



# County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development

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## **NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF AND PUBLIC HEARING ON THE DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED UTILITY SCALE SOLAR AMENDMENTS PROJECT**

Case Nos.: 24ORD-00028, 24ORD-00029, 24ORD-00030

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The County of Santa Barbara proposes to amend land use plans and zoning ordinances to allow for the development of utility-scale and community-scale solar energy facilities, as well as to streamline permitting for smaller solar energy systems in the unincorporated County.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** The project site encompasses unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County, including both Inland and Coastal Zones. It does not apply to lands within incorporated cities or those under the jurisdiction of federal, state, or tribal authorities.

**PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMENT:** The County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development Department (P&D) is soliciting comments on the adequacy and completeness of the analysis and proposed mitigation measures described in 25EIR-00003. You may comment by providing testimony at the public hearing on September 25, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. in the Santa Barbara County Engineering Building, Planning Commission Hearing Room, 105 East Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, or via Zoom at <https://santabarbaracounty.zoomgov.com/j/1617647940> (Webinar ID: 161 764 7940). You may also comment by submitting written or oral comments to the project planner identified below prior to the close of public comment on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:00 p.m.

**PROJECT DETAILS:** The Utility-Scale Solar Amendments Project would update multiple County land use plans and zoning ordinances to facilitate the development of utility-scale and community-scale solar energy facilities and streamline the permitting of smaller rooftop and ground-mounted systems. The Project includes amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, Coastal Land Use Plan, Land Use and Development Code (LUDC), Montecito Land Use and Development Code (MLUDC), Article II Coastal Zoning Ordinance (CZO), and Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves and Farmland Security Zones. The proposed changes would create a new permitting framework based on four tiers of solar development, remove the current 600-acre utility-scale overlay restriction, and clarify the permitting allowances for battery energy storage systems.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FINDINGS:** P&D has prepared a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (25EIR-00003, SCH No. 2024110254) pursuant to requirements of the State Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the County of Santa

Barbara Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA. P&D has prepared an EIR for the proposed project due to the potential for unavoidable, significant adverse effects that may result from project implementation. The EIR prepared for the project identifies and discusses potential impacts, mitigation measures, residual impacts and monitoring requirements for identified subject areas. **Significant and unavoidable** effects on the environment identified in the Draft Program EIR include: aesthetics, agricultural resources, and cultural, paleontological, and tribal resources. **Significant but mitigable** effects on the environment include: air quality, biological resources, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, transportation, utilities and service systems, and wildfires. If the project description changes, P&D will require a reevaluation to consider the changes. If you challenge this environmental document in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues raised by you or others in written correspondence or in hearings on the proposed project.

**DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:** The Draft Program EIR and all documents incorporated by reference in the Draft Program EIR may be reviewed at the P&D office located at 123 E. Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara and on the P&D website at <https://www.countyofsb.org/792/Utility-Scale-Solar-Comprehensive-Plan>. Draft documents are also available for review at the Santa Barbara Central Library, 40 East Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, and the Santa Maria Public Library, 421 South McClelland Street, Santa Maria. The administrative draft of the environmental impact report and P&D's formal comments to the preparer are also available for review at P&D offices.

**HOW TO COMMENT:** Please provide comments to the project planner, Zoë Carlson, at the County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development, 123 East Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, 93101, by email at [carlsonz@countyofsb.org](mailto:carlsonz@countyofsb.org), or by phone at 805-568-3532 prior to the close of public comment on Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:00 p.m. or provide testimony at the public hearing on the date and time specified above. Please limit comments to environmental issues such as traffic, biology, noise, etc. There will be a notice for future public hearings to consider project approval or denial.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this hearing, please contact Hearing Support Staff (805) 568-2000. Notification at least 48 hours prior to the hearing will enable Hearing Support Staff to make reasonable arrangements.