



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

---

# Oberon Renewable Energy Project

Virtual Public Scoping Meeting – April 13, 2021

---





# Public Scoping Meeting Format

Virtual Public Meeting begins @ 5:00 p.m.

- Opening & Introductions – Dan Ryan & Brandon Anderson (BLM)
- Proposed Project Presentation – Marisa Mitchell (IP)
- Public Questions on the Project Description
- Agency Presentations –
  - NEPA (BLM) – Dan Ryan & Brandon Anderson (BLM)
  - CEQA (RWQCB) – Hedy Koczwara (Aspen)
- Public Questions & Answers

*\*\* Virtual public meeting is being recorded via Zoom\*\**



# Participating in the Meeting

- **Question and Answer** sessions after project description & presentation
- **Q&A tool** for questions to be answered at the end of the presentation
- **Chat box** for technical support
- **Official Comments** will not be taken during this meeting – they can be submitted:
  - ✓ Through project ePlanning NEPA webpage: <https://go.usa.gov/xfdh5>
  - ✓ By mail or email:
    - NEPA – 1201 Bird Center Drive  
Palm Springs, CA 92262  
[BLM\\_CA\\_PS\\_OberonSolar@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_CA_PS_OberonSolar@blm.gov)
    - CEQA – c/o Aspen Environmental Group  
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 640  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
[Logan.Raub@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Logan.Raub@waterboards.ca.gov)

*\*\*To qualify for standing in BLM's NEPA process, please ensure you registered upon meeting entry or provide your contact information to BLM afterwards (telephone participants)\*\**



## Tips for Productive Meetings

- Help ensure everyone gets equal time – use “raise hand” or submit question using “Q&A” tool during the Q&A period.
- Keep questions concise.
- Actively listen to others, seek to understand perspectives.
- Meeting organizers may implement a time limit for each question, to ensure everyone has a chance to ask a question.



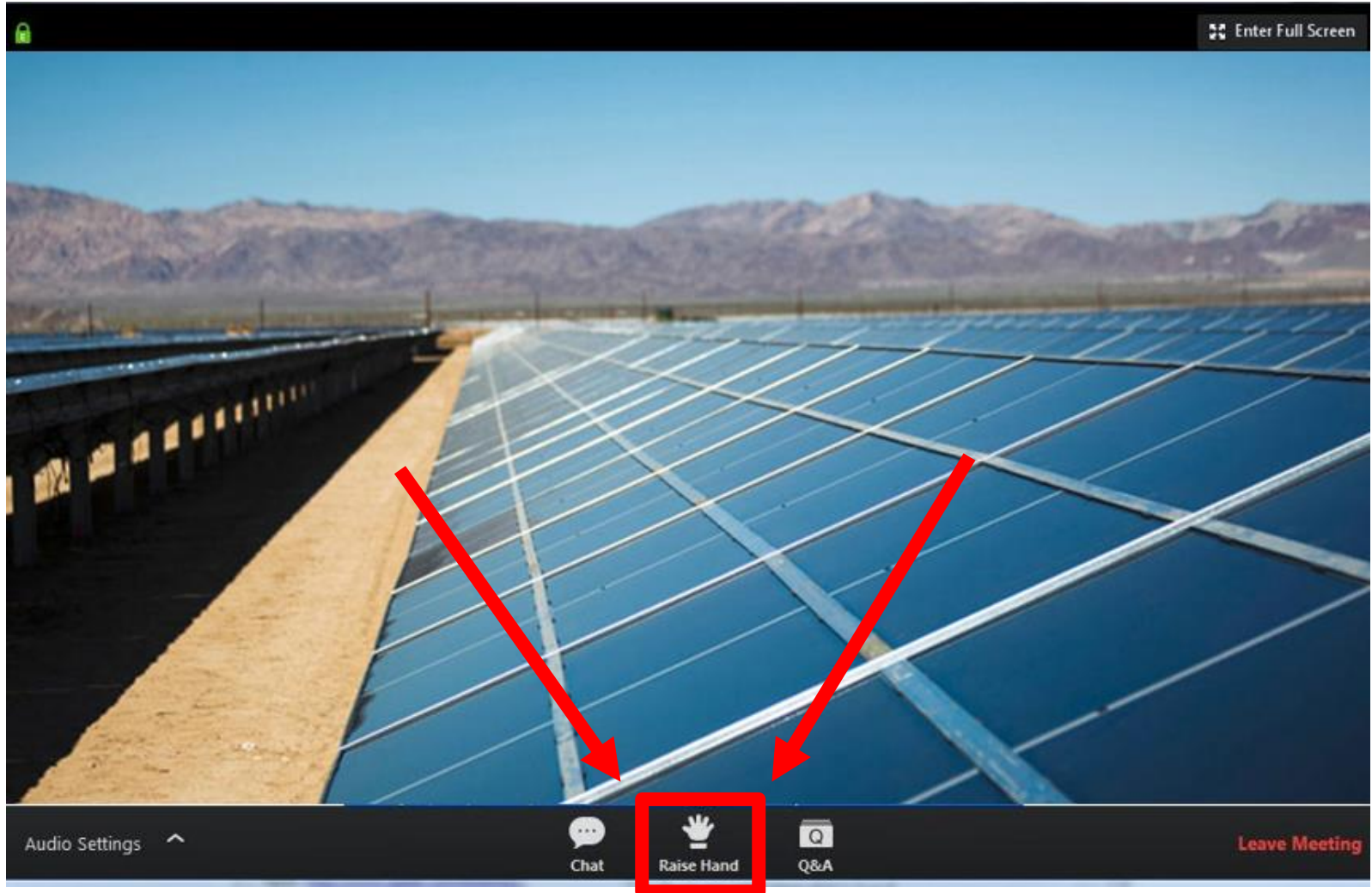


# Submitting Questions

A screenshot of a video meeting interface. The main video feed shows a large solar farm with rows of blue solar panels stretching into the distance under a clear blue sky, with mountains in the background. At the bottom of the screen is a dark control bar. From left to right, it contains: 'Audio Settings' with an upward arrow, 'Chat' with a speech bubble icon, 'Raise Hand' with a hand icon, 'Q&amp;A' with a question mark icon (this button is highlighted with a red square and two red arrows point to it from the video feed), and 'Leave Meeting' in red text. In the top right corner of the video frame, there is a small icon and the text 'Enter Full Screen'. A green lock icon is visible in the top left corner of the video frame.



# Raising Hand



**Telephone Access** – Dial \*9 to Raise Hand





# Chat – Technical Support



# Intersect Power Overview

## Approach to Project Development:

- We take a **low-impact siting** and design approach to project development, working with lead agencies and key stakeholders to minimize environmental impacts and gain stakeholder support, while also maximizing value to ratepayers

## Team:

- Has expertise in real estate, environmental & permitting, interconnection, power marketing, and finance
- Developed, constructed and operated together for **over a decade**
- Delivered **2 GWp to COD** and another **1.75GW to NTP** across **65+ projects**
- Benefits from significant lessons learned and deep experience working together

## Portfolio:

- **Recently completed successful development for 1.75 GWp** of contracted assets all entering construction first half 2021
- **Current portfolio has up to 3 GWp** of projects in various stages of development



# Oberon Project Overview

## Location

- Original application for 6,500 acres across two sites on BLM land in Desert Center, California
- Reduced project area to one 4,700-acre site
- Development footprint limited to < 3,000 acres
- Within Riverside East SEZ & DRECP DFA

## Environmental Diligence Completed

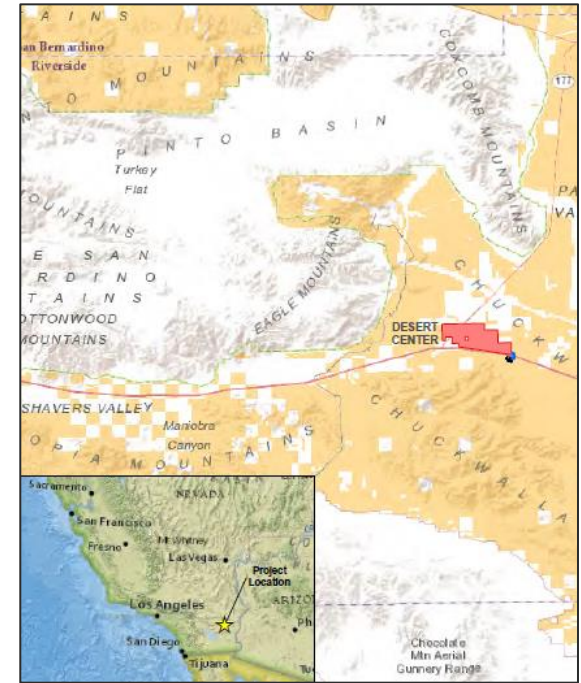
- Desert Tortoise Protocol Surveys
- Rare Plant Surveys
- Habitat Assessment & Jurisdictional Delineation
- Cultural Class I Inventory Report and Class III Surveys
- Hydrology, geotechnical, air quality, visual resources, paleontological resources

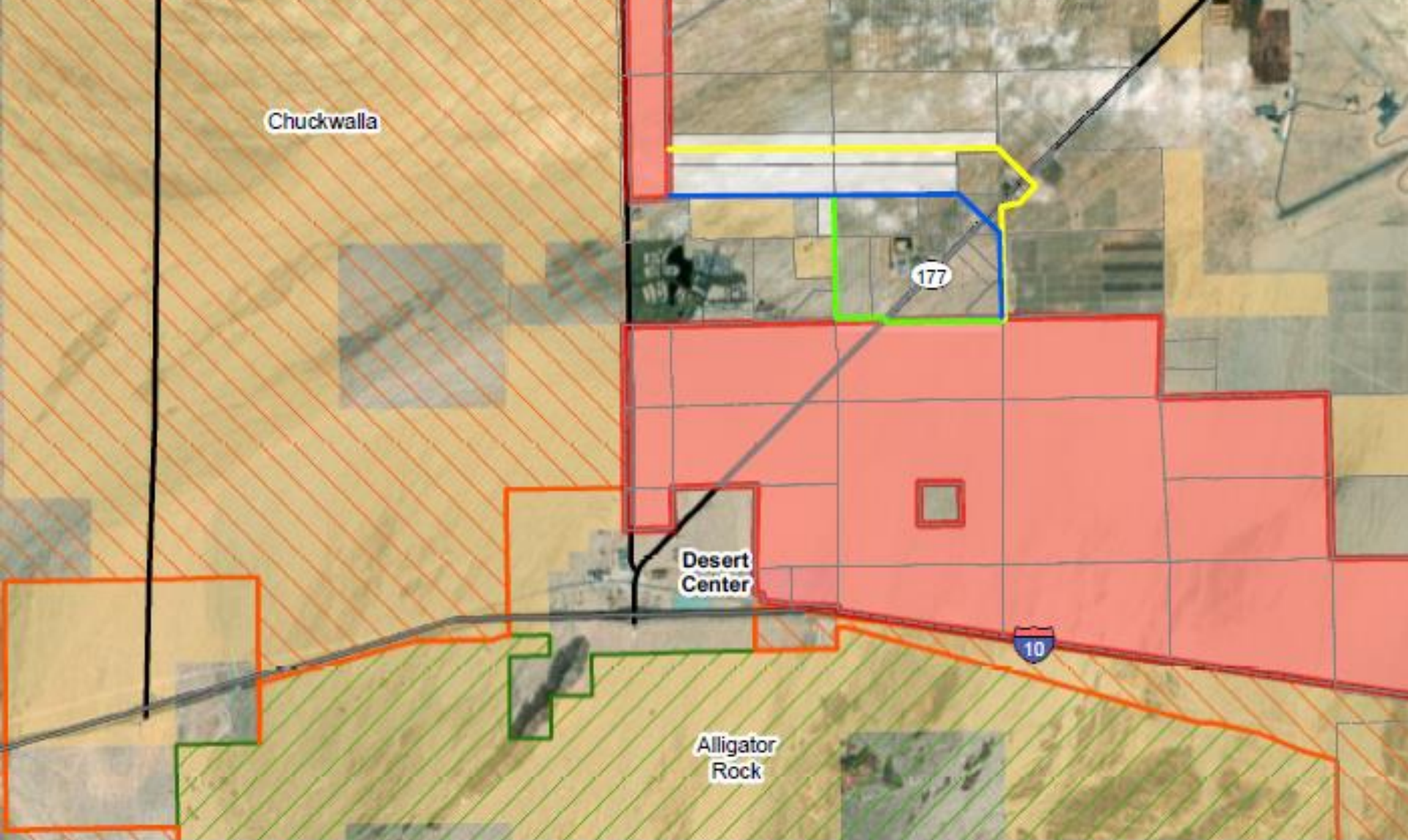
## Interconnection Status

- Executed letter agreement with SCE in June 2020 w/ Oct 2023 in-service date
- LGIA execution by the end of April 2021

## Power Purchase Agreement Status

- Currently negotiating PPAs with multiple offtake partners





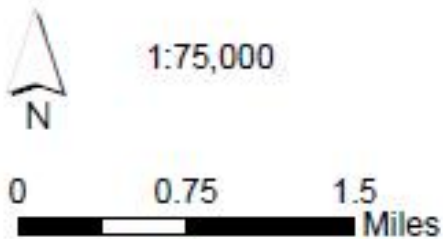
Chuckwalla

177














Desert Center

10

Alligator Rock

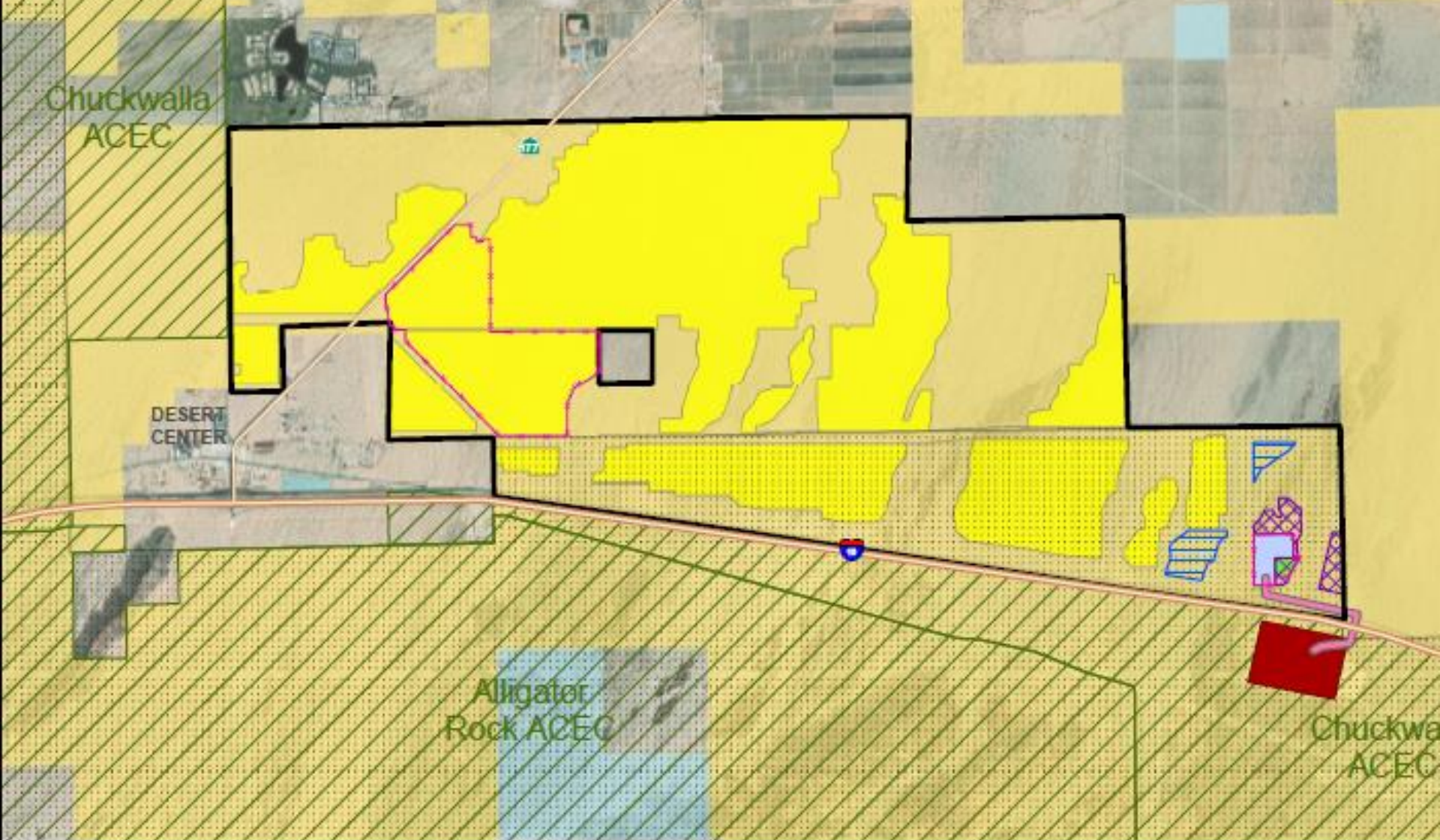


1:75,000

- |   |                             |   |                           |   |                    |
|---|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|--------------------|
|  | Proposed Solar Facility     |  | Parcel Line               |  | Alligator Rock     |
|  | Proposed Gen-Tie Route      |  | SCE Red Bluff Substation  |  | Chuckwalla A       |
|  | Gen-tie Alternative Route 2 |  | Bureau of Land Management |  | P                  |
|  | Gen-tie Alternative Route 3 |  |                           |  | Gen-tie Study Area |
|  | Gen-Tie Study Area          |   |                           |   |                    |

\*ACEC protections only apply





Oberon Project Boundary (approximately 4,700 acres)

Fenced Solar Array

Proposed Early Fencing Areas

Proposed 500 kV Gen-Tie Corridor

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

Future Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

Proposed Substation

Laydown Area

Existing SCE Red Bluff Substation

Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

Desert Tortoise Critical Habitat

Land Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

State



0 0.5 1 Miles

# Other Technical Studies/Plans

**The following technical reports and plans have been developed with agency coordination:**

- Biological Resources Technical Report
- Jurisdictional Delineation
- Paleontological Technical Report
- Water Supply Assessment
- Air Quality Emissions Report
- Health, Safety, & Noise Plan
- Socioeconomics & Envir. Justice
- Fire Management & Prevention Plan
- Hazardous Materials Mgmt. Plan
- Environmental Compliance & Monitoring Plan
- Dust Control Plan
- Closure & Decommissioning Plan
- Raven Management Plan
- Vegetation Management Plan
- Hydrological Report



# Supporting Technical Reports/Plans

**The following technical reports and plans are in the process of being prepared with agency coordination:**

- Cultural Resources Class III Technical Report, including Indirect Effects Report
- Ethnographic Assessment
- Visual Resources & Surface Management Plan, including Glare
- Transportation Impact Analysis
- Right-of-Way Corridor Conflict Analysis
- Erosion & Sediment Control Plan
- Recreation Plan
- Desert Tortoise Protection & Translocation Plan
- Wildlife Protection & Translocation Plan
- Bird & Bat Conservation Strategy, including Nesting Bird Management Plan
- Integrated Weed Management Plan & associated EA



# Project Description

# QUESTIONS?



# Public Scoping

- The purpose of the scoping process is to gather information, issues, and concerns related to the Oberon Renewable Energy Project from the public and stakeholders.
- This public meeting is being held by the BLM, but serves as a public scoping meeting for both the NEPA and CEQA processes.



# Parallel Permitting Processes

## NEPA

**BLM permitting solar facility  
via National Environmental  
Policy Act – EA & LUPA**

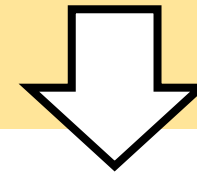
- BLM will consult with US Fish and Wildlife Service & other federal agencies



## CEQA

**WDR permitted via California  
Environmental Quality Act - EIR**

- Will facilitate applicant's consultation w/ State agencies



**After environmental review, a decision would be made  
separately by each authority**

- Decisions anticipated fall 2021
- Will include mitigation measures to protect public health and the environment

**If approved, construction would begin early 2022**





# BLM's Role

- Administration of public lands under Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA)
- Processing of right-of-way grant applications for use of public lands
- Review of the Project to determine consistency with existing land use plans
  - Project subject to California Desert Conservation Area Plan (1980, as amended)
  - Project subject to Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP)
- Lead federal agency for NEPA, National Historic Preservation Act, etc.
  - Preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the potential Project effects and DRECP LUPA
  - Tiered to the DRECP EIS
- Lead agency for consultation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act



# Applicable BLM Regulations & Land Use Plans

- Regulations: 43 CFR 2800
- Right-of-Way Information:
  - General Information  
<https://www.blm.gov/programs/lands-and-realty/right-of-way>
  - Obtaining ROW  
<https://www.blm.gov/programs/lands-and-realty/right-of-way/obtaining-right-of-way>
- Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP)  
<https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/plans-in-development/california/desert-renewable-energy-conservation-plan>



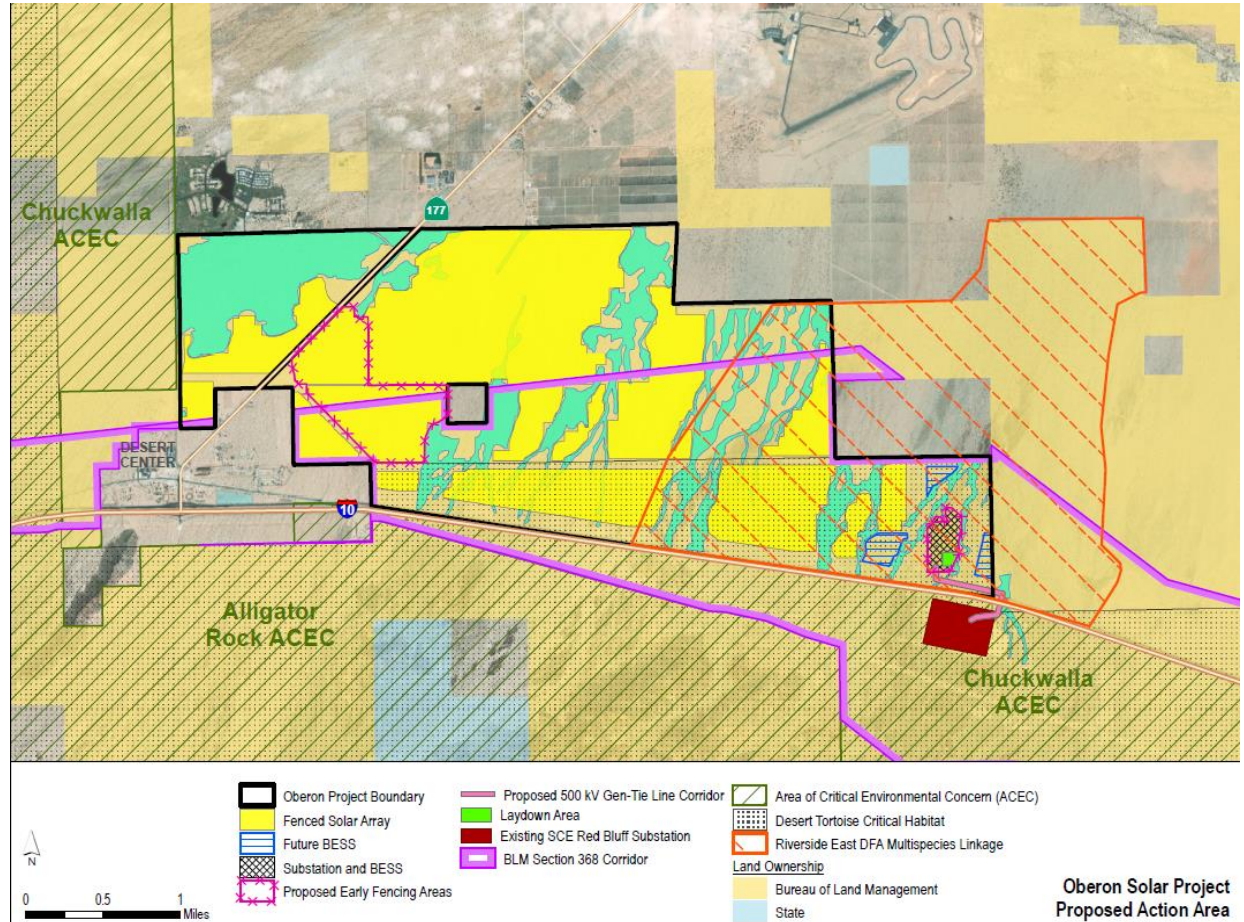
# National Environmental Policy Act

- Establishes an interdisciplinary, public framework for federal decision-making
- Ensures that agencies take environmental factors into account when considering federal actions
- Requires preparation of an environmental analysis for public review



# Land Use Plan Conformance

- The proposed project is located within a Development Focus Area
- Proposed project does not avoid all microphyll woodland or buffers as the DRECP prescribes





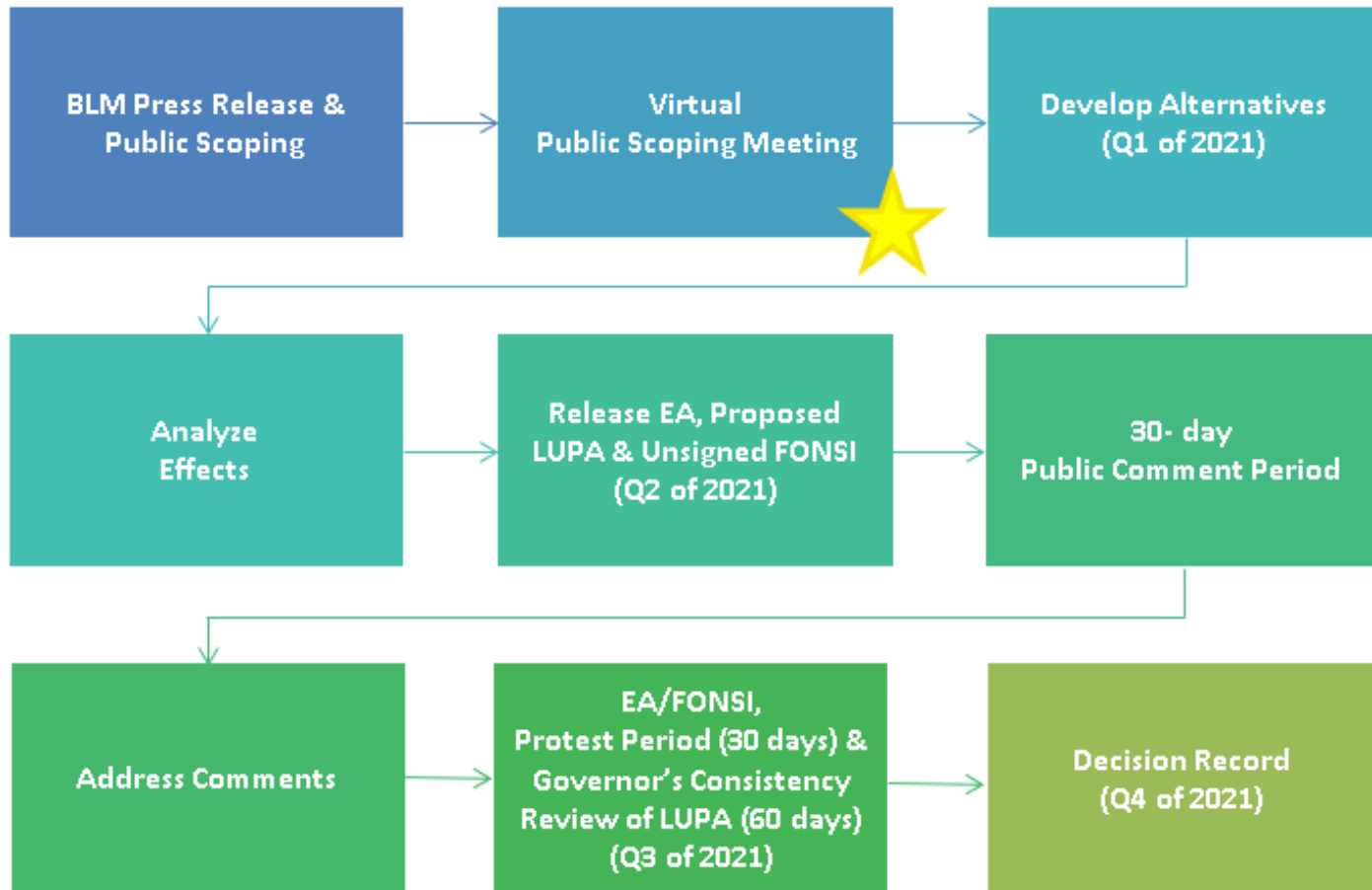


# NEPA Environmental Review Timeline

- **2019 to 2021 –**
  - Application filed August 30, 2019
  - Pre-application meetings held in May and July 2020
  - Plan of Development and technical studies updated in December 2020
- **BLM Press Release** - issued March 18, 2021
- **Public Scoping Period**
  - Public Comment Period: March 18 – April 19, 2021
  - Virtual Public Scoping Meeting: Today, April 13, 2021
- **Next Steps:**
  - Draft EA & Proposed LUPA release
  - Public Review & Comment
  - Final EA/FONSI, LUPA, & Decision Record (expected late 2021)
  - Right-of-Way Grant issued (if approved)



# NEPA Environmental Assessment & Land Use Plan Amendment Process





# Colorado River Basin RWQCB's Role

- Lead agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
- Regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material under section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act.
- CWA section 401 Water Quality Certification or Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR)



# California Environmental Quality Act

- Requires environmental review of projects that require discretionary review and approval by local or state agencies
- Requires analysis of potential significant impacts
- Preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR) is required for projects that could have a significant impact on the environment



# CEQA EIR Process

- Distribute Notice of Preparation (NOP)
- Scoping (30 days) with public meeting
- Prepare Draft EIR
  - Identify & analyze direct, indirect, & cumulative impacts
  - Recommend mitigation measures & alternatives to avoid or reduce potentially significant impacts
- Circulate Draft EIR for agency & public review (45 days)
- Respond to comments & prepare Final EIR
- After completion of the EIR process, decision-makers render a decision on the project and certify the EIR







# Environmental Analysis Areas

- Air Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural, Tribal, & Historic Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Energy Conservation
- Environmental Justice
- Geology & Soils
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Lands & Realty
- Noise
- Paleontology
- Recreation & Public Access
- Social & Economic Effects
- Population & Housing
- Special Designations
- Transportation
- Utilities & Service Systems
- Visual Resources
- Water Resources
- Wildland Fire Ecology



# Public Participation Opportunities

- Provide written comments during scoping period
  - Project ePlanning pages (NEPA)
  - Mail and Email (NEPA & CEQA)
- Review NEPA Environmental Assessment (EA), Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA), & unsigned Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
- Review CEQA Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

## **NEPA – EA & LUPA**

Lead Agency: BLM

**Public Comment Period Ends:**

Monday, April 19, 2021

## **CEQA - EIR**

Lead Agency: RWQCB

**Public Comment Period Ends:**

Monday, April 19, 2021



# Contact Information

## **Bureau of Land Management**

Oberon Renewable Energy Project,

*Attention:*

Brandon Anderson,

Bureau of Land Management

1201 Bird Center Drive

Palm Springs, CA 92262

**E-mail:**

[bganderson@blm.gov](mailto:bganderson@blm.gov)

## **Colorado River Basin RWQCB**

Oberon Renewable Energy Project,

*Attention:*

Logan Raub,

Project Manager

73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100

Palm Desert, CA 92260

**E-mail:**

[Logan.Raub@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Logan.Raub@waterboards.ca.gov)

**CEQA Project Website:**

<http://www.aspeneg.com/oberon-renewable-energy-project/>



# How to Submit Comments\*

## NEPA Comments

Send written comments on the project by **April 19, 2021** to:

**By US mail or courier:**

Oberon Renewable Energy Project,  
*Attention:*

Brandon Anderson  
Bureau of Land Management  
1201 Bird Center Drive  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

**By e-mail:**

[BLM\\_CA\\_PS\\_OberonSolar@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_CA_PS_OberonSolar@blm.gov)

**By ePlanning:**

<https://go.usa.gov/xfDH5>

## CEQA Comments

Send written comments on the project by **April 19, 2021** to:

**By US mail or courier:**

Oberon Renewable Energy Project,  
*Attention:*

Logan Raub  
Colorado River Basin Regional Water  
Quality Control Board  
c/o Aspen Environmental Group  
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 640  
San Francisco, CA 94104

**By e-mail:**

[Logan.Raub@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Logan.Raub@waterboards.ca.gov)

***\*Comments must be submitted separately to each agency.***



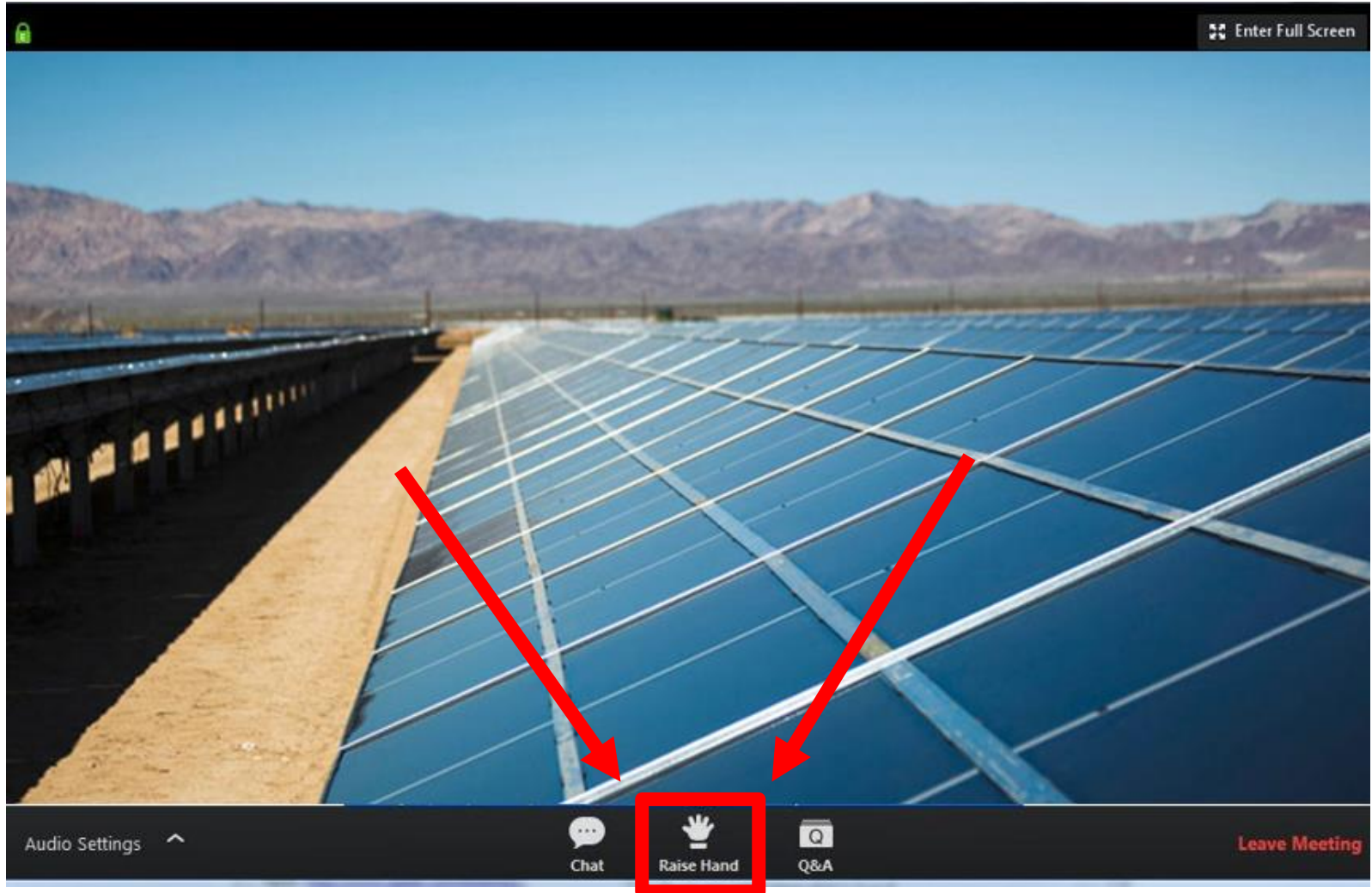


# Submitting Questions

A screenshot of a video meeting interface. The main video feed shows a large solar farm with rows of blue solar panels stretching into the distance under a clear blue sky, with mountains in the background. At the bottom of the screen is a dark control bar. From left to right, it contains: 'Audio Settings' with an upward arrow, 'Chat' with a speech bubble icon, 'Raise Hand' with a hand icon, 'Q&amp;A' with a question mark icon (this icon is highlighted with a red square box), and 'Leave Meeting' in red text. Two red arrows point from the top of the 'Q&amp;A' icon box towards the solar panels in the video feed.



# Raising Hand



Telephone Access – Dial \*9 to Raise Hand





# Chat – Technical Support





# Questions & Answers

**Note: Formal comments must be submitted in writing.**