

**Rio Mesa Solar Electric Generating Facility (RMSEGF)
(11-AFC-4)**

Applicant's Specific Comments on the Preliminary Staff Assessment

NOISE AND VIBRATION

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

1. **Page 4.6-9, Compliance with LORS, 1st paragraph:** Due to the Applicant's usage to date of a wind-neutral sound propagation prediction scenario for modeling project operation noise, please change the paragraph as follows:

The applicant performed noise modeling to determine the project's noise impacts on sensitive receptors (BS 2012v, § 5.7.5.2). The applicant has predicted the operational noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptors. Under wind-neutral conditions, the project's highest noise level would be 36 dBA L_{eq} , at ST2 (BS 2012v, Table 5.7-13). The County of Riverside General Plan, Chapter 7, p.N-11, requires that facility-related noise, as projected to any portion of any surrounding property containing a sensitive receiver, habitable dwelling, hospital, school, library or nursing home, must not exceed 45 dBA L_{eq} between the hours of 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. and 65 dBA L_{eq} between the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. (Riverside 1998). As seen above, a project level of 36 dBA would be well below these limits. Additionally, predicted operation noise levels can be influenced by factors such as wind speed and direction and thus be higher than the predicted 36 dBA L_{eq} at ST2 for limited periods of time. In such case, however, operation noise level is expected to remain below the limits set forth in the Riverside County General Plan. Therefore, the project would comply with the applicable noise LORS.

2. **Page 4.6-9, CEQA Impacts, 1st paragraph, Table 4, and 2nd paragraph:** Due to the higher predicted startup operation noise level for LT1a as presented in Table 5.7-14 on Page 5.7-13 of the Supplemental Response to DR Set 1A (#16 and #26), identified as "BS 2012v" in the PSA, and Applicant's usage to date of a wind-neutral sound propagation prediction scenario for modeling project operation noise, please change the 1st paragraph, Table 4, and the 2nd paragraph as follows:

The Rio Mesa SEGF project would operate during the daylight hours (when the sun is shining) and during the conduct of startup activities in an early morning hour (4:30 a.m. to 5:30 a.m.) (BS 2012v, Page 5.7-10). Thus, staff compares the project's full solar operation and startup operation noise levels to the existing daytime and nighttime ambient noise levels at the project's noise-sensitive receptors. (Please see below for limited nighttime maintenance activities.) Typically, ~~daytime~~ ambient noise consists of both intermittent and constant noises. The noise that stands out during this time is therefore best represented by the average noise level, referred to as L_{eq} . Staff's evaluation of the above noise surveys shows that the ~~daytime~~ noise environment in the project area consists of both intermittent and constant noises. Thus, staff compares the project's noise levels to the daytime ambient L_{eq} level at the project's nearest noise-sensitive receptor, LT1a. The applicant has predicted the full solar operation and startup operational noise levels at LT1a; the larger of which under wind-neutral conditions is shown here in Noise Table 4.

Noise and Vibration

Noise Table 4: Predicted Operational Noise Level at the Nearest Identified Sensitive Residential Receptor

Receptor	Project Alone Operational Noise Level (dBA) ¹	Measured Existing Ambient, Quietest Daytime L _{eq} (dBA) ²	Cumulative L _{eq} (dBA)	Increase in Existing Ambient (dBA)
LT1a	33 <u>5</u>	41	42	+1

Sources: ¹ BS 2012v, Table 5.7-13

² NOISE Table 2, above

Combining the ambient noise level of 41 dBA L_{eq} (**Noise Table 4**, above) with the project noise level of 335 dBA at LT1a would result in 42 dBA L_{eq}, 1 dBA above the ambient. Were the project's predicted operation noise levels to be influenced by factors such as wind speed and direction and thus be higher than the predicted 35 dBA L_{eq} for limited periods of time, an operation noise level as high as 39 dBA L_{eq} at LT1a would—combined logarithmically with the existing ambient sound level of 41 dBA L_{eq}—result in a cumulative L_{eq} of 43 dBA and only a 2 dBA increase above ambient. As described above (in **Method and Threshold for Determining Significance**), staff regards an increase of up to 5 dBA to be less than significant.

3. **Page 4.6-6, Second Paragraph Below Table 3:** The PSA states "No construction activities would be undertaken within 1/4-mile of an occupied residence or residences between the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. during the months of June through September and between the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. during the months of October through May. To ensure that these hours are, in fact, enforced, staff proposes Condition of Certification **NOISE-6**." As no project construction activity is expected within a ¼-mile of an occupied dwelling, and because the Applicant understands and will comply with Riverside County Ordinance 847 as summarized on Page 4.6-4, Applicant requests that NOISE-6 to be deleted in its entirety from the Conditions of Certification.
4. **Page 4.6-7, First Full Paragraph:** Please delete reference to NOISE-6 as Applicant has requested deletion of the condition as explained in Specific Comment #3.
5. **Page 4.6-8, Linear Facilities:** Please delete reference to NOISE-6 as Applicant has requested deletion of the condition as explained in Specific Comment #3.