

**Response to Comment Letter I92**

**Robert Renard and Family  
February 24, 2014**

**I92-1**

The County of San Diego (County) concurs with this comment. The comment does not raise an environmental issue for which a response is required.

Comment Letter I92



February 20, 2014

To: County of San Diego

Planning and Development Services

Project Processing Counter

5510 Overland Ave, suite 110

San Diego, CA 92123

Re: COMMENTS ON

SOITEC SOLAR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PIER)

SOITEC SOLAR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, LOG NO.PDS2012-3910-120005 (ER); 3800-12-010 (GPA); TIERRA DEL SOL, 3300-12-010 (MUP); 3600-12-005 (REZ); 3921-77-046-01 (AP); RUGGED SOLAR, 3300-12-007 (MUP); SCH NO.2012121018

From: Robert Peter Renard and Family

41148 Old Highway 80

Boulevard, Ca, 91905

Dear Director and Staff;

We have received notice of our opportunity to comment on this proposed Soitec program / project per Public Recourses Code, Section 21178 (c) et seq..

This Public Recourses Code (PRC), Section 21178 et seq. is first an attempt to promote long term employment for California.



<p>It is reasonable to assume that that the new Soitec factory in San Diego will eventually employ more than the 52 or so workers it now has. We applaud that. San Diego needs more steady employment for skilled manufacturing and assembly workers. This type of industry is also consistent with PRC section 21178's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions through ride sharing or public transportation compatible with a steady job and a consistent schedule. Bravo!</p> <p>This however is not applicable to the Soitec Solar projects on this agenda. We understand that the concept of alternative sources can be a huge contribution to our energy needs. "Alternative" means not dependent on the overburdened existing grid, not expanding it. We are amazed that that there are no wind turbines or solar panels atop Soitecs San Diego factory. We advocate solar energy at source where it is needed, not 65 miles out of town in someone else's back yard. That "local source" is a concept that will create some long term local employment. It is in its infancy. If every factory, office or industrial building and home contributed it would be laughable to even consider Boulevard or Julian California as a sacrificial goat to be offered up for extra power consumption from the existing grid. This solar farm is not an alternative that would reduce the burden on our enormous and heavy power grid, it amplifies it.</p> <p>The early Edison vs. Westinghouse debates about AC / DC might need to be revisited with the benefit of a century or so of technological advances. Everyone I know has a boxfull of inverters and chargers for D/C gadgets. I only raise this issue to highlight the fact that once we sacrifice our precious agricultural preserves and scenic corridors for anxiety about our future power requirements. Like Joni Mitchel said "you don't know what you've got till it's gone. " Tomorrow, Soitec's R+D, or someone else's will advance this technology beyond Mr. Westinghouse's wildest imagination. To convert D/C to A/C results in</p>	<p><b>I92-2</b> The County acknowledges the commenter's preference for distributed-generation energy projects over the Proposed Project. The County analyzed the distributed-generation alternative in the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR) pp. 4.0-4 to 4.0-6. See the response to comment O10-102 and common response ALT2.</p> <p><b>I92-3</b> The County appreciates this information and will take it into consideration. This information, however, would not affect the analysis in the DPEIR.</p>
--	--

I92-1  
Cont.

I92-2

I92-3

about a 20% loss with even more loss for transmission and inversion for use with ever more convenient and popular modern D/C equipment.

The proponents of Soitecs Boulevard project, to mitigate the environmental devastation reminds me of a different verse of Joni’s song, “you take all the trees and put them in a tree museum and charge all the kids a dollar and a half just to see ‘em.”

The rationale for requiring a 10 foot high security fence surrounding each project is that these facilities will be unmanned therefore will produce no quantity of long term employment. (10 foot fences, really?)

Recent experience is that when the “Power Link” Project was built the entire construction force was not from San Diego or anywhere in California. They worked for out of state subcontractors and were here only long enough do the job and take the money back home. That is not a complaint about hard working people making a sacrifice to provide for their families, but it does not provide any relief for California’s 12% plus unemployment problem that this CA (PRC) 21178 (f) et seq. promises. Even if the construction were done by San Diegos, it is a 130 mile round trip to Boulevard every day with trucks and heavy equipment in direct conflict with (PRC) sec. 21178 (g). The estimated duration of the construction for these jobs is a few months. This cannot be enough employment to justify abandoning the County of San Diego General Plan.

To install solar panels at the point of use on existing buildings and new construction would create local jobs long term and be much more efficient. We now require telephone and cable outlets in addition to 120 volt A/C outlets. Why not promote the addition of D/C outlets for our computers, cell phones and all of our battery operated tools and appliances, even cars, directly from at source solar panel power. This could also help eliminate those boxfulls of inverters from our landfills.

I92-3  
Cont.

I92-4

I92-5

I92-6

**I92-4**

The County does not agree with this comment which states that 10-foot-high security fences will surround each Proposed Project site because the facilities will be unmanned. Rather, as stated in Chapter 1.0, Project Description, the project sites would be fenced along the entire property boundary for security per National Electrical Safety Code requirements for protective arrangements in electric supply stations. Each site would be fenced with chain-link fencing 6 feet high. The DPEIR provides the approximate number of construction and long-term employees for the Project (DPEIR Chapter 1.0, Tables 1-3, 1-5).

**I92-5**

This comment raises concerns regarding employment. This topic was not evaluated in the DPEIR since it is not related to environmental impacts (see 14 CCR 15131). However, the information in this comment will be in the FPEIR for review and consideration by the decision makers. Whether the overarching goals behind the enactment of the Jobs and Economic Improvement Through Environmental Leadership Act (“Act”) (California Public Resources Code Section 21178 et seq.) will be met does not alter the Project’s certification under the Act, or the applicants’ obligations under the Act, including to the creation of high-wage, highly skilled jobs (California Public Resources Code Section 21183(b)). With regards to the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions associated with vehicle trips made by construction workers, refer to the response I92-9 below.

	<p>The DPEIR analyzes the Proposed Project’s compliance with land use plans, policies, and regulations (DPEIR Section 2.5.3.2). While the proposed solar farms are consistent with the majority of land use plans, policies, and regulations, the County acknowledges that there is a significant and unavoidable impact associated with the LanEast and LanWest projects’ inconsistency with General Plan Conservation and Open Space Policies 11.1 and 11.3. However, the County disagrees with the comment that it is “abandoning” the General Plan.</p> <p><b>I92-6</b> A distributed energy generation alternative was considered, but rejected, in the DPEIR (see common response ALT2). This comment does not raise specific issues related to the Proposed Project or the adequacy of the environmental analysis in the DPEIR; therefore, no additional response is provided or required.</p>
--	---

**I92-7**

To alter our general plan is far more significant than to alter the building code that would not be a cause for a new “superfund” per 21183 (d) when it proves out to be a mistake like this solar farm program can and likely will. The existing plan is the result of acquired experience and Knowledge to avoid the mistakes of the past.

There is no measurable benefit from this Soitec program for San Diego County employment, and there is an enormous price to pay in the ambiance of our surroundings, our agricultural heritage our scenic countryside and our cultural heritage. We have built fine cities, towns and villages with the binding presence of forethought to preserve, at the expense of that illusive instant gratification from pie in the sky flim flam.

I say to the board, Do not be hasty to undo the one point six four centuries of forethought and experience of your predecessors who saw fit to protect our heritage with a regulatory scheme to prevent this folly of reckless abandon for instant gratification with our conservative plan.

I do not believe that the laws enacted by the Legislature and Governor were intended to accept every scheme offered without proper scrutiny with relation to the overall objective of the plan: to cure unemployment in California with or without mitigation. See (PRC) 21178 et seq.

They know we have a good workable plan to ensure the quality of life in San Diego County and will be proud to know that you have done your due diligence before refusing this proposal. It is incompatible and creates a slippery slope that could rescind all of our agricultural preserves and scenic corridors without providing any long term employment for San Diego or California.

I92-7

The commenter’s opposition to the Project and concerns related to agricultural preserves, cultural heritage, aesthetics, and scenic corridors are acknowledged.

The County notes that the Proposed Project does not involve an amendment to the County General Plan; the approvals which the applicant is seeking are listed in DPEIR Table 1-11.

Related to the “proper scrutiny” that the commenter would like to ensure is given to the Project, regardless of the certification of the Proposed Project under the Act, the County is required to evaluate the Project under CEQA in the same manner as it would an uncertified Project, including providing for all feasible mitigation and alternatives to reduce potential significant impacts. Far from relieving the County or the Project of any requirement for review under CEQA, certification under the Act places additional and more stringent requirements on the applicant.

Regarding the commenter’s concerns related to aesthetics and scenic corridors, the County acknowledges that the Proposed Project would have a significant and unavoidable impacts related to scenic vistas and visual character and quality. The County has considered and implemented all feasible mitigation measures to reduce these impacts. Related to cultural resources, the Project would have a less than significant impact on all cultural

There are less sensitive areas for a 1500 acre solar program that do not tamper with our precious and delicate groundwater aquifers. See (COS-5)

192-8

The environmental impact reports list a number of impacts as significant and unavoidable. (PRC) 21178 et seq. requires mitigation, thereby pre-empting this “solar farm” program.

192-9

Let’s not take paradise and put up a parkin lot.

Thank you;



Robert Peter Renard

resources with the implementation of mitigation (DPEIR Chapter 2.4.)

Related to the loss of agricultural preserves in the County, the Project’s removal of an agricultural preserve on a portion the Tierra del Sol site, which is not currently in agricultural production, was analyzed in DPEIR Section 3.1.1.3.3. The County found that disestablishing the portion of the existing agricultural preserve on the Tierra del Sol site would be a less than significant impact.

The remainder of this comment does not raise an environmental issue for which a response is required.

**192-8**

The County acknowledges the commenter’s opposition to the Proposed Project. The information in this comment will be in the Final Program Environmental Impact Report (FPEIR) for review and consideration by the decision makers. Related to the commenter’s concern for groundwater aquifers, potential impacts related to groundwater use are considered and addressed in DPEIR Sections 3.1.5.3.4, Groundwater Resources, and 3.1.9.3.1, Water. Also refer to common response WR1 and WR2. The DPEIR found that the Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on groundwater supply. The County will place conditions on the Major Use Permit that will restrict the amount of water that is permitted to be withdrawn from on-site wells in order to prevent interference with off-site wells.

	<p><b>I92-9</b> Mitigation measures have been identified to reduce environmental impacts associated with aesthetics, air quality, biology, cultural resources, and noise (see Table S-2 of the DPEIR). The mitigation measures would reduce potentially significant impacts, but not below a significant level for aesthetics, air quality, and land use. Additional “infeasible” mitigation measures were considered in attempting to reduce impacts to below a level of significance. Should the decision makers wish to adopt the project, a Statement of Overriding Considerations will be included in the record.</p> <p>Per California Public Resources Code Section 21178(g), a project must “fully mitigate the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from passenger vehicle trips attributed to the project.” The applicant will obtain voluntary carbon offsets or greenhouse gas credits to offset total projected construction and operational greenhouse gas emissions for the Tierra del Sol and Rugged solar farms, per the requirements of California Public Resources Code Section 21178(g) for certified projects (DPEIR Section 3.1.3.3.1). The Jobs and Economic Improvement Through Environmental Leadership Act (California Public Resources Code Section 21178 et seq.) otherwise refers only to the general principle that “[t]he California Environmental Quality Act (Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code) requires that the environmental impacts of development projects be</p>
--	---

	<p>identified and mitigated.” (California Public Resources Code Section 21178(b)). The Proposed Project is consistent with this requirement.</p> <p><b>References</b></p> <p>14 CCR 15000–15387 and Appendices A–L. Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, as amended.</p> <p>California Public Resources Code, Sections 21178–21189.3. Chapter 6.5, Jobs and Economic Improvement through Environmental Leadership Act of 2011.</p>
--	--