



Inter Office Memo

**ATTENTION: FOR FINAL ACTION OR
MODIFICATION TO OR ADDITION OF
CONDITIONS, SEE FINAL BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS' ACTION SUMMARY
MINUTES**

DATE: December 6, 2018

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Planning Commission

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION NO. 12750 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
APPLICATION NO. 7225 and UNCLASSIFIED CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT
APPLICATION NOS. 3550, 3551, 3552, 3553, and 3577

APPLICANT: Little Bear Solar 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, LLC

OWNER: Westlands Water District

REQUEST: Allow the construction, operation, maintenance, and ultimate decommissioning of an up to 180-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating facility and associated infrastructure, to be known as Little Bear Solar 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 on an approximately 1,288-acre site in the AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District. (Note: No Little Bear 2 facility is proposed.) The solar facility will consist of five individual facilities, ranging from approximately 161 to 322 acres in size, with a 60-foot monopole design telecommunications tower and associated equipment proposed at the Little Bear Solar 1 site. Each individual facility would include a substation, inverters, transformers, and a 34.5-kilovolt (kV) overhead collection system, and could include an energy storage system. Other necessary infrastructure would include a permanent operation and maintenance (O&M) building, water storage, meteorological data system, access roads, telecommunications infrastructure, and security fencing.

LOCATION: The Project site is located approximately 13 miles east of Interstate 5, approximately two miles southwest of the City of Mendota, and adjacent to and west of State Route 33 (SR 33), in unincorporated Fresno County. The Project site is comprised of approximately 1,288 acres of Westlands Water District-owned lands, and would encompass five parcels. A new 115 kV

generation tie-line will be strung along the existing North Star generation tie-line, which has been constructed within private easements along W. California Avenue (Solar Facility APNs: 019-110-03ST, -04ST, -05ST, -06ST, and -13ST) (SUP. DIST. 1).

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

At its hearing of December 6, 2018, the Commission considered the Staff Report and testimony (summarized in Exhibit A).

A motion was made by Commissioner Lawson and seconded by Commissioner Chatha to deny Unclassified Conditional Use Permit Nos. 3550, 3551, 3552, 3553, and 3577 on the basis that Finding 4 could not be made due to the loss of farmable agricultural land.

This motion passed on the following vote:

VOTING:	Yes:	Commissioners Lawson, Chatha, Abrahamian, Burgess, and Eubanks
	No:	Commissioners Delahay, Hill, and Vallis
	Absent:	Commissioner Ede
	Abstain:	None

STEVEN E. WHITE, DIRECTOR
Department of Public Works and Planning
Secretary-Fresno County Planning Commission

By: 
William M. Kettler, Manager
Development Services and Capital Projects Division

WMK:ksn
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Attachments

EXHIBIT A

Environmental Impact Report Application No. 7225
Unclassified Conditional Use Permit Application Nos. 3550, 3551, 3552, 3553, and 3577

- Staff:** The Fresno County Planning Commission considered the Staff Report dated December 6, 2018, and heard a summary presentation by staff.
- Applicant:** The Applicant's representative concurred with the Staff Report and the recommended Conditions. He described the project and offered the following information to clarify the intended use:
- First Solar is a leading provider of photovoltaic energy solutions and has a history of successfully installing multiple solar projects.
 - Little Bear will create 500 jobs during the construction phase, and will create five permanent jobs during operation.
 - No water is needed to generate the renewable solar energy.
 - Little Bear and the existing North Star Solar facility are not the same project.
 - We are aware of the letter of opposition by John Belcher, representing Save Our Mojave, and we believe the comments made therein are not true; the consultant adequately addressed the concerns raised by the letter.
- Others:** Two other individuals spoke in support of the application refuting the letter of opposition, and addressing legal questions in the letter regarding the cumulative impacts section and adequacy of the Environmental Impact Report. No one spoke in opposition to the application.
- Correspondence:** No letters were presented to the Planning Commission in support of the application. One letter was presented to the Planning Commission in opposition to the application, citing concerns with the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) analysis specifically related to its legal association with the adjacent North Star Solar Facility, shared facilities, incremental cumulative impacts, and groundwater usage; and requesting the EIR be recirculated to address water usage and incremental cumulative impacts.

CMM:ksn

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