



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MERCED
5200 N. LAKE ROAD | MERCED, CA 95343
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NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT AN INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Pursuant to the State of California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21092, this is to advise you that the University of California, Merced has prepared a Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the following project:

Project Title: Solar Infrastructure and Battery Energy Storage System Project

Applicant & Lead Agency: University of California (UC Merced)

Project Location: UC Merced Campus, 5200 North Lake Road, Merced, California 95343. The project site is located immediately south of Cottonwood Loop.

Project Description: The project would include the demolition of an existing 1-megawatt (MW) ground-mounted solar array facility, and the construction of an up to 6-MW solar facility consisting of a dual-axis tracking system and a new battery energy storage system (BESS) with a minimum storage capacity of 3 megawatt-hour (MWh). The project would interconnect to the UC Merced campus' existing distribution system and power grid via the existing gen-tie line. The project would be served by existing water distribution infrastructure and would include upgrades to the existing fire water storage tank and/or the construction of a new water storage tank on-site to meet water storage requirements for the proposed project. Access to the project site would be provided by the existing ingress/egress access road off of Cottonwood Loop, which would be improved in accordance with the local fire ordinances to a minimum width of 22 feet. The BESS and electrical components would be fenced with six-foot-tall chain-link fencing, which may include barbed wire to facilitate cattle grazing on-site. A locked gate would be located at the project site entrance off of Cottonwood Loop to control ingress/egress.

Environmental Determination: Based on the findings of the Draft IS/MND, UC Merced has determined that, with mitigation, the proposed project would not result in significant environmental impacts. Mitigation measures for aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, public services, and wildfire will be required to reduce potentially significant impacts to a less-than-significant level. Accordingly, UC Merced intends to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration.

Hazardous Waste/Substance: The project site is not included on the list of hazardous materials facilities, hazardous waste properties, or hazardous waste disposal sites enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code (Cortese List).

Availability of Environmental Documentation: Hard copies of the Draft IS/MND are available for review at:



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UC Merced Downtown Center, 655 W. 18th Street, Merced, CA 95340

The Draft IS/MND is also available for viewing or downloading on UC Merced's Physical & Environmental Planning website at: <https://planning.ucmerced.edu/ceqa-environmental-documents>.

Public Review Period: A 30-day public review period for the Draft IS/MND begins June 15, 2026 through July 15, 2026.

Written comments on the Draft IS/MND should be submitted via regular mail or by email at the addresses below no later than 5:00 PM on July 15, 2026.

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