

DRAFT

PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

VALLEY CLEAN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (VCIP)

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE No. 2024020124

WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT

JULY 2025

**VOLUME I OF II
PEIR TEXT**

WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

OF THE

VALLEY CLEAN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (VCIP)

DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

State Clearinghouse #2024020124

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Westlands Water District (District), as Lead Agency, has completed a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR) for the proposed Valley Clean Infrastructure Plan (VCIP) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

PROJECT LOCATION and OVERVIEW: The VCIP would be located in the Fresno County portion of the District on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. The proposed VCIP provides a blueprint for the development of clean energy facilities and supporting infrastructure with an overall generating and delivery capacity of up to 21,000 MW on approximately 136,000 acres of repurposed farmland.

The District's main project objectives are to: 1) utilize the District's location, topography, and excellent insolation (solar radiation energy) attributes to promote the siting of solar generation, storage, and transmission of renewable energy, in furtherance of the state's renewable energy and carbon neutrality goals over approximately 35 years; 2) contribute to the solution of reduced water supply reliability by providing productive long-term but temporary repurposing of those lands from irrigated agriculture for renewable energy production to facilitate redirection of scarce water supplies while ensuring irrigated agriculture can be restored on the repurposed lands following the decommissioning of the renewable energy projects; 3) facilitate implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) pursuant to the Westside Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP); 4) provide for orderly development, operation and decommissioning of clean energy facilities and balance the promotion of long-term but temporary development of solar energy projects and associated storage and transmission facilities with the protection of environmental resources; 5) provide utility-scale power generation on highly disturbed lands that provide minimal habitat value for wildlife and, to the extent feasible, have been fallowed or removed from irrigated agriculture.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The VCIP consists of the following two main Plan elements: "Energy Resource Plan" and an "Infrastructure Plan," as briefly described below.

Energy Resource Plan. The VCIP Energy Resource Plan is a master plan for clean energy development in the form of: 1) solar photovoltaic (PV) generating facilities, and 2) battery energy storage systems (BESS), both of which would be developed within defined "Development Focus Areas" (DFAs) consisting of District-owned land and private lands of participating landowners located within the Fresno County portion of the Westlands Water District service area. It is anticipated that the DFAs would be built out over a 10-year period.

Infrastructure Plan. The VCIP Infrastructure Plan includes the following supporting elements for conveyance of solar generation to the state's electricity load centers: 1) gen-tie lines, 2) collection substations, and 3) connector transmission lines. In addition, transmission lines outside the VCIP Plan Area would deliver the VCIP renewable generation to metropolitan load centers. These outside transmission lines are described in the PEIR at a conceptual level with potential impacts discussed in the PEIR for informational purposes only.

HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES: The VCIP Plan Area includes four hazardous waste sites enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. These include: 1) Bullard Avenue Airstrip; 2) Airway Farms – Five Points Ranch Shop; 3) TMT Chemical Company on Oakland Avenue; and 4) Airway Farms Duster Ranch near Huron.

SIGNIFICANT ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The Draft PEIR identifies significant impacts under the following environmental issue areas: aesthetics, agricultural resources; air quality; biological resources; cultural and tribal cultural resources; paleontological resources; hazards and hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; noise; public services; and transportation. Implementation of the VCIP would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to aesthetics and agricultural resources. The remaining aforementioned impacts would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels through implementation of mitigation measures identified in the Draft PEIR.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: The Draft PEIR is available for review at the following locations:

- Westlands Water District Main Office, 286 W. Cromwell Avenue, Fresno, CA 93711.
- Westlands Water District Field Office, 23050 W. Mt. Whitney Avenue, Five Points, CA 93624.
- Fresno County Main Library, 2420 Mariposa Street, Fresno, CA 93721.
- Mendota Branch of the Fresno County Library, 1246 Belmont Avenue, Mendota, CA 93640.
- Firebaugh Branch of the Fresno County Library, 900 "O" Street, Firebaugh, CA 93622.
- Kerman Branch of Fresno County Library, 15081 W. Kearney Plaza, Kerman, CA 93630.
- San Joaquin Branch of the Fresno County Library, 8781 Main Street, San Joaquin, CA 93660.
- Tranquillity Branch of Fresno County Library, 25561 Williams Street, Tranquillity, CA 93668.
- Huron Library, 36050 "O" Street, Huron, CA 93234.
- Coalinga Library, 305 N. 4th Street, Coalinga, CA 93210.

An electronic version can be downloaded from the WWD website: <http://wwd.ca.gov/news-and-reports/environmental-docs/>

PUBLIC REVIEW TIMELINE: The 45-day public review period for the Draft PEIR begins **July 31, 2025** and ends **September 15, 2025**. Comments on the Draft PEIR must be received by the District no later than **5:00 PM on September 15, 2025**, to be addressed in the Final PEIR. Written comments may be submitted by mail or email to the attention of Russ Freeman, Deputy General Counsel, at the following:

Westlands Water District
286 W. Cromwell Avenue
Fresno, CA 93711
P.O. Box 5199
Fresno, CA 93755

Email: rfreeman@wwd.ca.gov

DISTRITO DE AGUA DE WESTLANDS
AVISO DE DISPONIBILIDAD
DEL
VALLEY CLEAN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (VCIP)
BORRADOR DEL INFORME DE IMPACTO AMBIENTAL DEL PROGRAMA

N.º de Registro Estatal: 2024020124

POR LA PRESENTE SE INFORMA que el Distrito de Agua de Westlands (el Distrito), como Agencia Principal, ha completado un Borrador del Informe de Impacto Ambiental del Programa (Borrador PEIR) para el propuesto Valley Clean Infrastructure Plan (VCIP), conforme a la Ley de Calidad Ambiental de California (CEQA).

UBICACIÓN Y RESUMEN DEL PROYECTO: El VCIP se ubicaría en la parte del Condado de Fresno del Distrito, en el lado oeste del Valle de San Joaquín. El VCIP propuesto proporciona un plan para el desarrollo de instalaciones de energía limpia e infraestructura de apoyo con una capacidad total de generación y entrega de hasta 21,000 MW en aproximadamente 136,000 acres de tierras agrícolas reutilizadas.

Los principales objetivos del proyecto del Distrito son: 1) Utilizar la ubicación, topografía y excelentes atributos de insolación (energía solar) del Distrito para promover la instalación de generación solar, almacenamiento y transmisión de energía renovable, en apoyo de los objetivos estatales de energía renovable y neutralidad de carbono durante aproximadamente 35 años; 2) Contribuir a la solución de la disminución de la confiabilidad del suministro de agua mediante la reutilización productiva a largo plazo pero temporal de esas tierras de agricultura irrigada para la producción de energía renovable, facilitando la redirección de suministros de agua escasos mientras se garantiza que la agricultura irrigada pueda restaurarse en las tierras reutilizadas tras la desactivación de los proyectos de energía renovable; 3) Facilitar la implementación de la Ley de Gestión Sostenible de Aguas Subterráneas (SGMA) conforme al Plan de Sostenibilidad de Aguas Subterráneas de la Subcuenca del Oeste; 4) Proporcionar un desarrollo ordenado, operación y desactivación de instalaciones de energía limpia y equilibrar la promoción del desarrollo solar a largo plazo pero temporal y las instalaciones asociadas de almacenamiento y transmisión con la protección de los recursos ambientales; 5) Proporcionar generación de energía a escala de servicios públicos en tierras altamente perturbadas que ofrecen un valor mínimo de hábitat para la vida silvestre y, en la medida de lo posible, han sido dejadas en barbecho o retiradas de la agricultura irrigada.

DESCRIPCIÓN DEL PROYECTO: El VCIP consiste de los siguientes dos elementos principales del Plan: “Plan de Recursos Energéticos” y “Plan de Infraestructura”, descritos brevemente a continuación.

Plan de Recursos Energéticos: Es un plan maestro para el desarrollo de energía limpia en forma de: 1) Instalaciones de generación solar fotovoltaica (PV), y 2) Sistemas de almacenamiento de energía con baterías (BESS), ambos desarrollados dentro de “Áreas de Enfoque de Desarrollo” (DFAs) definidas, que consisten en tierras propiedad del Distrito y tierras privadas de propietarios participantes ubicadas en la parte del Condado de Fresno del área de servicio del Distrito de Agua de Westlands. Se anticipa que las DFAs se desarrollarán durante un período de 10 años.

Plan de Infraestructura: Incluye los siguientes elementos de apoyo para el transporte de la generación solar a los centros de carga eléctrica del estado: 1) Líneas de conexión de generación (gen-tie), 2) Subestaciones de recolección, y 3) Líneas de transmisión conectoras. Además, líneas de transmisión fuera del Área del Plan VCIP entregarían la generación renovable del VCIP a centros de carga metropolitanos. Estas líneas externas se describen en el PEIR a nivel conceptual, y sus impactos potenciales se discuten en el PEIR solo con fines informativos.

SITIOS DE RESIDUOS PELIGROSOS: El Área del Plan VCIP incluye cuatro sitios de residuos peligrosos enumerados bajo la Sección 65962.5 del Código Gubernamental. Estos incluyen: 1) Pista de aterrizaje de la Avenida Bullard; 2) Airway Farms – Taller del Rancho Five Points; 3) Compañía Química TMT en la Avenida Oakland; y 4) Rancho Duster de Airway Farms cerca de Huron.

EFFECTOS AMBIENTALES SIGNIFICATIVOS ANTICIPADOS: El Borrador PEIR identifica impactos significativos en las siguientes áreas temáticas ambientales: estética, recursos agrícolas, calidad del aire, recursos biológicos, recursos culturales y culturales tribales, recursos paleontológicos, peligros y materiales peligrosos, hidrología y calidad del agua, ruido, servicios públicos y transporte. La implementación del VCIP resultaría en impactos significativos e inevitables relacionados con la estética y los recursos agrícolas. Los impactos restantes mencionados anteriormente se mitigarían a niveles menos que significativos mediante la implementación de medidas de mitigación identificadas en el Borrador PEIR.

DISPONIBILIDAD DEL DOCUMENTO: El Borrador PEIR está disponible para revisión en los siguientes lugares:

- Oficina Principal del Distrito de Agua de Westlands, 286 W. Cromwell Avenue, Fresno, CA 93711.
- Oficina de Campo del Distrito de Agua de Westlands, 23050 W. Mt. Whitney Avenue, Five Points, CA 93624.
- Biblioteca Principal del Condado de Fresno, 2420 Mariposa Street, Fresno, CA 93721.
- Sucursal de Mendota de la Biblioteca del Condado de Fresno, 1246 Belmont Avenue, Mendota, CA 93640.
- Sucursal de Firebaugh de la Biblioteca del Condado de Fresno, 900 “O” Street, Firebaugh, CA 93622.
- Sucursal de Kerman de la Biblioteca del Condado de Fresno, 15081 W. Kearney Plaza, Kerman, CA 93630.
- Sucursal de San Joaquin de la Biblioteca del Condado de Fresno, 8781 Main Street, San Joaquin, CA 93660.
- Sucursal de Tranquillity de la Biblioteca del Condado de Fresno, 25561 Williams Street, Tranquillity, CA 93668.
- Biblioteca de Huron, 36050 “O” Street, Huron, CA 93234.
- Biblioteca de Coalinga, 305 N. 4th Street, Coalinga, CA 93210.

Una versión electrónica puede descargarse del sitio web del Distrito: <http://wwd.ca.gov/news-and-reports/environmental-docs/>

PERÍODO DE REVISIÓN PÚBLICA: El período de revisión pública de 45 días para el Borrador PEIR comienza el 31 de julio de 2025 y termina el 15 de septiembre de 2025. Los comentarios sobre el Borrador PEIR deben ser recibidos por el Distrito a más tardar a las 5:00 PM del 15 de septiembre de

2025 para ser abordados en el PEIR Final. Los comentarios escritos pueden enviarse por correo o correo electrónico a la atención de Russ Freeman, Asesor Jurídico Adjunto, a la siguiente dirección:

Distrito de Agua de Westlands

286 W. Cromwell Avenue

Fresno, CA 93711

P.O. Box 5199

Fresno, CA 93755

Correo electrónico: rffreeman@wwd.ca.gov

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VALLEY CLEAN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (VCIP)

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2024020124

Prepared for

WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT

P.O. BOX 5199

286 W. CROMWELL AVENUE

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Prepared by

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ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING

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JULY 2025

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS – 1

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
AB 32	Assembly Bill 32 (California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006)
AC	alternating current
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADT	Average Daily Traffic
AF or af	acre-feet
AFY or afy	acre-feet per year
ALUC	Airport Land Use Commission
ALUCP	Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan
APN	Assessor’s Parcel Number
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
BMPs	best management practices
Btu	British Thermal Unit
CAISO	California Independent System Operator (also Cal ISO)
Cal-EPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CalGEM	California Department of Conservation (CDOC), Geologic Energy Management Division
CALGreen	California Green Building Standards Code
Cal/OSHA	California Occupational Safety and Health Administration
CalRecycle	California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CAPCOA	California Air Pollution Control Officers Association
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CBSC	California Building Standards Commission
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CDOC	California Department of Conservation
CDOJ	California Department of Justice
CDPH	California Department of Public Health
CDPR	California Department of Pesticide Regulation
CDWR	California Department of Water Resources
CEC	California Energy Commission
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFC	California Fire Code
CGS	California Geological Survey
CHJUSD	Coalinga/Huron Joint Unified School District
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Data Base
CNEL	community noise equivalent level
CO ₂ e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalents
CPUC	California Public Utilities Commission
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
CUPA	Certified Unified Program Agency
CVP	Central Valley Project

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS – 2

CVRWQCB	Central Valley – Regional Water Quality Control Board
CWA	Clean Water Act
cy	cubic yards
dB	decibels
dBA	decibels in “A-weighted” scale
DC	direct current
District	Westlands Water District
DOC	California Department of Conservation
DOD	Department of Defense
DPR	California Department of Pesticide Regulation
DTSC	California Department of Toxic Substances Control
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FAR	Federal Aviation Regulations
FCOG	Fresno Council of Governments
FCFPD	Fresno County Fire Protection District
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHSZ	Fire Hazard Severity Zone
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
LRA	Local Responsibility Area
FSZ	Farmland Security Zone
g	gravity - unit of ground acceleration; 1.0 g = force of gravity
GHG	greenhouse gas
gpd	gallons per day
GPUUSD	Golden Plains Unified School District
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
HMBP	Hazardous Materials Business Plan
ICC	International Code Council
IEEE	Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers
I&R	Illingworth & Rodkin
IFC	International Fire Code
IOU	Investor Owned Utility
IS/MND	Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
ISR	Indirect Source Review
JLUS	Joint Land Use Study (NAS Lemoore)
kV	kilovolt (unit of electrical potential)
L _{dn}	day-night average noise level
L _{eq}	equivalent hourly average noise level
L _{max}	maximum instantaneous noise level
LAMP	Local Agency Management Program

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS – 3

LCI	Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (formerly OPR)
LOA	Live Oak Associates
LOS	Level of Service
M&I	Municipal and Industrial (water supply)
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MM	Mitigation Measure
MMT	Million Metric Tons
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
MW	Megawatt
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NASL	Naval Air Station Lemoore
NEC	National Electric Code
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NERC	North American Electricity Reliability Corporation
NESC	National Electric Safety Code
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NIOSH	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
NOD	Notice of Determination
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NPIC	National Pesticide Information Center
OEHHA	California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
OES	State Office of Emergency Services
O&M	operations and maintenance
OPR	Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (renamed Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) as of July 1, 2024)
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
OWTS	Onsite Wastewater Treatment System
PEIR	Program (or Programmatic) Environmental Impact Report
PCS	Power Conversion System
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
POI	Point of Interconnection
PPA	Power Purchase Agreement
PPV	Peak Particle Velocity (vibration measure)
PRC	California Public Resources Code
PV	photovoltaic
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
ROW	Right of Way
RPS	Renewables Portfolio Standard
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SCADA	Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS – 4

SCE	Southern California Edison
SEMS	Standardized Emergency Management System
SGF	Solar Generating Facility
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SJVAPCD	San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
SoCalGas	Southern California Gas Company
SR	State Route
SRA	State Responsibility Area
SRP	Soil Reclamation Plan
SSC	species of special concern
SWMP	Solid Waste Management Plan
SWP	State Water Project
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	Toxic Air Contaminant
TCP	Traditional Cultural Place
TCR	Tribal Cultural Resource
USA	Underground Service Alert
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USBR	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
USEIA	U.S. Energy Information Administration
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
VdB	vibration velocity level in decibels
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
WAC	Williamson Act Contract
WAPA	Western Area Power Administration
WECC	Western Electricity Coordinating Council
WESD	Westside Elementary School District
WRP	Water Resources Planning
WSA	Water Supply Assessment
WSREC	University of California – West Side Research and Extension Center
WWD	Westlands Water District (also “District”)