



Department of Energy
Western Area Power Administration
Desert Southwest Customer Service Region
P.O. Box 6457
Phoenix, AZ 85005-6457

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Vidal Solar Interconnection Project
San Bernardino County, California
DOE/EA-2170**

Agency: U.S. Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact

BACKGROUND: Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) proposes to approve CDH Vidal LLC's application to interconnect its proposed facility to WAPA's Headgate Rock to Blythe (HDR-BLY) 161-kilovolt transmission line and enter into an interconnection agreement. WAPA operates and maintains this transmission line, which is part of the Parker-Davis Project transmission system. The interconnection agreement's purpose is to ensure that the request will not degrade existing transmission reliability and service. WAPA must respond to CDH Vidal LLC's interconnection request pursuant to its obligations under its Open Access Transmission Tariff (OATT) and applicable provisions of the Federal Power Act.

In association with the interconnection agreement, WAPA would:

1. Construct a new switchyard and associated interconnection facilities up to five acres in area within the footprint of the Vidal Energy Project to interconnect the solar project to WAPA's existing transmission line;
2. Install underground fiber from the control building to the take-off structure;
3. Install optical ground wire from the take-off structure along the overhead approach spans;
4. Replace an existing overhead transmission pole structure;
5. Install new microwave infrastructure to communicate between WAPA's interconnection switchyard and the Vidal Energy Project substation to meet relay protection and control requirements;
6. Replace insulators on HDR-BLY structure 25/2;
7. Inspect new facilities during their operational life as part of WAPA's existing inspection program which includes annual aerial and ground inspections; and
8. If appropriate, evaluate certain facilities for decommissioning after the useful life of the Vidal Energy Project.

CDH Vidal LLC plans to build, operate, and maintain the Vidal Energy Project, a 160-megawatt nameplate capacity photovoltaic (PV) solar energy generation and battery storage facility within a 1,090-acre project area located approximately 2.5 miles southeast of the unincorporated community of Vidal, east of U.S. Route 95, north of the Riverside County border, and west of the Colorado River. The Vidal Energy Project area is comprised entirely of private lands and is approved by San Bernardino County. WAPA's proposed interconnection tap and associated activities would be located entirely within the boundary of the Vidal Energy Project.

CDH Vidal LLC anticipates operating the Vidal Energy Project such that the annual output is equal to or less than 50 average megawatts.

CDH Vidal LLC's project development activities would include:

1. The construction of an on-site substation, battery storage, interconnection facilities, and associated electrical infrastructure;
2. PV panel assembly, installation, and commissioning;
3. The creation of access roads within the facility for construction and maintenance purposes; and
4. The installation of an overhead generation tie transmission line between the solar facility and WAPA's tap.

Construction activities would also be expected to include site preparation, fencing, mowing, excavation, grading, trenching/underground work, pile driving, system installation, testing, and cleanup. Upon completion of the construction and testing phases, the Vidal Energy Project would be operated during daylight hours. The PV arrays would produce electricity passively with minimal maintenance requirements. It is anticipated that panels would be washed up to two times a year, using the same water source used during the construction phase. The Vidal Energy Project has an anticipated operational life of up to 35 years, after which Proponent may choose to update site technology and recommission, or to decommission the site and remove the systems and their components.

WAPA prepared a Final Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzing the Proposed Action and a No Action Alternative. While Vidal Energy Project facilities are not part of WAPA's Proposed Action, the EA analyzed the impacts of the solar project alongside the effects of the Proposed Action as part of a comprehensive analysis. The EA is titled "Final Environmental Assessment for the Vidal Solar Interconnection Project: DOE/EA-2170" and dated December 2024. WAPA is the lead Federal agency. WAPA incorporates this EA by reference.

DETERMINATION: Based on the analysis contained in DOE/EA-2170, WAPA finds that the Proposed Action to approve CDH Vidal LLC's application and enter into an interconnection agreement does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required, and WAPA issues this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Additional information and copies of the EA and FONSI are available to all interested parties and the public from the following contact:

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The EA and FONSI can be downloaded from WAPA's website at:

<https://www.wapa.gov/transmission/transmission-environmental-review-nepa/vidal-solar/>

For further information on DOE's NEPA process, contact:

Mr. Brian Costner, Director

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