsequent EIR or negative declaration have occurred."

Under CEQA Guidelines § 15162(a)(1), a further EIR may be required if proposed changes to the project will require "major revisions" to the previous EIR or a negative declaration because of "new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects."

Thus, a proposed change in a project will require preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR if four conditions are all found to exist:

(1) The change in the project is substantial;

(2) The change involves new or more severe significant environmental impacts;

(3) The change will require major revisions to the previous EIR or negative declaration based on the new or more severe impacts; and

(4) The new or more severe impacts were not considered in the previous EIR or negative declaration.

Inclusion of the REC Element into the General Plan, as reviewed by this Addendum, would not represent a substantial change to the General Plan, nor would it require major revisions to the General Plan EIR. As discussed in more detail herein, none of the conditions outlined in Guidelines Section 15162 requiring preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR apply to the Proposed Project. Specifically, the Proposed Project will not cause a substantial changes in the General Plan and GHG Plan, as analyzed in the General Plan EIR, nor will the Proposed Project involve new or more severe significant environmental impacts, thereby requiring major revisions to the General Plan EIR, as any impacts from the Proposed Project were considered in the General Plan EIR.

In conformance with Guidelines Section 15121, the General Plan EIR, along with this Addendum, are intended to serve as the documents that will generally inform the decision-makers and the public of the environmental effects of the proposed project and the mitigation measures that may be used to lessen the effects. CEQA requires the decision-making body (the Lead Agency) taking action on the Proposed Project (in this case the County of San Bernardino) to consider the Addendum along with the General Plan EIR prior to making a decision on the Proposed Project.

Relationship of the Addendum to Previous CEQA Documents

The Program EIR was certified with the adoption of the General Plan Update in 2007 and the GHG Plan SEIR was certified with the adoption of the GHG Plan in 2011, as set forth above, collectively, the "**General Plan EIR**" No legal actions were filed challenging these previous CEQA documents, and thus they are presumed valid.

By utilizing provisions of the CEQA Guidelines ("**Guidelines**") authorizing the incorporation of previous documents [See Guidelines Sections 15148 (Citation) and 15150 (Incorporation by Reference)] in preparing this Addendum, the County has been able to make maximum feasible and appropriate use of previous analyses and technical information. As a result, following key documents are incorporated herein by reference:

- San Bernardino County General Plan Update Program EIR, 2007 (State Clearinghouse No. 2005101038)
- Facts, Findings, and Statement of Overriding Considerations Regarding the Environmental Effects from Implementation of the San Bernardino County General Plan Update, 2007
- San Bernardino County General Plan Amendment and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan Supplemental EIR, 2011 (State Clearinghouse No. 2005101038)
- Facts, Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations Regarding the Environmental Effects from Implementation of the San Bernardino County Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan and Associated General Plan And Development Code Amendments, November 2011

  Germane to the analysis in the GHG Plan SEIR were the following greenhouse gas ("**GHG**") related documents:

  - Functional Equivalent Document for Renewable Electricity Standard (California Air Resources Board 2010f) • Functional Equivalent Document for Climate Change Scoping Plan (California Air Resources Board 2008, SCH# 2008102060)
  - Functional Equivalent Document for California Cap on GHG Emissions and Market-Based Compliance Mechanisms (California Air Resources Board 2010d, SCH# 2010102056)

CEQA review of the REC Element in this Addendum must be approached, not independently, but in light of the entire General Plan and the General Plan EIR. By utilizing provisions of the CEQA Guidelines, the County, in preparing this Addendum, has been able to make maximum feasible and appropriate use of the technical information in these previous documents. Accordingly, the Addendum need contain only the information necessary to respond to the project changes, changed circumstances, or new information that triggered the need for additional environmental review (CEQA Guidelines Section 15163).

Relationship of the REC Element to the General Plan and Development Code

The General Plan takes immediate concerns into consideration, but focuses primarily on the future to project conditions and needs as a basis for determining objectives. It also establishes long-term policies for day-to-day decision-making based upon those objectives. Currently, the County's General Plan consists of eight Elements (or areas of focus): Land Use, Circulation and Infrastructure, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, Safety, Economic Development. The REC Element will join the General Plan, as its ninth Element. Within each Element are the vision, goals, policies, and objectives that direct implementation within its identified purpose. All of the Elements work together, forming a comprehensive set of planning policies. The General Plan also encompasses a series of

linked documents, e.g. associated Land Use Zoning District maps; Hazard, Circulation, and Resource Overlay maps, and an Alternate Housing Map. Also included are 13 individual Community Plans, the GHG Plan, and multiple supporting documents and reports. Policies in the General Plan then guide the rules and strategies that become codified in the County's Development Code.

The REC Element will identify the goals and policies that guide the siting, design, construction, maintenance, and decommissioning of renewable energy generation facilities, and recommend various measures with which such goals and policies may be attained. The vision, goals, policies, and programs described in the REC Element, and the associated rules and implementation strategies codified in the proposed Development Code amendments maintain consistency with the existing General Plan's vision, goals, policies, programs, and their implementing ordinances.

In 2011, the Conservation Element of the General Plan was amended and an Energy section (Section 7) included to guide policies related to multiple forms of energy production, including electricity infrastructures and renewable energy. Several goals and policies directly related to renewable energy will be removed from the Conservation Element and replaced by the proposed REC Element.

Summary of REC Element Focus and Policies

The REC Element has been prepared to augment existing General Plan policies related to renewable energy, consistent with a "Renewable Energy and Conservation Element Framework: Purpose, Values and Standards" of guiding principles for renewable energy policies ("**Framework**"). The Framework was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in March 2015. The Framework and the resulting REC Element policies tend toward restricting the siting of large scale renewable energy projects and toward encouraging increased production of on-site, smaller scale community oriented systems with the purpose of reducing environmental impacts.

The REC Element proposes a standards-based approach to identify where new renewable energy projects should be sited. A standards-based approach starts with meeting a need, and then follows by identifying appropriate and inappropriate site conditions. This approach enables protection of environmentally sensitive areas while allowing projects to locate where they are most beneficial and financially viable. Knowing the end-use enables project design to meet functionality rather than maximum capacity that transports the beneficial use elsewhere. The standards-based method also enables advancements in technology to occur without requiring continual reassessments. Developers will be required to demonstrate they meet standard County protocol in order to receive development permits.

The REC Element will encourage the construction of community-oriented renewable energy projects to ensure the benefits of a project offset its costs to the community. Project siting and design is anticipated to consist primarily of small solar photovoltaic (PV) of 6 acres or less and onsite or adjacent to already developed properties. Such small scale projects can more easily avoid environmental concerns that have made implementation of renewable energy in the County controversial.

REC Element policies are designed to direct utility-oriented projects toward degraded lands that are not of substantial value for other developed uses. In addition, the County has identified five Bureau of Land Management ("**BLM**") Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan "Development Focus Areas" where suitable land may be available that is separated from protected conservation lands and valuable wildlife habitat.

The REC Element builds on the Countywide Vision and General Plan with a set of policies designed to promote renewable energy development in a responsible manner, consistent with the protections

identified in the Environment and Quality of Life elements of the Countywide Vision and the County's existing General Plan Conservation Element. The County has long been a proponent of responsible conservation of its many and varied natural resources. The County has incorporated into the REC Element strong language in this regard, and will continue to uphold these values while at the same time encouraging renewable energy development that is appropriately sited, designed, constructed, and maintained.

APPROACH TO ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS:

Passage in 2006 of the Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32) was a major turning point in California's history. By legislating GHG emission reductions, AB 32 set the stage for transitioning to a sustainable, low-carbon future. Implementation of the County's REC Element is intricately connected to the GHG Plan component of the General Plan as it, in effect, encourages and enables, through its policies and performance measures, implementation of mitigation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The degree to which the REC Element may quantifiably affect the type, amount, and geographic distribution of future renewable energy projects cannot be known – and attempts to evaluate actual physical effects to the environment must, by nature, be an exercise in conjecture. With nearly two million unincorporated privately-held acres under County jurisdiction, it is far too speculative to translate the vision and processes into a quantifiable renewable energy project development future or any form of "build out scenario". With the General Plan EIR as its foundation, the review and analysis herein is based on general statements of unquantified impacts. Nonetheless, unquantified statements of impact maintain a place of value in identifying qualitative environmental impacts, alternatives, and mitigation measures.

That said however, the GHG Plan SEIR embraced and evaluated multiple renewable energy and conservation scenarios that, as applied to new and existing development, resulted in a level of quantified impacts used as a base for its impact analysis. These impacts also apply directly to the REC Element, as many of its greenhouse gas reduction policies are directly tied to implementation of policies in the REC Element. In a sense, the REC Element can be considered as a policy document that will enable implementation of many of the implementation measures outlined in the GHG Plan. Achieving this vision and implementing these goals will consequently result in projects that beneficially affecting the regions source of energy and contribute to its reduction in fossil fuel dependency. Implementation of the REC Element's performance standards will also enhance existing protections for the County's natural resources, valued landscapes, and built environments.

The certified Program EIR prepared for the 2007 General Plan Update evaluated potentially significant effects for the following 16 environmental areas of potential concern: 1) aesthetics; 2) agricultural resources; 3) air quality; 4) biological resources; 5) cultural and paleontological resources; 6) geology and soils; 7) hazards and hazardous materials; 8) hydrology, flood hazards and water quality; 9) land use and planning; 10) mineral resources; 11) noise; 12) population and housing; 13) public services; 14) recreation; 15) transportation/traffic; and 16) utilities and service systems. Of these 16 categories, the Board adopted findings concurring with the conclusions in the Program EIR that six of them remained incapable of being mitigated to a less-than-significant level: 1) aesthetics, 2) agricultural resources, 3) air quality, 4) biological resources, 5) hazards and hazardous materials and 6) transportation/traffic. (See Table 1, Summary of Environmental Impacts by CEQA Document.)

The certified GHG Plan SEIR evaluated 10 relevant environmental categories: 1) aesthetics, 2) agricultural and forestry resources, 3) air quality, 4) biological resources, 5) cultural resources, 6)

hazards & hazardous materials, 7) hydrology/water quality, 8) noise, 9) public services, and 10) utilities/service systems. Mandatory Findings of Significance were also evaluated. Of these 10, only three were found to cause new or substantially more severe significant impacts beyond those considered in the Program EIR: 1) aesthetics, 2) agricultural and forestry resources, and 3) biological resources. For these three topics it was determined that impacts would remain significant and unavoidable, even with implementation of mitigation measures.

The Board of Supervisors adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations that determined the benefits of the project outweighed their significance for both the Program EIR and the GHG Plan SEIR for those areas in which environmental impacts remained significant and unavoidable even with implementation of mitigation measures.

As the Addendum is related to impacts from GHG reduction measures, those categories applicable to the GHG Plan SEIR will also be evaluated in the Addendum. One addition to these categories will include Cultural Resources. Requirements for Cultural Resource consultation have been implemented and will be added to the evaluation. **The analysis covering the Proposed Project resulted in the summary of conclusions shown in Table 1, below. As shown, the Addendum reveals no significant changes would occur beyond what was previously determined** and analyzed in the General Plan EIR, nor will the Proposed Project involve new or more severe significant environmental impacts, thereby requiring major revisions to the General Plan EIR, as any impacts from the Proposed Project were considered in the General Plan EIR.

Table 1
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS BY CEQA DOCUMENT

	Program EIR	GHG Plan SEIR	Addendum
Aesthetics	SOC	SOC	No change
Agriculture and Forestry Resources	SOC	SOC	No change
Air Quality	SOC	Less Than	No change
Biological Resources	SOC	SOC	No change
Cultural Resources	Less Than	Less Than	No change
Geology and Soils	Less Than	---	---
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Less Than	---	---
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	SOC	Less Than	No change
Hydrology/Water Quality	Less Than	Less Than	No change
Land Use and Planning	Less Than	---	---
Mineral Resources	Less Than	---	No change
Noise	Less Than	Less Than	---
Population and Housing	Less Than	---	---
Public Services	Less Than	Less Than	No change
Recreation	Less Than	---	---
Tansportation/Traffic	SOC	---	---
Utilities and Service Systems	Less Than	Less Than	---
Mandatory Findings of Significance	**YES**	**YES**	**NO CHANGE**

SOC: A State of Overriding Considerations was adopted for an impact not able to be fully mitigated
Less Than: A Less Than Significant determination was made.
- - - Considered and not found to be relevant to the analysis

Eight topics were considered but eliminated found not to be relevant to the Proposed Project evaluated in the Addendum for the: 1) geology and soils, 2) greenhouse gas emissions, 3) land use and planning, 4) noise, 5) population and housing, 6) recreation, 7) transportation and traffic, and 8) utilities and service systems.

CEQA ANALYSIS:

The section numbers and letters, with corresponding analysis below, relate to the categories and relevant questions only found in the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G-Environmental Checklist.

1) AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

a, b, c) Scenic Vista, Scenic Resources, and Routes or Existing Scenic Character

The County contains vast undeveloped tracts of land that offer significant scenic vistas. There are numerous designated federal, state and local open space and recreational areas throughout the County that offer scenic vistas and views.

Primary scenic concerns of County residents include the preservation of views within the desert communities and limits development on ridge tops within the mountain communities. Given that wind generators are often located along hillsides and ridgelines (in order to take advantage of wind conditions) creating objectionable intrusions on the landscape and that the County does not have land use jurisdiction on federal and state lands for many large scale energy developments, there are no feasible mitigation measures to mitigate this impact.

The Program EIR determined that implementation of the General Plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts to scenic vistas, scenic resources, and the existing scenic character of the county (Program EIR Impacts AES-1 and 2) and the GHG Plan SEIR determined that it would result in a substantial increase in the severity of this impact, a significant and unavoidable impact (GHG SEIR Impact 3.1.1). Programmatic mitigation will be imposed on individual projects as they are evaluated in the future through the County development review process, however, it is not likely that the impacts will be mitigated to a less than significant level. **The impact to aesthetics and visual resources was overridden and outweighed by project benefits set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations for the GHG Reduction Plan.**

REC Element policies and Development Code performance measures will ensure that implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in an increased severity of aesthetic and visual impacts beyond what were previously identified.

All future projects would be subject to applicable state regulations and requirements, as well as subject to further CEQA analysis. Project siting and design characteristics will dictate the level of this review.

NO NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WOULD OCCUR AS A RESULT OF THE NEW POLICIES IN THE REC ELEMENT.

d) New Source of Substantial Light or Glare

New renewable energy projects, in response to the growth anticipated during the planning horizon of the General Plan, will incrementally increase ambient light and glare and continued intrusion on natural, scenic viewsheds. However, REC Element policies and performance standards will not increase the severity of the impacts anticipated in the GHG Plan SEIR. This is due to the stated goal of promoting small scale community oriented renewable energy projects near populated areas, and directing larger utility-oriented projects to outlying degraded land areas.

The Program EIR determined that implementation of the General Plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts associated in glare and nighttime lighting (Program EIR Impact AES-3 and GHG Plan SEIR Impact 3.1.2)**. REC Element policies and Development Code performance measures will ensure that implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in an increased severity of light or glare impacts beyond what were previously identified.**

All future projects would be subject to applicable state regulations and requirements, as well as subject to further CEQA analysis. Project siting and design characteristics will dictate the level of this review.

NO NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WOULD OCCUR AS A RESULT OF THE NEW POLICIES IN THE REC ELEMENT.

2) AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

a, b, e) Agricultural Resources

Agricultural has historically been an important part of San Bernardino County's economy. The Valley region was once dominated by citrus groves, vineyards, dairy farms and the related industries. Much of the agricultural industry has left the region due to increases in traffic congestion. Strict air and water regulations have caused many dairy owners and other agricultural businesses to relocate out of the state. Areas in the eastern portion of the valley still maintain fruit orchards and nursery and vegetable production. Continued urban expansion is resulting in the conversion of agricultural uses. Economic pressures favor developing the land for other uses such as shopping centers, industrial logistics, and master planned communities.

Agriculture within the Mountain Region has is limited to the Oak Glen area which maintains a thriving economy which is centered on apple orchards. In the Desert Region, agricultural development is limited primarily to areas bordering the Mojave River as far north as Newberry Springs, though, due to the adjudication of the Mojave River watershed, it is a limited resource.

New renewable energy generating facilities and supporting facilities such as transmission lines that would convert or cross agricultural lands could occur as a result of the Proposed Project. However, proposed policies in the REC Element will limit new utility-oriented projects to degraded lands only, thus significant agricultural impacts are not anticipated beyond that identified in the precious CEQA documents.

The Program EIR determined that implementation of the General Plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts to agricultural uses in the County due to urban

expansion and economic considerations (Program EIR Impacts AG-1 and 2). Renewable energy generating facilities are an allowed use in the Agriculture Zone and could result in increased severity of agricultural use impacts beyond what was considered in the Program EIR. The GHG Plan SEIR determined its policies to promote renewable energy would result in an increase in the severity of this impact and identified it as a substantial increase that would result in a significant and unavoidable impact. **Mitigation was incorporated into the GHG Plan SEIR, but did not mitigate the impacts to a less than significant level. A Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted by the Board of Supervisors for impacts to agricultural resources for the GHG Reduction Plan.**

REC Element policies and Development Code performance measures will ensure that implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in an increased severity of agricultural impacts beyond what were previously identified.

All future projects would be subject to applicable state regulations and requirements, as well as subject to further CEQA analysis. Project siting and design characteristics will dictate the level of this review.

NO NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WOULD OCCUR AS A RESULT OF THE NEW POLICIES IN THE REC ELEMENT.

3) AIR QUALITY

a - e) Air Quality and Pollutants

Air quality within a region is impacted by the amount of air pollution generated from stationary, mobile, area, and natural sources located within that region. California is divided geographically into 15 air basins in order to manage the State's air resources on a regional basis. San Bernardino County is located in two air basins, the South Coast Air Basin ("**SCAB**") and the Mojave Desert Air Basin ("**MDAB**").

The topography and climate of Southern California combine to make the SCAB an area with a high potential for air pollution. During the summer months, a warm air mass frequently descends over the cool, moist marine layer produced by the interaction between the ocean's surface and the lowest layer of the atmosphere. The warm upper layer forms a cap over the cool marine layer and inhibits the pollutants in the marine layer from dispersing upward. Light winds during the summer further limit ventilation. Sunlight triggers photochemical reactions which produce ozone, and this region experiences more days of sunlight than many other major urban areas in the nation. The cool moist coastal air from the SCAB is blocked by the San Gabriel and San Bernardino mountain ranges. Poor air quality conditions also exist in the MDAB. The area is characterized by hot, dry summers and mild winters with annual rainfall averaging two to five inches per year. Prevailing winds are a major contributor to poor air quality in the Desert Region.

The Program EIR determined that implementation of the General Plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts to air quality (Program EIR Impacts AQ-1, 2, and 3). The purpose of the GHG Plan is to reduce GHG emissions within the County, and the GHG SEIR determined that implementation of the GHG Plan would not result in an

increased severity of previously identified Program EIR air quality impacts. In addition, implementation of these General Plan and Development Code provisions would ensure that construction air pollutant emissions are adequately addressed. Thus, the GHG Plan also would not result in a substantial increase in the severity of this impact, which was previously identified in the Program EIR as a significant and unavoidable impact.

Implementation of REC Element policy provisions and the continued implementation of the County Development Code, as amended, would generally ensure that implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in increased severity of these impacts. **As a result, the Proposed Project would not result in a new significant or substantially more severe impact related to air quality.**

REC Element policies and Development Code performance measures will ensure that implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in an increased severity of air quality impacts beyond what were previously identified.

All future projects would be subject to applicable state regulations and requirements, as well as subject to further CEQA analysis. Project siting and design characteristics will dictate the level of this review.

NO NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WOULD OCCUR AS A RESULT OF THE NEW POLICIES IN THE REC ELEMENT.

4) BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

a - d) Natural Habitat Areas/Sensitive Species/Wildlife Corridors

The County has been divided into three sub-regions for planning purposes: the Valley Region, the Mountain Region and the Desert Region. The Valley Region is urbanized with few existing natural open space areas. The predominant vegetation communities within the undeveloped areas of the Valley are chaparral, coastal sage scrub, deciduous woodlands and grasslands. The most sensitive vegetation types found within the Valley area are wetlands, including riparian woodland, riparian scrub and freshwater marsh. All riparian areas in the County are within federal and state protected areas.

The dominant aquatic feature within the Valley Region is the Santa Ana River Watershed. Key riverine resources include Day Creek, Etiwanda Creek and Sevaine Creek. Other areas are important biologically because they support flora or fauna that are limited in their distribution or require or tolerate unusual conditions that occur there.

The vegetation communities in the Mountain Region include scrubs, woodlands, wetlands and the relic pavement plains. The County coordinates with federal and state management plans as most of the Mountain Region is under the jurisdiction of federal or state agencies. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife ("**CDFW**") recognizes 14 Areas of Special Biological Importance ("**ASBIs**") within this region, including key areas that support herds of both resident and seasonally migratory mule deer. CDFW also recognizes principal wintering areas for waterfowl migrating along the Pacific Flyway.

The Desert Region encompasses approximately 93 percent of the County land area, and includes a great diversity of biological resources in one of the most fragile ecosystems in the United States. Most of the Desert Region is made up of land managed by the BLM

and other federal agencies. These federal lands support various important biological resources, including areas of deer, bighorn sheep, and desert tortoise habitat. The Desert Region also supports a high number of sensitive plant species.

In general, the GHG reduction measures envisioned as part of the GHG Plan and the REC Element involve expansion of existing facilities in urbanized or already developed areas, and/or within existing rights-of-way, rather than extension of infrastructure into undeveloped portions of the County. New policies are to allow utility-oriented projects on degraded lands only. Therefore, most contemplated improvements would not be expected to adversely affect important biological habitats.

The GHG Plan determined that implementation of new renewable energy projects could involve installation of wind generators and other renewable energy facilities that have the potential to impact sensitive and special-status species in unique ways compared with other development not anticipated or evaluated in the Program EIR. Wildlife may be potentially affected by electrocution from transmission lines; noise; presence of, or collision with, turbines, meteorological towers, and transmission lines, maintenance activities; special-status avian and bat strikes from wind-generating facilities; exposure to contaminants; and increased potential for fire hazards.

In some instances, turbines, transmission lines, and other facility structures may interfere with behavioral activities, including migratory movements, and may provide additional perch sites for raptors, thereby increasing predatory levels on other wildlife (i.e., predation of juvenile desert tortoises by ravens). Additionally, with the development of wind power generating facilities, there is a potential for impacts to special-status birds, raptors, and bats due to collision with wind turbines and barotraumas (in bats).

The Program EIR found that, despite the imposition of certain mitigation measures, impacts to some sensitive and special-status species and their associated habitat and migratory corridors resulting from implementation of the General Plan could not be fully mitigated to a level below significance (Program EIR Impacts BIO-1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 13, 14, and 16). Implementation of General Plan policy provisions and the continued implementation of the County Development Code would generally ensure that implementation of the proposed project does not result in an increased severity of these impacts. The GHG Plan SEIR determined that new renewable energy generating facilities could result in increased severity of biological resource impacts than was considered in the Program EIR.

Mitigation was incorporated into the GHG Plan SEIR, but did not mitigate the impacts to a less than significant level. A Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted by the Board of Supervisors for impacts to agricultural resources for the GHG Reduction Plan.

REC Element policies and Development Code performance measures will ensure that implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in an increased severity of biological resource impacts beyond what were previously identified.

All future projects would be subject to applicable state regulations and requirements, as well as subject to further CEQA analysis. Project siting and design characteristics will dictate the level of this review.

NO NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WOULD OCCUR AS A RESULT OF THE NEW POLICIES IN THE REC ELEMENT.

5) CULTURAL RESOURCES

a, b) Historic and Archaeological Resources

Cultural and archaeological resources are physical objects, buildings and structures, locations, living biological resources, or landscapes with unique cultural or historical significance. In the County, these resources include items left by settlers from Europe and elsewhere, dated between 1770 and 1950, as well as Native American tools, artwork, other possessions or artifacts, structures, and sacred locations. The San Bernardino County Archaeological Information Center recognizes over 12,000 historic sites from Native American periods (pre-1770), the Mission period of Spanish occupation (1770 to 1820), the Mexican period (1820 to 1848), and the American period (1848 to 1950).[2] A large number of state and federally listed historic resources are located in the unincorporated parts of the County, including Native American petroglyph sites, ghost towns, World War II military training facilities, and wagon roads across the Mojave (OHP 2015; DOI 2015).

In addition to the cultural resources associated with historic sites, a significant number of traditional cultural properties ("**TCPs**") under the National Historic Preservation Act and California Historical Resources Information System ("**CHRIS**") sites under the California Office of Historic Preservation exist in and around the County.

To assist in evaluating the REC Element's cultural impacts, 15 tribes associated within the County's jurisdiction were contacted based on a list received from the California Native American Heritage Commission ("**NAHC**"). To-date, four tribes have responded to the County's notification of the proposed REC Element: San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians, and the Colorado River Indian Tribes. Senate Bill 18 consultation is ongoing with these tribes, and will continue as the REC Element moves through the public review and adoption process.

The enactment of Assembly Bill 52, Tribal Cultural Resources under CEQA, in 2015 will continue to ensure affected Tribes are notified and have opportunity to evaluate and participate in meaningful consultation regarding future renewable energy projects as they are proposed.

REC Element policies and Development Code performance measures will ensure that implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in an increased severity of cultural resource impacts beyond what were previously identified.

All future projects would be subject to applicable state regulations and requirements, as well as subject to further CEQA analysis. Project siting and design characteristics will dictate the level of this review.

NO NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WOULD OCCUR AS A RESULT OF THE NEW POLICIES IN THE REC ELEMENT.

[2] While the American period is of course ongoing, resources after 1950 are generally not considered historical.

c) Paleontological Resources

Paleontological resources are evidence of ancient organisms, such as fossils. They occur primary in sedimentary rock (rock composed by the deposition of sand, silt, and other fine particles), although they may be found in other types of rock as well. Fossils are usually buried and can only be discovered through excavation, although some may be found on the surface. There are approximately 3,000 known sites in San Bernardino County with paleontological resources (County of San Bernardino 2007).

Chapter 82.12, Cultural Resources Preservation, of the County's Development Code helps to identify and preserve important archaeological and historical resources, while Chapter 82.19, Paleontological Resources Overlay, helps to identify and preserve significant paleontological resources. Both of these overlay zones are applied to areas known for these resources

All future projects would be subject to applicable state regulations and requirements, as well as subject to further CEQA analysis. Project siting and design characteristics will dictate the level of this review. County standard procedures to protect cultural resources currently in place include: a cultural resources survey and consultation with associated Indian tribes and other specialists as appropriate. In certain cases, specialized cultural monitors are required on the project site during certain ground-disturbing activities.

Monitors have the authority to stop disruptive activities around areas where any such resources are found. Should any human remains be found, the County Coroner's office will be contacted along with the NAHC if any human remains of Native American origin are found (County of San Bernardino 2011b, 2014a, 2014b).

REC Element policies and Development Code performance measures will ensure that implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in an increased severity of cultural resource impacts beyond what were previously identified.

All future projects would be subject to applicable state regulations and requirements, as well as subject to further CEQA analysis. Project siting and design characteristics will dictate the level of this review.

NO NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WOULD OCCUR AS A RESULT OF THE NEW POLICIES IN THE REC ELEMENT.

6) HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

d) Hazardous Waste Sites

A hazardous material is defined as "any material that because of its quantity, concentration or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment." There are approximately 2,400 known hazardous waste facilities in San Bernardino County. As of January 1, 2006, there were 55 potential hazardous waste sites listed under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, also known as Superfund. The Fire Department, on behalf of the County, holds approximately 6,500 permits with businesses throughout the County for various hazardous materials and hazardous waste activities.

The Proposed Project would involve encouraging the placement of utility-oriented renewable energy facilities at degraded sites, including sites that are, or may have been, contaminated with hazardous waste. The California Department of Toxic Substances ("**DTSC**") is responsible for overseeing the identification and reclamation of contaminated sites. Subsequent use of such sites depends on the nature of toxicity and the method of containment. Once reclaimed, conditional uses can be allowed; often future habitation or human occupancy is restricted. Such sites can make preferable sites for renewable energy facilities that require only periodic site monitoring.

The General Plan EIR (the Program EIR and the GHG Plan SEIR) determined that implementation of the General Plan would result in a less than significant impact regarding the release of hazardous materials.

REC Element policies and Development Code performance measures will ensure that implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in an increased severity of hazards or hazardous material impacts beyond what were previously identified.

All future projects would be subject to applicable state regulations and requirements, as well as subject to further CEQA analysis. Project siting and design characteristics will dictate the level of this review.

NO NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WOULD OCCUR AS A RESULT OF THE NEW POLICIES IN THE REC ELEMENT.

7) HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

b, f) Groundwater Supply

Groundwater supply has been of particular concern in recent years due to the extended drought being experienced by this region. Water for renewable energy projects is primarily used to suppress fugitive dust generated during construction. It is also used during operations for energy generation technologies that involve heat, and for the periodic cleaning of solar panels. A community's water supply has the potential to result in both short- and long-term impacts. Insufficient supply can also result in a restriction of various forms of new development. Water supply needs for the operation of wind and solar projects is generally minor and much less than agricultural and residential land uses.

Renewable energy generation typically has little effect on groundwater infiltration as ground surfaces are primarily left in a permeable state. The GHG Plan SEIR determined the proposed GHG reduction measures would not increase the severity of groundwater resource impacts or result in a new impact that was not addressed in the Program EIR.

The Program EIR and GHG Plan SEIR determined that implementation of the General Plan would result in a less than significant impact to groundwater supplies and groundwater recharge (Program EIR Impact HWQ-1).

REC Element policies and Development Code performance measures will ensure that implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in an increased severity of groundwater supply impacts beyond what were previously identified.

All future projects would be subject to applicable state regulations and requirements, as well as subject to further CEQA analysis. Project siting and design characteristics will dictate the level of this review.

NO NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WOULD OCCUR AS A RESULT OF THE NEW POLICIES IN THE REC ELEMENT.

a, c - f) Water Quality and Storm Runoff

The GHG SEIR determined that water quality issues are becoming increasingly significant throughout the County. Improved monitoring techniques reveal the presence of man-made chemicals and their residues, as well as naturally occurring toxic chemicals, in most of the state's surface and groundwater. This is due, among other things, to the recharge of saline water originating from storm flows, urban runoff, imported water and incidental recharge. Stormwater runoff can contribute to water quality degradation. Long-term implementation of the proposed Project could add impervious surfaces that could impact water quality through discharge of pollutants into groundwater basins.

The Santa Ana Regional Quality Control Board has required the San Bernardino Flood Control District, as a permittee, to be included in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System ("**NPDES**") Municipal Stormwater Permit. The Permit and Section 4 of the Report of Waste Discharge, dated April 1995, require the development and adoption of New Development/Redevelopment Guidelines. The purpose of the Guidelines is to identify pollutant prevention and treatment measures that could be incorporated into development projects. The GHG Plan SEIR concluded that the County General Plan and Development Code include policies and programs, including NPDES compliance that addresses potential impacts to water quality and, in conjunction with state mandated requirements, provide adequate mitigation for activities anticipated to occur as a result of GHG Plan implementation.

REC Element policies and Development Code performance measures will ensure that implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in an increased severity of water quality and stormwater runoff impacts beyond what were previously identified.

All future projects would be subject to applicable state regulations and requirements, as well as subject to further CEQA analysis. Project siting and design characteristics will dictate the level of this review.

NO NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WOULD OCCUR AS A RESULT OF THE NEW POLICIES IN THE REC ELEMENT.

8) MINERAL RESOURCES.

a, b) Mineral Resources

The REC Element is consistent with the land uses envisioned in the General Plan and Development Code and would not remove policies that currently protect mineral resources. Future development proposals will be subject to permitting to ensure conformance with the land use designations, as well as with Mineral Resources overlay

zones. The Element contains recommendations that would allow distributed generation renewable energy facilities as an interim use on sites that are preserved for future mineral extraction and otherwise precluded from renewable energy development. As the intended uses would be temporary, and would not affect the long term extraction of mineral resources, there is no impact

REC Element policies and Development Code performance measures will ensure that implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in an increased severity of mineral resource impacts beyond what were previously identified.

All future projects would be subject to applicable state regulations and requirements, as well as subject to further CEQA analysis. Project siting and design characteristics will dictate the level of this review.

NO NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WOULD OCCUR AS A RESULT OF THE NEW POLICIES IN THE REC ELEMENT.

9) PUBLIC SERVICES

a, b) Police, Fire, and Emergency Services

The Program EIR and the GHG Plan SEIR determined that implementation of the General Plan would result in a less than significant impact to fire protection and emergency services (Program EIR Impacts PS-2 and 3). The GHG Plan SEIR examined the effects of the Project on fire protection and emergency services. The GHG Plan SEIR includes, each subsection, a description of existing facilities and infrastructure, applicable service goals, potential environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed General Plan Update, GHG Reduction Plan, and associated Development Code Amendment.

Certain issues within the public services and utilities topic, such as police protection, schools, parks and other services that could be potentially impacted by the Project were evaluated in the Initial Environmental Study prepared as part of the Notice of Preparation. The Initial Study determined that the GHG Plan would not result any new development potential, population increase, or construction of facilities that would trigger additional or altered needs for these services and were therefore not evaluated in the GHG Plan SEIR.

REC Element policies and Development Code performance measures will ensure that implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in an increased severity of hazards or hazardous material impacts beyond what were previously identified.

All future projects would be subject to applicable state regulations and requirements, as well as subject to further CEQA analysis. Project siting and design characteristics will dictate the level of this review.

NO NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SEVERE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WOULD OCCUR AS A RESULT OF THE NEW POLICIES IN THE REC ELEMENT.

10) MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.

For the reasons stated in the analysis above, the County finds and determines that adoption and implementation of the Proposed Project will not have a significant impact on the environment (either by creating new significant environmental impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of significant impacts already identified in the previous CEQA documents, the Program EIR and the GHG Plan SEIR, collectively, the "General Plan EIR"). The analysis included in this document constitutes an Addendum to the General Plan EIR and demonstrates that no further CEQA review is required.

None of the circumstances necessitating preparation of additional CEQA review as specified in CEQA and the Guidelines, including Public Resources Code Section 21166 and Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15163, are present in that:

1) there are no substantial changes to the project that would result in new significant environmental impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of significant impacts already identified in the General Plan EIR;

2) there are no substantial changes in circumstances that would result in new significant environmental impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of significant impacts already identified in the General Plan EIR;

3) there is no new information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the General Plan EIR were adopted, which is expected to result in

   (a) new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of significant environmental effects already identified in the General Plan EIR; or

   (b) mitigation measures which were previously determined not to be feasible would in fact be feasible, or which are considerably different from those recommended in the General Plan EIR and which would substantially reduce significant effects of the project, but the County declines to adopt them; and

4) adoption for the REC Element would not require major revisions to the Program EIR and the GHG Plan SEIR because its implementation does not result in new or more sever impacts.

Thus, in considering adoption and implementation of the Proposed Project, the County can rely on the General Plan EIR, and no further/additional CEQA review is required. Furthermore, as a separate and independent basis, the County finds and determines that the Proposed Project is also exempt from further CEQA review pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21083.3 and Guidelines section 15183.

Sources:

Association of Environmental Professionals, 2016 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statute and Guidelines.

County of San Bernardino 2011. General Plan Amendment and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan, Supplemental EIR. Prepared by PMC.

_ _ _ _ _. 2014 Development Code, as Amended.

_ _ _ _ _. 2007 General Plan, as Amended.