



**Planning Department
168 North Edwards Street
Post Office Drawer L
Independence, California 93526**

**Phone: (760) 878-0263
(760) 872-2706
FAX: (760) 878-0382
E-Mail: inyoplaning@inyocounty.us**

AGENDA ITEM NO.: 6 (Public Hearing)

**PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING DATE:** September 23, 2026

SUBJECT: **Informational Presentation and Public
Comment Opportunity** Regarding Renewable
Energy Development Agreements 2026-
01 and 2026-2/Bonanza Peak Solar

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant has applied to the Board of Supervisors for two Renewable Energy Development Agreements (REDAs) for a renewable energy solar photovoltaic project to be located on 192 private parcels owned by the Wiley Trust, Section 20 LLC and the Mary McMonigle Trust, in the community of Charleston View, within the Charleston View Solar Energy Development Area (SEDA). The REDAs would allow the applicant to construct a 500-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic solar facility that uses 734,000 fixed tilt or single axis tracker solar panels. The project encompasses approximately 2,400-acres of undeveloped, vacant, open space with some disturbance from roads, abandoned vehicles, and miscellaneous junk piles. The project has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and an Addendum to the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR)¹ for the County's Renewable Energy General Plan Amendment (REGPA), has been prepared. Under the Inyo County Code, approval of the REDAs is within the sole authority of the Board of Supervisors. *The Planning Commission's role is to hold a public hearing on the REDAs in advance of consideration and a public hearing by the Board.*

PROJECT INFORMATION

Supervisory District: 5

Recommended Action: **1) Conduct a public hearing and direct staff to provide comments received, or a summary thereof, to the Board of Supervisors for consideration in conjunction with its decision on the REDAs.**

¹ <https://www.inyocounty.us/services/planning-department/environmental-reviews>

Alternatives:

Continue the item to a future date and provide specific direction to staff regarding additional information and analysis needed.

BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURE

Government Code sections 65864 through 65869.5 and Title 20 of the Inyo County Code authorize the Board of Supervisors to enter into agreements with property owners/developers governing the use and development of property (development agreements or DAs). In general, DAs function as development approvals, often taking the place of a use permit or other type of land use approval. By utilizing a DA, the local jurisdiction may obtain public benefits that would not be available under traditional permitting systems, while exercising flexibility in accomplishing the goals set forth in the County General Plan. In exchange, DAs provide certainty to developers regarding the rules that will apply to their project by freezing (or “vesting”) the development regulations that are in place at the time the project is approved. Accordingly, existing rules apply to the project and (with certain exceptions for health and safety, taxes and similar matters) there are no changes or surprises.

Section 21.08.100 of the County Code addresses the use of DAs in the context of renewable energy projects (renewable energy development agreements or REDAs) and provides that REDAs shall be processed in the same manner as a development agreement under Title 20, except that the Board of Supervisors is the approval authority and county agency under CEQA, while the Planning Commission’s role is limited to holding a public hearing at which input may be provided on the project. Accordingly, this hearing provides an additional opportunity for members of the public to review and comment on the project, with any input provided to be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors. The Board will also conduct a public hearing in conjunction with its consideration of the project.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The applicant has applied for two REDAs², each covering a different geographic region of the property, to construct a 500 MW photovoltaic solar energy facility on 192 parcels, privately owned by the Wiley Trust, Section 20 LLC and the Mary McMonigle Trust, in the community of Charleston View (vicinity and site maps)³. Attachments to each of the REDAs (Exhibits A and B) describe and depict the geographic area covered by each REDA, Exhibit C sets forth the terms and conditions of approval and Exhibit D lists the current development standards applicable to the Project. Environmental review assesses the whole of the Project and is not limited to the impacts of only one of the two geographic Project regions. The Project (Plan of Development)⁴ would include the following primary components in Inyo County:

² https://www.inyocounty.us/sites/default/files/2026-09/REDA%20Region%20Maps_0.pdf

³ <https://www.inyocounty.us/sites/default/files/2026-09/Vicinity%20Maps%20and%20site%20plan.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.inyocounty.us/sites/default/files/2026-09/Final%20Bonanza%20Peak%20POD%20.pdf>

- Main solar energy generation area, which includes 734,000 solar panels.
- Power conversion systems including inverters and medium voltage transformers
- Medium voltage underground electrical collection system from the Power Conversion Stations (PCS) to the input of the main power transformer that will be located at the substation facility
- High voltage substation
- Gen-tie line
- Operation and maintenance (O&M) facilities
- Power plant control and monitoring system and communications networks
- Site security and fencing
- Perimeter and interior access roads.

An approximately 9-mile long 230 kilovolt (kV) generation tie-in line (gen-tie line) would be located on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Nye and Clark Counties, Nevada. The Project would connect to the existing Gridliance 230 kV transmission line at the Trout Canyon substation. An approximate 0.5-mile section of the gen-tie line will be located on the project site with the rest of the 8.5-miles located on the BLM land in Nye County Nevada. One of the REDAs covers what is referred to as “Region I” of the Project, which encompasses approximately 80% of the land area utilized for the Project and all Project infrastructure (e.g., substation, O&M facilities, etc.). The second REDA covers the remaining 20% of the land area to be developed with solar panels (“Region II”).

The Project site is located on land that is designated by the County’s General Plan as a Solar Energy Development Area (SEDA). More specifically, the Eastern Solar Energy Group – Charleston View SEDA (map attached). The Charleston View SEDA can be characterized as undeveloped, vacant, open space with some disturbance from roads, abandoned vehicles, and miscellaneous junk piles. The northeast side of it borders the State of Nevada and all of the surrounding Charleston View area is undeveloped land with scattered residential development, ad hoc RV living areas, and miscellaneous storage/junk sites throughout.

The developer, through the two REDAs⁵ would provide 2.5-million dollars in community benefits for Charleston View. These benefits will be paid to the County as each REDA is implemented at Project initiation. REDA 2026-01 will provide 2-million dollars for a firehouse and the purchase of equipment to fill it. These funds would be held by Inyo County until such time as the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District is prepared to approve and move forward with firehouse development. The County and the District will enter into an agreement governing the disbursement of funds to pay or reimburse the costs. REDA 2026-02 provides \$500,000 to the County to fund a CEQA compliant Environmental Impact Report to finalize the Charleston View Community Plan and to provide local road signs. Any funds left over will go into an account held by the county for firehouse and fire

⁵ <https://www.inyocounty.us/sites/default/files/2026-09/Bonanza%20Peak%20Development%20Agreement%20%28Final%20combined%20regions%29%20-%20For%20Sept%2011%20Distrib.pdf>

equipment maintenance. The REDAs also contain a requirement that the developer pay a fee in lieu of property taxes if the development should qualify in the future for a property tax exemption applicable to solar facilities, a requirement that sales and use taxes be allocated to Inyo County to the extent allowed by law, and provisions regarding default and termination, refunds in the event the Project is not permitted, litigation and indemnification and other standard contracting issues as set forth in the attached REDA. The attached REDA is a merged document which includes proposed language for both REDA 2026-01 (Region I) and REDA 2026-02 (Region II). Any language applicable to Region II, but not Region I, is shown in green and will be removed from the final REDA for Region I prior to approval. Likewise, any language specific to Region I and not applicable to Region II will be removed from the final REDA for Region II prior to approval.

The Project is consistent with Inyo County Code Section 21.16 “General Provisions for Renewable Energy Development”, which aims to “support and encourage the responsible development of its solar and wind resources to generate and transmit clean, renewable electric energy while protecting the health, safety and welfare of its citizens and its environment, including its public trust resources” (21.04.030). The REDAs include the provision that if they should be terminated or portions struck down by a court (which do not include Exhibit C), then Exhibit C will remain in effect and serve as a Renewable Energy Permit for the Project, without the REDAs, provided that the developer meets certain requirements, including payment of the community contributions for the construction and equipping of a fire station in Charleston View and completion of environmental review of the Charleston View Community Plan and payment of a fee in lieu of property taxes if a future full or partial exemption from property taxes applicable to solar facilities should be enacted.

The REDAs provide for a 50-year Project lifetime commencing when building and grading permits are granted by the County, or six months following approval of the REDAs, whichever occurs first.

As described in the materials accompanying the “Zone Text Amendment 2026-01” also on the September 23, 2026 agenda, staff is recommending a Zone Text Amendment (ZTA) to update Section 21.20.020 of the Inyo County Code (ICC). The need for this ZTA was identified as a result of the Bonanza Solar Project. Specifically, Section 21.20.020 allows the Board or the Planning Commission to apply development standards or procedures to renewable energy projects that differ from those set forth in Title 18 of the ICC where appropriate and includes a list of the types of deviations which may be made. While that list includes deviations for noise, glare, height, building density, type of use, and other standards, it does not specifically mention setbacks, and it is not clear whether “building density” or “distance between buildings” includes setbacks. As described in the materials accompanying the ZTA item, the Project includes a deviation from Title 18’s setback requirements within the OS Zone due to the existence of multiple “interior” lots which, if not built out fully in order to allow for lot setbacks, would result in the Project being less efficient and producing less power. No setback deviation is required for the perimeter of the Project.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The following information will be provided to the Board of Supervisors in support of its determination on the REDAs, and pursuant to CEQA:

FINDINGS

General Plan Consistency

In March of 2013 the County Board of Supervisors approved a Renewable Energy General Plan Amendment (REGPA) that established General Plan Policies and land use designations for several types of on-site use or commercial sales and export use types, of renewable energy solar photovoltaic facilities. These include:

- **Utility Scale Renewable Energy Solar Facility (more than 20 megawatts)**
A renewable energy solar facility that produces more than 20 megawatts (MW) of electricity for off-site use, consumption and/or sale, including all equipment and accessory structures related to the facility, including but not limited to PV panels, mounting posts, substations, electrical infrastructure, transmission lines, operations and maintenance buildings, appurtenant energy storage facilities and other accessory structures.
- **Commercial Scale Renewable Energy Solar Facility (20 megawatts or less)**
A renewable energy solar facility that produces 20 MW or less of electricity for off-site use, consumption and/or sale.
- **Community Scale Renewable Energy Solar Facility (36 acres or less)**
A renewable energy solar facility that uses renewable solar resources to generate energy for specific community's use and located near the community it serves.
- **Small Scale Renewable Energy Solar Facility**
A facility that uses renewable solar resources to generate energy for on-site use such as roof-top or ground mounted PV panels.

Policy LU 1.17 Utility Scale

The Bonanza Peak Solar Project proposal falls into the Utility Scale Renewable Energy Solar Facility category. It will generate 500MW of electricity on approximately 2,400-acres. Potential social, economic, visual and environmental impacts from the project have been avoided, minimized, and mitigated to an acceptable level pursuant to CEQA as found in the Addendum to the PEIR prepared for the County's REGPA and as such is compliant with the County General Plan, which requires that all impacts be mitigated to an acceptable level.

Other General Plan policies were developed for renewable solar energy projects in the REGPA and the Project is also consistent with these General Plan policies as follows:

- **Policy Gov-2.3: Public Involvement:** The County shall provide the opportunity for the public to engage in the planning process at the onset of any renewable energy solar facility project and for all other large or potentially controversial projects applied for in the County.

The County provided an opportunity for early public involvement by holding presentations regarding the proposed project on October 9, 2024, at St. Therese Mission Catholic Church in Charleston View. Subsequent public meetings and presentations were held on December 3, 2024, and November 4, 2025. The presentations provided information about the proposed project and gave community members an opportunity to ask questions, provide comments, and discuss the project with County representatives.

- Policy GOV-2.4: The County shall require that renewable energy solar facility developers notify local residents and/or landowners by direct mailings or other appropriate means announcing projects at the time an application is submitted.

Bonanza Peak Solar conducted public outreach beginning in April 2024, when outreach letters introducing the proposed project were mailed directly to local residents and property owners. The applicant continued its outreach efforts throughout the project review process by participating in multiple public meetings and community outreach events. Additional outreach included presentations and discussions before the Inyo County Board of Supervisors on October 9, 2024, and December 3, 2024. Outreach continued in 2025, including a November 4 Board of Supervisors meeting in Tecopa and a November 4 community meeting in Charleston View held in coordination with the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District (SIFPD). In July 2026, Bonanza Peak Solar conducted an additional community outreach Open House in Charleston View to provide project information, answer questions, receive community input, and discuss issues of concern to local residents. These outreach efforts provided residents and property owners with multiple opportunities throughout the planning process to receive information regarding the proposed project, ask questions, and provide comments (copies of outreach materials)⁶ and documentation of these efforts are included as attachments to the staff report.

- Between the outreach efforts by the county and the applicant several changes to the project have been made. The applicant began with a proposal to include Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with the project. This would allow for excess energy produced during the day to be stored on site for discharge during peak demand and night times. During several of the first public outreach meetings community members and the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District (SIFPD) had serious concerns and many comments about the dangers of having battery storage since the batteries are lithium and if they were to catch on fire, lithium fires burn very hot and cannot be put out. Based on these concerns and comments the applicant ultimately left the BESS out of the project.

At later public outreach meetings, concerns about groundwater depletion in the area were passionately discussed. Community members are very concerned about the initial amount of water that will be used during

⁶ <https://www.inyocounty.us/sites/default/files/2026-09/Public%20Outreach%20Materials%20and%20Documentation.pdf>

construction. During the approximate 18-months of construction 1,085 AF will be used. Once building is completed 0.5 AF of water will be used for the rest of the life of the project annually. In response to this concern the developer has proposed a voluntary ground water monitoring program (VGMP) during construction. This will allow the residents of the Charleston View community to have their wells monitored during project construction. Provisions for remedy if ground water levels drop below preconstruction levels will also be included. The development of this plan in detail is included as a condition of approval.

- Policy LU-1.20: The County does not support new transmission in or through Inyo County above what is necessary for the megawatt cap placed on each Solar Development Group.
Transmission for the Bonanza Peak project will only convey the 500MW of electricity that will be generated by the project.
- Policy LU-1.21: The County does not support renewable energy solar development projects other than those that use PV technologies.
The Bonanza peak project is a solar photovoltaic electric generation facility.
- Policy ED-4.4: Offset the Cost to the County for Service Provision. Renewable energy solar facility development shall be required to provide the means to offset the costs to the County, including but not limited to, the cost of infrastructure improvements and County services, and lost economic development potential. Economic impacts from renewable energy solar facility development identified by the County shall be mitigated or offset.
Memos were sent out to the departments of: Agriculture, Road, Building and Safety, Environmental Health, Water, Health and Human Services, Information Services, Solid Waste, Public Works, Southern Inyo Fire Protection District (SIFPD) and Inyo County Sheriff requesting information regarding possible additional costs for county services resulting from the project. The sheriff stated they have limited resources in the Charleston View area and suggested that Bonanza Peak include a security plan as part of the project, which is included as a condition of approval. No other additional costs were identified.
- Policy ED-4.5: Employ and Train Local Labor. The County shall encourage renewable energy solar facility developers to employ the local labor force during development and for long-term facility maintenance and provide educational and training opportunities, as practicable.
Bonanza Peak Solar will ensure that the contractors they hire to construct the project announce job opportunities to the local community.
- Policy ED-4.6: Compensation to Local Communities. The County shall encourage renewable solar energy developers to provide compensation in the form of reduced rates for communities impacted by development.
Utility-Scale Solar electricity is generated by independent developers who sell it directly to major utilities through long-term power purchase agreements. This

wholesale power is then transmitted across the grid to serve residential and commercial customers and cannot be sold directly or given directly to consumers. Therefore, this is a policy that cannot be met. Bonanza Peak Solar is instead providing 2.5 million dollars as part of the REDAs prepared for the project to be used to construct a firehouse and purchase the equipment to fill it, as well as to fund a CEQA compliant Environmental Impact Report to finalize the Charleston View Community Plan and provide local road signs. Any funds left over will go into an account held by the county for firehouse and fire equipment maintenance. By providing this level of compensation to the community of Charleston View the project is in substantial conformance with ED-4.6.

- Policy ED-4.7: Provide Transient Housing. The County shall encourage renewable solar energy developers to help provide transient housing during the construction of solar energy facilities to minimize impacts to tourist accommodations.
Most of the workforce for the Bonanza Peak project will come from Pahrump and Las Vegas Nevada as well as from the local area. No transient worker housing will be required for the project as most of the workers will be from nearby and will commute into the project site from their homes or in housing provided by the construction contractor outside of Charleston View. The project is being conditioned with no transient housing or camping without prior discretionary approval since the project's housing needs are covered without it and due to Charleston View not having the infrastructure to provide it.
- Policy AG-1.3: Conversion of Agricultural Land. Discourage conversions of productive agricultural lands for urban development and encourage avoidance of the use of productive agricultural lands for renewable energy solar facility development.
No agriculture land will be affected by the Bonanza Peak project as there is none in the area.
- Policy CUL-1.6: Protect Cultural Resources. The County shall require renewable energy solar facility developers recognize the Old Spanish Trail as a cultural resource and ensure that it and its immediate surroundings in the Charleston View SEDA are preserved and protected.
The Bonanza Peak project will not affect the Old Spanish Trail cultural resource. It was specifically reviewed for the Addendum (Appendices C and H of the Addendum) to the PEIR prepared for the REGPA and it was found that the Old Spanish Trail is not located within the proposed project footprint, nor will the project affect the area's view shed surrounding it.
- Goal MER-2: Avoid, Minimize, Mitigate. Ensure that renewable energy solar facility development is conducted appropriately to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the impacts from such development on the social, economic, visual, and environmental resources of the County.

The Bonanza Peak Solar project has been prepared pursuant to the PEIR created for the REGPA and an Addendum⁷ thereto which reviewed and analyzed potential impacts to social, economic, visual, and environmental resources. All were found to have less than significant impacts with mitigations.

- Policy MER-2.1: Encourage Small Scale. The County shall continue to encourage small scale renewable energy solar facilities, such as roof-top and ground mounted solar; commercial scale; and community scale renewable energy solar facilities that serve specific communities.

County Planning and Building and Safety staff continue to encourage small scale solar development by expediting the non-discretionary permitting process as much as possible.

- Policy MER-2.2: Solar Energy Development Areas (SEDA). The County shall maintain a Land Use Diagram of areas where utility scale and commercial scale solar facilities may be appropriate (REGPA, SEDA maps)⁸.

- Policy MER-2.3: SEDA Land Inventory. As illustrated on Table 3-1, of the REGPA the total acreage that may be developed for utility and commercial scale renewable energy solar facilities within each SEDA is capped; and, the amount of megawatts that may be generated within each Solar Energy Group is capped (small scale and community scale solar energy facilities are excluded from the caps).

The Charleston View SEDA allows for up to 500MW and 2,400-acres. The project has been prepared and submitted to meet the maximum SEDA allowances for the Charleston View SEDA. This project effectively uses all of the allowed amounts of megawatts and acreage and will take away any further possibility of solar energy development in Charleston View as well as Sandy Valley because the Eastern Solar Energy Group, which both are in, is capped at 500MW.

- Policy MER-2.6: Avoid, Minimize, or Mitigate Impacts. The County shall work with renewable energy solar developers and other agencies to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to the social, economic, visual, and environmental resources of the County from renewable energy solar facility development.

The Bonanza Peak Solar project has been prepared pursuant to the PEIR created for the REGPA and an Addendum thereto which reviewed and analyzed potential impacts to social, economic, visual, and environmental resources. All were found to have less than significant impacts with mitigations.

- Policy MER-2.7: Dust Control. The County shall work with renewable energy solar developers to ensure that dust creation during the construction and operations of a renewable energy solar facility are avoided to the extent practicable.

Bonanza peak Solar will follow all construction best practices including watering to control dust during construction. This is included as a condition of approval.

⁷ <https://www.inyocounty.us/services/planning-department/bonanza-peak-renewable-energy-project>

⁸ <https://www.inyocounty.us/sites/default/files/2020-04/FinalREGPA33015.pdf>

- Policy MER-2.8: Reclamation Planning. The County shall work with renewable energy solar facility developers to provide and implement a reclamation plan to return the site of each project to pre-project conditions or another appropriate state (i.e., native, reuse, etc.). The reclamation plan shall include financial assurances, such as bonding, for the cost of decommissioning, reclaiming and re-vegetating (if required) each renewable energy solar facility including removal of all equipment and accessory structures related to the facility, including but not limited to PV panels, mounting posts, substations, electrical infrastructure, transmission lines, operations and maintenance buildings, appurtenant energy storage facilities and other accessory structures.

Bonanza Peak Solar has submitted a reclamation plan⁹ and will submit, prior to the issuance of building/grading permits, financial assurances to be carried out at the end of the life of the project that meet the requirements of MER-2.8 including: a detailed strategy for removing all solar panels and appurtenant structures and to bring the project area back into the open space character as found prior to the project; financial assurance mechanism corresponding to the reclamation plan that covers all implementation costs at current prices; annual inspections of the project site; updates to the decommissioning plan that are found necessary based on the annual inspections, with corresponding updates to financial assurances based on the current Consumer Price Index; and that annual project site inspection costs related to staff time and travel will be paid annually at the time of inspection by the owner/developer. This is included as a condition of approval

- Policy MER-2.9: Renewable Energy Solar Facility Development along the Los Angeles Aqueduct. The County shall encourage the use of land over and along the Los Angeles Aqueduct for renewable energy solar facility development. These areas may not be included in the SEDA, but are subject to the Western Solar Energy Group cap on the total megawatts that may be produced with the Western Solar Energy Group.

N/A. The Project is not located along the Los Angeles Aqueduct.

- Policy MER-2.10: Protect Vegetation. The County shall require that renewable energy solar facility developers use mowing and/or other methods that do not include ground scraping during the construction and/or operation of solar facility developments (access roads and infrastructure are excluded from this requirement). *The Bonanza Peak Solar project does not include grading beyond that required for buildings; interior project roads (access and service roads); temporary construction facilities (laydown, staging and storage areas); and gen-tie transmission structures (light grading). All of the area dedicated to the solar arrays will be mowed and post holes will be augured for the construction of the solar panel posts. No vegetation scraping or grading is included. This is included as a condition of approval for the project.*

⁹ https://www.inyocounty.us/sites/default/files/2026-09/DRAFT%20Bonanza%20Peak%20Solar_Draft%20Reclamation%20Plan_09102026_rev1.pdf

- Policy WR-3.5: Sustainable Renewable Energy Solar Development. The County shall require renewable energy solar facility development to incorporate measures to minimize water consumption and use of potable water and encourage the use of reclaimed water and/or practices that do not require water during construction, the life of the facility, and during reclamation.

A hydrology and water quality assessment was prepared for the project Addendum. It found no significant impacts from the project (Appendix M)¹⁰. Bonanza Peake also has a groundwater monitoring and contingency plan prepared. It is included as a condition of approval for the project.

- Policy WR-3.6: Sustainable Water Practices. Renewable energy solar facility development proposed in the Laws and Sandy Valley SEDAs shall be required to show that the proposed project will be water sustainable.

N/A, the Project is not within the Laws or Sandy Valley SEDAs.

- Policy WR-3.7: Charleston View. Projects proposed in Charleston View shall be water sustainable and shall require project applicants to purchase and retire water rights along the same flow path for the water that will be used for the project (construction and maintenance) at a minimum of a 1 to 1 ratio.

The owner/developer shall prepare and execute deed restrictions on the Kingston View mitigation parcels with Assessor Parcel Numbers: 048-120-09, 048-170-02, 048-170-56, 048-190-02, 048-170-51 and 048-170-47, which totals 1,880 acres. The deed restrictions shall disallow the use or export of groundwater from these parcels in perpetuity, with the exception for water being used onsite for projects strictly related to the environmental mitigation being conducted.

Based on the current zoning and general plan designations on the Kingston View mitigation parcels, 47, 40-acre residential lots, or 1,880-acres of land could be used for residential or agricultural projects. The Project proposes the use of 1,085 AF for the 18-months of construction and 4.85AF for the remaining 48.5-years the project is in use. This is a grand total of approximately 1,090 AF over the 50-year life of the project. The full potential of 47 residential lots, with 2 units each, one single family and one accessory dwelling unit would result in 94 households. According to UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, the average California household uses between 0.5 and 1 AF per year. At the lower end (0.5AF), in 50-years if the 1,880-acres were developed to the maximum allowed residential units (94) based on state law, county zoning and general plan a total of 25 AF of water would be used annually, for a total of 1,250 AF over the 50-year life of the Project and continuing thereafter. If the land was used for agriculture in the general area, it would likely be alfalfa farms. Based on a report from UC Davis, water use for alfalfa is from 2.5-6.5 AF depending on the climate, per year. The Charleston View area would likely be at the higher end due to its dry climate. Even at the low end of 2.5 AF per year, however, this would be about 4,700 AF per year, for a total of 235,000 over the 50-year life of the Project. In these examples of the current by

¹⁰ https://www.inyocounty.us/sites/default/files/2026-09/App%20M_Hydrology%20and%20Water%20Quality%20Assessment.pdf

right uses of the mitigation property, residential use would be 160 AF higher than the solar project and agriculture/alfalfa farming at a 214 to 1 ratio. Even though the developer cannot buy and retire 1 to 1 water rights as policy WR-3.7 is written, since there is not surface water available for sale in the same flow path as the project within California, the restriction on groundwater use on the mitigation parcels, except for environmental mitigation, has the effect of retiring more water than would be used by the Project (i.e., more than a 1 to 1 ration). It is therefore in substantial conformance with WR-3.7. This is included as a condition of approval for the project.

- Policy VIS-1.8: Renewable Energy Solar Development, Light and Glare, Night Skies. The County shall encourage siting, orientation and screening to avoid, minimize or mitigate significant changes to the visual environment from renewable energy solar facility development during construction and operations including avoiding or minimizing light and glare, and impacts inconsistent with Death Valley National Park's International Night Skies designation.
The proposed solar panels for the Bonanza Peak project are designed to have anti-glare properties. All lighting included on the project site will be subject to the county's outdoor light ordinance. This is included as a condition of approval for the project.
- Policy VIS-1.9: Economic Impacts from lost Visual Resources. The County shall balance renewable energy solar facility development opportunities with the potential loss of tourist based economic opportunities from impacts to visual resources.
N/A. The community of Charleston View currently has very little in the way of tourist-based commercial activities. There is one unpermitted off-road vehicle rental business and many unpermitted short-term rentals in Charleston View. Most travelers in Charleston View are traveling through it to get to Las Vegas, Death Valley National Park and the Dumont Dunes off-road vehicle area. Visual resources affecting through travelers would be to the surrounding mountains. As part of the CEQA review of the Project visual simulations (can be found in Appendix C of the Addendum)¹¹ were prepared to evaluate the views from various locations along the Old Spanish Trail Highway (the route through Charleston View) and found that the Project would not degrade the existing character or quality of public views of the site or surroundings.
- Policy VIS-1.10: Old Spanish Trail (OST). Provide for setbacks, siting, orientation, screening and buffers, on a project-by-project basis, to avoid impacts to views of the Old Spanish Trail Highway located in the Charleston View SEDA. *The project will not affect the views of or to the Old Spanish Trail Highway based on visual simulations, (found in Appendix C of the Addendum) no view sheds to the OST will be blocked by the project). The Cultural Resources Report also reviewed historic information related to the OST in Charleston View and more specifically in the SEDA and found previously identified resources were recommended as not eligible.*

¹¹ https://www.inyocounty.us/sites/default/files/2026-09/App%20C_Visual%20Simulations.pdf

Zoning Ordinance Consistency

The Bonanza Peak Solar project is consistent with Title 18 of ICC Zoning, with the modification of internal lot setbacks as authorized and necessary for renewable solar energy facilities, which are allowed in any zoning district as long as the project area is included in a General Plan SEDA overlay, and as previously discussed the project is completely within the Charleston View SEDA. The project is also compliant with Title 21 Renewable Energy Development of the ICC as a reclamation plan that meets the requirements of 21.20.030 has been submitted and conditions of approval require that financial assurances meeting the requirements of 21.20.040 will be provided prior to the issuance of building permits; it is consistent with the County's General Plan; and, there is substantial evidence in the record to support a finding that through the imposition of mitigation measures, the approval of a reclamation plan, the receipt of adequate financial assurances, and by other conditions incorporated into the determination or imposed upon the Project, the health, safety and welfare of the county's citizens, the county's environment, including its public trust resources, and the county's financial well-being, have been adequately safeguarded.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Addendum to PEIR SCH 2014061039 prepared for the REGPA

An Addendum pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15164 has been prepared for the project as none of the circumstances listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15152 requiring the preparation of a subsequent EIR are present, and the proposed project is consistent with the general plan and zoning of the County; therefore, an Initial Study tiering off of the REGPA EIR was prepared. Furthermore, the County as the Lead Agency under CEQA has determined that the proposed project does not trigger the need for supplemental or subsequent review under Section 15162 of CEQA Guidelines, and the Addendum consists of all required project specific surveys and studies and is fully responsive to the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) established by the PEIR.

Tribal Consultation

Tribal consultation pursuant to AB52 is not required for Addendums. County staff did, however, send Tribal consultation invitations to the Tribes on its AB52 contact list and the Pahrump Vally Paiute Tribe in Pahrump Nevada. These Tribes included: Big Pine Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley, Bishop Paiute Tribe, Fort Independence Indian Community of Paiutes, Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, Timbisha Shoshone Tribe, Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, Cabazon Band of the Mission Indians Toret Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians and Kern Valley Indian Community.

One Tribe, the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, requested consultation. Staff made four attempts to schedule consultation with the Tribe, on January 21, February 7, March 31, and April 9, 2025; however, the Tribe did not respond to these follow-up efforts and consultation did not occur. No other Tribes responded to the County's outreach.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL (page 27 of Exhibit C to the REDAs)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission conduct a public hearing and, at the close of the hearing, direct staff to provide all comments received, or a summary thereof, to the Board of Supervisors for its consideration in making a determination whether to approve the Project.

ATTACHMENTS

All attachments, maps, and appendices are located on the Planning Department webpage under the Bonanza Peak Renewable Energy Project heading and they are referenced by the footnotes included in this staff report.