California Department of Transportation

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT 10 PLANNING
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Ms. Katherine Stefani
Planner II
Calaveras County Planning Department
891 Mountain Ranch Road
San Andreas, CA 95249

CAL-12-PM 13.822 Double Springs Energy Storage System Initial Study - SCH 2025120134

Ms. Stefani,

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the Double Springs Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Initial Study to construct a utility scale BESS consisting of up to 240 prefabricated battery enclosures with an on-site substation. The BESS facility will be composed of lithium-ion or comparable batteries installed within modular outdoor enclosures, and contain inverters, medium-voltage transformers, switchgear, fire suppression systems, communication facilities, and other associated equipment to connect the project to the PG&E Valley Springs Substation. The project is intended to provide a reliable source of auxiliary energy to stabilize the local transmission grid, as well as receive, store, and discharge electricity from the electric grid.

The project is located approximately north of SR 12 and a quarter mile west of State Route (SR) 26 adjacent to PG&E Valley Springs Substation and north of Double Springs Road in the community of Valley Springs within Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 040-002-017, 040-002-018 and 040-002-019.

Caltrans has the following comments:
Caltrans suggests that the Calaveras County continue to coordinate with Caltrans in identifying and addressing potential pedestrian safety and cumulative transportation impacts from this project and other developments near this location. This will assist Caltrans in ensuring that pedestrian, traffic safety, and quality standards are maintained for the traveling public on existing and future state transportation facilities in Calaveras County.

Environmental

It does not appear the work will encroach onto Caltrans Right of Way (ROW). However, if there are any construction related activities that will encroach into Caltrans ROW as a result of the project, the project proponent must apply for an Encroachment Permit with the Caltrans District 10 Encroachment Permit Office. All California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation, such as the final Initial Study, with supporting technical studies, must be submitted with the Encroachment Permit Application. These studies may include an analysis of potential impacts to any cultural sites, historic properties, biological resources, hazardous waste/materials, scenic highways, and/or other environmental resources within Caltrans Right of Way, at the project site(s).

Evidence of consultation with local Native American tribes and interested parties will need to be presented within the technical documents for approval of encroachment in the Caltrans ROW. If any previously unknown cultural resources are discovered during construction in Caltrans ROW, all work must stop within a 60-foot radius of the discovery. The Caltrans D10 Environmental Office must be notified immediately. The Caltrans Professionally Qualified Staff (PQS) will investigate the discovery. No work shall resume within the 60-foot radius until authorized by the Caltrans PQS.

If work occurs between February 1 and September 30 of any year, a pre-construction bird survey must be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to the start of any construction-related activities in Caltrans ROW. If an active nest is observed, a protective buffer must be established around the nest per CDFW guidelines. No work is allowed within the protective buffer limits until the young have fledged and until authorized by the Caltrans District 10 Environmental Office. Results of the pre-construction bird survey(s) must be provided to the Caltrans District 10 Environmental Office prior to the start of construction.

If there are impacts to water resources within Caltrans ROW, Caltrans will need to review the correspondence with the permitting authorities (California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW], United States Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board) and/or be provided copies of any required permits prior to the start of any construction in Caltrans ROW. If there are impacts to any special status species, critical habitat, or Essential Fish Habitat that exist within Caltrans ROW, evidence of consultation with CDFW, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and/or National Marine Fisheries Service shall be provided to Caltrans with the Encroachment Permit application.

Encroachment Permits

If any project activities encroach into Caltrans ROW, the project proponent must submit an application for an Encroachment Permit to the Caltrans District 10 Encroachment Permit Office. Appropriate environmental studies must be submitted with this

application. For more information, please visit the Caltrans Website at: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep/applications

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Shiferaw Jemberie (209) 986-9635 (email: Shiferaw.jemberie@dot.ca.gov) or me at (209) 639-8832 (email: Gregoria.ponce@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

Gregoria Ponce'

Gregoria Ponce', Chief
Office of Rural Planning

cc: Bret Sampson, Director, Calaveras County Planning Department
State Clearinghouse