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NOTICE OF PREPARATION of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Notice of October 23, 2024 Public Scoping Meeting

DATE: October 9, 2024
TO: State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties and Organizations

PROJECT TITLE: File No. PLP22-0025 Borealis Energy Storage Project

COMMENT PERIOD: October 9, 2024 through 5:00 p.m. on November 25, 2024

SCOPING MEETING: October 23, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. PST (virtual meeting)

LEAD AGENCY: Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department (Permit Sonoma)

PROJECT LOCATION: 3571 Old Adobe Road, Petaluma, CA 94954

LEAD AGENCY CONTACT: Peter Kaljian, Project Planner
Permit Sonoma
2550 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Peter.Kaljjan@sonoma-county.org

Environmental Impact Report:

The Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department (Permit Sonoma) is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Borealis Battery Storage Project (“Project”). The County is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Project. This Notice of Preparation (NOP) describes the proposed Project that will be analyzed in the EIR and identifies areas of probable environmental effects.

Agencies and interested members of the public are invited to provide input on the scope of the environmental analysis. Permit Sonoma formally solicits responsible and trustee agencies to provide their views on the scope and content of the environmental analysis as it relates to their statutory responsibilities regarding the proposed Project. Due to the time limits mandated by state law and county code, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than 45 days after the receipt of this notice.

Written Comments:

Please submit written comments to any of the below by 5:00 p.m. on November 25, 2024:

Email: Peter.Kaljia@sonoma-county.org
Regular Mail: Permit Sonoma, Attn: Peter Kaljian, Planner I
2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, California 95403

All commenters who provide an email address will be added to the Interested Parties List for future project notifications.

Public Scoping Meeting:

The County will hold a virtual public scoping meeting to provide an opportunity for agency staff and interested members of the public to submit comments, either written or verbal, on the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR. The scoping meeting will be held on **Wednesday, October 23, 2024, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. pacific standard time (PST)**. The scoping meeting will include a presentation on elements of the project, a summary of the NOP and broader CEQA process to come, and an opportunity to provide comments on the scope of the EIR.

To join the virtual scoping meeting by computer or provide comment by phone, use the Zoom link or phone number below:

Please click the link below to join the webinar:
<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/j/93426799587?pwd=8Lm7qzqzLIADXbb2xR89EScOaA99nU.1>

Webinar ID: 934 2679 9587
Passcode: 120200
One tap mobile: +16699009128

If you have questions regarding this NOP or the scoping meeting, please contact Peter Kaljian at 707-565-1735 or via email at Peter.Kaljia@sonoma-county.org

Project Background:

On September 22, 2022, Permit Sonoma received an application for Use Permit and Design Review to allow construction and operation of the Borealis Energy Storage Project on a portion of a 137-acre property located at 3571 Old Adobe Road, Petaluma, and zoned Land Extensive Agriculture. Sonoma County Zoning Code Section 26-30-100 allows Public Utility Facilities in the Land Extensive Agriculture Zoning District provided a use permit is obtained.

Permit Sonoma determined that the scope and intensity of development proposed under the project has the potential to result in significant environmental impacts that cannot be fully mitigated, and therefore an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required prior to initiating further processing of the application.

Project Description:

Borealis ESS, LLC (Applicant) proposes to construct, own, and operate the Borealis Energy Storage Project, a lithium-ion battery energy storage facility capable of storing and delivering approximately 300 megawatts (MW) of electric energy and associated ancillary services into the California electric grid. The Project will include:

1. Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) enclosures housing lithium-ion battery modules ranging from 10 to 20 feet in height
2. Power Conversion System (PCS) equipment
3. Medium Voltage (MV) transformers
4. Project substation with main step-up transformers
5. Power Distribution Center (PDC)
6. Operations & Maintenance (O&M) office and storage enclosure
7. Approximately 0.5-mile overhead 115kV generation tie-line
8. Fire and safety systems
9. Site security features
10. Landscaping and perimeter wall
11. Stormwater management system

The existing two-lane farm access road from Old Adobe Road to the proposed Project site entrance would be improved to provide permanent Project access. The Project facilities include battery energy enclosures with heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, surrounded by a security fence sound wall and landscaping; separately fenced substation facilities; office space with a restroom; berms, grading, and drainage; site access; and gen-tie and utility rights of way. Additional area will be used for temporary construction use, including lay-down and construction access. The Project proposes interconnecting to the Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) 115-kilovolt (kV) Lakeville Substation located south and across Old Adobe Road from the Project site. The Project will be operated and monitored 24 hours per day, 7 days per week from an offsite control center. Maintenance staff, typically in crews of two to four staff members, are expected to visit the site biweekly and as needed for Project maintenance.

For a full project description and proposed site plan, please visit:

<https://permitsonoma.org/divisions/planning/projectreview/significanteirs>

Project Location:

The Project is proposed to be located on an approximately 20-acre site, part of a larger 137.52-acre parcel (APN 017-130-008) at 3571 Old Adobe Road, Petaluma in unincorporated Sonoma County, California, 95954.

Project Alternatives:

The EIR will evaluate a reasonable range of project alternatives that, consistent with CEQA, meet most of the project objectives and reduce or avoid potential environmental effects, including a required No Project Alternative.

Next Steps:

After the EIR is completed, the County will issue a Notice of Availability of a Draft EIR to inform the public and interested agencies, groups, and individuals of how to access the document and provide comments.

Potential Environmental Effects:

The EIR will describe the reasonably foreseeable and potentially significant adverse effects of the proposed project (both direct and indirect). The EIR also will evaluate the cumulative impacts of the project when considered in conjunction with other related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. The County anticipates that the proposed project could result in potentially significant environmental impacts in the following topic areas, which will be further evaluated in the EIR.

- Aesthetics/Visual
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Cumulative Effects