

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Development

Avellana Power Rural Electric Cooperative: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA

ACTION: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS), has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to a request for possible financing assistance to Avellana Power Rural Electric Cooperative for the construction of the Avellana Solar and Broadband Project in San Bernardino County, California.

FURTHER INFORMATION: To obtain copies of the EA and FONSI, or for further information, contact: Elisa Sims Albury, Environmental Protection Specialist, RUS, Phone (202) 692-1970, RUSPublicComments@usda.gov. The EA and FONSI are also available for public review at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmentalstudies/assessment/avellana-solar-and-broadband-project>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed project consists of constructing, operating, and maintaining a 2.25 Megawatt (MW) solar power generating facility and broadband internet service delivery network on approximately 44.92 acres in Apple Valley, California. Alternatives considered by RUS and Avellana Power Rural Electric Cooperative include: No action; Proposed Action. The alternatives are discussed in the Avellana Solar and Broadband Project EA. The RUS has reviewed and approved the EA for the proposed project.

The availability of the EA for public review was announced via notice in the following newspaper(s): Victorville Daily Press on March 23-25, 2023. A 14-day comment period was announced in the newspaper notice(s). The EA was also available for public review at the USDA Rural Development website. No comments were received.

Based on its EA, commitments made by Avellana Power Rural Electric Cooperative, and public comments received, RUS has concluded that the project would have no significant impact (or no impacts) to water quality, wetlands, floodplains, land use, aesthetics, transportation, or human health and safety.

The proposed project will have no adverse effect on resources listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Agency has also concluded that the proposed project is not likely to affect federally listed threatened and endangered species or designated critical habitat thereof. The proposed project would not disproportionately affect minority and/or low-income populations.

No other potential significant impacts resulting from the proposed project have been identified. Therefore, RUS has determined that this FONSI fulfills its obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR §§ 1500-1508), and USDA Rural Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR Part 1970) for its action related to the project.

RUS is satisfied that the environmental impacts of the proposed project have been adequately addressed. RUS's federal action would not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment, and as such it will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for its action related to the proposed project.

Dated: April 15, 2023