

3.0 Environmental Analysis

3.1 Environmental Checklist Form

Project Title	Hellman Solar PV Electrical System Project
Lead Agency Name and Address	City of Seal Beach 211 Eighth Street Seal Beach, CA 90740
Contact Person and Phone Number	Shaun Temple Planning Manager City of Seal Beach 211 Eighth Street Seal Beach, CA 90740 (562) 431-2527, Ext. 1316
Project Location	1 Pacific Coast Highway, Seal Beach, CA 90740 (just east of First Street)
Project Sponsor's Name and Address:	Hellman Properties, LLC P.O. Box 2398, Seal Beach, CA 90740
General Plan Designation:	Hellman Ranch Specific Plan
Zoning:	Oil Extraction/Hellman Ranch Specific Plan
Description of Project:	The proposed Project would consist of the installation and operation of a 1.5 megawatt (MW) fixed-tilt ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) system. This system would interconnect with the Hellman Property's electrical infrastructure and operate in parallel with the utility grid to provide sustainable clean energy in support of the facilities operations. The proposed Project would include three separate solar arrays, consisting of a total of 56 solar tables, which would be comprised of 3,100 solar panels. The proposed PV system would cover approximately 2.66 acres on the north edge of the existing Hellman Ranch Oil and Gas Production Facility (OGPF).
Surrounding Land Uses	The property to the south of the proposed Project property is owned by the Los Cerritos Wetland Authority. This property is about 100 acres in size and is zoned open space-natural (OS-N). The property to the north of the proposed Project property is owned by the County of Orange and serves as a retention basin. This property is about 43 acres in size and is zoned open space-natural (OS-N). To the west of the proposed Project property is the Department of Water and Power Haynes Cooling Channel. On the far west side of the channel is property owned by the Los Cerritos Wetland Authority, which is about 71 acres in size coving both sides of the San Gabriel River. This property is located within the City of Long Beach. To the east of the proposed Project property site is a small open space area that contains the Hellman Ranch Trail. This area is zoned open-space natural (OS-N). The site primarily contains ruderal upland vegetation. Just to the east of this open space is residential housing comprised of all single-family homes. This area is zoned Residential Low Density-9 (RLD-9).
Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required:	California Coastal Commission Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board

3.2 Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact," as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture / Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards and Hazardous Materials |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

3.3 Environmental Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature S. Shum Temple Date 7/17/25

3.4 Evaluation of Environmental Impacts and Initial Study Checklist

In developing the evaluation of the environmental impacts, the CEQA Environmental Checklist (also known as an “Initial Study”) was used. Each environmental issue listed on the checklist was marked “Potentially Significant Impact,” “Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated,” “Less Than Significant Impact,” or “No Impact” depending on the potential of the Project to have adverse impacts. For each checklist item an explanation/analysis is provided to support the level of impact determination. In developing the initial study checklist, the following guidelines from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines were used.

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors, as well as general standards (e.g., the project would not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. “Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a. Earlier Analyses Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - b. Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c. Mitigation Measures. For effects that are “Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated,” describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.

7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9. The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a. the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b. the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance

Each of the issue areas specified in the CEQA Environment Checklist is discussed below.

3.4.1 Aesthetics

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) In nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The City of Seal Beach is a community located on the Pacific Ocean in northwest Orange County. The proposed Project would be located within the existing Hellman Ranch OGP site. Pacific Coast Highway is the nearest state highway to the Project site, which is approximately 0.7 miles away. Due to the low height of the panels (4.5 feet) and the surrounding area vegetation, the panels would not be visible from Pacific Coast Highway. Gum Grove Park is the nearest public park and borders the eastern edge of the Hellman Ranch OGP site. Between Gum Grove Park and the Hellman OGP is a wetland area that is owned by the Los Cerritos Wetland Authority, who are proposing a wetland restoration project for this area. The proposed solar facility would be visible from Gum Grove Park and the Los Cerritos Wetland property. The topography of Hellman Ranch OGP site is primarily flat terrain.

a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? (Less Than Significant Impact)

The views from Gum Grove Park to the north look across the Hellman Ranch OGP and in the distance are several large electrical generating stations. All the views are dominated by industrial type facilities. Figure 3-1 shows the current views from Gum Grove Park to the North. The brush area in the foreground of