

County of Madera
California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
Initial Study

- 1. Project title:** CUP #2026-001 – RPCA Solar 28, LLC.
- 2. Lead agency name and address:** County of Madera
Community and Economic Development
Department
200 West 4th Street, Suite 3100
Madera, California 93637
- 3. Contact person and phone number:** Brian Guerrero, Planner
559-675-7821
Brian.guerrero@maderacounty.com
- 4. Project Location & APN:** The project is located on east side of Chowchilla Boulevard, approximately 1,200 feet south of Road 15 in the Chowchilla area. APN# 026-120-011
- 5. Project sponsor's name and address:** RPCA Solar 28, LLC
44 Montgomery St., Ste. 3150
San Francisco, CA 94104
- 6. General Plan Designation:** Agriculture Exclusive (AE)/Agriculture (A)
- 7. Zoning:** AR-5 (Agricultural, Rural, Five Acre) District
- 8. Description of project:**

The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit for the construction and operation of a 4.95 MW photovoltaic solar energy generating facility on approximately 36 acres of an approximately 130-acre parcel. The project site, identified as Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 026-120-011, is located on the east side of Chowchilla Boulevard, approximately 500' south of Road 15 in the Chowchilla area. The site also borders the southbound lanes of Highway 99 to the west. The facility will be interconnected to existing PG&E electric distribution lines that run parallel to Chowchilla Boulevard.
- 9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:**

Agricultural, Chowchilla City Limits.
- 10. Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required:**

None

11. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

No consultation received for the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| ☐ Aesthetics | ☐ Agricultural/Forestry Resources | ☐ Air Quality |
| ☐ Biological Resources | ☐ Cultural Resources | ☐ Energy |
| ☐ Geology/Soils | ☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions | ☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials |
| ☐ Hydrology/Water Quality | ☐ Land Use/Planning | ☐ Mineral Resources |
| ☐ Noise | ☐ Population/Housing | ☐ Public Services |
| ☐ Recreation | ☐ Transportation | ☐ Tribal Cultural Resources |
| ☐ Utilities/Service Systems | ☐ Wildfire | ☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance |

DETERMINATION (to be completed by Lead Agency)	
On the basis of this initial evaluation:	
☐	I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
☒	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
☐	I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
☐	I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
☐	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signed: _____ Date: July 31, 2025

	Less Than Significant			
	With		Less Than	No
Potentially	Mitigation		Significant	Impact
Significant	Incorporation		Impact	
Impact				

I. AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

☐☐☒☐

Responses:

(a - c) No Impact. There are no scenic vistas in the vicinity of this project site. There are no scenic resources on this property that will be damaged as a result of this project. Limited grading will take place on-site.

(d) Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would involve installation of solar panels. The panels will be mounted atop single-axis tracker rows which efficiently track the sun throughout the day, which significantly reduces potential for light to reflect. Reflected light can cause a glint (a quick reflection) and glare (reflections that last for longer durations), which can create hazards for pilots, air-traffic control personnel, motorists, and other potential receptors,

The project could increase the potential for light and glare in the vicinity of the project site during the day. However, it would only impact motorists driving along southbound Highway 99 temporarily, and only during certain times of the day. The County does not have policies regarding glare, however, County Code requires all new exterior lighting to be hooded or shielded to minimize glare and light spillage. Therefore, project impacts regarding light or glare would result in impacts that are less than significant.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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II. AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

In determining whether agricultural impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

Would the project:

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Responses:

(a) Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is designated as a mixture of Prime and Farmland of Statewide Importance. Although the proposed project will construct a solar facility on 36 acres of the site, the project expected life is approximately 35 to 40 years following initial operations. A decommissioning plan will be incorporated to ensure that the disturbed acreage will be returned to agriculture after the project's horizon and would therefore not permanently convert the disturbed acreage. Therefore, the project will have a less than significant impact.

(b) No Impact. The project site as zoned is AR-5 (Agricultural, Rural Five Acre) District and is a permitted use with the approval of a conditional use permit. The site is not currently under Williamson Act contract and will therefore have no impact.

(c-d) No Impact. The project site is not classified as forest land and will not result in the conversion or loss of forest land.

General Information

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965 -- commonly referred to as the Williamson Act -- enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments which are much lower than normal because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value.

The Department of Conservation oversees the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts on California's agricultural resources. Agricultural land is rated according to soil quality and irrigation status; the best quality land is called Prime Farmland. The maps are updated every two years with the use of a computer mapping system, aerial imagery, public review, and field reconnaissance. The program's definition of land is below:

PRIME FARMLAND (P): Farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE (S): Farmland similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

UNIQUE FARMLAND (U): Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated but may include no irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

FARMLAND OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE (L): Land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory

committee.

GRAZING LAND (G): Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. This category was developed in cooperation with the California Cattlemen's Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, and other groups interested in the extent of grazing activities. The minimum mapping unit for Grazing Land is 40 acres.

URBAN AND BUILT-UP LAND (D): Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least 1 unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately 6 structures to a 10-acre parcel. This land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, institutional, public administrative purposes, railroad and other transportation yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water control structures, and other developed purposes.

OTHER LAND (X): Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than 40 acres. Vacant and non-agricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.

VACANT OR DISTURBED LAND (V): Open field areas that do not qualify as an agricultural category, mineral and oil extraction area, off road vehicle areas, electrical substations, channelized canals, and rural freeway interchanges.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
III. AIR QUALITY				
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with, or obstruct implementation of, the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Responses:

(a) Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporation. The project would generate temporary emissions from the use of construction vehicles and equipment. Project construction activities are required to be conducted in compliance with application San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) rules and regulations. SJVAPCD Regulation VIII Control Measures for Construction of Emissions of PM10 provides mitigation measures to reduce emissions of fugitive dust. Project construction and operations are required to be conducted in compliance with SJVAPCD rules and regulations; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

(b-d) Less Than Significant Impact No significant impacts have been identified as a result of this project. The proposed project will not obstruct implementation of any air quality plans. Any pollutants created by this proposed structure shall be less than what the surrounding rural agricultural structures emit upon project completion, as no agricultural practices would occur on this portion of the site.

Sensitive receptors are facilities that “house or attract children, the elderly, people with illnesses, or others who are especially sensitive to the effects of air pollution. Hospitals, schools, convalescent facilities and residential areas are examples of sensitive receptors.” (GAMAQI, 2002).

There are no sensitive receptors effected by the proposed project. This use is consistent with the surrounding region.

Mitigation Measures

AIR-1 Best Management Practices for Valley Fever Protection – The applicant shall incorporate the following controls and work practices that reduce workers’ exposure, which may include:

1. Minimize the area of soil disturbed.
2. Use water, appropriate soil stabilizers, and/or re-vegetation to reduce airborne dust.
3. Stabilize all spoils piles by tarping or other methods.
4. Provide enclosed air-conditioned cabs for vehicles that generate dust and make sure workers keep windows and outside vents closed.
5. Suspend work during heavy winds.
6. Keep workers upwind of digging and other dust-producing activities, such as grading, driving, dumping soil, drilling, or blasting
7. Use vacuums equipped with HEPA filters, water, wet towels, or other wet methods to clean soiled equipment, tools, and surfaces. Do not use compressed air, dry sweeping, or other methods that create dust when cleaning.
8. Keep break areas, eating areas, and sleeping quarters, if provided, clean and protected from sources of dust.
9. When exposure to dust is unavoidable, provide NIOSH-approved respiratory protection with particulate filters rated as N95, N99, N100, P100, or HEPA. Employers must develop and implement a respiratory protection program in accordance with Cal/OSHA’s Respiratory Protection standard (8 CCR 5144). Face coverings and masks do not protect against Valley Fever.

Take measures to reduce transporting spores offsite, such as:

1. Clean tools, equipment, and vehicles safely before transporting them offsite.

2. At dusty worksites, provide coveralls and change rooms, and showers where possible. Ensure workers change into clean clothes and shoes before leaving the worksite.
3. Identify a health care provider for occupational injuries and illnesses who is knowledgeable about the diagnosis and treatment of Valley Fever.
4. Train workers and supervisors about the risk of Valley Fever, the work activities that may increase the risk, and the measures used onsite to reduce exposure. Also train on how to recognize Valley Fever symptoms.
5. Encourage workers to report Valley Fever symptoms promptly to a supervisor. Not associating these symptoms with workplace exposures can lead to a delay in appropriate diagnosis and treatment.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES				
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of a native wildlife nursery site?	☐	☐	☐	☒
	☐	☐	☐	☒

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

☐☐☐☒

Responses:

(a) Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation – The Biological Resources Assessment Report provided by the applicant identified potential impacts to native nesting birds, more specifically, Swainson’s hawk, as well as the San Joaquin Kit Fox. With mitigation, the project would have a less than significant impact.

(b) No Impact - The Fremont Cottonwood Woodland is considered a sensitive natural community by the California Department of Fish Wildlife (CDFW) and has been found to occur within the northern and southern portions of the project site, along two aquatic features. An unnamed, drainage that flows along the northern boundary of the site is classified as a manmade perennial riverine feature, and the Ash Slough, located along the southern boundary of the site. Ash Slough is classified as an intermittent to perennial riverine feature. The Fremont Cottonwood woodland species occurs outside of the project area, therefore, impacts to this vegetation community are not expected to occur as a result of the proposed project.

(c) No Impact – The two aquatic riverine features located along the northern and southern boundaries of the project site likely fall under the jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, CDFW, and regional Water Quality Control Board. However, the project has been designed to avoid these features by at least 800 feet, and as such, the project is not considered to have an impact. As part of design and construction activities, appropriate best management practices (BMPs) will be incorporated to prevent runoff and siltation from entering these features. Specific BMPs should be defined prior to construction to protect these features, and spill kits should be available to all workers on site during construction.

(d) Less Than Significant Impact - There are no activities or development associated with the Project that would interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species. Therefore, there will be less than significant impacts to habitats as a result.

(e - f) No Impact - The project area occurs within unincorporated Madera County and is therefore subject to the Madera County General Plan policies protecting biological resources. The Plan requires riparian protection zones around natural water courses and provides buffers of 100 feet as measured from the top of bank of unvegetated channels and 50 feet in width as measured from the outer edge for the canopy of riparian vegetation. However, the project has been designed to avoid riparian areas by at least 800 feet, and therefore no impacts are expected to occur as a result of project implementation.

Mitigation Measures

BIO – 1a: Native Nesting Birds.

A preconstruction nesting bird survey shall be performed by a qualified biologist no earlier than seven days prior to any ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities that start during the nesting season (March 1–August 31) to determine if any native birds are nesting on or near the Project area (including a 250-foot buffer for raptors, where accessible). If any active nests are detected during surveys, a suitable avoidance buffer from the nests shall be determined by a qualified biologist based on species, location, and extent and type of planned construction activity. These nests would be avoided until the chicks have fledged and/or the nests are no longer active, as determined by the qualified biologist. Any ground disturbance or suitable nesting habitat (i.e., trees and vegetation) that would need to be removed under the Project shall occur outside of the bird breeding season (September 1–February 28) to avoid impacts to nesting birds, when feasible. No more than seven days prior to the start of construction, a qualified biologist will check each barn owl nest box within 150 feet of the Project disturbance area to determine if they are actively being used by barn owls for nesting. Nest checks will be conducted using a long-handled mirror to determine occupancy. During the nest box surveys, all nest box locations will be mapped and recorded. Any active nest boxes will be flagged with a 150-foot buffer for avoidance during Project construction. All inactive nest boxes within 150 feet of the Project area will be closed/blocked or removed from the parcel at least 48 hours prior to the onset of construction to ensure no impacts to barn owls will occur under the Project. These boxes would be reopened or reinstalled upon completion of construction.

BIO-1b: Swainson's Hawk.

Prior to initiation of Project activities, a qualified biologist should conduct protocol surveys for Swainson's hawk following the *Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee's Recommended Timing and Methodology for Swainson's Hawk Nesting Surveys in California's Central Valley* (TAC 2000). If Project activities begin prior to the start of the breeding season (typically March 1) and are ongoing throughout the breeding season, Swainson's hawks are unlikely to initiate nesting in the vicinity of the Project area due to elevated levels of noise and visual disturbance, and therefore protocol surveys would not be warranted. Alternatively, if construction is expected to begin during the breeding season, protocol-level surveys should be performed at a minimum in Period 2 (March 20–April 5), and Period 3 (April 5–April 20) to determine if nesting Swainson's hawks are present within 0.5 mile of the Project Area. Performing surveys during Period 1 (January 1–March 20) would increase the chance of nest detections, as most nests are easily observed from relatively long distances when leaves are absent from trees, giving the surveyor the opportunity to identify potential nest sites, as well as becoming familiar with the Project Area. However, surveys in Period 1 are not required.

If active Swainson's hawk nests are detected during surveys in Period 2 and Period 3, monitoring of nests should occur in Period 4 (April 21–June 10) to maintain records on the status of the nests. During this time, Project activities should not be initiated until consultation with CDFW is sought to determine a proper strategy to avoid impacts to nesting Swainson's hawks, which would likely include avoidance in the form of no-work buffers or monitoring of active nests. If avoidance is infeasible, an Incidental Take Permit from CDFW may be required.

BIO – 2: San Joaquin Kit Fox

No less than 90 days prior to the construction start date, early evaluation surveys should be performed by a qualified biologist to determine the potential for presence of San Joaquin Kit Fox on the site. These surveys would follow the *USFWS San Joaquin Kit Fox Survey Protocol for the Northern Range*, prepared by the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office (June 1999). The results of the survey would then be submitted to USFWS and CDFW for review and guidance regarding effects to this species due to project activities.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

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|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

Responses:

(a) No impact. The proposed project is not projected to have an adverse change in the significance of historical or archaeological resources. The site location is currently populated with the existing structures as no known historical resources have been identified on the parcels. If human remains are discovered as a result of the construction of additional religious assembly buildings, the coroner's office shall be contacted immediately.

(b - c) Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated – The cultural resources study provided by the applicant found that no archaeological resources were identified within a 0.5-mile radius of the project site and that there is a low potential for surface and buried archaeological resources within the site itself. However, there is always a potential for unanticipated resources to occur during construction activity. If, during construction, resources are identified, mitigation measures implementation would bring the project to less than significant.

General Information

Public Resource Code 5021.1(b) defines a historic resource as “any object building, structure, site, area or place which is historically significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California.” These resources are of such import, that it is codified in CEQA (PRC Section 21000) which prohibits actions that “disrupt, or adversely affect a prehistoric or historic archaeological site or a property of historical or cultural significance to a community or ethnic or social groups; or a paleontological site except as part of a scientific study.”

Archaeological importance is generally, although not exclusively, a measure of the archaeological research value of a site which meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Is associated with an event or person of recognized significance in California or American history or of recognized scientific importance in prehistory.
- Can provide information which is both of demonstrable public interest and useful in addressing scientifically consequential and reasonable archaeological research questions.

- Has a special or particular quality such as oldest, best example, largest, or last surviving example of its kind.
- Is at least 100 years old and possesses substantial stratigraphic integrity (i.e. it is essentially undisturbed and intact).
- Involving important research questions that historic research has shown can be answered only with archaeological methods.

Mitigation Measures

Cul -1: Cease ground disturbance activities and implement treatment plan if Archaeological Resources or human remains are encountered. If archaeological resources/human remains are exposed during construction, work in the immediate vicinity up to 50 feet surrounding the area of disturbance shall stop until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the significance of the find. Construction activities may occur in other areas. If the find is determined to be significant under CEQA (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] 15064.5(f); PRC Section 21082) and if avoidance is not feasible, additional work such as project relocation, excavation plan, and/or protective cover, in consultation with culturally affiliated tribes or other descendant groups may be warranted, the archaeologist shall design and carry out a data recovery plan consistent with Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5097.98.

Reference CEQA Guidelines §15064.5 for definitions.

VI. ENERGY

Would the project:

a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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☐	☐	☐	☒
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b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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Responses:

(a & b) No Impact. Outside of construction related energy consumption, implementation of the project will not result in potentially significant impacts due to wasteful, inefficient or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Upon project completion, energy consumption would consist of on-going maintenance of the installed equipment and landscaping. Design of the project will require compliance with the California Green Energy Building Standards Code to ensure the energy used associated with the project will not be wasteful, therefore no impacts are anticipated.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS				
Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Map issued by the State Geologist for the area, or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Be located on a geological unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☐	☒

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

Responses:

(a. i – iii) Less Than Significant Impact. Madera County is divided into two major physiographic and geologic provinces: the Sierra Nevada Range and the Central Valley. The Sierra Nevada physiographic province in the northeastern portion of the county is underlain by metamorphic and igneous rock. It consists mainly of homogenous types of granitic rocks, with several islands of older metamorphic rock. The central and western parts of the county are part of the Central Valley province, underlain by marine and non-marine sedimentary rocks.

The foothill area of the County is essentially a transition zone, containing old alluvial soils that have been dissected by the west-flowing rivers and streams which carry runoff from the Sierra Nevada's.

Seismicity varies greatly between the two major geologic provinces represented in Madera County. Central Valley is an area of relatively low tectonic activity bordered by mountain ranges on either side. The Sierra Nevada's, partly within Madera County, are the result of movement of tectonic plates which resulted in the creation of the mountain range. The Coast Ranges on the west side of the Central Valley are also a result of these forces, and continued movement of the Pacific and North American tectonic plates continues to elevate the ranges. Most of the seismic hazards in Madera County result from movement along faults associated with the creation of these ranges.

There are no active or potentially active faults of major historic significance within Madera County. The County does not lie within any Alquist Priolo Special Studies Zone for surface faulting or fault creep.

However, there are two significant faults within the larger region that have been and will continue to be the principal sources of potential seismic activity within Madera County.

San Andreas Fault: The San Andreas Fault lies approximately 45 miles west of the county line. The fault has a long history of activity and is thus a concern in determining activity in the area.

Owens Valley Fault Group: The Owens Valley Fault Group is a complex system containing both active and potentially active faults on the eastern base of the Sierra Nevada Range. This group is located approximately 80 miles east of the County line in Inyo County. This

system has historically been the source of seismic activity within the County.

The *Draft Environmental Impact Report* for the state prison project near Fairmead identified faults within a 100-mile radius of the project site. Since Fairmead is centrally located along Highway 99 within the county, this information provides a good indicator of the potential seismic activity which might be felt within the County. Fifteen active faults (including the San Andreas and Owens Valley Fault Group) were identified in the *Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation*. Four of the faults lie along the eastern portion of the Sierra Nevada Range, approximately 75 miles to the northeast of Fairmead. These are the Parker Lake, Hartley Springs, Hilton Creek and Mono Valley Faults. The remaining faults are in the western portion of the San Joaquin Valley, as well as within the Coast Range, approximately 47 miles west of Fairmead. Most of the remaining 11 faults are associated with the San Andreas, Calaveras, Hayward and Rinconada Fault Systems which collectively form the tectonic plate boundary of the Central Valley.

In addition, the Clovis Fault, although not having any historic evidence of activity, is considered to be active within quaternary time (within the past two million years), is considered potentially active. This fault line lies approximately six miles south of the Madera County line in Fresno County. Activity along this fault could potentially generate more seismic activity in Madera County than the San Andreas or Owens Valley fault systems. However, because of the lack of historic activity along the Clovis Fault, there is inadequate evidence for assessing maximum earthquake impacts.

Seismic ground shaking, however, is the primary seismic hazard in Madera County because of the County's seismic setting and its record of historical activity (General Plan Background Element and Program EIR). The project represents no specific threat or hazard from seismic ground shaking, and all new construction will comply with current local and state building codes. Other geologic hazards, such as landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, and liquefaction have not been known to occur within Madera County.

According to the Madera County General Plan Background Report, ground shaking is the primary seismic hazard in Madera County. The valley portion of Madera County is located on alluvium deposits, which tend to experience greater ground shaking intensities than areas located on hard rock. Therefore, structures located in the valley will tend to suffer greater damage from ground shaking than those located in the foothill and mountain areas.

Liquefaction is a process whereby soil is temporarily transformed into a fluid form during intense and prolonged ground shaking. According to the Madera County General Plan Background Report, although there are areas of Madera County where the water table is at 30 feet or less below the surface, soil types in the area are not conducive to liquefaction because they are either too coarse in texture or too high in clay content; the soil types mitigate against the potential for liquefaction.

(a - iv) No Impact. There are no known impacts that will occur as a direct or indirect result of this project. The proposed construction is not projected to contribute to landslides.

(b) Less Than Significant Impact. The parcel is subject to potential erosion from rain events due to the topographic slope like nature of the parcel.

(c – f) No Impact. There are no known impacts that will occur as a direct or indirect result of this project.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |

Responses:

(a - b) Less than Significant Impact. A slight increase in greenhouse gases could be generated from construction activities during project implementation and decommissioning. The project will have no conflict of local regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are projected.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions: The potential effect of greenhouse gas emission on global climate change is an emerging issue that warrants discussion under CEQA. Unlike the pollutants discussed previously that may have regional and local effects, greenhouse gases have the potential to cause global changes in the environment. In addition, greenhouse gas emissions do not directly produce a localized impact but may cause an indirect impact if the local climate is adversely changed by its cumulative contribution to a change in global climate. Individual development projects contribute relatively small amounts of greenhouse gases that when added to other greenhouse gas producing activities around the world would result in an increase in these emissions that have led many to conclude is changing the global climate. However, no threshold has been established for what would constitute a cumulatively considerable increase in greenhouse gases for individual development projects. The State of California has taken several actions that help to address potential global climate change impacts.

Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, outlines goals for local agencies to follow in order to bring Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels (a 25% overall reduction) by the year 2020. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) holds the responsibility of monitoring and reducing GHG emissions through regulations, market mechanisms and other actions. A Draft Scoping Plan was adopted by CARB in order to provide guidelines and policy for the State to follow in its steps to reduce GHG. According to CARB, the scoping plan's GHG reduction actions include direct regulations, alternative compliance mechanisms, monetary and non-monetary incentives, voluntary actions, and market-based mechanisms such as a cap-and-trade system.

Following the adoption of AB 32, the California State Legislature adopted Senate Bill 375, which became the first major bill in the United States that would aim to limit climate change by linking directly to "smart growth" land use principles and transportation. It adds incentives for projects which intend to be in-fill, mixed use, affordable and self-contained developments.

SB 375 includes the creation of a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) through the local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) in order to create land use patterns which, reduce overall emissions and vehicle miles traveled. Incentives include California Environmental Quality Act streamlining and possible exemptions for projects which fulfill specific criteria.

	Potential y Significa nt Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporatio n	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS				
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
	☐	☐	☐	☒

f) Impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

☐☐☐☒

Responses:

(a – b) Less than Significant Impact. Because the project does not require the use of hazardous materials during operation and because the applicant would be required to comply with applicable regulations and laws pertaining to usage, transport, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials during construction-related activities, the impacts would be less than significant.

(c – d) No Impact. No impacts have been identified as a result of this project. The project is not listed as a hazardous site nor is located within one-quarter mile of an existing school.

(e - g) No Impact. The project site's most southern portion is located with the Madera County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, however the area where the facility will be located is outside of this plan boundary. The project will be conditioned to use the least reflective materials to prevent glare and obstruction for pilots using the Chowchilla Municipal Airport.

A material is considered hazardous if it appears on a list of hazardous materials prepared by a federal, state, or local agency, or if it has characteristics defined as hazardous by such an agency. The California Code of Regulations (CCR) defines a hazardous material as a substance that, because of physical or chemical properties, quantity, concentration, or other characteristics, may either (1) cause an increase in mortality or an increase in serious, irreversible, or incapacitating illness; or (2) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or environment when improperly treated, stored, transported or disposed of, or otherwise managed (CCR Title 22 Division 4.5 Chapter 10 Article 2 §66260.10).

Hazardous waste is defined in the same manner. Hazardous wastes are hazardous materials that no longer have practical use, such as substances that have been discarded, discharged, spilled, contaminated or are being stored prior to proper disposal. Hazardous materials and hazardous wastes are classified according to four properties: toxicity, ignitability, corrosiveness, and reactivity.

General Information

Any hazardous material because of its quantity, concentration, physical or chemical properties, pose a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety, or the environment the California legislature adopted Article I, Chapter 6.95 of the Health and Safety Code, Sections 25500 to 25520 that requires any business handling or storing a hazardous material or hazardous waste to establish a Business Plan. The information obtained from the completed Business Plans will be provided to emergency response personnel for a better-prepared emergency response due to a release or threatened release of a hazardous material and/or hazardous waste.

Business owners that handle or store a hazardous material or mixtures containing a hazardous material, which has a quantity at any one time during the year, equal to or greater

than:

- 1) A total of 55 gallons,
- 2) A total of 500 pounds,
- 3) 200 cubic feet at standard temperature and pressure of compressed gas,
- 4) Any quantity of Acutely Hazardous Material (AHM).

Assembly Bill AB 2286 requires all business and agencies to report their Hazardous Materials Business Plans to the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) information electronically at <http://cers.calepa.ca.gov>

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY				
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	☐	☐	☐	☒
(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	☐	☐	☐	☒
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;	☐	☐	☐	☒
(iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	☐	☐	☐	☒

(iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Responses:

(a - b) Less Than Significant Impact. The Project will have a less than significant impact on water usage. The proposed project does not include a substantial amount of water usage outside of routine maintenance of the solar panels which may include washing dust and debris off the panels occasionally. The applicant must comply with Madera County Code Title 13 as it relates to private water well and/or onsite wastewater treatment systems. A more detailed review will be required for future developments as compliance with all current local, state & federal requirements will be reviewed by the Madera County Environmental Health Division.

(c i - iv) No Impact. The project in and of itself is not anticipated to create or contribute to erosion or runoff. No impacts have been identified as a result of this project.

(d) No Impact. A seiche is an occasional and sudden oscillation of the water of a lake, bay or estuary producing fluctuations in the water level and caused by wind, earthquakes or changes in barometric pressure. A tsunami (from the Japanese language, roughly translated as “harbor wave”) is an unusually large sea wave produced by seaquake or undersea volcanic eruption. According to the California Division of Mines and Geology, there are no active or potentially active faults of major historic significance within Madera County. Additionally, there are no bodies of water (lakes, etc.) within proximity to the site. Madera County is geographically located in the center of the state, therefore not affected by tsunamis.

A seiche is an occasional and sudden oscillation of the water of a lake, bay or estuary producing fluctuations in the water level and caused by wind, earthquakes or changes in barometric pressure. A tsunami (from the Japanese language, roughly translated as “harbor wave”) is an unusually large sea wave produced by seaquake or undersea volcanic eruption. According to the California Division of Mines and Geology, there are no active or potentially active faults of major historic significance within Madera County. As this property is not located near any bodies of water, no impacts are identified.

(e) No Impact. No impacts have been identified as a result of this project. The solar facility does not involve the substantial use of water and will not conflict with any water quality control plans or adopted sustainable groundwater management plans.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING				
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Responses:

(a - b) No Impact. No impacts identified as a result of project implementation. The Project is not dividing an established community or interfere with applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. MINERAL RESOURCES				
Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Responses:

(a - b) No Impact. There are no known minerals in the vicinity of the project site.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII. NOISE				
Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinances, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Generation of excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Responses:

(a - b) No Impact. No noise is anticipated to be generated as a result of project implementation. Additionally, any noise that would be generated due to construction activities would be drowned out due to noise generated by Highway 99, which is adjacent to the site. Conditions will be placed to monitor any noise during the timeframe of construction.

(c) No Impact. This project is Located within 2 miles of the Chowchilla Airport; however it is not within an airport/airspace overlay district and solar facilities do not generate significant noise as part of operations. There will be no impacts as a result.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING				
Would the project:				

a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and business) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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Responses:

(a - c) No Impact. The Project will not cause unplanned growth in the area or displace a number of existing housings. Therefore, no impact has been identified for the Project.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XV.PUBLIC SERVICES				

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

i) Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iii) Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv) Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
v) Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Responses:

(a-i) Less Than Significant Impact. All roads accessing the project site shall be cleared of flammable vegetation over 18 inches in height to a distance of 25 feet from the centerline of the road. Vertical clearance of a minimum 15 feet is required as to provide an unobstructed access for fire apparatus. (CFC, Section 503.2.1 and CVC Section 22500.1)

The Madera County Fire Department exists through a contract between Madera County and CalFire (California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention) and operates six stations for County responses in addition to the state-funded CALFIRE stations for state responsibility areas. Under an “Amador Plan” contract, the County also funds the wintertime staffing of four fire seasonal CALFIRE stations. In addition, there are ten paid-call (volunteer) fire companies that operate from their own stations. The administrative training, purchasing, warehouse, and other functions of the Department operate through a single management team with County Fire Administration.

The building construction will be governed by the requisite Building, Life, Safety and Fire Codes applicable at the time of construction. The mitigation tied to this finding is written in such a manner as to leave open as to what year the applicable codes will be enforced at the time of construction. This will ensure that the most current codes are followed instead of being tied to outdated codes. The facility will be conditioned to provide adequate water storage for the proposed and existing self-storage facility.

(a - ii) No Impact. Crime and emergency response is provided by the Madera County Sheriff’s Department. There will be an incidental need for law enforcement in the events of theft and vandalism on the project site.

(a-iii) No Impact. No impacts are anticipated as a result of this project as it does not relate to any educational programs or increase the surrounding population.

(a - iv) No Impact. No impacts are anticipated as a direct, indirect, short- or long-term impact as a result of this project.

(a - v) No Impact. No impacts identified as a result of this project.

Crime and emergency response is provided by the Madera County Sheriff’s Department. There will be an incidental need for law enforcement in the events of theft and vandalism on the project site.

County Sheriff’s Department personnel are low on resources as well. With new development, the potential for criminal activity (including but not limited to home burglaries, assaults, auto thefts) increases.

Currently, the Madera County’s Sheriff’s Department provides law enforcement and patrols in the planning area, operating from its new headquarters on Falcon Drive in Madera. The new headquarters are approximately 5 miles from the project site, with access to Highway 99.

	Potentially	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	No
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	Significant Impact	Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	Impact
XVI. RECREATION				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Responses:

(a - b) No Impact. No impacts as a result of this project. The project does not include any recreational facilities.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVII. TRANSPORTATION				
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g. sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Responses:

(a - b) Less than Significant Impact. No increase in traffic is expected to be generated as a result of ongoing operations of the project. Aside from occasional maintenance personnel accessing the site, visitors will be prohibited from accessing the site.

(c - d) Less Than Significant Impact. The Project does not propose any roadway changes or infrastructure.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or

ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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☐	☐	☐	☒
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☐	☐	☐	☒
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Responses:

(a - b) No Impact. Local Native American tribes have not expressed any immediate interest to the Project. Therefore, No Impact has been identified.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it had adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Responses:

(a-e) No Impact. The project will not result in the construction of a new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities.

The Project shall have the arrangement for waste disposal and recycling services will be the responsibility of the Applicant and/or site tenants, including service compliance with SB 1383 per Chapter 7.24 of the Madera County Municipal Code. Onsite storage adequate for solid waste bins for Municipal Solid Waste (Grey), Recycling (Blue), and Organics (Green)

services shall be incorporated into the site layout.

General Discussion

Madera County has 34 County Service Areas and Maintenance Districts that together operate 30 small water systems and 16 sewer systems. Fourteen of these special districts are located in the Valley Floor, and the remaining 20 special districts are in the Foothills and Mountains. MD-1 Hidden Lakes, Bass Lake (SA-2B and SA-2C) and SA-16 Sumner Hill have surface water treatment plants, with the remaining special districts relying solely on groundwater.

The major wastewater treatment plants in the County are operated in the incorporated cities of Madera and Chowchilla and the community of Oakhurst. These wastewater systems have been recently or are planned to be upgraded, increasing opportunities for use of recycled water. The cities of Madera and Chowchilla have adopted or are in the process of developing Urban Water Management Plans. Most of the irrigation and water districts have individual groundwater management plans. All of these agencies engage in some form of groundwater recharge and management.

Groundwater provides almost the entire urban and rural water use and about 75 percent of the agricultural water use in the Valley Floor. The remaining water demand is met with surface water. Almost all of the water use in the Foothills and Mountains is from groundwater with only three small water treatment plants relying on surface water from the San Joaquin River and its tributaries.

In areas of higher precipitation (Oakhurst, North Fork, and the topographically higher part of the Coarsegold Area), groundwater recharge is adequate for existing uses. However, some problems have been encountered in parts of these areas due to well interference and groundwater quality issues. In areas of lower precipitation (Raymond-Hensley Lake and the lower part of the Coarsegold area), groundwater recharge is more limited, possibly requiring additional water supply from other sources to support future development.

Madera County is served by a solid waste facility (landfill) in Fairmead. There is a transfer station in North Fork. The Fairmead facility also provides Household Hazardous Materials collections on Saturdays. The unincorporated portion of the County is served by Red Rock Environmental Group. Above the 1000-foot elevation, residents are served by EMADCO services for solid waste pick-up.

XX. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

☐☐☐☒

c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

☐☐☐☒

d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

☐☐☐☒

Responses:

(a – d) No Impact. The project is not located within a State Responsibility area and does not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan. Additionally, the project site is flat and there are minimal structures downwind from the area where the facility is proposed. The project will be conditioned to allow for appropriate widths and turnarounds for fire apparatus throughout the site. Therefore, the project will result in no impacts.

XIX. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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☐	☐	☒	☐
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b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)

☐	☐	☒	☐
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c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

☐	☐	☒	☐
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Responses:

CEQA defines three types of impacts or effects:

- Direct impacts are caused by a project and occur at the same time and place (CEQA §15358(a)(1).
- Indirect or secondary impacts are reasonably foreseeable and are caused by a project but occur at a different time or place. They may include growth-inducing effects and other effects related to changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate and related effects on air, water and other natural systems, including ecosystems (CEQA §15358(a)(2).
- Cumulative impacts refer to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or

increase other environmental impacts (CEQA §15355(b)). Impacts from individual projects may be considered minor but considered retroactively with other projects over a period of time, those impacts could be significant, especially where listed or sensitive species are involved.

(a - c) Less Than Significant Impact. The Project will not have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. The Project impacts cannot be seen to have a cumulative impact that is significant and will not have significant impacts that will affect human beings directly or indirectly.

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