

1 Introduction

This environmental impact report (EIR) has been prepared to meet the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for purposes of evaluating the potential environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and alternatives associated with the proposed VEGA SES 6 Solar and Battery Storage Project and Ramon Substation Expansion. This EIR describes the existing environment that would be affected by, and the environmental impacts which could potentially result from the construction and operation of the proposed project as described in detail in Chapter 2.0 of this EIR.

1.1 Overview of the Proposed Project

1.1.1 VEGA 6

The solar energy facility site is located on approximately 320 acres of privately-owned vacant land on a single parcel (Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 034-160-002) in the unincorporated Imperial County, California. The site is located approximately 6 miles south of the southern-most edge of the Salton Sea; 10 miles west of the City of Brawley; and approximately 5 miles southwest of the community of Westmorland. The solar energy facility site is located directly south of Andre Road and 0.50 mile west of the Westside Main Canal.

The solar energy facility site is bound by undeveloped Open Space/Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land immediately to the west and south, and active agricultural land to the north and east. The Westside Main Canal travels southeast to northwest and is located northeast and east of the solar energy facility site.

The proposed VEGA 6 project involves the construction and operation of an 80 megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) solar facility with an integrated 160 MW battery storage system (BESS) on approximately 320 acres of privately-owned land. The proposed VEGA 6 project would be comprised of solar PV arrays panels, an on-site substation, BESS, gen-tie line, inverters, transformers, underground electrical cables, and access roads. The proposed gen-tie line would be approximately 4-miles long and would connect to the Imperial Irrigation District's (IID) existing 161 kV "L" transmission line. The entire gen-tie route would be on federal lands managed by BLM within the California Desert Conservation Area planning area.

1.1.2 Ramon Substation Expansion

Energy generated by the VEGA 6 project will be transmitted to IID's existing 161 kV "L" Line, with ultimate delivery to IID's Ramon Substation in Riverside County. IID has identified that upgrades to the Ramon Substation will be required in order to accommodate several planned utility-scale projects, including the VEGA 6 project. Upgrades to the Ramon Substation would involve expansion of an approximately 4-acre area immediately adjacent to the existing substation. The proposed upgrades to the Ramon Substation are necessary infrastructure improvements to accommodate several planned utility-scale projects, including the VEGA 6 project, to connect to the IID grid. Because it is a necessary infrastructure improvement to allow the VEGA 6 project to connect to the IID grid, the Ramon Substation expansion is considered a connected project for the purposes of CEQA review.

The existing Ramon Substation is located on a single parcel (APN 651-230-015) in unincorporated Riverside County, generally northeast of Cathedral City, north of the Interstate-10 Freeway. The

existing substation currently occupies approximately 6.7 acres of the 11.26-acre parcel. The proposed upgrades would involve expansion of an approximately 4-acre area immediately adjacent to the existing substation. Immediately west of the existing Ramon Substation and proposed expansion area is the existing Southern California Edison Mirage Substation. Access to the existing substation is provided by Ramon Road, which is immediately south of the existing substation.

1.1.3 Agency Roles and Responsibilities

County of Imperial

The following are the primary discretionary approvals required for implementation of the project:

1. **General Plan Amendment #22-001.** An amendment to the County's General Plan, Renewable Energy and Transmission Element is required to implement the proposed project. CUP applications proposed for specific renewable energy projects not located in the Renewable Energy (RE) Overlay Zone would not be allowed without an amendment to the RE Overlay Zone. The project site is located outside of the RE Overlay Zone. Therefore, the applicant is requesting a General Plan Amendment to include/classify the project site (APN No. 034-160-002) into the RE Overlay Zone. No change in the underlying General Plan land use (Agriculture) is proposed.
2. **Zone Change #22-0001.** The project site is currently zoned Open Space/Preservation (S-2). The applicant is requesting a Zone Change to include/classify the project site (APN No. 034-160-002) into the RE Overlay Zone to allow for solar and battery storage development.
3. **Approval of CUP #22-0005.** Implementation of the project would require the approval of a CUP by the County to allow for the construction and operation of the proposed solar energy facility with an integrated BESS. The project site is located on one privately-owned legal parcel zoned Open Space/Preservation (S-2). Pursuant to Title 9, Division 5, Chapter 19, the following uses are permitted in the S-2 zone subject to approval of a CUP from Imperial County:
 - d) *Communication Towers: including radio, television, cellular, digital, along with the necessary support equipment such as receivers, transmitters, antennas, satellite dishes, relays, etc.*
 - i) *Major facilities relating to the generation and transmission of electrical energy provide[d] such facilities are not under State or Federal law, to [be] approved exclusively by an agency, or agencies of the State or Federal government, and provided such facilities shall be approved subsequent to coordination review of the Imperial Irrigation District for electrical matters. Such uses shall include but be limited to the following:*
 - *Electrical generation plants*
 - *Facilities for the transmission of electrical energy (100-200 kV)*
 - *Electrical substations in an electrical transmission system (500 kv/230 kv/161 kV)*
4. **Approval of CUP (CUP 22-0027) – Groundwater Well.** Pursuant to Title 9 Division 21: Water Well Regulations, §92102.00, the Applicant will be required to obtain a CUP for the proposed on-site groundwater well. As required by §92102.00, no person shall (1) drill a new well, (2) activate a previously drilled but unused well, (unused shall mean a well or wells that have not



been used for a 12 month) period by installing pumps, motors, pressure tanks, piping, or other equipment necessary or intended to make the well operational, (3) increase the pumping capacity of a well, or (4) change the use of a well, without first obtaining a CUP through the County Planning & Development Services Department.

5. **Certification of the EIR.** After the required public review for the Draft EIR, the County will respond to written comments, edit the document, and produce a Final EIR to be certified by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors prior to making a decision on approval or denial of the project.

Subsequent ministerial approvals may include, but are not limited to:

- Grading and clearing permits
- Building permits
- Reclamation plan
- Encroachment permits
- Transportation permit(s)

Discretionary Actions and Approvals by Other Agencies

Responsible Agencies are those agencies that have discretionary approval over one or more actions involved with development of the project. Trustee Agencies are state agencies that have discretionary approval or jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project.

- **Imperial Irrigation District (IID) (CEQA Responsible Agency).** The IID is a Responsible Agency as defined by CEQA Guideline Section 15381 as it relates to the proposed Ramon Substation improvements. In this capacity, the IID has the discretionary authority to approve improvements to the existing Ramon Substation, and would utilize the information contained in this EIR, as prepared by the County of Imperial as the CEQA Lead Agency, as the CEQA clearance for the substation improvements.
- **Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (National Environmental Policy Act – Federal Lead Agency).** Right-of-way grant for the off-site gen-tie line to be located on federal lands under the jurisdiction of the BLM. The proposed ROW would be 60-feet-wide.
- **County of Riverside.** The Ramon Substation expansion area is zoned General Residential Zone (R-3) in the Riverside County Zoning Ordinance. The Riverside County Zoning Ordinance does not identify public utilities as a permitted or conditional use in R-3. However, per Section 17.208.010, facilities for the storage or transmission of electrical energy is permitted with a Public Use Permit:

Facilities for the storage or transmission of electrical energy where the County is not preempted by law from exercising jurisdiction. This subsection shall take precedence over and supersede any conflicting provision in any zone classification. Facilities for the storage or transmission of electrical energy shall not be subject to the development standards of the zone classification in which they are located.

The existing Ramon Substation is currently operating under an approved Public Use Permit. IID would apply for an amendment to its Public Use Permit for the proposed Ramon Substation expansion.

Other Agencies Reviews and/or Consultations

The following agencies may be involved in reviewing and/or consultations with the project proponent as it relates to construction of the project:

Federal

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

- The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) enforces compliance with regulations related to special-status species or their habitat as required under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

UNITED STATES ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

- Section 404 Permit (Clean Water Act [CWA]). The CWA establishes a program to regulate the discharge of dredge and fill material into waters of the U.S. including wetlands. Activities regulated under this program include fills for development, water resource projects (e.g., dams and levees), infrastructure development (e.g., highways and airports), and conversion of wetlands to uplands for farming and forestry. Either an individual 404b permit or authorization to use an existing USACE Nationwide Permit will need to be obtained if any portion of the construction requires fill into a river, stream, or stream bed that has been determined to be a jurisdictional waterway.

State

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (TRUSTEE AGENCY)

- The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is a Trustee Agency and enforces compliance with regulations related to California special-status species or their habitats as required under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA).

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD

- **National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit Order No. 2009-009-DWQ.** Requires the applicant to file a public Notice of Intent to discharge stormwater and to prepare and implement a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP).
- **Jurisdictional Waters.** Agencies and/or project proponents must consult with the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) regarding, when applicable, regarding compliance with the CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification or permitting under California Porter-Cologne Act.

Local

IMPERIAL COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

- Review as part of the EIR process including the final design of the proposed fire system.

IMPERIAL COUNTY AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

- Review as part of the EIR process regarding consistency with the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) CEQA Air Quality Handbook, the final "Modified" 2009 8-hour Ozone Air Quality Management Plan, the State Implementation Plan for particulate matter less than



10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀) in the Imperial Valley, the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM_{2.5}), and verification of Rule 801 compliance.

1.2 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, and Other Plans

1.2.1 County of Imperial General Plan and Land Use Ordinance

The General Plan provides guidance on future growth in the County of Imperial. Any development in the County of Imperial must be consistent with the General Plan and Land Use Ordinance (Title 9, Division 10).

1.2.2 County of Riverside General Plan

The County of Riverside General Plan is a policy document that reflects the County's vision for the future of Riverside County. The General Plan was comprehensively revised in 2003 and most recently updated in 2021. In addition, the General Plan divides the County into 19 Area Plans. The purpose of these Area Plans is to provide more detailed land use and policy direction regarding local issues such as land use, circulation, open space, and other topical areas. The Ramon Substation expansion area is located within the Western Coachella Valley Area Plan (WCVAP) of the General Plan.

1.2.3 Western Coachella Valley Area Plan

The Ramon Substation expansion area is located within the WCVAP of the General Plan. The WCVAP is not a standalone document, but rather an extension of the County of Riverside General Plan. It provides a customized direction specifically for this planning area. The WCVAP provides a description of the location, physical characteristic, and special features, in addition to a land use plan, policies, and exhibits to better understand the physical, environmental, and regulatory characteristics that comprise the area.

1.2.4 Renewables Portfolio Standard Program

Established in 2002 under Senate Bill (SB) 1078, California's Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) was accelerated in 2006 under SB 107 by requiring that 20 percent of electricity retail sales be served by RE resources by 2010. RE sources include wind, geothermal, and solar. Subsequent recommendations in California energy policy reports advocated a goal of 33 percent by 2020. On November 17, 2008, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed Executive Order (EO) S-14-08 requiring that "... all retail sellers of electricity shall serve 33 percent of their load with RE by 2020." The following year, EO S-21-09 directed the California Air Resources Board (CARB), under its Assembly Bill (AB) 32 authority, to enact regulations to achieve the goal of 33 percent renewables by 2020.

In the ongoing effort to codify the ambitious 33 percent by 2020 goal, SB X12 was signed by Governor Brown, in April 2011. This new RPS preempts the CARB's 33 percent Renewable Electricity Standard and applies to all electricity retailers in the state including publicly owned utilities, investor-owned utilities, electricity service providers, and community choice aggregators. All of these entities had to adopt the new RPS goals of 20 percent of retail sales from renewables by the end of 2013, 25 percent by the end of 2016, and the 33 percent requirement being met by the end of 2020.

Governor Brown signed into legislation SB 350 in October 2015, which requires retail sellers and publicly owned utilities to procure 50 percent of their electricity from eligible RE resources by 2030. In 2018, SB 100 was signed by Governor Brown, codifying a goal of 60 percent renewable procurement by 2030 and 100 percent by 2045 Renewables Portfolio Standard.

1.2.5 Senate Bill 32

In August 2016, Governor Brown signed SB 32 and AB 197, which serve to extend California's GHG reduction programs beyond 2020. SB 32 amended the Health and Safety Code to include § 38566, which contains language to authorize CARB to achieve a statewide GHG emission reduction of at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by no later than December 31, 2030. SB 32 codified the targets established by Executive Order (EO) B-30-15 for 2030, which set the next interim step in the State's continuing efforts to pursue the long-term target expressed in EOs S-3-05 and B-30-15 of 80 percent below 1990 emissions levels by 2050.

1.2.6 Title 17 California Code of Regulations, Subchapter 10, Article 2, Sections 95100 et seq.

These CARB regulations implement mandatory GHG emissions reporting as part of the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006.

1.2.7 Federal Clean Air Act

The legal authority for federal programs regarding air pollution control is based on the 1990 Clean Air Act (CAA) Amendments. These are the latest in a series of amendments made to the CAA. This legislation modified and extended federal legal authority provided by the earlier Clean Air Acts of 1963, 1970, and 1977.

The Air Pollution Control Act of 1955 was the first Federal legislation involving air pollution. This Act provided funds for federal research in air pollution. The CAA of 1963 was the first Federal legislation regarding air pollution control. It established a federal program within the U.S. Public Health Service and authorized research into techniques for monitoring and controlling air pollution. In 1967, the Air Quality Act was enacted in order to expand Federal government activities. In accordance with this law, enforcement proceedings were initiated in areas subject to interstate air pollution transport. As part of these proceedings, the Federal government for the first time conducted extensive ambient monitoring studies and stationary source inspections.

The Air Quality Act of 1967 also authorized expanded studies of air pollutant emission inventories, ambient monitoring techniques, and control techniques.

1.2.8 Imperial County Air Pollution Control District

The ICAPCD enforces rules and regulations regarding air emissions associated with various activities, including construction and farming, and operational activities associated with various land uses, in order to protect the public health.

1.2.9 Federal Clean Water Act (33 United States Code Section 1251-1387)

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 United States Code [USC] §§1251-1387), otherwise known as the CWA, is a comprehensive statute aimed at restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the nation's waters. Enacted originally in 1948, the Act was amended numerous times until it was reorganized and expanded in 1972. It continues to be amended almost every year. Primary authority for the implementation and enforcement of the CWA rests with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In addition to the measures authorized before 1972, the Act authorizes water quality programs, requires federal effluent limitations and state water quality standards, requires permits for the discharge of pollutants into navigable waters, provides enforcement mechanisms, and authorizes funding for wastewater treatment works construction grants and state revolving loan programs, as well as funding to states and tribes for their water quality programs. Provisions have also been added to address water quality problems in specific regions and specific waterways.

Important for wildlife protection purposes are the provisions requiring permits to dispose of dredged and fill materials into navigable waters. Permits are issued by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under guidelines developed by EPA pursuant to Section 404 of the CWA.

1.2.10 Federal Clean Water Act and California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The project is located within the Colorado River Basin RWQCB, Region 7. The CWA and the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act require that Water Quality Control Plans (more commonly referred to as Basin Plans) be prepared for the nine state-designated hydrologic basins in California. The Basin Plan serves to guide and coordinate the management of water quality within the region.

1.2.11 Federal Land Policy and Management Act

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) is a federal law that governs the way in which the public lands administered by the BLM are managed. The act set out a multiple use management policy for the BLM in which the agency would balance its management of the land to meet diverse needs, including recreation, grazing, timber and mineral production, fish and wildlife protection, and oil and gas production.

BLM is authorized to grant, issue or renew rights-of-way (ROW) over, upon, under, or through public lands. A ROW grant is an authorization to use a specific piece of public land for a certain project, such as roads, pipelines, transmission lines, and communication sites. A ROW grant authorizes rights and privileges for a specific use of the land for a specific period of time. The proposed right-of-way request associated with the project is subject to review and approval by the BLM.

1.2.12 California Desert Conservation Area Plan

Section 601 of the FLMPA required preparation of a long-range plan for the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The CDCA Plan was adopted in 1980 to provide for the use of public lands and resources of the CDCA in a manner which enhances wherever possible and, which does not diminish, on balance, the environmental, cultural, and aesthetic values of the Desert and its productivity. The CDCA Plan is a comprehensive, long-range plan covering 25 million-acres. Approximately 12 million acres of this total are public lands administered by the BLM on behalf of the

CDCA. These public lands are dispersed throughout the California Desert which includes the Mojave Desert, the Sonoran Desert and a small portion of the Great Basin Desert. The 12 million acres of public lands administered by the BLM make-up approximately half of the CDCA. The CDCA is applicable to the federal (i.e., BLM) actions associated with implementation of the proposed project (the portion of the project [gen-tie line] not otherwise located on private lands).

1.2.13 Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan

The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) created a Land Use Plan Amendment to the CDCA Plan. The DRECP has been developed as an interagency plan by the BLM, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the California Energy Commission (CEC), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to (1) advance federal and state natural resource conservation goals and other federal land management goals; (2) meet the requirements of the federal Endangered Species Act, California Endangered Species Act, Natural Community Conservation Planning Act, and FLPMA; and (3) facilitate the timely and streamlined permitting of renewable energy projects, all in the Mojave and Colorado/Sonoran desert regions of Southern California.

1.2.14 Federal Endangered Species Act

The ESA (16 USC 1531-1544) provides protection for plants and animals whose populations are dwindling to levels that are no longer sustainable in the wild. The Act sets out a process for listing species, which allows for petition from any party to list a plant or animal. Depending on the species, USFWS or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will determine whether listing the species is warranted. If it is warranted, the species will be listed as either threatened or endangered. The difference between the two categories is one of degree, with endangered species receiving more protections under the statute.

1.2.15 National Historic Preservation Act

Federal regulations (36 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 800.2) define historic properties as "any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included, or eligible for inclusion in, in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)." The term "cultural resource" is used to denote a historic or prehistoric district, site, building, structure, or object, regardless of whether it is eligible for the NRHP.

1.2.16 California Endangered Species Act

CESA is enacted through Government Code Section 2050. Section 2080 of the California Fish and Game Code (FGC) prohibits "take" of any species that the commission determines to be an endangered species or a threatened species. Take is defined in Section 86 of the FGC as "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill."

CESA allows for take incidental to otherwise lawful development projects. CESA emphasizes early consultation to avoid potential impacts to rare, endangered, and threatened species and to develop appropriate mitigation planning to offset project-caused losses of listed species populations and their essential habitats.



1.2.17 California Lake and Streambed Program (Fish and Game Code Section 1602)

CDFW is responsible for conserving, protecting, and managing California's fish, wildlife, and native plant resources. To meet this responsibility, the FGC (Section 1602) requires an entity to notify CDFW of any proposed activity that may substantially modify a river, stream, or lake.

1.3 Purpose of an EIR

The purpose of an EIR is to analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with a project. CEQA (Section 15002) states that the purpose of CEQA is to: (1) inform the public and governmental decision makers of the potential, significant environmental impacts of a project; (2) identify the ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced; (3) prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when the governmental agency finds the changes to be feasible; and (4) disclose to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved the project in the manner the agency chose if significant environmental effects are involved.

1.4 EIR Process

1.4.1 Availability of Reports

~~This~~The Draft EIR has been distributed to various federal, state, regional, local agencies and interested parties for a 50-day public review period, from February 26, 2024 to April 16, 2024, in accordance with Section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines. ~~This~~The Draft EIR and documents incorporated by reference ~~are~~were made available for public review at the County of Imperial Planning and Development Services Department, 801 Main Street, El Centro, California 92243. Documents ~~may be reviewed~~were available for review during regular business hours.

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Comments received during the public review period of the Draft EIR ~~will be~~have been reviewed and responded to in ~~the~~this Final EIR. The Final EIR will then be reviewed by the Imperial County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors as a part of the procedure to certify the EIR. Additional information on this process may be obtained by contacting the County of Imperial Planning and Development Services Department at (442) 265-1736.

1.4.2 Public Participation Opportunities/Comments and Coordination

Notice of Preparation

The County of Imperial issued a notice of preparation (NOP) for the preparation of an EIR for the VEGA SES 6 Solar and Battery Storage Project on July 11, 2022. The NOP was distributed to city, county, state, and federal agencies, other public agencies, and various interested private organizations and individuals in order to define the scope of the EIR. The NOP was also published in

the Imperial Valley Press on July 10, 2022. The purpose of the NOP was to identify public agency and public concerns regarding the potential impacts of the project, and the scope and content of environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR. Correspondence in response to the NOP was received from the following entities and persons:

- Imperial Irrigation District
- California Department of Transportation, District 11
- Defenders of Wildlife
- Imperial County Air Pollution Control District

The comments submitted on the NOP during the public review and comment period are included as Appendix A to this EIR.

Scoping Meeting and Environmental Evaluation Committee

During the NOP public review period, the VEGA SES 6 Solar and Battery Storage Project was discussed as an informational item at the County's Environmental Evaluation Committee meeting on July 28, 2022.

Additionally, a virtual scoping meeting for the general public as well public agencies was held on July 28, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., to further obtain input as to the scope of environmental issues to be examined in the EIR. The NOP, which included the scoping meeting date and location, was published in the Imperial Valley Press on July 10, 2022. A virtual meeting was held by the Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department. At the scoping meeting, members of the public were invited to ask questions regarding the proposed project and the environmental review process, and to comment both verbally and in writing on the scope and content of the EIR.

1.4.3 Environmental Topics Addressed

Based on the analysis presented in the NOP and the information provided in the comments to the NOP, the following environmental topics are analyzed in this EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- GHG Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use/Planning
- Noise and Vibration
- Public Services (Fire Protection and Police Protection)
- Transportation



- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities/Service Systems (Water Supply)

Eliminated from Further Review in Notice of Preparation

The initial study (IS)/NOP completed by the County (Appendix A of this EIR) determined that environmental effects to Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Energy, Mineral Resources, Population/Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Utilities (Wastewater, Stormwater, and Solid Waste), and Wildfire would not be potentially significant. Therefore, these impacts are not addressed in this EIR; however, the rationale for eliminating these issues is discussed in Chapter 6.0, Effects Found Not Significant.

1.4.4 Areas of Controversy and Issues to be Resolved

Section 15123(b)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR identify areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by other agencies and the public as well as issues to be resolved. A primary issue associated with this solar farm project, and other solar facility projects that are proposed in the County, is the corresponding land use compatibility and fiscal/economic impacts to the County. Through the environmental review process for this project, other areas of concern and issues to be resolved include potential impacts related to the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses, damage to crops, wildlife, water supply, fire hazards associated with the battery energy storage system, health effects from air pollution, noise and hazardous materials, and change of visual character.

1.4.5 Document Organization

The structure of the ~~Draft-Final~~ EIR is identified below. The ~~Draft-Final~~ EIR is organized into ~~40-14~~ chapters.

- **Chapter 0.1 Introduction and Summary** describes the CEQA requirements and content of the Final EIR.
- **Chapter 0.2 Responses to Comment Letters Received on the Draft EIR** provides copies of the comment letters received and individual responses to written comments.
- **Chapter 0.3 Errata to the Draft EIR** identifies the location of, or contains revisions to, information included in the Draft EIR dated February 2024, based upon additional or revised information required to prepare a response to a specific comment.
- **Chapter 0.4 Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program** identifies the mitigation measures, timing, and responsibility for implementation of the measures.
- The **Executive Summary** provides a summary of the proposed project, including a summary of project impacts, mitigation measures, and project alternatives.
- **Chapter 1 Introduction** provides a brief introduction of the proposed project; relationship to statutes, regulations and other plans; the purpose of an EIR; public participation opportunities; availability of reports; and comments received on the NOP.
- **Chapter 2 Project Description** provides a description of the VEGA SES 6 Solar and Battery Storage Project and Ramon Substation Expansion. This chapter also defines the goals and objectives of the proposed project, provides details regarding the individual components that

together comprise the project, and identifies the discretionary approvals required for implementation of the project.

- **Chapter 3 Environmental Analysis** provides a description of the existing environmental setting and conditions, an analysis of the environmental impacts of the project for the following environmental issues: aesthetics; agricultural resources; air quality; biological resources; cultural resources (includes tribal cultural resources); geology and soils; GHG emissions; hazards and hazardous materials; hydrology/water quality; land use and planning; noise and vibration; public services; recreation; transportation/traffic; and utilities/service systems. This chapter also identifies mitigation measures to address potential impacts to the environmental issues identified above.
- **Chapter 4 Analysis of Long-Term Effects** provides an analysis of growth inducing impacts, significant irreversible environmental changes, and unavoidable adverse impacts.
- **Chapter 5 Cumulative Impacts** discusses the impact of the proposed project in conjunction with other planned and future development in the surrounding areas.
- **Chapter 6 Effects Found Not to be Significant** lists all the issues determined to not be significant as a result of the preparation of this EIR.
- **Chapter 7 Alternatives** analyzes the alternatives to the proposed project.
- **Chapter 8 References** lists the data references utilized in preparation of the EIR.
- **Chapter 9 EIR Preparers and Organizations Contacted** lists all the individuals and companies involved in the preparation of the EIR, as well as the individuals and agencies consulted and cited in the EIR.