

STATE OF CALIFORNIA - THE RESOURCES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
ENVIRONMENTAL FILING FEE CASH RECEIPT

Receipt #: 19-143285

State Clearinghouse # (if applicable):

Lead Agency: CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS

Date: 05/17/2019

County Agency of Filing: RIVERSIDE

Document No: E-201900576

Project Title: NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL EIR FOR THE DESERT HOT SPRINGS

Project Applicant Name: CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS

Phone Number: (760) 329-6411

Project Applicant Address: 65-950 PIERSON BLVD, DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CA 92240

Project Applicant: LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY

CHECK APPLICABLE FEES:

☐ Environmental Impact Report

☐ Negative Declaration

☐ Application Fee Water Diversion (State Water Resources Control Board Only)

☐ Project Subject to Certified Regulatory Programs

☐ County Administration Fee

☐ Project that is exempt from fees (DFG No Effect Determination (Form Attached))

☐ Project that is exempt from fees (Notice of Exemption)

\$0.00

Total Received \$0.00

Signature and title of person receiving payment:



Deputy

Notes:



**Notice of Availability of a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report for the
Desert Hot Springs Wind Energy Repowering Project**

Date: May 16, 2019
To: State Agencies, Responsible Agencies, Local and Public Agencies, and Interested Parties
From: City of Desert Hot Springs
Subject: Notice of Availability (NOA) of a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

Pursuant to Section 21166 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code 21000–21189) and Section 15163 of the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000– 15387), the City of Desert Hot Springs (City) has prepared a Draft Supplemental EIR (Draft SEIR) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the Desert Hot Springs Wind Energy Repowering Project (Project).

According to Section 15163(a), the Lead Agency may choose to prepare a supplement to an EIR rather than a subsequent EIR if: (1) Any of the conditions described in Section 15162 would require the preparation of a subsequent EIR, and (2) Only minor additions or changes would be necessary to make the previous EIR adequately apply to the project in the changed situation. The qualifying condition is found in Section 15162(a)(1): Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major [or minor for supplemental per Section 15163(a)(2)] revisions to the previous EIR due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects.

Project Background and Prior Environmental Review Process

In 1985, the County of Riverside approved the Wind Energy Conversion System (WECS) 20 Wind Park project on the same Project site, which was proposed by Energy Unlimited, Inc. (EUI), for the development of 128 65-kilowatt (kW) wind turbines. This project was originally constructed with 65 wind turbines, with 8 additional turbines being added on site a few years later. The existing on-site facility is currently operating with 69 turbines, as approximately 4 of the original turbines have since been decommissioned. The Project site, including the WECS 20 Wind Park facility, was annexed into the City in 1994.

Notice of Availability of a Draft SEIR for the Desert Hot Springs Wind Repowering Project

The City received applications from EUI in 2000 to install eight new wind turbines within the existing WECS 20 Wind Park facility. The Conditional Use Permit and accompanying variances were approved by the City in January 2001. Construction of the eight turbines had not commenced by the time the permits expired two years after issuance. In 2003, EUI applied with the City to have the permits reapproved. In 2009, the City certified the Revised Commercial WECS 20 Permit Project Final EIR (WECS 20 FEIR) evaluating the potentially significant environmental impacts of the proposed eight-turbine project and approved the corresponding Conditional Use Permit and Variance applications.

The potentially significant environmental impacts identified in the WECS 20 FEIR were reduced to a level considered less than significant through the adoption of mitigation measures that would avoid or substantially reduce impacts. No significant and unavoidable impacts were identified to occur in the WECS 20 FEIR.

As of this date, the project described and analyzed in the WECS 20 FEIR has not been implemented.

Project Location

The approximately 160-acre Project site is bordered by undeveloped land to the north, south, and west, and Municipal Water District (MWD) facilities to the east. Downtown Desert Hot Springs is located approximately 6 miles east of the Project site, and the Interstate (I-) 10/State Route (SR-) 62 interchange is located approximately 2.2 miles to the south. Primary access to the Project site would continue to be provided via an existing private access off Windhaven Road. The Project site consists of the Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 667-160-001 (Figure 1). The Project site is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

Project Overview

The Project would produce up to approximately 17 megawatts (MW) of wind energy and would consist of up to four new wind turbines with a range of approximately 2.0 MW to 4.2 MW in nameplate capacity per turbine. In addition to the new wind turbines, the Project includes the following primary components, which are described in detail in the following sub-sections:

- Decommissioning of approximately 69 existing wind turbines and the appropriate ancillary equipment.
- Construction of new underground collection lines starting at the southernmost new turbine, heading north, connecting to each of the other three new turbines. From this point, the collection will either continue underground in the center of the existing access road to the off-site substation (located on APN 516-030-014) or it will connect to the existing overhead 12-kilovolt (kV) collection line system on site that continues to the off-site substation (located on APN 516-030-014).

Notice of Availability of a Draft SEIR for the Desert Hot Springs Wind Repowering Project

- Construction of temporary and permanent access roads between turbines, as well as improvements to existing private roadways to accommodate construction and delivery of equipment.
- Construction of a temporary on-site laydown and parking area.
- Installation of one new temporary and one new permanent meteorological tower, each up to approximately 309 feet tall.
- Decommissioning of the new wind turbines at the end of their useful life.

Project Impacts

The Draft SEIR has been prepared to assess the potentially significant effects on the environment that could result from implementation of the Project. The Draft SEIR addresses the changes necessary to the previous WECS 20 FEIR so that the CEQA review for the Project adequately addressed the proposed Project modifications. It addresses the potential for new impacts not disclosed in the WECS 20 FEIR and increases in the severity of impacts disclosed in the WECS 20 FEIR as a result of the Project.

The resource area topics analyzed in the Draft SEIR have been determined through preparation of a Section 15163 Study (Appendix A to the Draft SEIR) and the scoping process conducted by the City. As indicated in Draft SEIR, no new or more severe impacts would occur as a result of the Project with regard to all of the resource areas outlined in the WECS 20 FEIR. Implementation of the Project would not result in any impacts that cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level. Therefore, the Project would not result in significant and unavoidable environmental effects. This finding is consistent with that made in the WECS 20 FEIR, which determined that the previously proposed project would not result in significant and unavoidable environmental impacts.

Public Review Period

This Notice of Availability solicits comments and questions from responsible agencies, trustee agencies, federal, State and local agencies and the general public, on the analysis of the potential environmental impacts resulting from the Project. The public review period for the Draft SEIR will begin on May 17, 2019 and end on July 1, 2019.

Notice of Availability of a Draft SEIR for the Desert Hot Springs Wind Repowering Project

Availability of the Draft SEIR

The Draft SEIR and its technical appendices are available for review at the following two locations during normal business hours:

In Person:

City of Desert Hot Springs, Community Development Department
65950 Pierson Boulevard
Desert Hot Springs, California 92240
760.329.6411

City of Desert Hot Springs Public Library
11691 West Drive
Desert Hot Springs, California 92240

Online:

<https://www.cityofdhs.org>

Agencies, organizations, individuals, and all other interested parties not previously contacted, or who did not respond to the NOP, have the opportunity to comment on this Draft SEIR during the public review period. Written or email comments on this Draft SEIR should be addressed to:

Scott Taschner, Senior Planner
City of Desert Hot Springs, Community Development Department
65950 Pierson Boulevard
Desert Hot Springs, California 92240
760.329.6411, ext. 256
staschner@cityofdhs.org

Public Meeting

A public hearing at which the Final SEIR will be considered for certification has not yet been scheduled. The comments received and the responses to those comments will be included as part of the record for consideration for the Project at this future, currently unscheduled, public hearing. Once a public hearing has been scheduled, a Notice of Public Hearing will be circulated consistent with the noticing requirements set forth by Chapter 17.104 of the Desert Hot Springs Municipal Code.

