Imperial County
Planning & Development Services Department
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT PROGRAM EIR FOR THE LITHIUM VALLEY SPECIFIC PLAN, REVISED LITHIUM VALLEY SPECIFIC PLAN, PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE/MAP AMENDMENTS, AND CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE ORDINANCE

The Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department has prepared a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR) (State Clearinghouse No. 2023120104), including a Water Supply Assessment, for the proposed Lithium Valley Specific Plan Project (Project or LVSP), as described below. These documents have been prepared in accordance with, and pursuant to, the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), as amended; Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.; and the "Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act" (State CEQA Guidelines), California Code of Regulation, Title 14, Chapter 15000 et seq. Also included is a revised version of the Draft Lithium Valley Specific Plan updated from the draft made available in February 2025, and draft proposed General Plan and Zoning Ordinance/Map Amendments. The County has also prepared a Construction Workforce Ordinance which includes prevailing wage provisions for the construction workforce and a local hiring goal of 40%, with exemptions for agricultural and other uses. The County is also referring the Draft PEIR, the revised LVSP, General Plan and Zoning Ordinance/Map Amendments, and Workforce Ordinance to citizens, California Native American Indian tribes, public agencies, public utility companies, water suppliers. and civic, education, and other community groups identified in Government Code Section 65352.

SUBJECT: Lithium Valley Specific Plan Draft Program Environmental Impact Report

PROJECT LOCATION: The Lithium Valley Specific Plan is located in Imperial County, California, specifically covering an approximate area of 51,622 acres (Plan Area) adjacent to the southeastern shore of the Salton Sea (see Figure 1). This area is in unincorporated Imperial County land, situated within the basin of the Salton Sea, with the Alamo River channel running through the center of the Study Area, draining into the Salton Sea. The Study Area extends from the Imperial Wildlife Area Wister Unit in the north to the City of Calipatria in the south, bounded by the New River on the southwest. It covers shoreline and open water portions of the Salton Sea and extends slightly into the alluvial fans at the base of the Chocolate Mountains. The topography is generally flat but sloping from east to west towards the Salton Sea, and below sea level. The land use in the Study Area primarily consists of agriculture, the Salton Sea, existing geothermal energy facilities, with some limited residential and recreational uses. The proximity to the Salton Sea, National Wildlife Refuges, and abundant open space promotes recreational and commercial farming activities. The Plan Area contains hazardous sites enumerated under Gov. Code Section 65962.5, as detailed in Draft PEIR Section 4.9 and Figures 4.9-1 and 4.9-2.

The Project is located in the Section, Range, and Townships within the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangles of Frink, Iris Wash, Niland, Obsidian Butte, Westmorland East, Westmoreland West and Wister Quadrangles. See attached map – Figure 1).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: On June 30, 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 125 authorizing the state to assist in developing Imperial County's lithium resource in an area that is a part of the Salton Sea Known Geothermal Resource Area, known as Lithium Valley. SB 125 appropriated funding to develop a Lithium Valley Specific Plan and PEIR and adopted a lithium excise tax to fund Salton Sea restoration efforts and to fund affected communities. The LVSP facilitates renewable energy development, lithium extraction, associated infrastructure, commercial, and related manufacturing industries, which provide quality local jobs, while minimizing adverse effects on the environment and public health. The LVSP would serve as the land use and zoning regulations on the southeastern side of the Salton Sea. The Project would change the permissible land uses to include Green Industrial (e.g. geothermal energy, lithium/mineral extraction), Manufacturing (e.g. lithium batteries), Logistics, Renewables, Community

Opportunity Areas, Solar, Playa Restoration, Floodplains, and Conservation, with an Agricultural Overlay. This Project would be a pivotal step for Imperial Valley towards a more sustainable and localized economy and support the nations' ability to produce sustainable energy and technologies.

The Project also includes amendments to the County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance/Map.

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATIONS AND ZONING: The Project area's existing land use designations include "Recreation and Open Space" and "Agriculture."

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DISTRICT: District 4, Supervisor, Ryan E. Kelly.

Summary of environmental Impacts: The Draft PEIR identifies that implementation of the Lithium Valley Specific Plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts to Aesthetics, Agriculture/Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Noise, Population and Housing, Transportation, and Tribal Cultural Resources. All other environmental factors, including Energy, Geology/Soils, Hazards/Hazardous Materials, Hydrology/Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Public Services, Recreation, Mineral Resources, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire would result in no impacts, less than significant impacts, or less than significant impacts with mitigation.

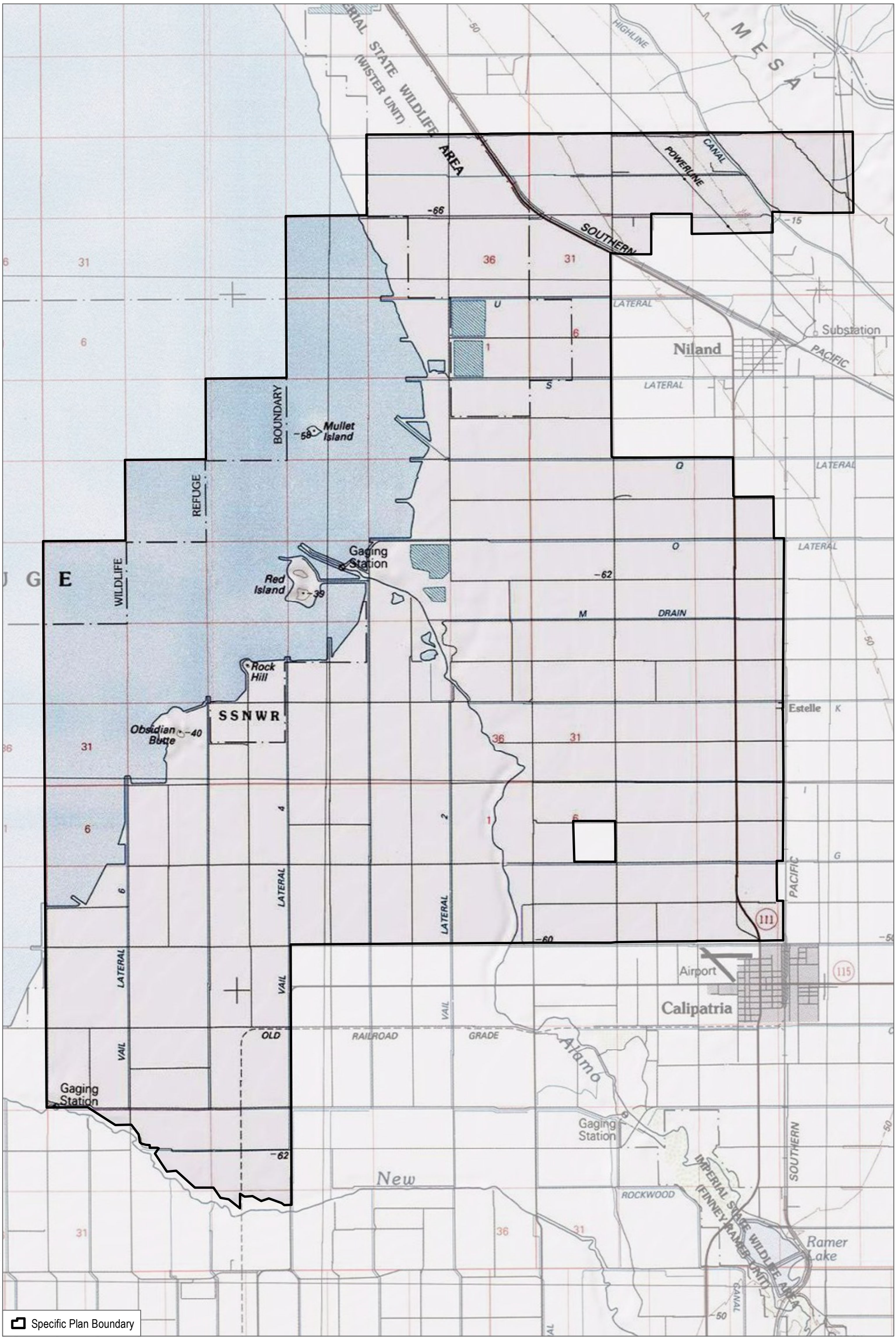
PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing on the LVSP and the Final PEIR will be scheduled before the Imperial County Board of Supervisors at a time and date to be determined subsequent to the close of the Draft PEIR public review period.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD:

The formal public review period for the Draft PEIR, the revised LVSP, the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance/Map Amendments will be from **December 30, 2025 to March 2, 2026 (60 days) at 5.00 pm** (comments must be **received by** this time). Any person wishing to comment on the Draft PEIR must provide **written** comments to the Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department, 801 Main Street, El Centro, CA 92243 or via email to publiccomment@co.imperial.ca.us. All comments must be clearly identified in the subject line with the "**LVSP 2025**." Mailed or emailed submissions to the above email or address are the only options for submittal and no oral comments or submissions elsewhere will be included or responded to as part of the Final PEIR.

AVAILABILITY: Copies of the Draft PEIR, documents incorporated by reference, the revised LVSP, the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance/Map Amendments, and the Construction Workforce Ordinance are available at the County of Imperial Planning and Development Services offices at 801 Main Street El Centro, CA 92243, and online at: https://lithiumvalley.imperialcounty.org/. Copies of the Draft PEIR are also available at Imperial County Free Library, Calipatria Branch, at 105 S Lake Ave, Calipatria, CA 92233.



USGS 7.5-Minute Series Iris Wash, Niland, Obsidian Butte, Westmorland East, Westmorland West, Wister Quadrangles

DUDEK

0 0.5 1 Miles

FIGURE 1

Plan Area Topographical Map

Lithium Valley Specific Plan