



AGENDA: November 16, 2020 MEETING

3:00 p.m. at Flamingo Heights Community Center, 55977 Perris St

All HVCC agendas, contact information and minutes are posted on www.hvccsite.org

Flag Salute

Roll Call/Delegate List

Approve Agenda

Approve Minutes of October meeting included in agenda packet.

Treasurer's Report: Floy Creveling

1. **Guest Comments** on items not on the agenda
2. **SB County Fire**
3. **SB County Sheriffs Dept**
4. **Cal Fire -**
5. **California Highway Patrol (CHP) –**
6. **Morongo Basin Ambulance – Matthew Welsch**
7. **SB County 3rd District Supervisor Dawn Rowe**
8. **H.E.L.P Homestead Valley Emergency Plan Update– Jason and Roxanne**
9. **Stagecoach Solar HVCC Opposition Letter and Sup. Rowe/Lovingood Opposition Letter**
10. **Committees:**
 1. *Standing:* Public Outreach (Betty Munson)
 2. *Ad Hoc:* Scenic Highway 247 (Betty Munson)
11. **President's Report**
12. **Community Reports List – Announcements**
13. **Review Action Items From This Meeting**

Next HVCC meeting: Monday, December 21, 3:00 pm

Yucca Mesa Community Center, 3133 Balsa Ave. Yucca Mesa

Adjourn

HVCC DELEGATES / COMMITTEE LIST

COUNCIL MEMBERS

*Members appointed by the 4 HVCC Organizations, residing in the community they represent.
Up to 3 voting members from each community, plus alternate to vote in case of an absence.*

Kim Abramson JVIA alternate 760-792-4555 dojasmomdc@gmail.com
Adrienne Bishop Landers 760-364-2345
Floy Creveling Landers 714-309-8677 g.creveling@att.net
Toby Gramm FHCA 760-668-7774 outforblood74@hotmail.com
Jim Hanley JVIA 760-364-4829 jhaflame@aol.com
Jim Harvey JVIA 760-401-1015 johnsonvalley@gmail.com
Betty Munson JVIA 760-364-2646 ranchotaj@gmail.com
Chris Nichols YMIA 760-285-3560 chris@wb6cdf.com
Rick Sayers YMIA 760-574-6598 rick@ricksayers.com
Roxanna Shamay Landers 760-333-2707 shamay@inreach.com

OFFICERS

President: Jim Harvey
Vice President: Rick Sayers
Secretary: Betty Munson
Treasurer: Floy Creveling

STANDING COMMITTEE

Community Outreach: Chairperson: Betty Munson
Jim Hanley, Rick Sayers

AD HOC COMMITTEE

Scenic 247 Committee: Chairperson: Betty Munson
Phillip Brown, Barbara Harris, Jim Harvey, Sarah Kennington, Sara Fairchild, Chuck Bell

Committee members not required to be members of the Council

MINUTES OCT 19, 2020 MEETING

3:00 p.m. at Johnson Valley Community Center

Guests: County 3rd District Supervisor Dawn Rowe; Mark Lundquist, 3rd District Field Rep; Sheriff's Dept. Capt. Lucas Niles, Lt. Mike Walker; Chuck Bell, Lucerne Valley Economic Development Assn; H.E.L.P. Director Jason Hansen; Matthew Welsch, Morongo Basin Ambulance; Kristina Brown USMC, Kim Pope, USMC GEA; Steve Bardwell, Morongo Basin Conservation Association; Alex Cruz, Nick Rodriguez, Stale Louis-Floki Terranova Nakken, Judy Mifflin, K. Lund, Charlene Claybaugh, Terry Burkhart, John Burkhart,

Flag Salute 3:10 p.m.

Roll Call/Delegate List - absent Toby Gramm, Chris Nichols

Agenda Approved with additions

Minutes of August meeting Approved

Treasurer's Report: Floy Creveling - approved

Oath of Office - HVCC Officers present sworn in by Supervisor Dawn Rowe

1. SB County Fire - unable to attend

2. SB County Sheriffs Dept – Capt Luke Niles - working closely with Supervisor Rowe's office, Sheriff's Dept has transferred more assets from stations into County marijuana team to make concerted effort in our region to eradicate 30 illegal marijuana farms out of 200; ongoing operation will publish exact data when finished. Requested communities to continue to be diligent relaying information to him about new locations and grading equipment. Discussion clean-up after closures; communicating through Code Enforcement. Complaint system through CE established, but shocking increase of illegal farms and COVID19 disruption of schedules and shifts; communicate through Capt Niles. How careful should we be interacting with suspicious people? Avoid them. Sheriffs do preliminary surveillance.

3. Morongo Basin Ambulance – Matthew Welsch - stats Sept 2019: 10 responses. Sept 2020: 14. includes calls for medical aid, traffic accidents. Johnson Valley averages about 15 9-1-1 calls per month. Starting advance planning for onsite at King of the Hammers which can generate 50-60 calls.

Welsch brought membership information can relieve financial burden if MBA services are needed. MBA is a 501(c)3 non-profit, supported by subscriptions, billing, donations. Membership: annual \$50 per person; \$85 per household.

4. 29 Palms Marine Base - Deputy Director of Internal Affairs Kristina L. Brown - reported the Shared Use Area in the Johnson Valley OHV Recreation Area closes to the public from October 30 to November 9 to conduct military training. She brought flyers, maps, App cards to warn if approaching border. Most Base tours suspended due to COVID; hoping to resume by January.

5. SB County 3rd District Supervisor Dawn Rowe – reported Dave Cole is planning on having King of the Hammers, and he is working to ensure the event is safe and complies with all health orders. Working with County Health to find a rapid COVID-negative test, if the State of California restrictions still apply. Three KOH contingency plans depending where the state is on re-opening. Current guidelines would not allow the event, but KOH Week requires so much advance planning they are looking at all options.

-Code Enforcement lead officer Andy Wingert passed away recently and unexpectedly. He was instrumental helping Rowe with her Night Sky Ordinance. She hopes that project will come to fruition with his replacement; it is still a priority for her. Point lights downward – if it can be seen from afar, it's too bright.

Question: could code enforcement become more aggressive? Pot farms, trailers inhabited, unpermitted, connecting to water; the late Mike Romage lived here; always alert to violations like illegal dumping. New web-based reporting app uses GIS map..

-Rowe reminded us the western Joshua tree and its habitat being studied for protection; it has full protection meanwhile under the California Environmental Protection Act, so do not touch it. Contact California Fish & Wildlife for questions how this affects your property. Damaging trees after September 22, 2020, is very serious.

-Citizens may address Board of Supervisors meetings in the teleconference center in the County building in Joshua Tree. Not well attended lately; to keep it open, please come to speak there rather than driving all the way to San Bernardino.

-COVID Compliant Grant program closes end of October; 2500.00 eligibility was extended to non-profit community organizations even though they have no employees. Kim Abramson displayed the check received by JVIA.

-Question: camping on your property. OK while building house and having inspections. Will add to HVCC newsletter.

Noise, light, environmental problems intruding on neighbor may fall under Code Enforcement regulations. Squatters paying property taxes would be a civil matter between owner and squatter. **45:14:42**

6. Homestead Valley H.E.L.P. – Jason Hansen - addressing issue of limited law enforcement, fire and emergency medical resources. History of 1992 earthquake response uncoordinated. Homestead Emergency Lifeline Project has completed six units for disaster preparedness, management and recovery: Animal Rescue Unit (already activated, in 2-1/2 weeks rescued 130 animals during the Apple Fire), a Communications Unit, a Ground Operations Unit, a Triage Unit in every community center and church for less urgent injuries, Drone Command for wide radius search and recovery, Food Distribution Team headed by Roxanna Shamay.

Testing getting a 501(c)3 designation for H.E.L.P. in 14 days, if successful, will share with community associations.

HVCC is motivation for this project.

6. Illegal Marijuana Grow Farms – Chuck Bell, Jim Harvey **16:00-59+**

Lucerne Valley hit earlier and harder with this illegal grading and 8-ft. fencing of large properties; the community already meeting with law enforcement; CHP stopping unlicensed trucks and trailers hauling water.

Discussion Agenda materials: Prop 64 Purpose & Intent and its changes to Health & Safety Code 11358. On Page 61 of 72 pages, it downgraded illegal growing of non-medical marijuana from a felony offense with severe penalties to a misdemeanor with \$500 max fine, causing this mess. Most voters did not know they voted for this change, not detailed in ballot summaries, and the section on Purpose and Intent stated Prop 64 would take production and sales out of the hands of the illegal market. Other western states legalizing non-medical marijuana impose much harder penalties and punitive fines for non-permitted, non-regulated commercial cultivation. They do not have this problem.

Judges and DA's not pursuing this. Voter initiative voted this in. Sen. Grove staff working on it. Environmental protections may trigger felony. No state agency known to have presence for any enforcement in this area. SB County licences no growers except industrial hemp, highly regulated. Non-discrimination rules, utility companies must sell water and power to anyone who asks for it.

7. SB County Community Plans – Chuck Bell, Jim Harvey

Discussion of letter from Chuck Bell and LVEDA recommending inclusion of each 2007 Community Plan in Countywide Plan, answered in conference call:

Steve Bardwell reported BOS Oct 27 meeting will consider the Countywide Policy Plan and Countywide Business plan, to certify the programmatic Environmental Impact Report repealing all 2007 Community Plans, and “acknowledge” the Community Action Guides. Earlier this day on a conference call with Terri Rahhal, Director of Land Use Services, to state abandoning specifics in the Community Plans will not serve to protect our communities. Planning Department not interested in this approach. They look on Countywide Plan as a “living document” and later policies could be adopted as amendments. Some 2007 policies did not make it into the Countywide Plan “matrix.” Community Action Guides not legally binding. Detailed information about fire dangers, flood dangers, air quality, etc. may be lost.

Chuck Bell suggested comparing specific Community Plan to matrix in digital Countywide Plan. LVEDA to update the Lucerne Valley 2007 Plan for use by community. Difficult to find items in Countywide. Plans require enforcement.

HVCC always has 2007 Homestead Valley Plan available to the public on www.hvccsite.org. Use for reference to staff in the future.

8. Stagecoach Solar Notice of Preparation – Chuck Bell, Jim Harvey

Discussion Agenda materials: Stagecoach Solar Notice of Preparation with project construction details, must submit written comments by November 13, 2020. Showed location map of the 3000-acre project on State Lands compared to Scenic 247 Visual Assessment map of Section 4 South (same area). This devastates our formulas for impacts on our scenic values, all visible from the highway.

Calcite Substation helps grandfathered projects all over the area. HVCC comment to emphasize incompatibility with scenic qualities.

9. SB 1263 Hauled Water Properties Building Permit Prohibition – Chuck Bell, Jim Harvey

Chuck has sent cases to Pacific Legal Foundation; possible legislative change since author of Assembly Bill 1263 is no longer there. Looking for Single Family Zone case where building a house is primary use.

No guarantee that drilling a well will give you usable water. No “if all else fails” remedy in the law. Property taking = if legal policy maker adopts a policy in your area that prevents your using your property in any way.

10. Committees:

1. Standing: Public Outreach (Betty Munson) meeting announced on radio; Hi-Desert Star column. Last meeting the Council recommended we publicize our support for Measure J

2. Ad Hoc: Scenic Highway 247 (Betty Munson) Making progress with Land Use Services, working on the Corridor Protection Plan. Committee is prepared to make comments on the new threat from Stagecoach Solar. We hope ridealong with Caltrans doesn't happen with marijuana farms in view.

11. Guest Comment on cargo containers dropped on land near the highway. Information from County, you could have a container on your land if farming, or during construction for supplies. Also, it must be a color that complements our desert.

12. President's Report - Received our Covid Compliant grant check; Jim purchased hand sanitizer, masks and contact-free thermometer.

13. Community Reports List – Announcements -

Landers Thrift Store still open, Food drive every Thursday.

YMIA- a few weddings and other private parties. Polling Place in the Community Center.

FHCA- Registrar of Voters approved Community Center as a Polling Place Sat, Oct 31 - Tues, Nov 3

JVIA - Tailgate Swap Meet Saturday, Nov. 7th, 7:00-noon, or later if anyone wants to stay

14. Review Action Items From This Meeting

Comment letter on Stagecoach Solar

**Next HVCC meeting: Monday, November 16, 3:00 pm
Flamingo Heights Community Center, 55977 Perris St.**

Adjourn 5:25

Betty Munson, Secretary

Homestead Valley Community Council, Inc.

Treasurer's Report

For the month of October 2020

Checking Account:

Beginning Balance 10/01/2020.....	\$ 7,306.30
Income.....	\$ 2,500.00
COVID Compliant Business Partnership Program Payment from County of San Bernardino	
Expense.....	\$ 27.93
CK#695 Reimburse Jim Harvey for hand sanitizer, wipes, and digital thermometer	
Ending Balance 10/31/2020.....	\$ 9,778.37

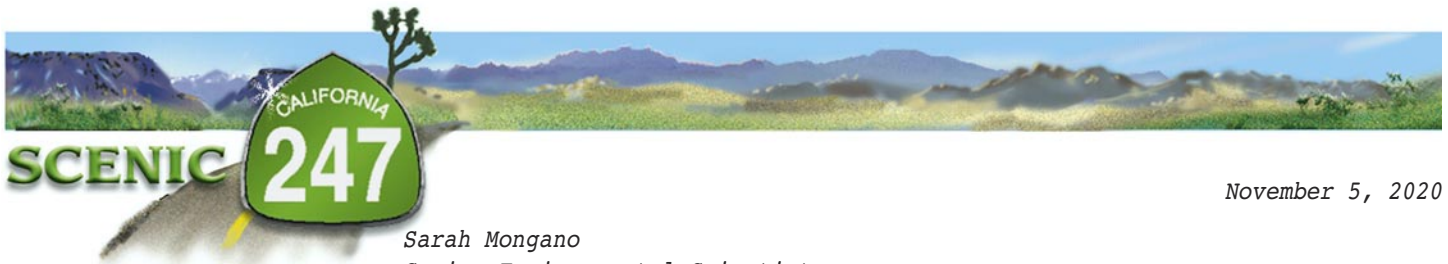
Total HVCC Assets in Bank 10/31/2020..... \$ 9,778.37

Legend:

CK – Check DC– Debit Card DEP-Deposit EFT– Electronic Funds Transfer

Floy Creveling

Treasurer



November 5, 2020

Endorsed by:

Homestead Valley
Community Council
www.hvccsite.org

Morongo Basin
Historical Society
www.mbhs.org

Flamingo Heights
Community Association
www.fhca.com

Johnson Valley
Improvement Association
[see www.johnsonvalley.com](http://www.johnsonvalley.com)

Hammering Productions
dave@kingofthehammers.com

Landers Association

Yucca Mesa
Improvement Association
www.yuccamesa.org

Western American
Railroad Museum
www.barstowrailmuseum.org

Lucerne Valley
Chamber of Commerce

Lucerne Valley
Economic Development Association

Lucerne Valley
Market and Hardware

Lucerne Valley Museum

Route 66
Mother Road Museum
www.route66museum.org

Joshua Tree
Gateway Communities
Tourism Committee
www.joshuatreegatewaycommunities.com

Points of Interest Promotions
Lucerne Valley
billlembright@thenewlight.net

Rockhound Field Trip Fanatics!
<http://rockhound-field-trips.ning.com>

Morongo Basin
Conservation Association
www.mbconservation.org

Lucerne Valley-Johnson Valley
Municipal Advisory Council

Barstow Chamber of Commerce
www.barstowchamber.com

Morongo Basin
Municipal Advisory Council

Sarah Mongano
Senior Environmental Scientist
California State Lands Commission
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100-South
Sacramento, CA 95825

Scoping Comments for the Proposed Stagecoach Solar Project including Southern California Edison Calcite Substation

File Ref: SCH No. 2020100234 CSLC EIR No. 763; W30213; W26868

The Homestead Valley Community Council (HVCC) is a coalition of community associations in unincorporated communities on State Route 247 in the area mapped in the San Bernardino Countywide Plan as the Homestead Valley.

Summary:

- HVCC seeks State Scenic Highway designation for S.R.247.
- HVCC has submitted the VISUAL ASSESSMENT, core of the designation process.
- HVCC currently works with San Bernardino County Land Use Services on the final steps of scenic designation - the CORRIDOR PROTECTION PLAN.
- The Proposed Stagecoach Solar and SCE Calcite Substation projects are incompatible with scenic designation and corridor protection.

Therefore, the EIR for these projects **MUST** acknowledge their **significant and unavoidable negative impact** these projects would have on the scenic resources of State Route 247. They cannot coexist with Scenic 247.

Commentary: The Scenic 247 Visual Assessment, under review by County and Caltrans, demonstrates that the Stagecoach Solar array and equipment on State School Lands, the Calcite Substation, and their attendant transmission lines present miles of intrusive visual impact in the Scenic Corridor of S.R. 247. **This intrusion cannot be mitigated in any meaningful manner**, in one of the most scenic areas selected on the entire route.

The HVCC Scenic 247 Committee has opposed elements in these proposals in the past; rejected parts of zombie projects now reassemble themselves. Aside from established environmental and economic injuries to an area designated as "disadvantaged," Aurora Solar LLC ignores or shrugs off clear statements from various levels of government of their intent to preserve scenic and biological resources in the region (see attached review).

The California State Lands Commission envisioned itself as a recognized leader that "champions environmentally sustainable public land management and balanced resource protection for the benefit and enjoyment of all current and future generations of Californians." Now its Mission and Vision seem disregarded as they carried out recent School Lands consolidation in a manner that only "maximizes development potential."

Thank you for your attention to the following details and attachments.

Betty Munson
Committee Chair
760-364-2646

SCENIC 247 COMMITTEE

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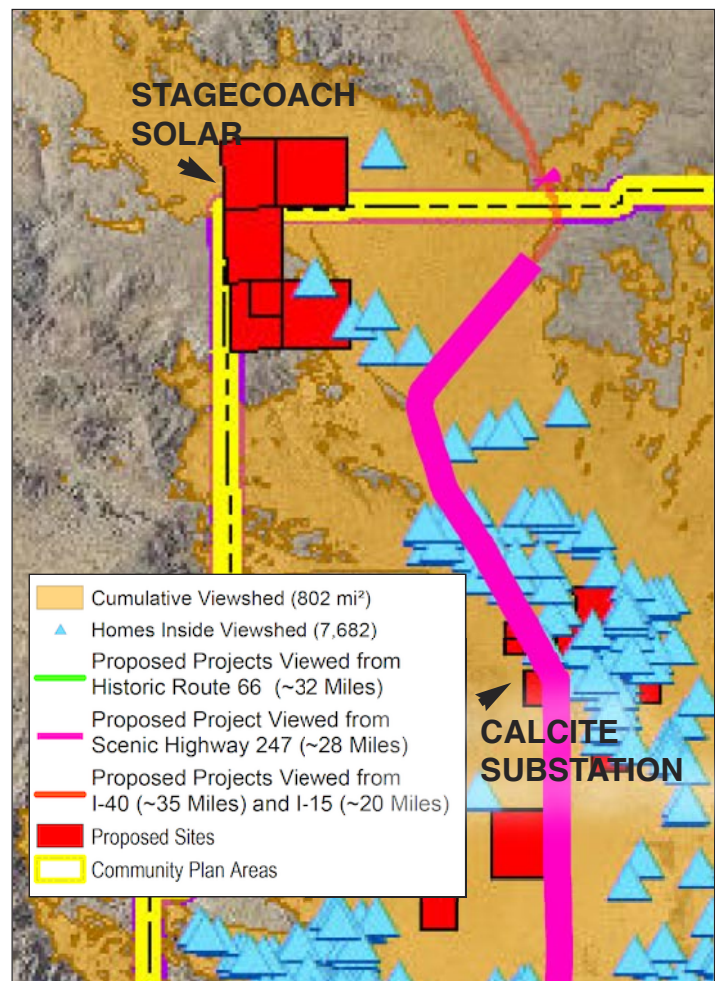
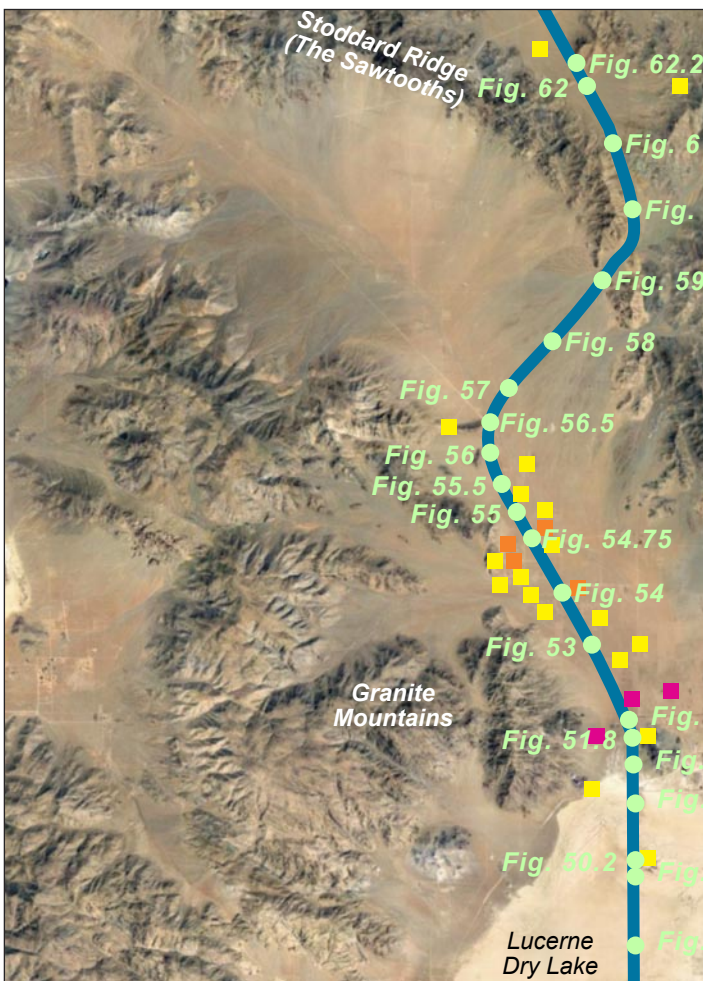
Elements of Visual Intrusion by Stagecoach Solar and Calcite Substation Projects in the Scenic 247 Corridor

The Scenic 247 Committee review of the project description deduces from similar facilities extreme intrusions of expanse, height, and distance:

- PV modules and associated infrastructure to be constructed on approximately 1,950 acres
- A 5-acre on-site electric substation with components possibly over 50 feet high, meteorological towers, a storage (battery) system planned to occupy some 100 acres, inverter stations up to 12 feet high, overhead lines supported by even higher poles, plus security fencing, a network of new roads, and a 5,000-sq-ft maintenance building
- an overhead generation tie line (gen-tie line) extending approximately 9 miles south to the proposed SCE Calcite Substation, zigzagging over and along either side of S.R. 247.

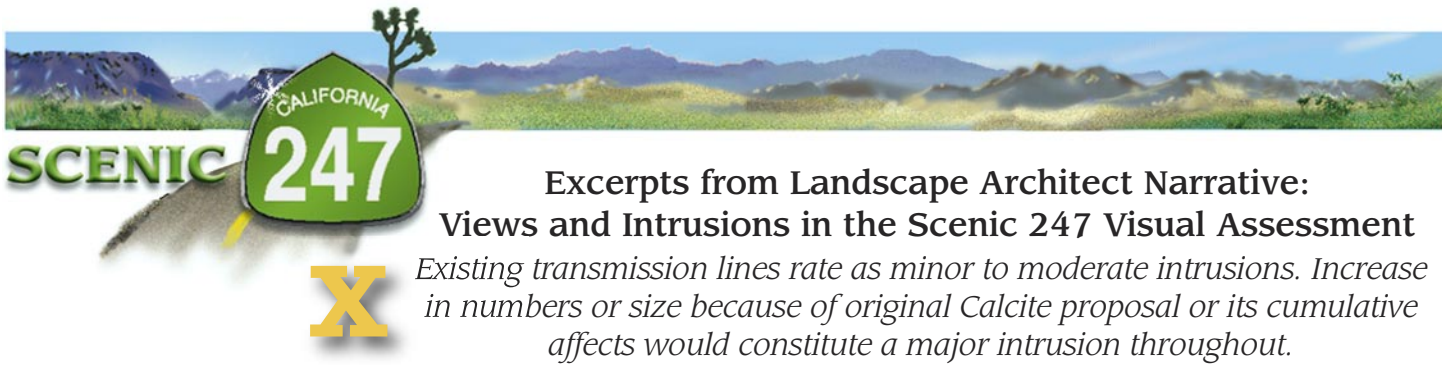
Therefore, the Scenic 247 Committee concludes that this proposed industrial solar project, with its infrastructure, towers, transmission pylons, and associated SCE Calcite Substation:

- 1) will undoubtedly have a **significant and unavoidable negative impact** on the scenic corridor,
- 2) will increasingly damage protected biological and scenic resources, and
- 3) will substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings on both sides of the highway in a manner that cannot be mitigated.



Left: Map detail from Scenic 247 Visual Assessment showing photography (Figures) viewpoints in Section 4 South, between Lucerne Dry Lake and the entry into Goat Pass

Right: Map detail showing Scenic Corridor 247 and cumulative proposed projects in its viewshed



**Excerpts from Landscape Architect Narrative:
Views and Intrusions in the Scenic 247 Visual Assessment**

Existing transmission lines rate as minor to moderate intrusions. Increase in numbers or size because of original Calcite proposal or its cumulative affects would constitute a major intrusion throughout.



Figure 51.5W - Scenic View with Intrusion: The scenic Granite Mountains, viewed from PM 51.5 looking west. Creosote bushes begin to populate the landscape. Transmission lines may be discernible running along the base of the mountains at a distance of two miles.



Figure 52N - Intrusion: The three parallel SCE transmission lines cross the highway just north of PM 52.

SEE THE ENTIRE VISUAL ASSESSMENT FOR SCENIC HIGHWAY 247

<http://scenichighway247.com/documents.html>

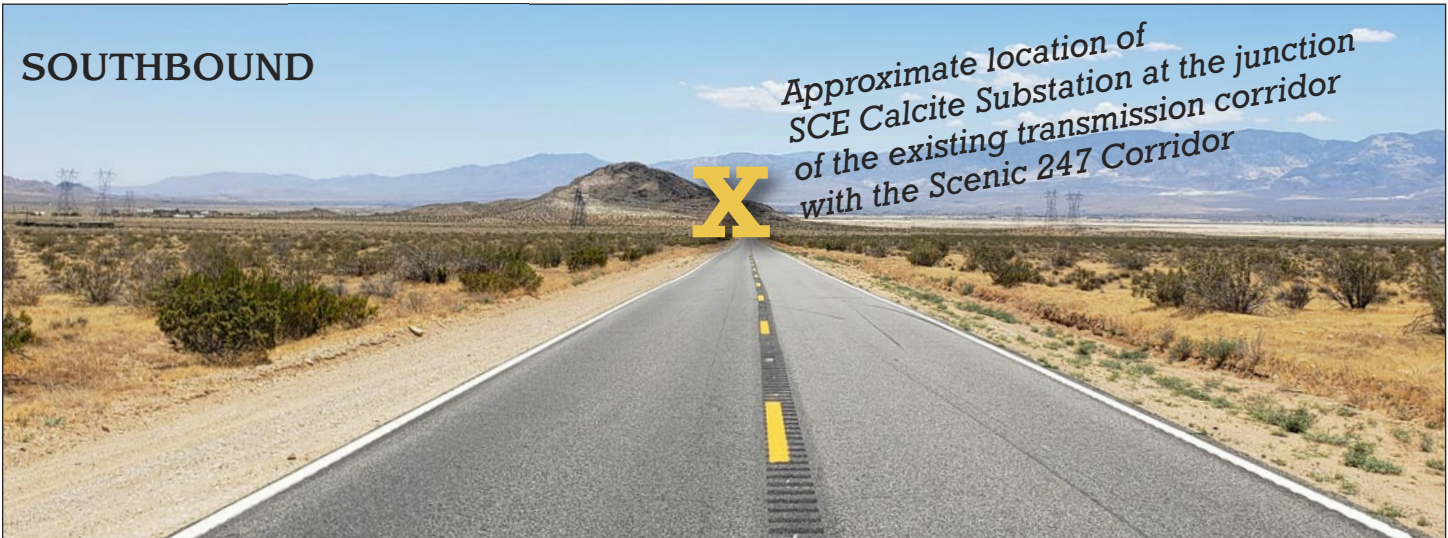
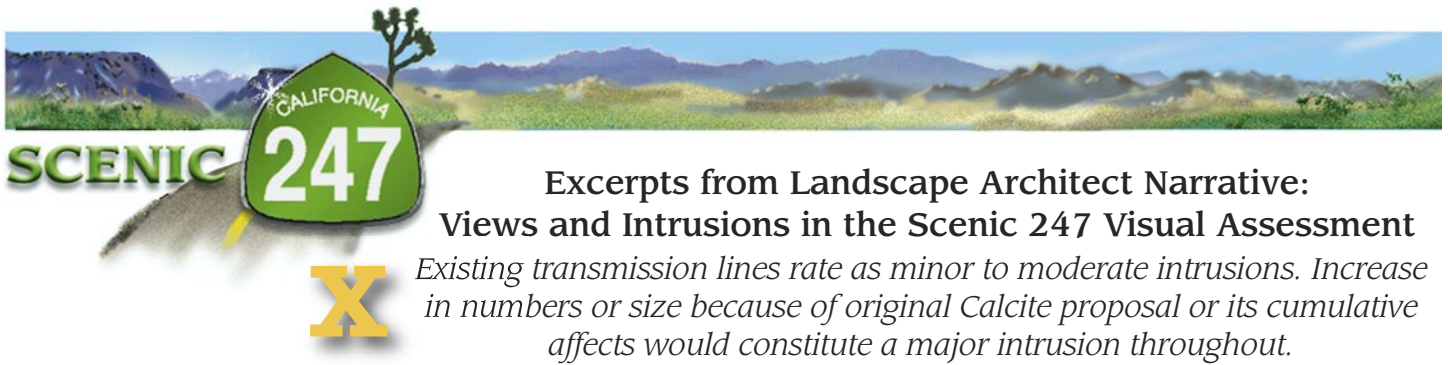


Figure 53S - Scenic View with Intrusion: Peterman Hill, viewed as Scenic by the southbound traveler from PM 53. The SCE transmission lines are visible here to the southbound traveler as they cross the highway ahead.



Figure 49S - Scenic View with Intrusion: The mines on the San Bernardino Mountains above Lucerne Valley become discernible as intrusions at about PM 49 looking south.

SEE THE ENTIRE VISUAL ASSESSMENT FOR SCENIC HIGHWAY 247
<http://scenichighway247.com/documents.html>



**Excerpts from Landscape Architect Narrative:
Views and Intrusions in the Scenic 247 Visual Assessment**

X

Existing transmission lines rate as minor to moderate intrusions. Increase in numbers or size because of original Calcite proposal or its cumulative affects would constitute a major intrusion throughout.

NORTHBOUND



Figure 56.25N - Scenic View: Approaching Lucerne Valley Cutoff Road. Looking north from PM 56.25, vivid views open up ahead, with few visual intrusions for the northbound traveler.

SOUTHBOUND

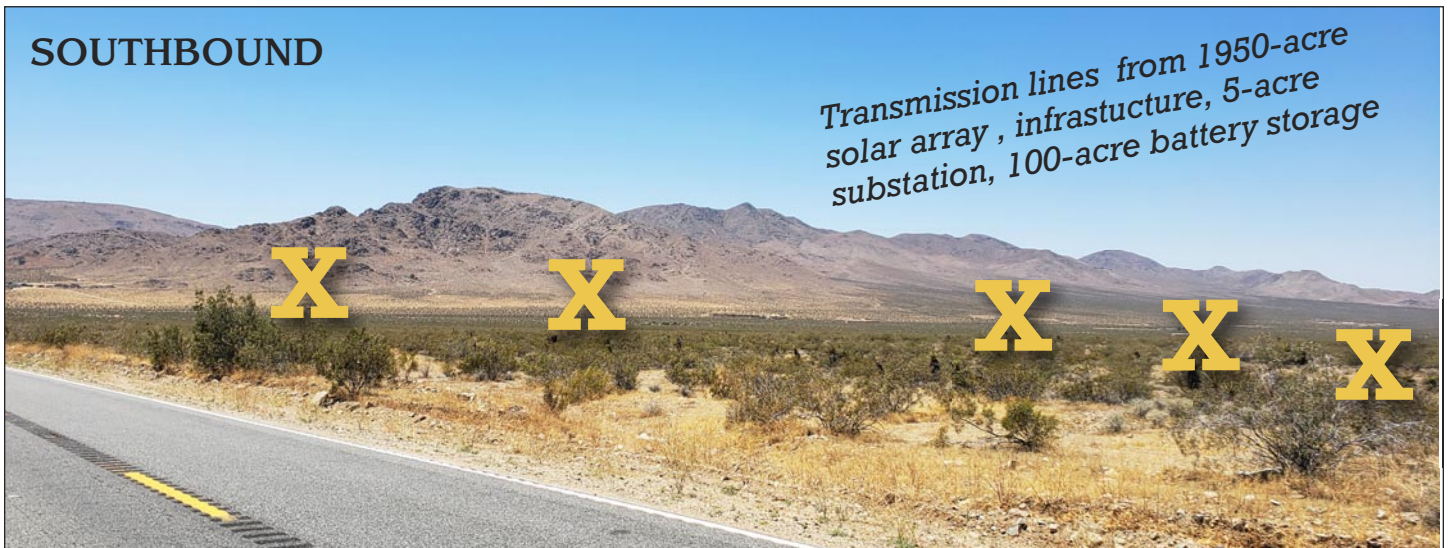
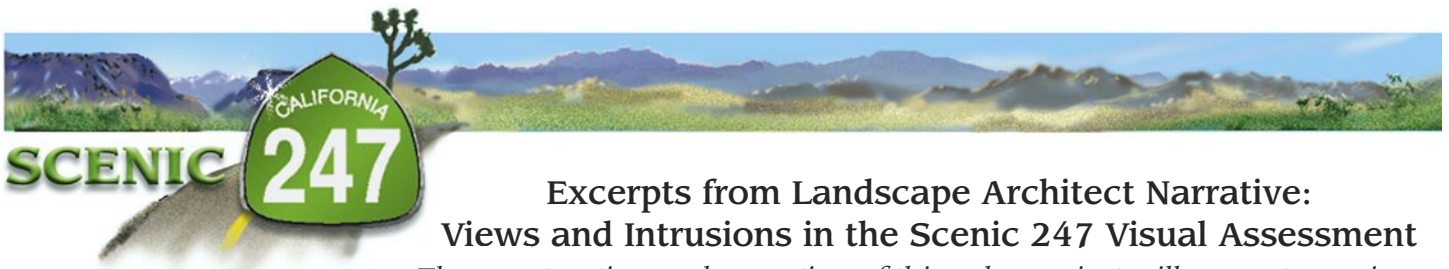


Figure 58SW - Scenic View: Looking southwest toward Sidewinder Mountain from PM 58 over the vast open valley crossed by Lucerne Valley Cutoff.

SEE THE ENTIRE VISUAL ASSESSMENT FOR SCENIC HIGHWAY 247

<http://scenichighway247.com/documents.html>



X *The construction and operation of this solar project will present a major intrusion into on of the least developed, most dramatic landscapes in the Scenic 247 Corridor destroying Section4 South entirely*

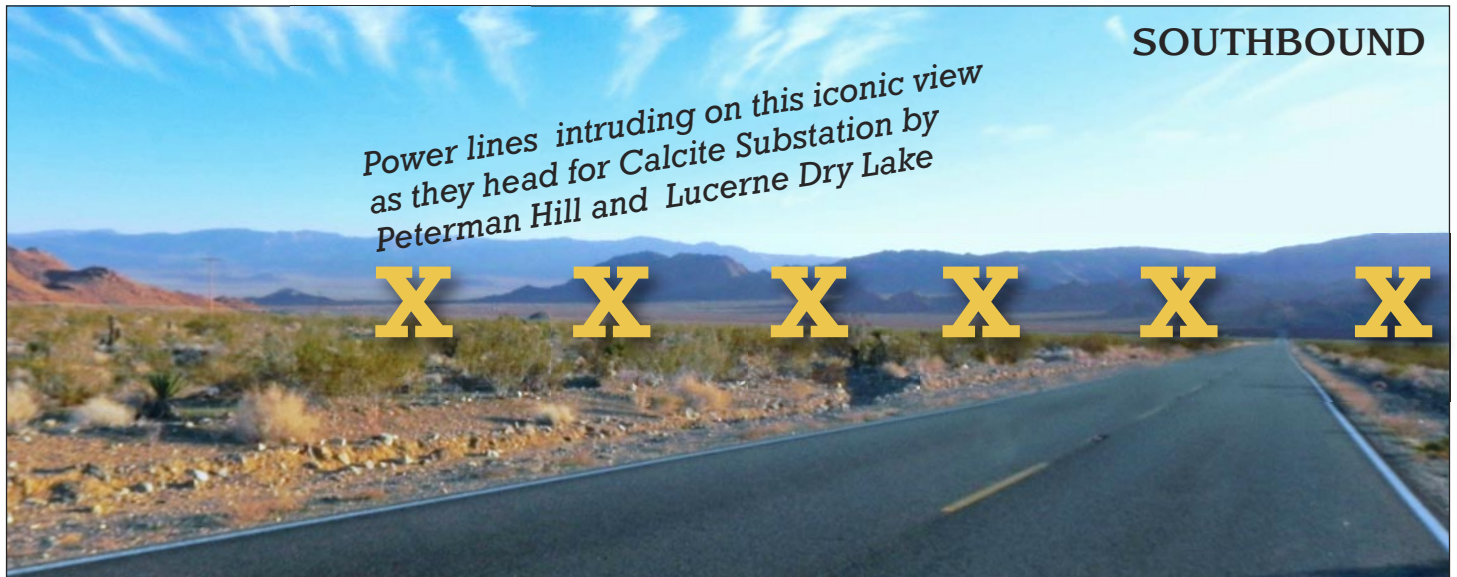


Figure 59S - Scenic View: Looking southeast from PM 59 with the foothills of the Ord Mountains in the foreground to the east, past the Granite Mountains and Peterman Hill in the mid-ground, then over Lucerne Dry Lake to the San Bernardino Mountains beyond.

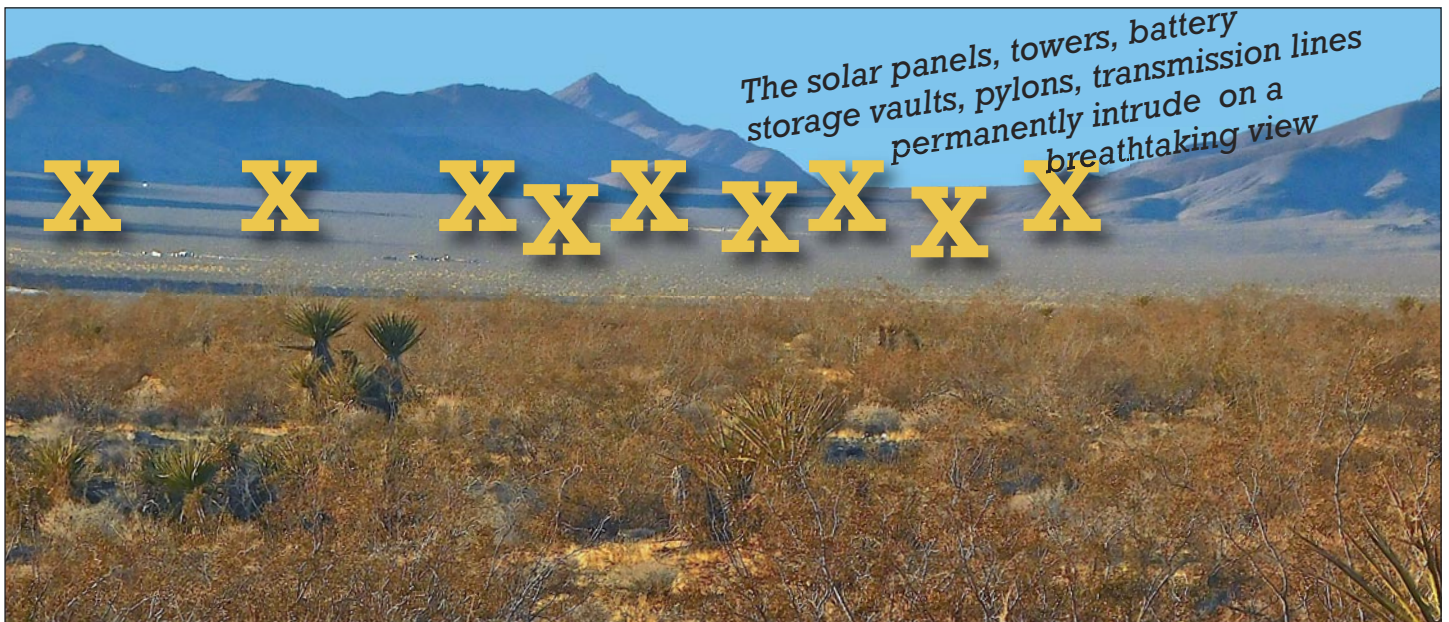


Figure 58W - Scenic View: The beautiful wide valley traversed by Lucerne Valley Cutoff Road comes into prominence as the northbound traveler approaches Goat Pass. Zoom view from PM 58, looking west to the pass leading to historic Stoddard Wells Road.

SEE THE ENTIRE VISUAL ASSESSMENT FOR SCENIC HIGHWAY 247

<http://scenichighway247.com/documents.html>



Regulatory and Legislative Protections in Place Affecting the Scenic 247 Corridor

Sited in a gently-sloping valley encircled by DRECP-designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Linkage Networks, one would assume such designations would preclude industrialization of the scenic corridor. However, planners seem to have overlooked, or ignored, these designations when applied to this landscape.

Calcite substation could accommodate utility-scale projects besides these proposed. This would induce further utility-scale development degrading the region. Just the prospect of a new Calcite substation triggered an influx of project proposals in its vicinity. Three more utility-scale projects queued up to interconnect with Calcite. If permitted, this would have the **cumulative, substantial and unavoidable** impact of industrialization of more than 8,000 acres in Lucerne Valley.

Developers have proposed siting Calcite substation in an existing transmission corridor which already intrudes on the Scenic 247 corridor. Substation towers and infrastructure would be quite visible across the flat expanses of Lucerne Dry Lake.

Scenic Designation

The County has designated S.R. 247 as scenic. The State has established it as eligible for scenic designation, therefore it has scenic protection under Chapter 27 of the California Department of Transportation Standard Environmental Reference: "The intent of the State Scenic Highway Program is to protect and enhance California's natural scenic beauty. If a highway is listed as eligible for official designation, it is also part of the Scenic Highway System and **care must be taken to preserve its eligible status.**"

—Department of Transportation website:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/vol1/sec3/community/ch27via/chap27via.htm#scenic>

We must also point out that Caltrans submitted the following comment on the DRECP:

"Ensure each energy project considers impact upon officially designated and eligible State Scenic Highways."

—Landscape Architecture website:

http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/scenic_hwy.htm

Furthermore, see the California Streets and Highways Code, specifically sections 260, 263, and 263.1:

Section 260. (Added by Stats. 1963, Ch. 1788.) Cite as: Cal. Sts. & High. Code §260.

"It is the intent of the Legislature in designating certain portions of the state highway system as state scenic highways to establish the State's responsibility for the protection and enhancement of California's natural scenic beauty by identifying those portions of the state highway system which, together with the adjacent scenic corridors, require special

scenic conservation treatment. It is further declared to be the intent of the Legislature in designating such scenic highways to assign responsibility for the development of such scenic highways and for the establishment and application of specific planning and design standards and procedures appropriate thereto and to indicate, in broad statement terms, the location and extent of routes and areas requiring continuing and careful co-ordination of planning, design, construction, and regulation of land use and development, by state and local agencies as appropriate, **to protect the social and economic values provided by the State's scenic resources.**

Section 263. (Amended by Stats. 1991, Ch. 775, Sec. 6.) Cite as: Cal. Sts. & High. Code §263.

"The state scenic highway system is hereby established and shall be composed of the highways specified in this article. The highways listed in Sections 263.1 to 263.8, inclusive, are either eligible for designation as state scenic highways or have been so designated...

Section 263.1. (Amended by Stats. 1994, Ch. 1220, Sec. 27.) Cite as: Cal. Sts. & High. Code §263.1.

"The state scenic highway system shall include:

Routes 28, 35, 38, 52, 53, 62, 74, 75, 76, 89, 96, 97, 127, 150, 151, 154, 156, 158, 161, 173, 197, 199, 203, 209, 221, 236, 239, 243, **247**, 254, and 330 in their entirety.

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Stagecoach and Calcite Unavoidable Negative Environmental Impacts to Report in the Scenic 247 Corridor

Aside from all the environmental and justice considerations, the EIR for the Stagecoach Solar and Calcite Substation Projects **MUST** concede the **significant and unavoidable negative impacts** these projects would have on the Scenic Corridor of State Route 247, noting the significant intrusions they would introduce into our Visual Assessment (see below), as well as conflicting with the mission of the California State Lands Commission and the numerous government policies and codes referenced above in these comments.

Tourism The Scenic 247 Committee's campaign for Scenic Highway status dovetails with the County tourism program. Scenic 247 links urban centers and a recreational gold mine in the San Bernardino Mountains and the Mojave Desert.

Scenic Highway designation itself makes a proven magnet for travelers.

Economy We have argued many times: San Bernardino County suffers from lack of revenue, lack of jobs. The County exports mineral resources, but little else brings outside money into the region – except the story of its attractions, building tourism to support local enterprises and enhance County and State revenues.

Highway businesses cannot survive on local population alone. The stores, restaurants, medical offices in our communities serve residents who benefit from tourism and recreation revenues.

These considerations spurred the Scenic 247 campaign, as well as the prehistoric and historic heritage of the territory it traverses, and some of the least-developed scenery remaining in the State of California.

Visual Impact The major consideration for development in a Scenic Corridor is Visual Impact, how compatible is it with the character of the area? (Note: Many states and countries treat their rural and wild scenery as a natural resource, which it is). Stagecoach/Calcite are NOT compatible.

Industrial-scale renewable energy generation in the California desert ignores this value. Already, the unpleasant visual impacts of wind turbines, massive solar fields and miles of transmission lines mar the legendary California experience for travelers.

Studies prove that people come to the desert from cities, other states and countries around the world, not for industrialization, but for wide open spaces. Industrial-scale renewable energy development means loss of tourism, and loss of present and future tax revenues.

The County and California need revitalizing, not government-imposed depression, not ghost towns. Promises of local jobs from the energy developers never materialize; instead we witness destruction of desert habitat and private property values as the power generated flows to urban use.*

The Scenic 247 corridor is a valuable and irreplaceable resource for conservation. Industrial exploitation cannot coexist in it.

We urge planners to remember that if we allow precious open desert spaces to be exploited for intrusive industrial-scale energy projects, what they will do cannot be undone. We must utilize all of the already-developed spaces first for solar and wind, and prioritize "point-of-use" solutions if we must increase renewable energy supplies. This is the better way.

* See Appendix: Market Value Impact of Commercial Solar Farms

SCENIC 247 COMMITTEE

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Market Value Impact of Commercial Solar Farms and Diversified Solar on Property Values in San Bernardino County

Prepared by John Miller
Residential Real Estate Appraiser
January 07, 2015

... the industrialization of these communities will be the most likely consequence of the development of these projects. If left unchecked the market will clarify itself and the residential use of the land surrounding these projects will most likely be minimized if not completely eliminated and the expansion of Commercial Scale solar projects on the land surrounding the existing projects will increase. This will further push residential development and use of the land out of these areas and solidify these areas as Commercial Scale Solar / Industrial Zones devoid of any and all residential use rural or otherwise.

Size and footprint of the development

Size and appearance of a new development, in the case of the development of a Community Scale Solar development with a new substation and powerlines, are important in determining the visual impact. As such, the larger a structural feature, the more it is likely to be visible and have a visual impact. The visual impact can also create or change the market perception of a community. For instance, development of a 20 story high rise hotel building in the middle of Yosemite Valley would alter or otherwise change the appeal of the valley for the majority of the market participants. While there is a need for lodging in the Yosemite Valley and every year demand increases, developing the project would diminish the visual appeal of the area and alter the perception of the area as a whole.

While this is a dramatic illustration of the impact that a development can have on a given market as a whole, it demonstrates the fundamental principle that is the basis for considering not only the impact that such a development would have on those properties adjacent to the development but also the impact that such a development has on the neighborhood or local market as a whole.

As evidenced in the development of these projects within several already impacted communities, the ability to mitigate the impact on view is very limited at best.

Valuation Components

1. TYPE OF USERS

Visual sensitivity will vary with the type of users. Recreational sightseers or residents are most likely highly sensitive to any changes in visual quality, whereas workers or other uninterested parties, who pass through the area on a regular basis, may not be as sensitive to change.

2. AMOUNT OF USE

Areas that are seen and utilized by large numbers of people are potentially more sensitive.

Protection of visual values usually becomes more important as the number of viewers increase.

This is evident when evaluating the total number of negative comments when projects are proposed in or near residential neighborhoods as opposed to industrial zones.

3. PUBLIC INTEREST

The visual quality of an area may be of concern to local, State, or National groups. Indicators of this concern are usually expressed in public meetings, letters, newspaper or magazine articles, newsletters, land-use plans, etc. Public controversy created in response to proposed activities that would change the landscape character is therefore considered.

4. ADJACENT LAND USES

The interrelationship with land uses in adjacent lands can affect the visual sensitivity of an area.

For example, an area within the view shed of a residential area may be very sensitive, whereas an area surrounded by commercially developed lands may not be visually sensitive.

5. SPECIAL AREAS

Management objectives for special areas such as Natural Areas, Wilderness Areas or Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Scenic Areas, Scenic Roads or Trails, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), frequently require

special consideration for the protection of the visual values. This does not necessarily mean that these areas are scenic, but rather that one of the management objectives may be to preserve the natural landscape setting.

Property for sale next to Cascade Solar in Joshua Tree, just as construction began



The management objectives for these areas may be used as a basis for assigning sensitivity levels.

According to this method, visual quality is rated according to the presence and characteristics of seven key components of the landscape. These components include landform, vegetation, water, color, adjacent scenery, scarcity and cultural modifications.

Market Impact Analysis

The Market Impact Analysis is utilized to estimate the impact associated with development of Community Scale Solar projects in residential areas of the Mojave Desert area of San Bernardino County. The opinions and data utilized were developed from interviews with members of impacted communities, data on Land and Homes sales from Local MLs and Title companies, as well as review of previous studies and reports and the experts cited in this report.

IMPACTS

1. What is the risk that development of Community Scale Solar will affect or impact the views or scenic vistas within a Residential Zoned Community?

In my research, I found that the overwhelming majority of residents within the viewshed of the solar projects have a negative opinion of the aesthetic impact associated with a solar farm within the

community. The most common response was that the facilities are **blight on the community** or that the projects turn the neighborhood into an industrial zone.

My inspection of several Community Scale Solar developments revealed that the facilities are significantly impactful on the view and appearance of the community if placed proximate residential properties. When appropriately placed proximate existing industrial properties or in areas that are otherwise protected by a topographic, vegetative or other natural feature, the impact is considered to be nominal.

Therefore, based on the research, interviews and inspections, my opinion is that **the impact is Significant**

TOPOGRAPHY

Topography is one of the most important factors to siting a solar project, specifically, the position of the project on the slope on which the project sits. This is because the projects that have the most visual exposure to a community typically face the most opposition and are therefore the most likely to impact a potential buyer or seller of impacted property. This was evidenced on several occasions when interviewing homeowners in Lucerne Valley and Yucca Valley. When asked the question, “Do you support or oppose wind and why?” the response was an emphatic “No on Wind”.

When the respondents were asked why, they inevitably stated “Because it kills my view” or “I don’t want to have to look at those ugly things on my hill side.”

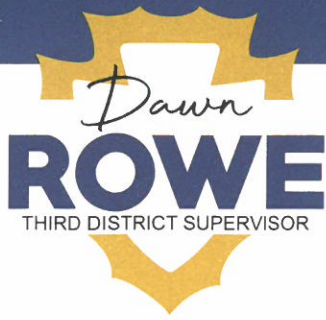
Conversely when asked the question, “Would you support or oppose a community scale solar project in your area?” the same people stated that they have no problem with solar. When asked why, they almost universally stated “because they don’t impact my view” or “they are flat and so I can’t see them”.

However when asked if they would support a solar project being placed next door, All of the respondents stated “no” or “absolutely not”. The fact is that most people on the valley floor looking up at the mountains do not want to have their view altered by wind turbines and most people on the hills or sloped areas do not want to have their view of the valley altered by utility scale solar farms. Therefore, based on the research and interviews my conclusion is, based on the location of the projects at a given point on the slope of the surrounding land, **the impact on property values within the viewshed is Significant** based on its location, and should be considered as it can be either negative or neutral based on the location and mitigation measures.

While the prospects of finding a speculative investor for the 17 parcels of land as residential development land are low, these 17 parcels are going to attract attention as possible future solar farm land. The value of land for this type of development land is significantly higher and as such the owners will be inclined to sell. This will further expand the development of solar in the area and result in the Industrialization of an area that had an intended use of growing agricultural crops and single family residential developments for small farms and ranches as stated in the General plan of San Bernardino County.

Lone Valley industrial solar fields in the community of Lucerne Valley





County of San Bernardino

November 12, 2020

Sarah Mongano
Senior Environmental Scientist
California State Lands Commission
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100-South
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Ms. Mongano,

As members of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, we write to express our concern and opposition to the proposed Stagecoach Solar Project (Project) in the unincorporated community of Lucerne Valley. It is our understanding that this project will be sited on undeveloped state property, and the California State Lands Commission (CSLC) will serve as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This letter is submitted in response to the CSLC solicitation for public and agency comments as to the scope and content of the environmental analysis.

Renewable energy development has been a major issue in San Bernardino County for over a decade. After a three-year public process which relied heavily on stakeholder input from our communities, the Board of Supervisors on August 8, 2017, adopted a Renewable Energy and Conservation Element (RECE) into our General Plan, incorporating our citizens' vision for renewable energy development in San Bernardino County policies.

In 2019, the Board of Supervisors adopted Policy 4.10 into the RECE. Under the provisions of this policy, development of utility-scale renewable energy projects within Community Planning areas is prohibited. The proposed location of the Project is in direct conflict with this established land use policy in San Bernardino County, as it would be developed in the Lucerne Valley Community Planning Area. We request that CSLC take into account this significant conflict when conducting the CEQA environmental analysis for the Project.

We were dismayed to learn that the Project will interfere with critical wildlife linkages identified in a Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) for the Town of Apple Valley. The MSHCP Plan Area is strategically located at the intersection of three important wildlife linkages that are not only important to the immediate region, but also to the Mojave Desert as a whole. The identification and protection of these linkages will facilitate wildlife movement and gene flow across a wider regional landscape, making the entire region more resilient to the effects of climate change by ensuring the long-term viability of six Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

The proposed project site is also problematic for the designation of State Route 247 (SR-247) as a State Scenic Highway by the California Department of Transportation. The close proximity of the Project to SR-247 disturbs the iconic viewshed of Lucerne Valley and jeopardizes efforts to obtain this highly coveted designation. This undertaking is a critical priority for Lucerne Valley and residents in nearby desert communities, thus the proposed location of this project will receive considerable backlash from our constituents if it moves forward as intended.

We also cannot overlook our citizens' concerns about visual impacts of renewable energy development on rural communities. The scenic quality of desert open space attracts highly valued tourism and contributes greatly to the quality of life in our desert communities. It is essential that this quality is considered by CSLC during the project review and decision process.

It is important to note that the County does support the development of utility-oriented renewable energy projects in defined areas. The Board of Supervisors adopted in RECE Policy 5.4.2 the following: "Encourage utility-oriented RE generation to occur in the five Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) Development Focus Areas (DFAs) that were supported by the Board of Supervisors on February 17, 2016, Resolution No. 2016-20 and on adjacent private lands (North of Kramer Junction, Trona, Hinkley, El Mirage, and Amboy)." These defined areas were determined through a meticulous process undertaken by the County of San Bernardino, taking into consideration our stakeholder input and citizens' vision for renewable energy development.

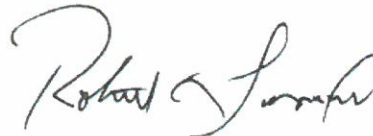
The proposed Project conflicts with our County's current land use policies, would interfere with critical wildlife linkages, and significantly impacts the viewshed of the unincorporated community of Lucerne Valley. For these reasons, we cannot support the application submitted by Aurora Solar, LLC and respectfully request that it be withdrawn. If the CSLC and/or project applicant are interested in exploring alternative options within San Bernardino County that meet our policy requirements, our county staff will gladly assist with identifying locations that are suitable for this type of development.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views on this project. We look forward to receiving a response to our comments.

Sincerely,



Dawn Rowe
3rd District Supervisor
County of San Bernardino



Robert A. Lovingood
1st District Supervisor
County of San Bernardino

CC: Paul Cook, Congressman, 8th District of California
Jay Obernolte, State Assemblyman, 33rd State Assembly District
Shannon Grove, State Senator, 16th State Senate District