Renewable Energy:

Setting a Course for the Future.

The Westlands Water District's geographic location is a plentiful source of natural sunlight, presenting a powerful opportunity to replace unproductive farmlands with renewable energy projects.

- In recent years, Westlands has designated retired lands for the production of solar energy, which is then sold into the California Electrical Grid for the benefit of the entities that contracted to purchase energy from the solar development. Since 2010, PG&E has completed several solar projects on land that has been deemed as drainage-impaired.

- Westlands is also home to a proposed state-of-the-art solar farm, the privately-owned Westlands Solar Park, which will be operating on 24,000 acres of retired farmland in the southeastern portion of the District. The project is expected to be completed by 2025 and will generate up to 2.4 gigawatts of solar power, greater energy potential than the combined output of several large nuclear power plants.

- Under the terms of a 2015 settlement between the United States Department of Justice and Westlands Water District, approximately 100,000 acres of land will be retired and made available for productive use, including additional solar energy park development and other productive uses.

- Westlands' focus on renewable energy also contributes to local cost efficiencies. Seawater desalination projects in Israel, Australia, and Carlsbad (Southern California) have all been costly; the cost of the Carlsbad project, which uses high-pressure reverse osmosis, is nearing $1 billion. Westlands is working with a local company, WaterFX, on a solar thermal desalination alternative that would produce five million gallons of water – at a much lower cost of just $30 million.

- Certain sensitive lands, such as wildlife conservation areas, are not appropriate for energy development. Westlands will continue to exercise prudence in siting decisions in order to operate in an environmentally responsible manner.

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