

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Development

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service (RUS), USDA

ACTION: Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment – Sloughhouse Solar, LLC and Preliminary Notice of Conversion of Wetlands and Effects to Floodplains

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the RUS, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, is issuing an environmental assessment (EA) in connection with possible impacts related to a project proposed by Sloughhouse Solar, LLC called the Sloughhouse Solar Project (Proposed Action). The proposal is for construction of a proposed 50 megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) solar photovoltaic (PV) generation facility located on approximately 372 acres of undeveloped, largely grazing land in the Cosumnes community of unincorporated Sacramento County, California. The distance to the Cosumnes River ranges from approximately 150 feet in the northwest corner of the Proposed Action area, to more than 0.5 miles in the southwest corner.

Sloughhouse Solar has requested long-term financing from RUS for this proposal.

Additionally and in accordance with Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management; Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands; and USDA Departmental Regulation 9500-3, Land Use Policy, the purpose of this notice is also to inform the public of the proposed conversion of wetlands and effects to floodplains and to request comments concerning the proposal, alternative sites or actions that would avoid these impacts, and methods that could be used to minimize these impacts. Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.2(d), the purpose of this notice is to inform the public of the potential impacts to historic properties and request comments concerning the proposal and any concerns with impacts to historic properties.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Proposed Action would result in the construction, operation, and eventual decommissioning of solar-energy generation, and electrical distribution facilities. Project parcels would be developed with solar panel arrays and ancillary facilities, energy storage facilities, an electrical substation, internal roads, retention basins, and distribution lines. The 50 MW solar facility would interconnect to the regional electric grid via interconnection to a 69 kilovolt distribution system operated by Sacramento Municipal Utility District and located along Dillard Road adjacent to the western side of the site.

AECOM consulting firm, retained by the applicant (Sloughhouse Solar), has prepared an environmental assessment for RUS that describes the project, assesses the proposed project's environmental impacts, and summarizes, as applicable, any mitigation measures used to minimize environmental effects. If implemented, the proposed project will convert 0.08 acres of wetlands within the Proposed Action area. In accordance with Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, and USDA Departmental Regulation 9500-3, Land Use Policy, the purpose of this notice is to inform the public of this proposed conversion and request comments concerning the proposal, alternative sites or actions that would avoid these impacts, and methods that could be used to minimize these impacts.

Additionally, if implemented, the proposed project would involve construction of solar arrays and supporting infrastructure within approximately 73 acres of the 100-year floodplain. In accordance with Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management and USDA Departmental Regulation 9500-3, Land Use Policy, the purpose of this notice is to inform the public of this proposed effect and request comments concerning the proposal, alternative sites or actions that would avoid these impacts, and methods that could be used to minimize these impacts. RUS has conducted an independent evaluation of the environmental assessment and believes that it accurately assesses the impacts of the proposed project. No significant impacts are expected as a result of the construction of the project.

Written questions and comments should be emailed to RUS at:

RUSPublicComments@usda.gov

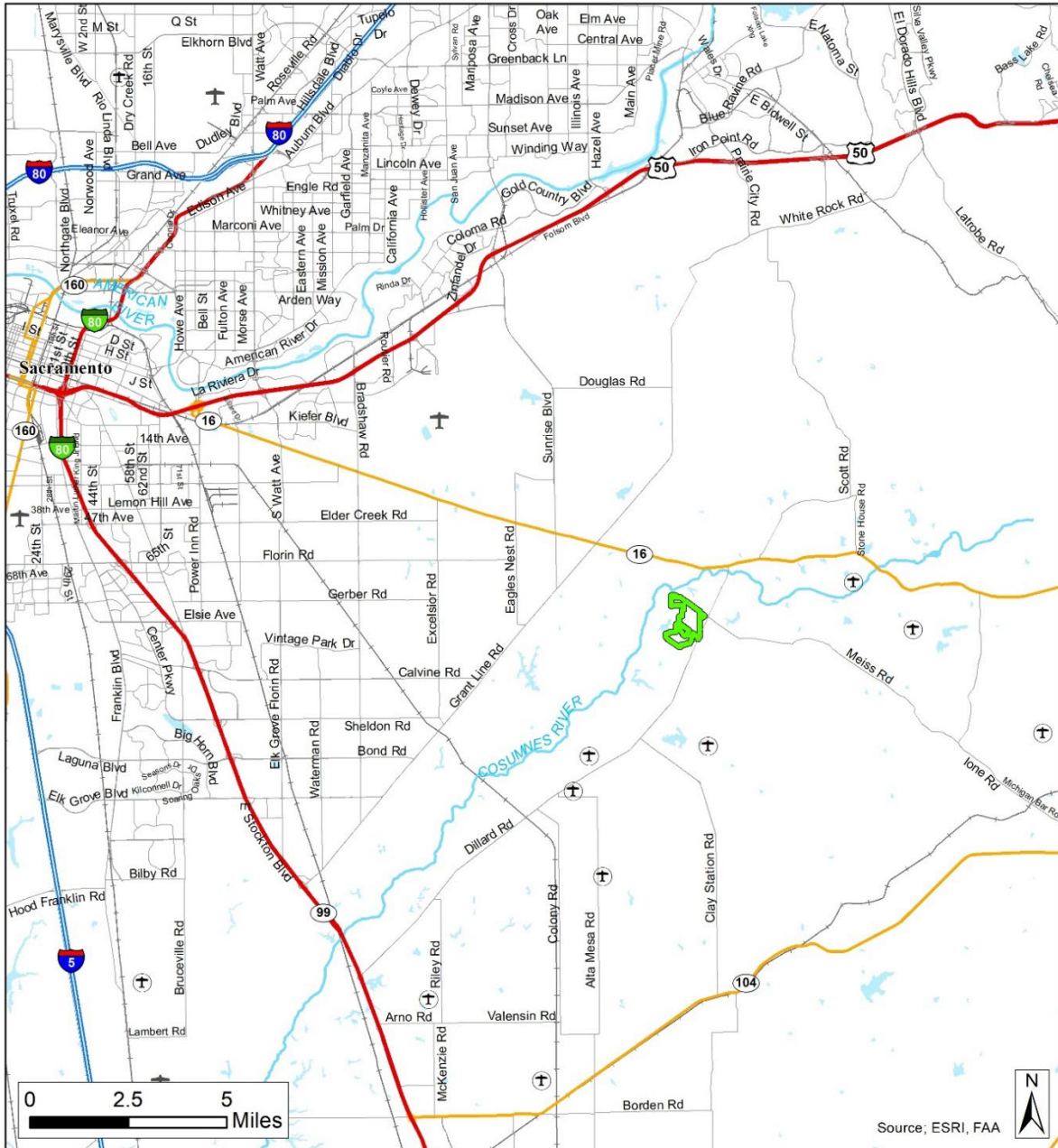
Or sent via postal mail to Attn: Sloughhouse Solar Project, 10 Patewood Drive, Building 6, Suite 500, Greenville, SC 29615. RUS will accept questions and comments on the environmental assessment for 14 days from the first date of publication of this notice.

Copies of the Environmental Assessment and supporting documentation will be available for public review at:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/assessment/sloughhouse-solar-project>

Any final action by RUS related to the proposed project will be subject to, and contingent upon, compliance with all relevant Federal environmental laws and regulations and completion of environmental review procedures as prescribed by 7 CFR Part 1970, Environmental Policies and Procedures.

A general location map of the proposal is shown below.



Legend

- Sloughouse Solar Proposed Action Area
- Highway
- County Road
- Minor Road
- Rivers and Lakes
- ✈ Private airport
- ✈ Public airport
- USA Railroads
- Interstate

Sloughouse Solar EA Regional Location Map

Dated: 09/29/2023