

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
 P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk
 County of: Kern
 1115 Truxtun Avenue, First Floor
 Bakersfield, CA 93301-4639

From: (Public Agency): Arvin-Edison Water Storage District
20401 East Bear Mountain Blvd.
Arvin, California, 93203

(Address)

RECEIVED
KERN COUNTY

NOV 14 2025

AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
 AUDITOR CONTROLLER-COUNTY CLERK
 BY [Signature] DEPUTY

Project Title: Sycamore Spreading Works Solar Project

Project Applicant: Whiterock PV, LLC

Project Location - Specific:

55 acres of a 160-acre parcel (APN 503-042-11) in unincorporated Kern County

Project Location - City: Unincorporated Kern County Project Location - County: Kern

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Construction and operation of an approximately 7-mega-watt behind-the-meter solar photovoltaic generation facility on an approximately 55-acre site to provide an alternative energy source for the Arvin-Edison Water Storage Districts water spreading facility. See Attachment A for additional information about the Project.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Arvin-Edison Water Storage District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Whiterock PV, LLC

Exempt Status: (check one):

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: _____
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: 15268

Reasons why project is exempt:

CEQA Guidelines Section 15268 state that ministerial projects are statutorily exempt from CEQA. This Project qualifies as a "by-right" use consistent with the Exclusive Agriculture zone district as described in the Kern County Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, the Project requires only a ministerial building permit. See Attachment A for additional information and reasoning.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Jeevan Muhar Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (661) 854-5573

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: [Signature] Date: 11-7-25 Title: Engineer-Manager

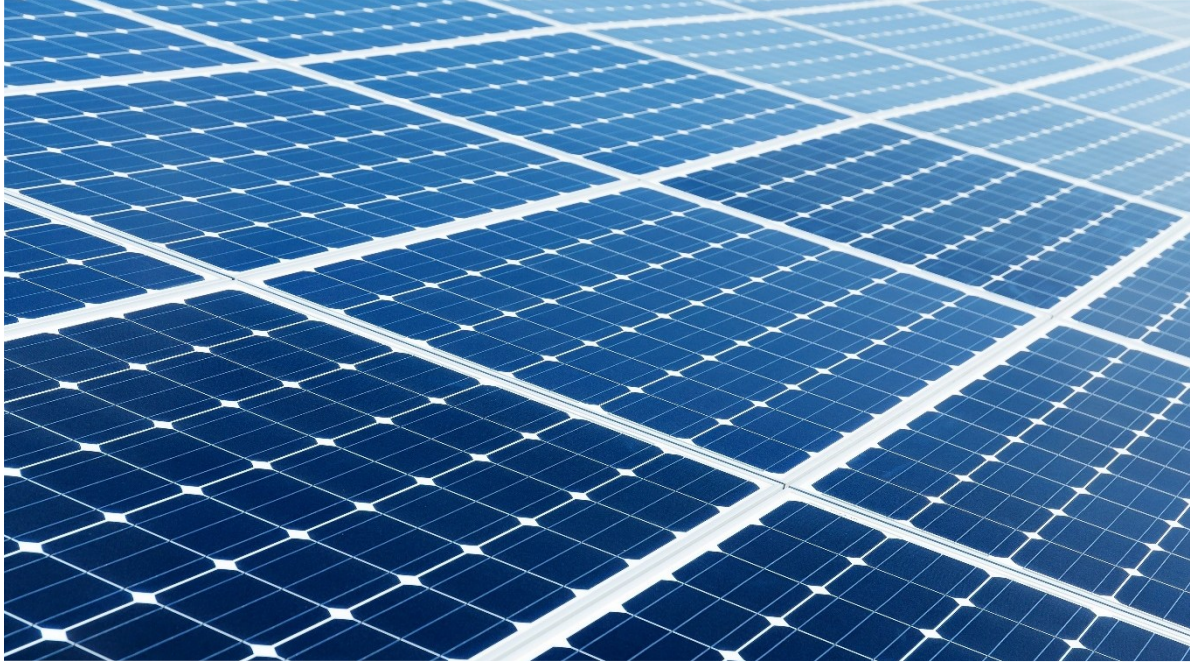
Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
 Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Attachment A

Statutory Exemption Report



Sycamore Spreading Works Solar Project

Statutory Exemption Report

prepared for

White Pine Renewables

7621 North Del Mar Avenue, Suite 102

Fresno, California 93711

Contact: Garrett Hollingsworth

prepared by

Rincon Consultants, Inc.

7080 North Whitney Avenue, Suite 101

Fresno, California 93720

September 2025

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1 Introduction

This report serves as the documentation of analysis performed by Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) on behalf of Whiterock PV, LLC (“Applicant”) for the Sycamore Spreading Works Solar Project (Project). The Project involves construction and operation of an approximately 7 megawatt (MW) behind-the-meter solar photovoltaic (PV) energy generation facility located on Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 503-042-11. The Project would be located on approximately 55 acres of an approximately 160-acre parcel of previously disturbed land in unincorporated Kern County, California, and would serve an Arvin-Edison Water Storage District (AEWSD) facility. Power lines would extend from the Project site northeast toward an existing pump station and electrical meter; these lines are located on two additional parcels, APN 503-042-20 and 503-042-24. The Project is located on previously disturbed land in unincorporated Kern County, California, and would serve the existing AEWSD water spreading facility.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15268 state that a Statutory Exemption can be made for ministerial projects. According to Section *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15369, “Ministerial” describes a governmental decision involving little or no personal judgment by the public official as to the wisdom or manner of carrying out the project. The public official merely applies the law to the facts as presented but uses no special discretion or judgment in reaching a decision. A ministerial decision involves only the use of fixed standards or objective measurements, and the public official cannot use personal, subjective judgment in deciding whether or how the project should be carried out. The determination of what is “ministerial” can most appropriately be made by the particular public agency involved based upon its analysis of its own laws, and each public agency should make such determination either as a part of its implementing regulations or on a case-by-case basis which projects are considered exempt from CEQA.

The intent of the analysis is to document whether the Project meets the requirements as a Statutory Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) with the Arvin-Edison Water Storage District as the CEQA Lead Agency. This report provides an introduction, project description, and evaluation of the Project’s consistency with the requirements for a Statutory Exemption. The report concludes that the Project is eligible for a Statutory Exemption.

2 Project Description

2.1 Project Title

Sycamore Spreading Works Solar Project

2.2 Project Location and Setting

The Project site is approximately 55 acres of a larger 160-acre parcel (APN 503-042-11) in unincorporated Kern County, California. The Project site does not have an address but is located at the northeast corner of Rockpile Road and Sunset Boulevard.

The Project site is located approximately 1.6 miles east of the City of Arvin in Kern County and is an area characterized by agricultural land, undeveloped land, and water utility infrastructure. The Project site is generally flat and bounded by agricultural lands to the north and west, water spreading basins to the south and a canal to the east. The Project site is accessed via Rockpile Road and Sunset Boulevard.

Figure 1 shows the regional location of the Project site and Figure 2 shows the Project site boundary and the immediate surroundings. Figure 3 shows the site plan for the Project.

2.3 General Plan and Zoning Designations

The Project site has a Kern County General Plan land use designation of Intensive Agriculture with a minimum 20-acre parcel size (8.1/2.5) in the Kern County General Plan.

The site is zoned as Exclusive Agriculture (A). Kern County provides the permitted uses in this zone in Chapter 19.12 of the Kern County Zoning Ordinance.

2.4 Project Characteristics

The Applicant has entered into a Solar Power Services Agreement (SPSA) with AEWS for construction, operation, and maintenance of the solar facility and associated infrastructure to provide power for the AEWS water facility pumps and infrastructure. The Project would generate approximately 7 MW of PV energy to provide an alternative energy source for AEWS use. The power generated would be used to operate existing AEWS pumps and water infrastructure and would not exceed the total power demand of AEWS facilities.

Figure 1 Regional Location



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25.18122 EPS
Fig 1 Regional Location

★ Project Location

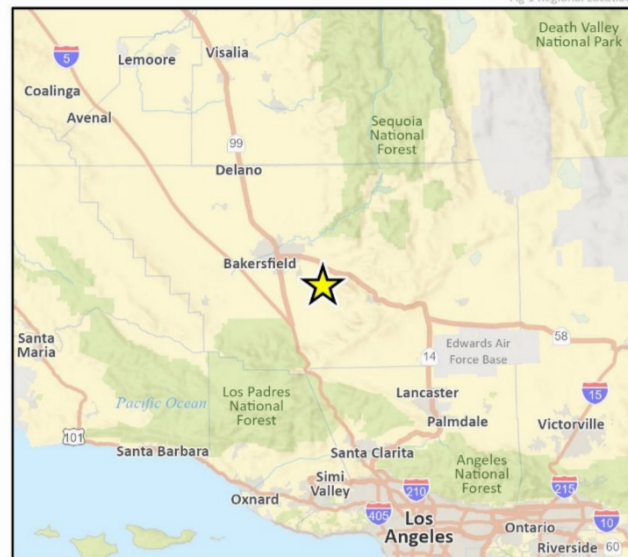


Figure 2 Project Site Location

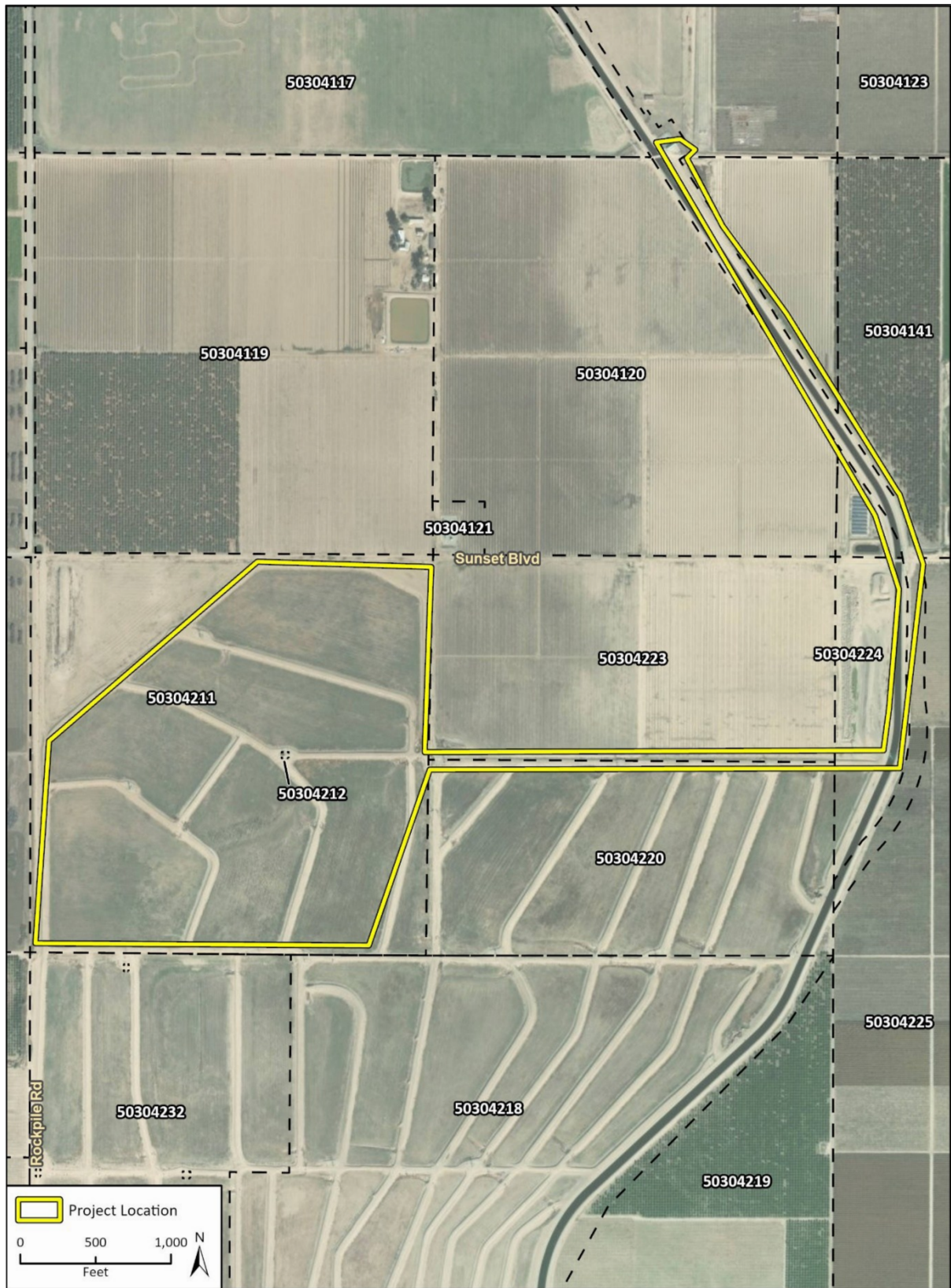
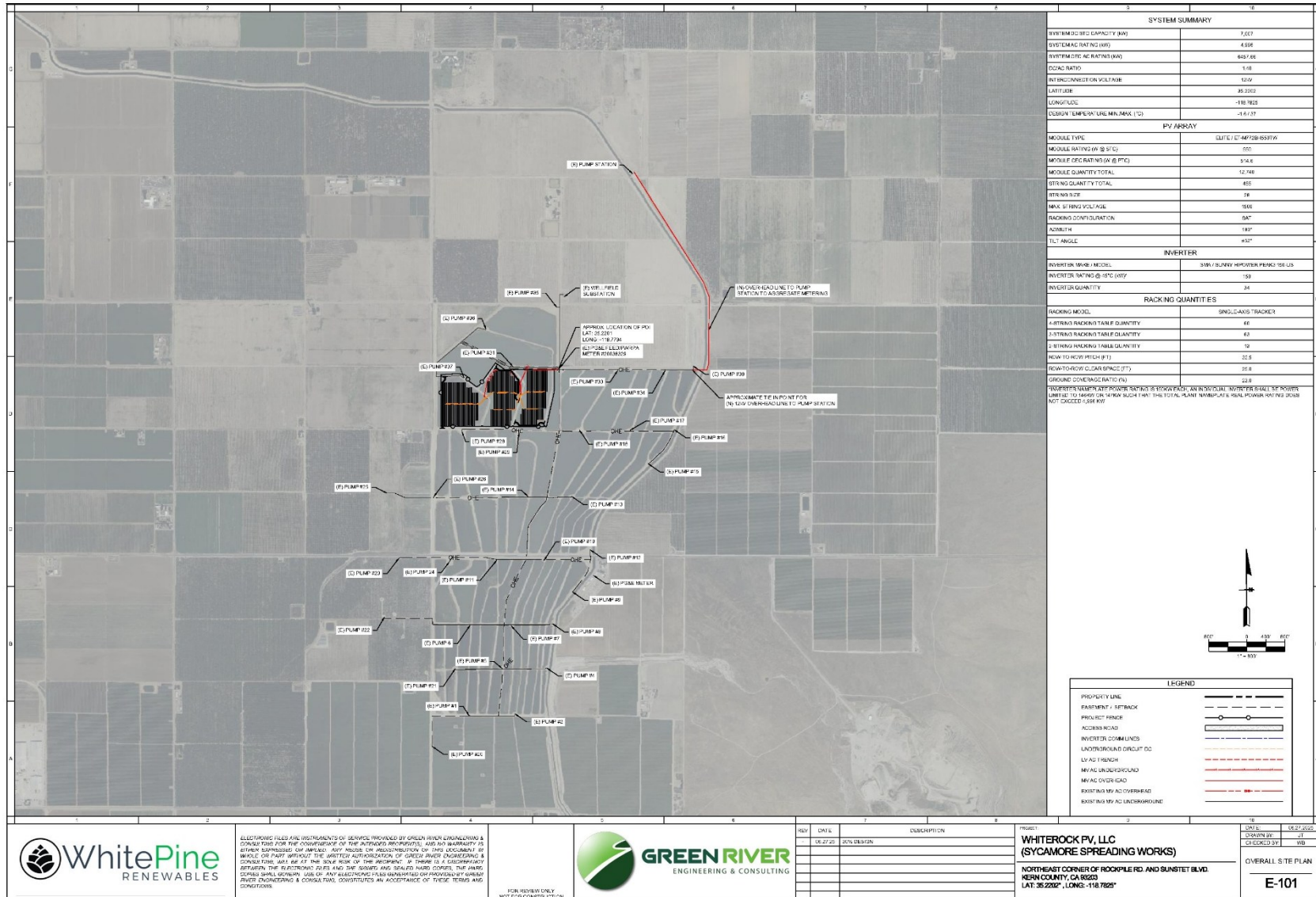


Figure 3 Project Site Plan



ELECTRICAL FIELD AND INSTRUMENTS OF SERVICE PROVIDED BY GREEN RIVER ENGINEERING & CONSULTING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE INTERIOR MOUNTED PV. THE LIABILITY IS STAFF RESPONSIBILITY AND NOT THE LIABILITY OF GREEN RIVER ENGINEERING & CONSULTING. THE ELECTRICIAN SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CORRECT INSTALLATION OF THE SYSTEM. THE OWNER SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CORRECT INSTALLATION OF THE SYSTEM. THE OWNER SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CORRECT INSTALLATION OF THE SYSTEM. THE OWNER SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CORRECT INSTALLATION OF THE SYSTEM.



REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1	05-27-25	REV DESIGN

PROJECT: **WHITEROCK PV, LLC (SYCAMORE SPREADING WORKS)**
 NORTHWEST CORNER OF ROCKPOND RD AND SUNSET BLVD.
 KERN COUNTY, CA 93223
 LAT: 35.2202°, LONG: -118.7825°

DATE	BY	DATE
06-27-2020	JT	
06-27-2020		
06-27-2020		

OVERALL SITE PLAN
E-101

Sycamore Spreading Works Solar Project

The Project will include the following components:

- Construction of a 7 MW solar photovoltaic (PV) system consisting of modules on a single-axis tracking system.
- Installation of approximately 12,740 PV panels mounted on a single-axis tracking system to optimize sunlight capture.
- Installation of a new underground medium voltage (MV) utility line, and interconnection to an existing PG&E meter just east of the project site.
- A new 12kV overhead utility line starting at existing pump #38 east of the Project site and continuing north along the existing canal to connect to the pump station northeast of the Project site.
- Construction of a new fence surrounding the facility and an access road constructed around the perimeter of solar arrays with site access from Rockpile Road and Sunset Boulevard.

No additional structures, such as operations buildings or restrooms, are proposed.

Construction Activities

Project construction is expected to last for approximately 12 months. Construction activities are anticipated to occur five days a week (Monday through Friday) from approximately 6:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Construction of the Project would begin with initial clearing and grubbing of the site. Staging and construction worker parking would be provided on site. The panels would be mounted on pile-driven posts installed at a depth of between 5 and 10 feet. Grading is anticipated to be balanced on site with no import or export of earth material.

During construction, water would be used for civil activities and dust control. Water use is anticipated to be brought on-site from AEWSD sources by a 2,000-gallon truck filled three times per day, or approximately 6,000 gallons per day, five days per week. Portable restrooms would also be brought to the site during construction for worker use.

Operations and Maintenance

Once operational, the facility will run autonomously without on-site staff. Production and system health data, as well as onsite weather data, would be monitored remotely. The District currently manages vegetation in the basins by keeping the ground denuded; White Pine Renewables or the District will continue to manage the vegetation in the same manner that is currently managed. Further, management will ensure that vegetation is maintained adequately to prevent negative impacts to adjacent properties from spreading wildfire and to ensure no interference with on-site solar production.

No onsite restroom facilities are included because the Project does not include any permanent onsite employees. Additionally, no water service is proposed to the Project site, and no lighting is required.

3 Statutory Exemption Applicability

Article 18 of the *CEQA Guidelines* describes the exemption from CEQA granted by the California Legislature, which are referred to as Statutory Exemptions. Pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15268, this includes ministerial projects. The determination of what is ministerial “can most appropriately be made by the particular public agency involved based upon its analysis of its own laws.” In the absence of any discretionary provision contained in the local ordinance or other law establishing the requirements for the permit, license, or other entitlement for use, the issuance of building permits and business licenses as well as the approval of final subdivision maps and individual utility service connections and disconnections are presumed to be ministerial (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15268[b]).

The Project is located on a parcel with a General Plan land use designation of Intensive Agriculture (Map Code 8.1). The Kern County General Plan Land Use Element identifies appropriate uses for land designated Intensive Agriculture. These include, but are not limited to, irrigated cropland; orchards; vineyards; horse ranches; raising of nursery stock ornamental flowers and Christmas trees; fish farms; bee keeping; ranch and farm facilities and related uses; one single-family dwelling unit; cattle feed yards; dairies; dry land farming; livestock grazing; water storage; groundwater recharge acres; mineral, aggregate, and petroleum exploration and extraction; hunting clubs; wildlife preserves; farm labor housing; public utility uses; and agricultural industries pursuant to provisions of the Kern County Zoning Ordinance. As a solar facility, the project is substantially similar to “public utility uses” and therefore falls within the appropriate uses for land designated Intensive Agriculture.

Further, Section 19.12.020 the Kern County Zoning Ordinance lists permitted uses in the Exclusive Agriculture zoning district. As discussed in Section 19.12.020(E), “solar energy electrical generators which are accessory to a permitted or conditionally permitted use and where the power generated does not exceed the total on-site power demand” are a permitted use. “Permitted use” means any use allowed by right in a zoning district and subject to the restrictions applicable to that zoning district (Kern County Zoning Ordinance Section 19.04.555). The term “by-right” use refers to a property owner's use of property and structures in manners consistent with that which is listed as permissible in the zoning district in which his or her property is located. The Project, as described in Section 2, will generate approximately 7 MW of energy, which will only offset a portion of energy usage for AEWSD pump facilities, and the power generated would not exceed the total on-site power demand. Therefore, this project qualifies as a “by-right” permitted use in the Exclusive Agriculture zone.

According to the Kern County Zoning Ordinance Section 19.06.020, “Where there is a question as to the meaning or the intent of any requirement of this title, including interpretations of conditions of approval required in conjunction with the approval of any ministerial or discretionary permit authorized therein, the Planning Director shall provide any necessary interpretation, and the decision of the Planning Director shall be final.” Therefore, the authority to determine whether a Statutory Exemption is appropriate is vested solely with the Kern County Planning Director.

4 Summary

Based on the analysis presented herein, the Project meets all criteria to be Statutorily Exempt from CEQA pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15268. The Kern County Zoning Ordinance Section 19.12 allows this facility as a by-right use as it would not exceed the total power demand (i.e., no net export of electricity), thereby making this project a ministerial project per County regulations and therefore statutorily exempt. Therefore, it is concluded pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15268 that the Project is ministerial and thus exempt from further CEQA analysis.