



COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
NOTICE OF PREPARATION

OCTOBER 31, 2024

To: ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for Arboleda Battery Energy Storage System Project (PLNP2024-00021)

Sacramento County will be the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency for preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Arboleda Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project (proposed project). This Notice of Preparation has been sent to responsible and trustee agencies and involved federal agencies pursuant to Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines. Agencies should comment on the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to the agencies' statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than 30 days after issuance of this notice.

The project description, location, and the probable environmental effects are contained in the attached materials and may also be viewed online at:

<https://planningdocuments.saccounty.net/ViewProjectDetails.aspx?ControlNum=PLNP2024-00021>

Please send your Agency's response to this Notice to:

Kevin Messerschmitt, Senior Planner
Planning and Environmental Review
827 7th Street, Room 225, Sacramento, CA 95814

or via e-mail at: CEQA@saccounty.gov.

Your response should include the name of a contact person in your agency.

Agencies with specific questions about the project should contact Kevin Messerschmitt, Senior Planner, at messerschmittk@saccounty.gov for further information.

COMMENT PERIOD

October 31, 2024 to December 2, 2024

SCOPING MEETINGS:

One scoping meeting has been scheduled for the proposed project. Interested parties and agency representatives are invited to learn more about the proposed project and submit comments and suggestions concerning the analysis for the Draft EIR.

The scoping meeting will be conducted virtually via Zoom. The date, time, and login information for the meeting is as follows:

November 21, 2024, 11 AM

Location: Online via Zoom at:

<https://saccounty-net.zoomgov.com/j/1615676577?pwd=xnna1EJcdFTUIF5TBnXl4LaX7cQxke.1>

Meeting ID: 161 567 6577

Passcode: 055567

PROJECT TITLE: Arboleda Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project

CONTROL NUMBER: PLNP2024-00021

PROJECT PROPONENT(S):

Landowner: McConnell Estates
Attn: Michael Wackman

Applicant: Arboleda Energy Storage, LLC
Attn: Qaim Syed

Engineer: Coffman Engineers, Inc.
Attn: Lee Bolling

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION:

Arboleda Energy Storage, LLC, a wholly-owned indirect subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC, proposes to construct and operate the Arboleda BESS Project located south of the City of Elk Grove in unincorporated Sacramento County. The proposed project would include an up-to 250 megawatt (MW), 4-MW-hour (MWh) BESS facility, which means that at maximum capacity, the facility can potentially deliver up to 250 MW of power over a duration of 4 hours. In addition to the battery systems, the facility would include associated accessory structures that are described further below. The project also includes a 230-kilovolt (kV) offsite, overhead generation tie (gen-tie) line, which would interconnect at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) Elk Grove Substation.

The project site is west of the intersection of Eschinger Road and West Stockton Boulevard, in unincorporated Sacramento County. The project site is situated on a portion of two privately-owned parcels (Assessor Parcel Numbers 134-0220-064 and 134-0220-063) which total 203 acres. The project facility would occupy approximately 34 acres. The project proposal includes a request for a lot line adjustment to adjust the parcel boundaries such that project facility would be located on an approximately 40-acre parcel.

The project's offsite gen-tie line would extend northward for approximately 0.45 mile from the project site to the SMUD Elk Grove Substation within the City of Elk Grove municipal boundaries, as shown on Figures 1 and 2. The gen-tie line would cross West Stockton Boulevard and Highway 99 in Sacramento County, and travel north across Emerald Lakes Golf Course in the City of Elk Grove, largely within the existing SMUD high voltage transmission corridor. The gen-tie line point of interconnection would be at the southern portion of the SMUD Elk Grove Substation.

PROJECT FACILITIES

The project would be designed to charge or discharge up to 250 MW of electricity over a four-hour period and would consist of lithium-ion or similar technology batteries housed in storage containers installed with heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) or similar cooling systems and fire protection and control systems. The proposed BESS would include associated ancillary facilities consisting of an on-site project substation and control room, power conversion stations (with inverters and transformers), buried collector lines, and Conex containers for storage and offices. The project would also include other facility features including: miscellaneous maintenance equipment outdoor storage area; fencing; internal access roads; permanent noise barrier walls; drainage design features, such as detention basins; landscaping along the facility frontage; and entrance signage. The project would also include a 230-kV gen-tie line (refer to Figure 3).

Site Access

The project site would be accessed from Highway 99 to Eschinger Road. The project facility would be developed with two ingress/egress points off Eschinger Road.

Battery Energy Storage System

The proposed BESS facility would include multiple self-contained, prefabricated enclosure units in a parallel configuration with spacing between each unit as required by the manufacturer. The enclosure units would contain lithium-ion, or similar technology, batteries stored on racking. Each of the enclosure units is expected to be up to 12 feet tall, up to 12 feet wide, and up to 44 feet long, depending on manufacturer. There would be no internal open space available within the enclosures for entry or occupation. Battery racking would only be accessible from the exterior of the enclosures via external doors. Each enclosure unit would have a fire rating in compliance with industry standards, including the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 855, *Standard for the Installation of Stationary Energy Storage Systems*, Underwriters Laboratories (UL) 9540, *Standard for Energy Storage Systems*, and as required by the Consumnes Community Services District Fire Department. Each unit would also be equipped with a cooling system for thermal management of the batteries. These systems would be automatically and continuously monitored onsite through the supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system and through an offsite remote monitoring system.

On-Site Project Substation

An on-site substation would be required to step-up and step-down energy between the BESS facility and gen-tie line. Additionally, the on-site substation would host the grid inertia safety

equipment and switches required by SMUD specifications to interconnect to the high-voltage transmission system in a control room structure located within the on-site substation.

Power Conversion Station (PCS)

The project would install PCS in the BESS fields. The PCS would be comprised of industry standard, nationally (and internationally) recognized inverter and transformer equipment. The PCS would be unattended, standalone units that operate in all conditions. They operate in charge and discharge modes, for bidirectional use, and would be monitored and controlled remotely.

Offsite Generation Tie Line

Energy would be transported between the on-site substation at the project site to the SMUD Elk Grove Substation through an overhead 230-kV gen-tie line. The gen-tie line would be supported by up to eight dilled galvanized steel poles up to 150 feet tall and spaced approximately every 200 to 800 feet. The Project Sponsor would construct the gen-tie line from the onsite substation to the point of change of ownership at the SMUD Elk Grove Substation. The Project Sponsor would also be responsible for any updates necessary to connect the project to the SMUD Elk Grove Substation, which would be completed within the existing previously disturbed area of the Elk Grove Substation.

Other Facility Features

The proposed project would also include the following features:

- Up to eight storage containers for operations and maintenance (O&M) equipment storage and offices;
- Onsite detention basins designed to capture runoff from a hypothetical 100 year-48-hour storm event per the County's standards;
- Lighting for the control room structure located within the on-site substation;
- 8-foot barbed wire chain link fencing along the perimeter of the project facility ;
- Approximately 159,000 square feet of drought tolerant and native vegetation landscaping, which would include trees and shrubs along Eschinger Road, as well as herbaceous seed for the detention basins; and,
- Sound barriers to ensure that noise to residential receptors would not exceed the thresholds in the Sacramento County Code and the County of Sacramento General Plan Noise Element (amended December 13, 2022) consisting of one up to 10-foot continuous sound barrier (approximately 800 linear feet) at the western perimeter of the project site, and three up to 20-foot tall noise barriers at the eastern perimeter.

Construction

The proposed project is anticipated to be constructed over an approximately 15-month timeframe. Construction would require site preparation, grading, foundation and battery/container installation, substation installation, gen-tie line installation, and battery commissioning. Due to the existing level ground, construction of the facility would not require substantial grading, and cut and fill would be balanced onsite.

The construction phases would average 60 workers per day, with a peak of 150 workers during commissioning. The peak number of daily off-site truck trips would be approximately 216 trips (round-trips) per month during the grading phase. Construction activities are anticipated to take place between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday-Friday and Saturday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., with a total of six shifts per week (Monday–Saturday). Overtime and weekend work would be used only as necessary to meet scheduled milestones or accelerate schedule and would comply with applicable California labor laws and Sacramento County Code Section 6.68.090(e).

Operation

Up to approximately 6-7 O&M staff are expected to be working at the project site daily. Project operations would also be monitored remotely through the SCADA system. Typically, one major maintenance inspection would take place annually.

In addition, approximately every two to three years the site would be visited by a work crew to add or connect additional batteries to the facility. This replenishment activity would offset the degradation of the batteries and maintain the overall performance of the facility.

Decommissioning

The planned operational life of the facility is approximately 30 years. Following, the proposed project would be decommissioned, and the project components would be recycled, repurposed, or salvaged where possible. The project site would be thoroughly cleaned, and all debris removed.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

The proposed project has been designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Site a 250 MW, 4-MWh battery storage facility adjacent, or in close proximity, to the Elk Grove Substation to minimize transmission losses, reduce environmental effects, and provide an efficient energy delivery system to the grid.
- Develop an energy storage facility in Sacramento County that supports the local economy by creating local construction jobs, increased local business activity from construction and construction worker expenditures, and increasing tax revenue to the County.
- Support state policies necessary to improve the reliability of California's energy grid, including Assembly Bill 2514 for energy storage targets, the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) February 22, 2021, ruling (20-05-003) related to integrated resource planning, including the need for 7,500 MW of net qualifying capacity, and CPUC Decision 16-06055 to reduce greenhouse gases from energy generation and provide grid stability.

- Increase local energy storage capacity at Elk Grove Substation to address the limitations of the electric grid and make it more resilient to disturbances and peaks in energy demand.
- Site a battery storage facility near an existing transmission corridor for the gen-tie line and limit disturbance to previously disturbed and designated transmission development areas.
- Site a utility-scale BESS in a location that achieves the above fundamental objectives while avoiding and minimizing potential environmental impacts, including: avoidance of aquatic resources; reduced impacts to farmland; avoidance of flood zones; and use of previously disturbed land.

ENVIRONMENTAL/LAND USE SETTING:

The project site is currently fallow farmland. There is an agricultural retention pond adjacent to the project site to the northeast, and an agricultural ditch that runs east to west along the northern boundary of the site. The land to the south of the project site is actively grazed by cattle. The land to the west is rural residential surrounded by fallow farmland. To the north and northeast of the project site is orchard and vineyard, and directly to the east is residential farmland. The existing SMUD high voltage transmission corridor directly adjacent to the eastern edge of the project site is the proposed location of the gen-tie line.

The project property parcels are designated Agricultural Cropland in the Sacramento County General Plan and are zoned Agricultural 80 (AG-80). Emerald Lakes Golf Course, which the gen-tie line would cross over, is designated as Parks and Open Space in the City of Elk Grove's General Plan. The SMUD Elk Grove Substation is designated as Heavy Industrial by the City of Elk Grove.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS/EIR FOCUS:

The EIR will describe the existing conditions, legal and regulatory framework relevant to the project, standards of significance to be used in the analysis, and methodology, evaluate the environmental impacts of the project, and provide mitigation, if necessary. A high-level review of the project and of the environmental resources in the study area has resulted in the identification of potential categories of environmental effect. These descriptions below are not exhaustive, and other discussions may be included if further research or public comment indicates that their inclusion is warranted. As the analyses progress and the extent of impacts to the categories is determined, appropriate CEQA alternatives will be included for analysis.

Aesthetics

The project site is not located near a scenic highway or in the close vicinity of any scenic resources. The project proposes BESS equipment consisting of enclosure units up to 12 feet tall, 12 feet wide, and 44 feet long, and equipment at the onsite substation. The project also includes an offsite 0.45-mile overhead gen-tie line supported on dulled galvanized steel poles up to 150 feet tall, extending northward crossing Highway 99 and interconnecting at the SMUD Elk Grove Substation. The analysis will characterize existing visual resources at the project site and in the vicinity, including any scenic vistas or scenic resources that could be potentially impacted by project implementation. There will be a permanent change to the landscape following implementation of the proposed project is developed. Thus, potential aesthetic impacts will be analyzed.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources

The project site is currently fallow farmland and is identified as containing farmland of local importance. The proposed project would convert farmland for the proposed BESS facilities. As a result, impacts to farmland will be identified and analyzed, with a focus on the potential impact related to loss of farmland.

Air Quality

The proposed project would require construction, operational, and decommissioning activities that would generate emissions of air pollutants. The EIR will analyze the project's potential impacts on air quality, including consistency with air quality plans, contribution to existing air quality conditions, impacts to sensitive receptors, and potential to generate other emissions such as odors.

Biological Resources

As discussed, the project site is currently fallow farmland, and contains suitable habitat for special status species. The project site is within the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan area but is not within the Urban Development Area. Several water features are located on the project property but are not within the proposed facility footprint and are not anticipated to be disturbed. The EIR will analyze potential impacts to sensitive natural communities, special-status plant and wildlife species, and jurisdictional waters.

Cultural Resources

The project site will be evaluated for presence of cultural, historical, and archaeological resources in accordance with State law and County policy. Impacts to identified resources, if any, will be assessed.

Energy

The proposed project would increase local energy storage capacity and facilitate the use of renewable energy. The EIR will analyze any potential project conflicts with State or local plans regarding renewable energy and evaluate whether the project would result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources.

Geology and Soils

The proposed project has the potential to result in impacts related to geology and soils. The EIR section will describe the geological setting and potential effects resulting from soil erosion, earthquakes, liquefaction, expansive/unstable soils, as well as identify any known paleontological resources or unique geological features within the site.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The proposed project would require construction, operational, and commissioning activities that would generate greenhouse gas emissions. The EIR will evaluate the project's generation of greenhouse gas emissions, and analyzes the project's consistency with plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gases.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The proposed project would develop a BESS facility with associated components, which would require the use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials. Additionally, the project would be decommissioned after 30 years, at which BESS components (batteries, battery enclosures,

fuels, hydraulic fluids, etc.) would be recycled or salvaged. The EIR will analyze the use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials. Impacts related to airport hazards and other potentially hazardous conditions will also be assessed.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Construction and operation of the project would change the hydrology of the site and has the potential to impact water quality due to soil disturbance. Onsite detention basins would be constructed as part of the project to comply with County standards. The EIR will describe the regulatory and environmental setting for hydrology, drainage, and water quality at the project site, and will identify and analyze the projects impacts related to these resources.

Land Use and Planning

As mentioned previously, the project site is designated as Agricultural Cropland in the Sacramento County General Plan and is zoned AG-80. The County Planning Director determined that BESS facilities could operate in agricultural districts as well as industrial districts with a Use Permit approved by the Board of Supervisors. The proposed project would require a Conditional Use Permit. The EIR will include an evaluation of the project's consistency with the County's General Plan as well as other land use plans, policies, and ordinances intended to avoid or mitigate environmental impacts, and the potential for the project to divide an established community.

Mineral Resources

The project site is located within as an area classified as MRZ-3, which is an area of unknown determined mineral resource significance. While the project site does not contain any active mining operation and does not propose any mining, potential impacts to mineral resources will be further assessed in the EIR.

Noise

The project has the potential to expose the public to increased noise levels and vibration during construction, operation, and decommissioning. The EIR will analyze noise and vibration impacts associated with the project and include all feasible mitigation to reduce environmental impacts associated with noise and vibration. Due to the proximity of sensitive receptors to the project site, noise barriers would be constructed as part of the project design to reduce noise levels.

Population and Housing

There is no housing on the project site, and the proposed project does not include any residential land uses. However, the EIR will analyze whether the project would induce unplanned population growth.

Public Services

The proposed project does not include any land uses such as residential uses that would increase demand on public services. Nonetheless, this chapter will describe existing fire, police, schools, parks, and other facilities that serve the project site, and analyze the project's potential impacts on those resources.

Recreation

The closest recreational facility to the project site is the Emerald Lakes Golf Course, which the gen-tie line would cross over. Impacts to recreational facilities will be further discussed in the EIR.

Transportation

Construction, operation, and decommissioning of the proposed project would result in truck trips and worker trips. The analysis will evaluate the project's impacts on vehicle miles traveled and compare them to the established significance criteria utilizing the Sacramento County Transportation Analysis Guidelines. The EIR will also evaluate the potential impacts of the project related to the circulation system, transportation hazards due to geometric design features or incompatible uses, and emergency access.

Tribal Cultural Resources

A cultural resources evaluation will be prepared to determine if there are any tribal cultural resources onsite. In addition, AB 52 consultation has been initiated by the County. The EIR will evaluate potential impacts on any identified or potentially undiscovered tribal cultural resources.

Utilities and Service Systems

The proposed project would require water during construction, operations, and decommissioning, which would be delivered via truck from an off-site source. Bottled water would be provided to workers and staff. The project does not propose use of groundwater or diversion of surface water. This chapter will describe existing utilities and service systems that serve the project site and analyze the impacts of the proposed project to those utilities during construction and operation.

Wildfire

The project site is not located in a designated very high fire hazard severity zone. The proposed project includes the use of lithium-ion batteries, which could potentially elevate the risk of fire. Therefore, the EIR will discuss the potential impacts of the proposed project related to exacerbating wildfire risk.

INTENDED USES OF THE EIR:

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors will use the information contained in the EIR in evaluating the proposed project and rendering a decision to approve or deny the requested entitlements. The EIR will serve as an informational document for the general public as well. Responsible agencies may also use the EIR as needed for subsequent discretionary actions. Responsible Agencies may include, but are not limited to, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Regional Water Quality Control Board – Central Valley Region, and SMUD.





Table NOP-1 includes information required by Section 15124 of the CEQA Guidelines and summarizes the following intended uses of the EIR:

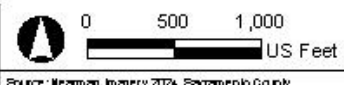
- A list of agencies that are expected to use the EIR in their decision making.
- A list of permits and other approvals required to implement the project.
- A list of related environmental review and consultation requirements required by federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or policies.

Table NOP-1. Permits, Approvals, Review, and Consultation Requirements	
Agency	Approval
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors	Final EIR Certification
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors	Conditional Use Permit (CUP)
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors	Special Development Permit
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors	Discretionary Design Review
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors	Lot Line Adjustment
Sacramento County Community Development	Grading and Construction Permits
Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District	Fugitive Dust Prevention and Control Plan
Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD)	Interconnection Agreement
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)	Encroachment Permit



Legend

 Project Site	 Sacramento County/City Boundaries
 Generation Tie Line	 Assessor's Parcel Boundary and APN



ARBOLEDA BESS PROJECT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Project Area

Figure 2

