CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

CALIFORNIA NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY

Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Prairie Song Reliability Project (25-OPT-02)

Date:	February 2, 2026
To:	Reviewing Agencies and Other Interested Parties
From:	California Energy Commission (CEC)
Project Title:	Prairie Song Reliability Project
Project Applicant:	Prairie Song Reliability Project, LLC
Docket Log:	25-OPT-02
NOP Review Period:	February 2, 2026, to March 4, 2026

In accordance with California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15082, California Energy Commission (CEC) staff has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to inform the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) (formerly known as the Office of Planning and Research), and each responsible and trustee agency that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared for the Prairie Song Reliability Project (project) proposed by Prairie Song Reliability Project, LLC (applicant) in Los Angeles County. A copy of this NOP will also be filed with the Los Angeles County Clerk.

In 2022, Assembly Bill 205 established a new Opt-In Certification Program for eligible energy storage facilities to optionally seek certification through the CEC. Upon receipt of an application, the CEC has the exclusive authority to certify the site and related facility. With certain exceptions, the issuance of a certificate by the CEC is in lieu of any permit, certificate, or similar document required by any state, local, or regional agency, or federal agency to the extent permitted by federal law, and supersedes any applicable statute, ordinance, or regulation of any state, local, or regional agency, or federal agency to the extent permitted by federal law (Pub. Resources Code, § 25545.1). In accordance with Public

Resources Code section 25545.7, the CEC is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Further information about the Opt-In Certification Program can be found on the CEC website at: https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/topics/power-plants/opt-certification-program.

Responsible and Trustee Agencies

Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, § 15082(b)), the CEC requests LCI and responsible and trustee agencies' views on the scope and content of the environmental document relevant to each agency's area of statutory responsibility that must be included in the draft EIR. Responsible agencies for this project are State Water Resources Control Board and Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board). The only trustee agency identified for this project is the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. At a minimum, the response shall identify:

- The significant environmental issues and reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures that the responsible or trustee agency, or the LCI will need to have explored in the draft EIR; and
- Whether the agency will be a responsible agency or trustee agency.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, responses must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. Based on comments received by public agencies on the scope and content of the EIR, CEC staff may request additional information from the applicant to address such comments. If a responsible or trustee agency, or LCI, fails by the end of the 30-day period to provide the CEC with either a response to the notice or a well-justified request for additional time, CEC staff will presume that the entity has no response.

Document Availability

The CEC has a webpage for the Prairie Song Reliability Project. The application and related project documents are viewable by clicking the "Docket Log (25-OPT-02)" link located near the upper right corner of the project webpage:

https://www.energy.ca.gov/powerplant/battery-storage-system/prairie-song-reliability-project.

The direct link to the project docket log is: https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=25-OPT-02.

Interested agencies or members of the public may also subscribe via the project webpage (linked above) to receive electronic notices of all project-related activities and documents related to CEC's evaluation of the application—look for the box with the words "SUBSCRIBE PRAIRIE SONG RELIABILITY PROJECT" to add your subscription email. Alternatively, you can go to CEC's subscription page (https://www.energy.ca.gov/subscriptions) under "Power Plants Licensing and Projects" and check the "Prairie Song Reliability Project" box under "Projects Under Review Topics."

Submitting Comments

Please submit comments electronically to the project docket. To use CEC's electronic commenting feature, go to CEC's webpage for this proceeding, (identified above), click on the "Submit e-Comment" link, and follow the instructions in the online form. If you have a file you would like to submit, use the "Submit e-filing" link. Be sure to include the project name in your comments. Once filed, you will receive an email with a link to them and the comments will be part of the proceeding's public record.

Project Location and Existing Conditions

The project is proposed on approximately 100-acres of privately-owned land in unincorporated Los Angeles County, California, in the community of Acton, which is in a small valley located in the San Gabriel Mountains, along State Route (SR) 14, between Palmdale and Santa Clarita. Development of the battery energy storage system (BESS) facility would occur on an area of land situated between two existing transportation corridors, SR 14 to the north and Southern Pacific Railroad lines and Carson Mesa Road to the south, which are approximately 1,200 feet apart.

Project Description

The applicant proposes to construct, own, and operate a 1,150-megawatt (MW), approximately 9,200-megawatt hour (MWh), BESS. The energy storage project

includes the containerized BESS with individualized fire prevention systems, a project substation, inverters, and other appurtenant facilities, such as fencing, operations and maintenance buildings, stormwater retention and infiltration basins, and communication systems. The project would connect to the existing Southern California Edison Vincent Substation via either a 1.1-mile or a 1.8-mile generation intertie (gen-tie) line, installed overhead using monopoles and steel lattice towers.

The project would store electricity from the power grid, providing additional capacity to the electrical grid to assist with serving electrical load during periods of peak demand by charging the batteries when demand is low and discharging them when demand is high. The project would also serve as an additional local/regional energy capacity resource that would enhance grid reliability, particularly to the Los Angeles Basin local reliability area, and may allow for the deferral or avoidance of regional transmission facilities.

A regional map and site layout figure from the application are attached to this notice.

Probable Environmental Effects

The CEC will prepare a Staff Assessment (SA), which will include a Draft EIR following the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code of Regs., tit. 14, div. 6, ch. 3). The purpose of the SA is to provide objective information regarding the project's significant effects on the environment, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, describe reasonable alternatives to the project, assess the project's conformance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards in accordance with CEQA, and provide an evaluation of the extent to which the application complies with additional licensing requirements set forth in the Public Resources Code. This information will be considered by the CEC Commissioners in deciding whether to grant a certificate to build and operate the project. The SA will include an Engineering Evaluation, Environmental Impact Assessment, assessment of the Mandatory Opt-In Requirements, and evaluation of Other Key Topics as identified in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Staff Assessment Topic Outline

Proposed Section	Topics Included
Engineering Evaluation	• Facility Design • Facility Reliability • Transmission System Engineering • Worker Safety and Fire Protection
Environmental Impact Assessment	• Air Quality • Biological Resources • Climate Change/Greenhouse Gas Emissions • Cultural/Tribal Cultural Resources • Efficiency/Energy Resources • Geology/Paleontology/Minerals • Hazards/Hazardous Materials/Hazardous Waste/Wildfire • Land Use/Agriculture • Noise and Vibration • Public Health • Socioeconomics • Solid Waste • Transmission Line Safety and Nuisance • Transportation • Visual Resources • Water Resources • Alternatives Analysis
Mandatory Opt-In Requirements	• Workforce Requirements • Community Benefits Agreement
Other Key Topics	• Environmental Justice • Compliance Conditions • Compliance Monitoring

Preliminary review of the application and other filed information indicates the following probable environmental effects:

Air Quality

The project site is within the Mojave Desert Air Basin, under the jurisdiction of the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD). The project area is currently designated as a non-attainment area with respect to National Ambient Air Quality Standards and California Air Quality Standards for ozone and particulate matter of 10 micrometers and smaller in diameter (PM10).

Construction of the project is estimated to require 20 months to be completed. Construction and operational emissions are not anticipated to exceed the significance thresholds set by the AVAQMD. CEC staff will evaluate the

significance of the ambient air quality impacts of the project based on an air quality impacts assessment and identify mitigation measures as necessary.

The EIR will evaluate whether the project would result in potentially significant air quality impacts including compliance with the applicable air quality plan; result in cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under any ambient air quality standards; expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations from criteria pollutants; and/or result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.

Biological Resources

CEC staff anticipates that project construction and operation could have a potentially significant impact on biological resources. Specifically, impacts could affect ephemeral drainages and swales and various special-status plant and wildlife species and their habitats, including Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), a candidate for listing under the California Endangered Species Act, as well as the state fully protected golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). Increased levels of human presence, noise, and fugitive dust could also adversely affect nesting birds along with other sensitive wildlife individuals, burrows, and dens if present within or adjacent to construction work areas. Operational impacts from increased noise and human presence and the installation of lighting could adversely affect wildlife use and movement through the area.

The applicant has proposed various mitigation measures to reduce the severity of any such impacts, including, but not limited to, conducting preconstruction surveys for special-status plants and wildlife, requiring worker environmental awareness training to all project staffing, conducting biological monitoring, implementing construction site best management practices, preserving onsite habitat, and providing compensatory habitat mitigation. Staff will evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of these measures and anticipates drafting additional measures based upon independent research and coordination with the Los

Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources

The cultural resources inventory report prepared by the applicant did not identify any cultural resources that meet the CEQA criteria for historical resources or unique archaeological resources.

Even though the inventory report did not identify any archaeological resources, there is still a possibility that the project will impact buried cultural resources. The inventory suggests there is a moderate potential to encounter buried archaeological deposits and human remains in the project site.

Ground disturbance proposed as part of the project could encounter and damage buried resources that meet CEQA's criteria for historical resources or unique archaeological resources, likely resulting in a significant impact under CEQA. CEC staff will assess this potential in the EIR and propose necessary mitigation, if needed.

For tribal cultural resources, CEQA requires the lead agency to consult with tribes to identify such resources and assess potential impacts. The CEC sent invitation letters offering to consult with all tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area. Impacts on tribal cultural resources have not been determined at this time.

Geology, Paleontology, and Minerals

The project is in the Transverse Ranges geomorphic province of California, in the western San Gabriel Mountains. The applicant conducted a preliminary site-specific geotechnical investigation and a site-specific paleontological investigation. Geologic units mapped at the surface within two miles of the project include Mesozoic granitic rocks, Precambrian granitic rocks, Tertiary volcanic flow, and Holocene/Pleistocene alluvial deposits.

The project is not in an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone of Required Investigation for surface fault rupture, liquefaction, nor landslides. The project is not within a designated Mineral Resource Zone or near mines or gravel pits. The geotechnical evaluation did not identify any active faults at the project site. None of the test borings exhibited groundwater seepage and the closest groundwater well indicated that groundwater was deeper than 100 feet below ground surface.

The closest Holocene active fault, the San Andreas, is approximately 4 miles northeast of the project site. The closest Pre-Holocene faults are within one mile from the project site. Earthquakes on nearby faults, which may subject the project to strong seismic shaking and related geologic hazards, will be evaluated in the EIR.

At the project site, strong seismic shaking is a potentially significant geologic hazard that requires mitigation through project design. The geotechnical investigation proposed design, grading, and construction actions to mitigate potential impacts. Staff will evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of these measures and identify additional measures as warranted.

During grading and construction, activities that disturb native soil, sediments, and rock may encounter paleontological resources. Ground disturbing activities include grading, trenching for utilities, excavation for foundations, and installation of support structures. Ground disturbing activities are expected to encounter Quaternary sedimentary deposits.

The applicant's paleontological investigation determined that Late Pleistocene dissected surficial sediments have a high paleontological sensitivity. The paleontological investigation proposed planning, training, and monitoring actions to mitigate potentially significant impacts on unique paleontological resources and CEC staff will evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of these measures and identify additional measures as warranted.

Hazards, Hazardous Materials, Hazardous Waste, and Wildfire

The project would use hazardous materials during construction typical for construction projects and small quantities of hazardous materials during project operations that could pose a risk to workers and the public. The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) compile and update lists of hazardous material sites pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5. The project site is not included as the location of any hazardous material sites on the Cortese list databases maintained by the DTSC's EnviroStor or the SWRCB's Geotracker.

The project site is in unincorporated Los Angeles County and would be subject to wildland fires. The project is located within a State Responsibility Area (SRA) and is designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). Construction and

operation of the proposed BESS facility could increase the risk of wildfire. Staff will assess the potential impacts related to wildfire risk and, if necessary, propose mitigation measures to reduce the risk, such as engineering and administrative controls, enhanced emergency response, and vegetation management.

Land Use and Agriculture

The project site would encompass seven parcels that are currently zoned by the County of Los Angeles as Light Agriculture (A-1-2) and Heavy Agriculture (A-2-2). The project site does not contain Important Farmland as designated by the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. Staff will evaluate compatibility of the proposed project with the surrounding land uses. Staff will also evaluate whether the proposed project would cause a significant environmental impact due to any conflicts with a land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

Noise and Vibration

The noise levels associated with temporary project construction activities could result in potentially significant impacts. Potential impacts could include excessive noise at the project's noise sensitive receptors, including residences located as close as approximately 50 feet from project boundary, during specific construction activities. No significant noise and vibration impacts associated with project operation are anticipated. The CEC staff will evaluate potential noise and vibration impacts and, if necessary, identify mitigation measures to reduce impacts.

Public Health

The project would be located in the Mojave Desert Air Basin, under the jurisdiction of the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District.

Construction of the proposed project is estimated to require 20 months to complete. Construction activities could result in emissions of toxic air contaminants (TACs), primarily from diesel equipment, and may disturb soil containing Coccidioides spores, potentially exposing workers and the public to Valley fever. Staff will evaluate these potential impacts through a health risk

assessment and assess the effectiveness of proposed dust control and diesel emissions reduction measures.

The project proposes three emergency backup diesel generators to support emergency safety systems during a power outage and fire support. Similar to construction, TACs emitted from the stacks of the emergency backup diesel generators during readiness testing and maintenance purposes would result in diesel emissions during project operation. The significance of the operational effects of this project will be determined based on the conclusions of a health risk assessment for the emergency diesel generators.

Potential fire or thermal runaway event in the BESS could release TACs. CEC staff has not completed its analysis of the significance of the project's potential construction or operational impacts and is yet to reach a definitive conclusion. The EIR will discuss whether the project would expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations of toxic air contaminants during construction, routine operation, and during a potential BESS fire or thermal runaway event and propose mitigation measures when necessary to reduce any health risks.

Transportation

Transportation impacts associated with the proposed project will be evaluated but is not anticipated to have a significant effect on the environment, once mitigation is incorporated. Project operations would generate a minimal amount of traffic, approximately 32 daily trips (16 each way), which represents a nominal increase to the surrounding roadway network and would not adversely affect roadway performance, transit, bicycle, pedestrian facilities, or emergency access. Operational vehicle miles traveled (VMT) would be negligible and would not conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3.

Project construction would result in a temporary increase in traffic from workers and haul/vendor trucks over a 26-month period. Peak construction activity would generate substantial daily truck trips and worker commutes. However, off-ramp queues would not spill back onto the freeway mainline, emergency access would be maintained, and construction-related VMT would remain below Los Angeles County's significance threshold when normalized over the project life. Transportation impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels with implementation of Conditions of Certification/Mitigation Measures that include a Construction Management Plan, construction traffic control measures, hazardous

materials transport compliance, and provision of an additional secondary access to avoid creating a cul-de-sac that exceeds the maximum standard.

Visual Resources

The proposed project site lies in Soledad Canyon, a long, narrow canyon-valley between the Sierra Pelona and San Gabriel Mountains in northeastern Los Angeles County. The canyon forms part of the Santa Clara River Valley and extends from the top of Soledad Pass to the open plain of the valley in Santa Clarita. The project site is located in the eastern portion of Soledad Canyon near an elongated depression known as Kentucky Springs Canyon.

The unincorporated community of Acton is identified as a "Rural Town Area" in the Antelope Valley Area Plan of the Los Angeles County General Plan. The Town and Country Scenic Drives Map in the Antelope Valley Area Plan of the Los Angeles County General Plan designates SR 14, which passes through the Acton Rural Town Area, as a "priority scenic drive." In addition, the Antelope Valley Area Plan's Significant Ecological Areas and Coastal Resource Areas Policy Map designates the Santa Clara River as a Significant Ecological Area.

The EIR will evaluate whether the project would have a significant impact on a scenic vista or damage scenic resources. Because the community of Acton meets the CEQA statutory definition of a non-urbanized area (Pub. Resources Code, § 21071[a]), the EIR will also evaluate whether the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. The analysis will consider the project's components—including shapes, sizes, exterior surfaces (e.g., colors, textures, finishes), and massing—within the context of the existing physical environment.

Project-related night lighting, glare, and reflectance could significantly affect daytime and nighttime views within the existing physical environment.

If significant visual impacts are identified, the EIR will recommend all feasible mitigation measures to reduce those impacts.

Water Resources

Project construction would disturb approximately 70.8 acres of land and be subject to construction-related stormwater permit requirements of California's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance

Activities (Construction General Permit) administered by the State Water Resources Control Board. During project operations, stormwater runoff within the project facility would be controlled using a series of protected catch basins and storm drain pipelines to collect and store stormwater into an underground chamber system at the southwest end of both project segments. Stormwater stored in the underground chamber system would infiltrate into the subgrade below.

Water for the project construction would be purchased by a local water purveyor and transported to the site. Construction water demand for dust suppression, soil compaction and grading is estimated at 27.5 acre-feet (AF) over a 20-month period. Water for project operation would be supplied by on-site groundwater well(s) to support O&M building activities and landscaping. Operational water demand is estimated at 1.5 AF per year.

During construction, sanitary facilities consisting of portable toilets would be supplied and maintained by a third-party vendor. During project operation, sanitary wastewater from the O&M building would be addressed by an onsite septic system.

CEC staff will evaluate project impacts to water supply and water quality, including applicant-proposed mitigation measures. If CEC staff determines that the proposed mitigation measures are not adequate, staff will recommend additional mitigation to ensure impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Worker Safety and Fire Protection

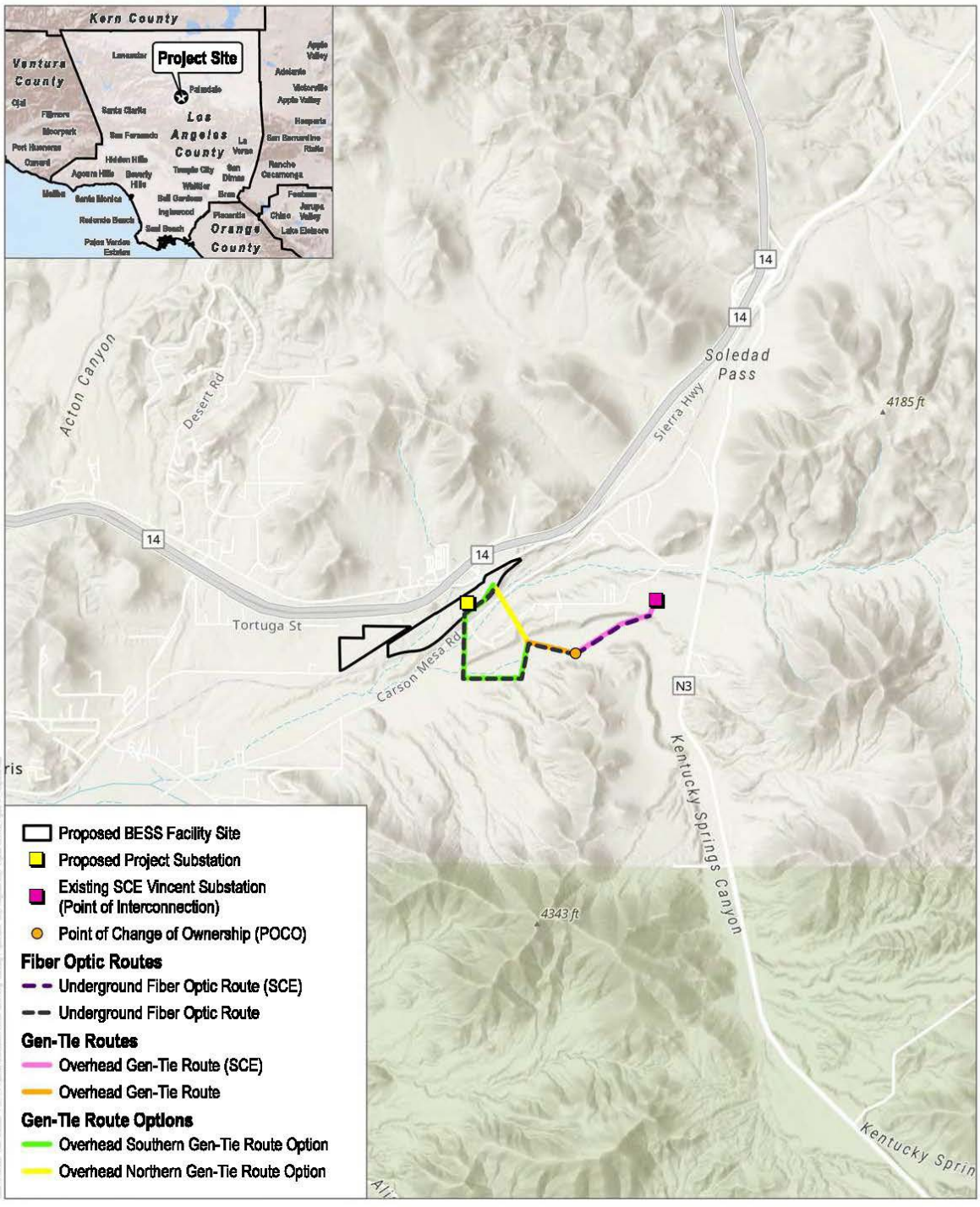
Industrial environments pose inherent safety and health risks to workers during construction and operations, such as fire risk. Worker safety and fire protection are regulated through laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards, at the federal, state, and local levels. Workers at an energy facility under construction, during commissioning, and during operations operate equipment and handle hazardous materials and may face hazards that could result in accidents or serious injury.

Protective measures are employed to eliminate or reduce these hazards or to minimize the risk through special training, protective equipment, and procedural controls. The project would use standard hazardous materials during construction, and small quantities of hazardous materials during project operations that could pose a risk to workers. Operation of the proposed BESS

facility could pose a risk of fire if a thermal runaway in a battery cell, module, or unit occurred. CEC staff will assess this potential risk, discuss additional mitigation measures with the Los Angeles County Fire Department and the applicant, and identify engineering and administrative controls, as well as enhanced emergency response, to reduce this risk.

Public Scoping Meeting

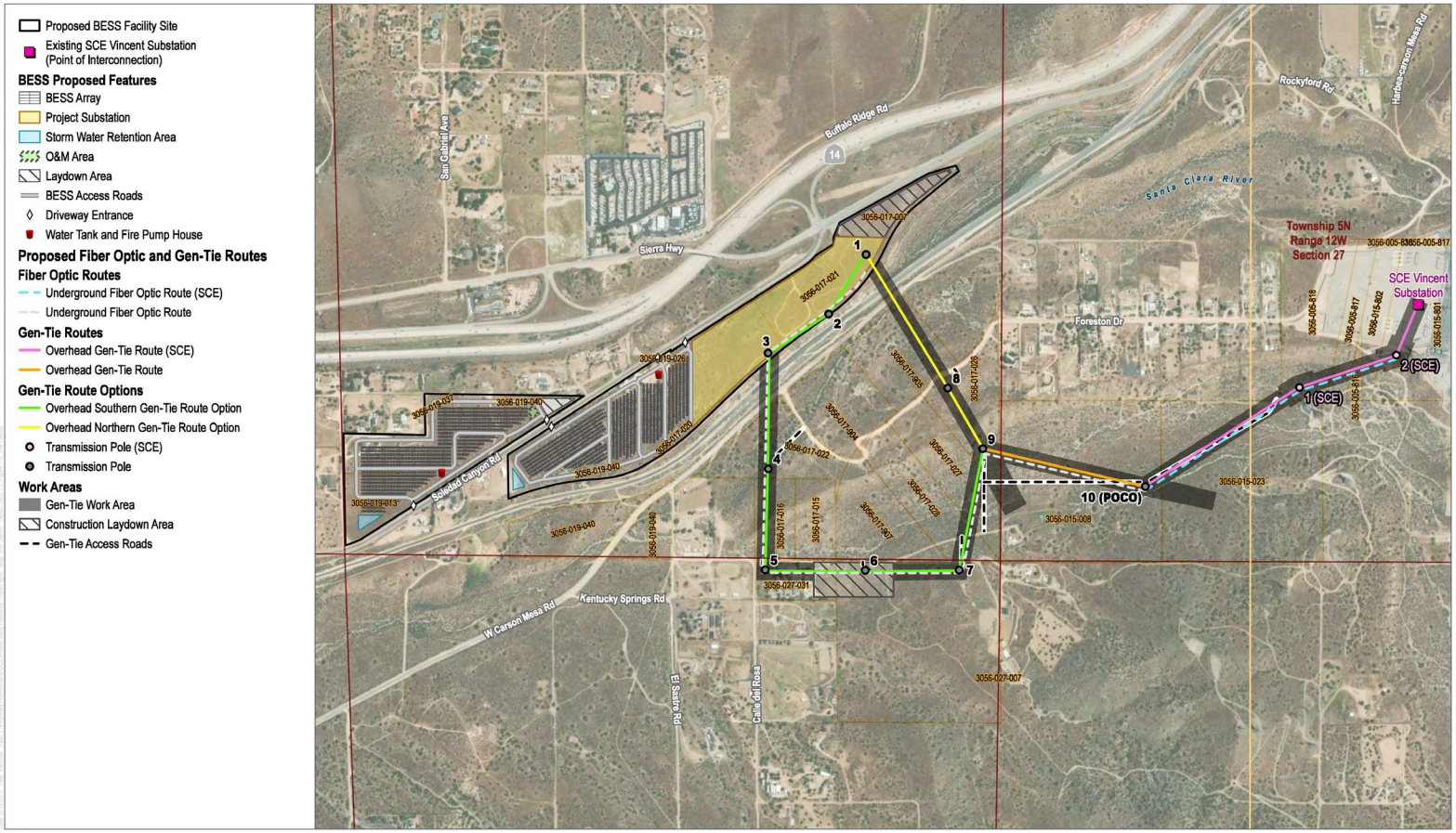
The Opt-In Certification process requires a public informational and scoping meeting to be held as near to the project site as practicable, and within 30 days of CEC's determination of a complete application on January 30, 2026. The CEC expects this event will occur in February 2026 pending confirmation of the venue and the availability of key participants. The informational/scoping meeting will be noticed via the project docket (weblink provided above) at least 10 days prior to its occurrence and will contain information specific to the public meeting and how to participate.



SOURCE: World Topographic

DUDEK 0 1,500 3,000 Feet

FIGURE 1-1
Regional Map
Prairie Song Reliability Project



SOURCE: World Imagery

DUDEK 0 360 720 Feet

FIGURE 1-3
Site Layout
Prairie Song Reliability Project