

## **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

### **Rural Development**

#### **Juniper Energy LLC: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact**

**AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA

**ACTION:** Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact.

**SUMMARY:** The Rural Utilities Services (RUS) has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to a request for possible financing assistance to Juniper Energy LLC for the construction of the Lockhart and Harper Solar Project in San Bernardino County, California.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:** To obtain copies of the EA and FONSI, or for further information, contact: Terry Czerwien, Environmental Protection Specialist, by email at [terry.czerwien@usda.gov](mailto:terry.czerwien@usda.gov). The EA and FONSI are also available for public review at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/assessments>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The proposed project consists of the construction of two solar electric generating systems plus storage (Lockhart Solar and Harper Solar) (collectively, the Proposed Action) using photovoltaic (PV) panel arrays mounted on single-axis tracker equipment. Alternatives considered by RUS and Juniper Energy LLC include: No Action and the Proposed Action. The alternatives are discussed in the Lockhart and Harper Solar 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: Victorville Daily Press on January 8 and 12, 2025. A 14-day comment period was announced in newspaper notices. The EA was also available for public review at the Hinkley Community & Senior Center, 35997 Mountain View Road, Hinkley, CA 92347. No comments were received.

Based on its EA, mitigation commitments made by Juniper Energy LLC, RUS has concluded that the project will have no significant impact to water resources, floodplains, land use, aesthetics, or human health and safety.

If implemented, the proposed Project will convert 100-year floodplain for the construction of the Proposed Action. RUS has determined that there is no practicable alternative to avoiding this conversion or effect and that there is a significant need for the proposal. The basis of this determination is that after conducting preliminary feasibility studies for alternative sites, only the site of the Proposed Action met the criteria for continuing with development as initially envisioned. 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.

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. §§ 4321–4347), 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 potential federal action will 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 23, 2025