SOLAR ENERGY UPDATE
May 23, 2023

Solar Energy Systems Ordinance
Revised November, 2022

Effective December, 2022

Six-Month Report on the
Implementation of the Revised
Solar Energy Systems Ordinance

Updated Solar Use Types and Regulatory Framework

Small accessory use ground-mounted and roof-mounted SES: up to 10kW

- *Expedited reviews (no Planning review required)*

Accessory SES: >10kW up to 7.5 acres

- *Accessory solar uses greater than 2.5 acres require non-discretionary Site Plan Review prior to building permit submittal*
- *Projects less than 2.5 acres are reviewed under ministerial building permit submittal*

Medium-sized SES: >7.5 acres up to 30 acres *or* **up to 1 MW utility solar**

- *Can be onsite ('accessory') and/or offsite ('utility') serving*
- *Medium-sized solar located on prime farmland and Williamson Act contracted land or that will remove Swainson's hawk foraging habitat require discretionary Minor Use Permit and environmental review*
- *Projects not located on prime farmland or WA land and that will not remove SH foraging habitat may be permitted under non-discretionary Site Plan Review*
- *Medium-sized solar use projects that require a Use Permit are subject to the Agricultural Conservation and Mitigation Program*
  - *A medium-sized solar energy system that is found to offset energy demands of an agricultural operation may not require ag mitigation [County Code Section 8-2.404(b)].*

Large-scale SES: > 30 acres

- *Large-scale solar projects require Major Use Permit, environmental review, and mitigation under the Ag Conservation and Mitigation Program*
- *Projects up to 120 acres may be approved by Planning Commission*
- *Projects greater than 120 acres must be approved by the Board upon a recommendation from the PC*

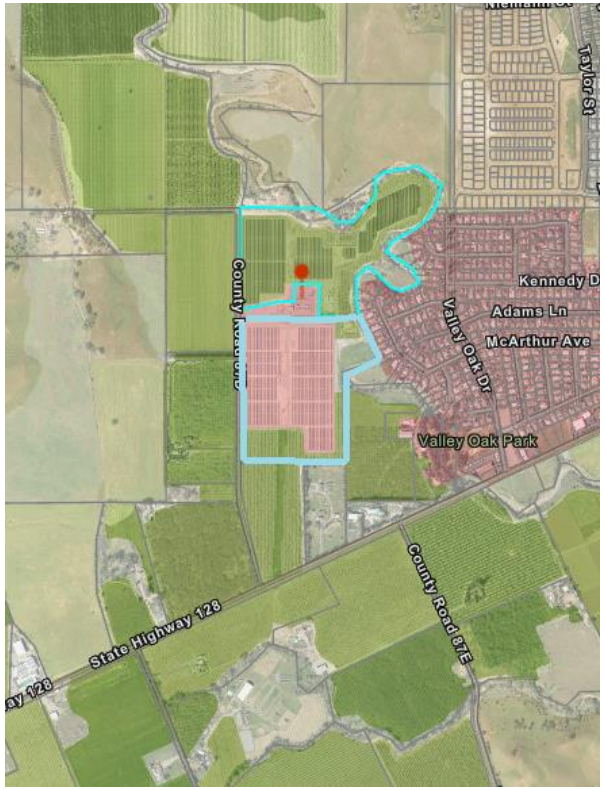
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WEIGHTS & MEASURES SOLAR USE REVIEWS

The Agricultural Commissioner takes into consideration the following:

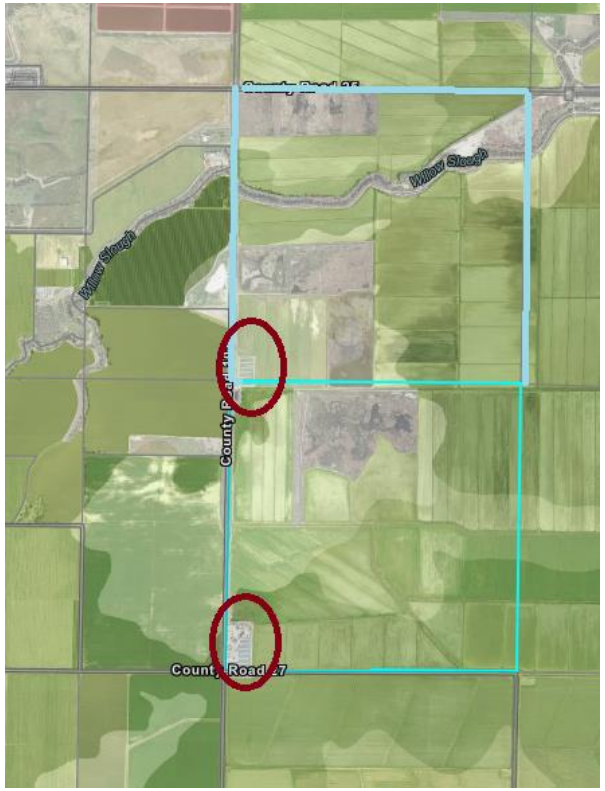
- Will the solar use remove the productive capabilities of prime farmland
  - *Crop history and value of crops grown at the site are reviewed based on crop reports*
- Is the project located on farmland under Williamson Act contract
- How will the solar use project impact adjacent farmland
  - *Can it affect the farming practices of adjacent farmers (i.e., based on Yolo County Permit Conditions for orchard blast and aerial applications)*
- Does the proposed solar site design lend itself to continued agricultural use of the property
  - *Will the project benefit the ag operations or provide other benefits*
- Is there a community or overall County benefit(s) that outweighs the potential impact to the productive agricultural capability of the land

SOLAR PROJECTS APPROVED UNDER discretionary USE PERMIT and environmental review (2013-2023)

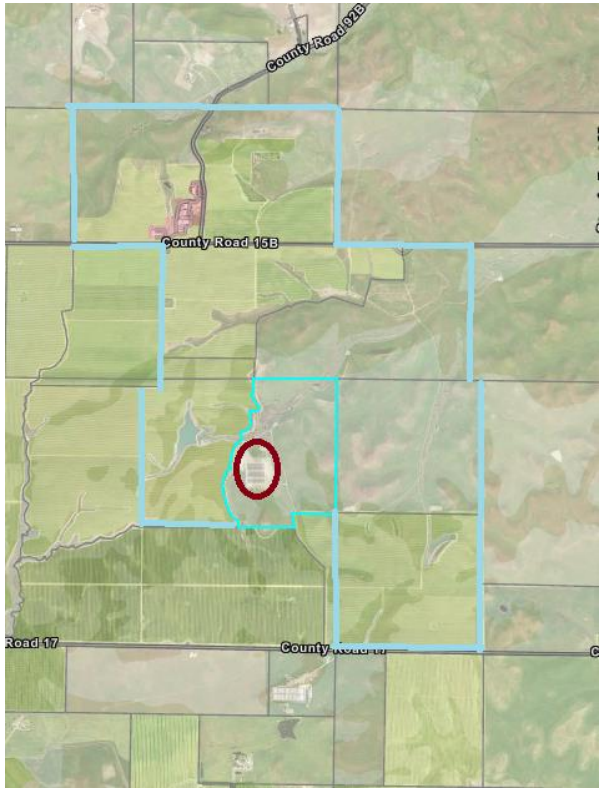
- Putah Creek Solar I located off CR 87D near Winters adjacent to Putah Creek Substation (2013)
  - 2 MW on approx. 18 acres
  - Agriculture and habitat mitigation
  - Utility serving
- Conaway Solar I located off CR 103 near Woodland (2016)
  - 1.12 MW on 3.28 acres
  - Mitigated for loss of habitat
  - Ag mitigation not required (onsite serving)
- Conaway Solar II located off CR 27/103 (2016)
  - 1.12 MW on 3.32 acres
  - No mitigation required
  - Onsite serving
- Putah Creek Solar II located immediately north of Putah Creek Substation (2020)
  - 3 MW on approx. 19 acres (includes battery storage)
  - Ag and habitat mitigation required
  - Utility serving (PPA w/ VCE)
- Matchbook Wines located off CR 92B/CR 17 in Dunnigan Hills (2020)
  - 1.38 MW on 3.68 acres
  - No mitigation required
  - Onsite serving
- Bayer Solar located off Hwy 16 near Woodland (2022)
  - 2 MW on 10.8 acres
  - Pollinator-friendly solar design
  - No mitigation required (onsite serving)



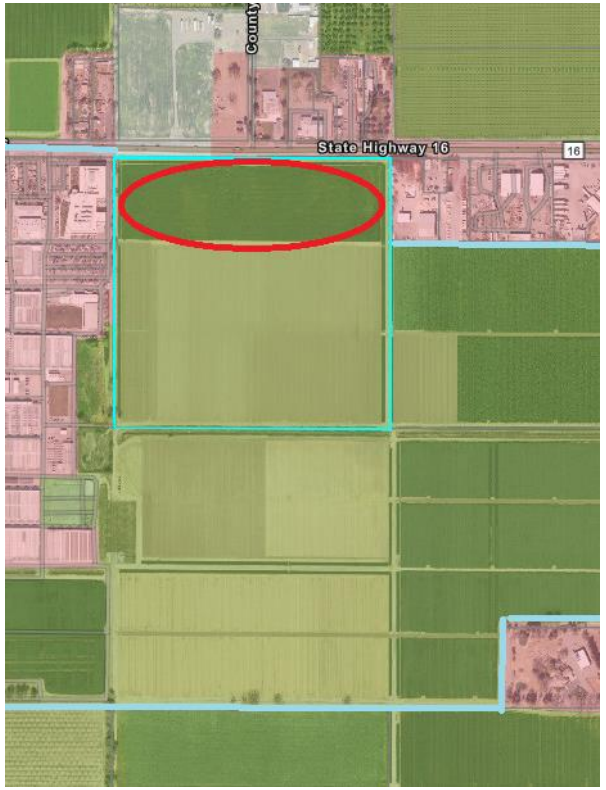
PUTAH CREEK SOLAR I AND II



CONAWAY SOLAR I AND II



MATCHBOOK WINES SOLAR



BAYER SOLAR

10.62 MW on approximately 58.08 acres
(29.8 acres mapped as Prime Farmland)

SOLAR PROJECTS APPROVED UNDER ministerial SITE PLAN REVIEW (2013-2023)

- Clark Pacific Solar located of Best Ranch Rd near Woodland (2016)
  - < 1 MW (792 kW) on 7 acres
  - No mitigation required
  - Onsite serving
- Bullero Farms Solar located off CR 27 near Woodland (2021)
  - 1.13 MW on 3.1acres
  - No mitigation required
  - Onsite serving
- Chickahominy Lands Accessory Solar near Winters (2023)
  - < 1 MW (750 kW) on 2.86 acres
  - No mitigation required
  - Onsite serving

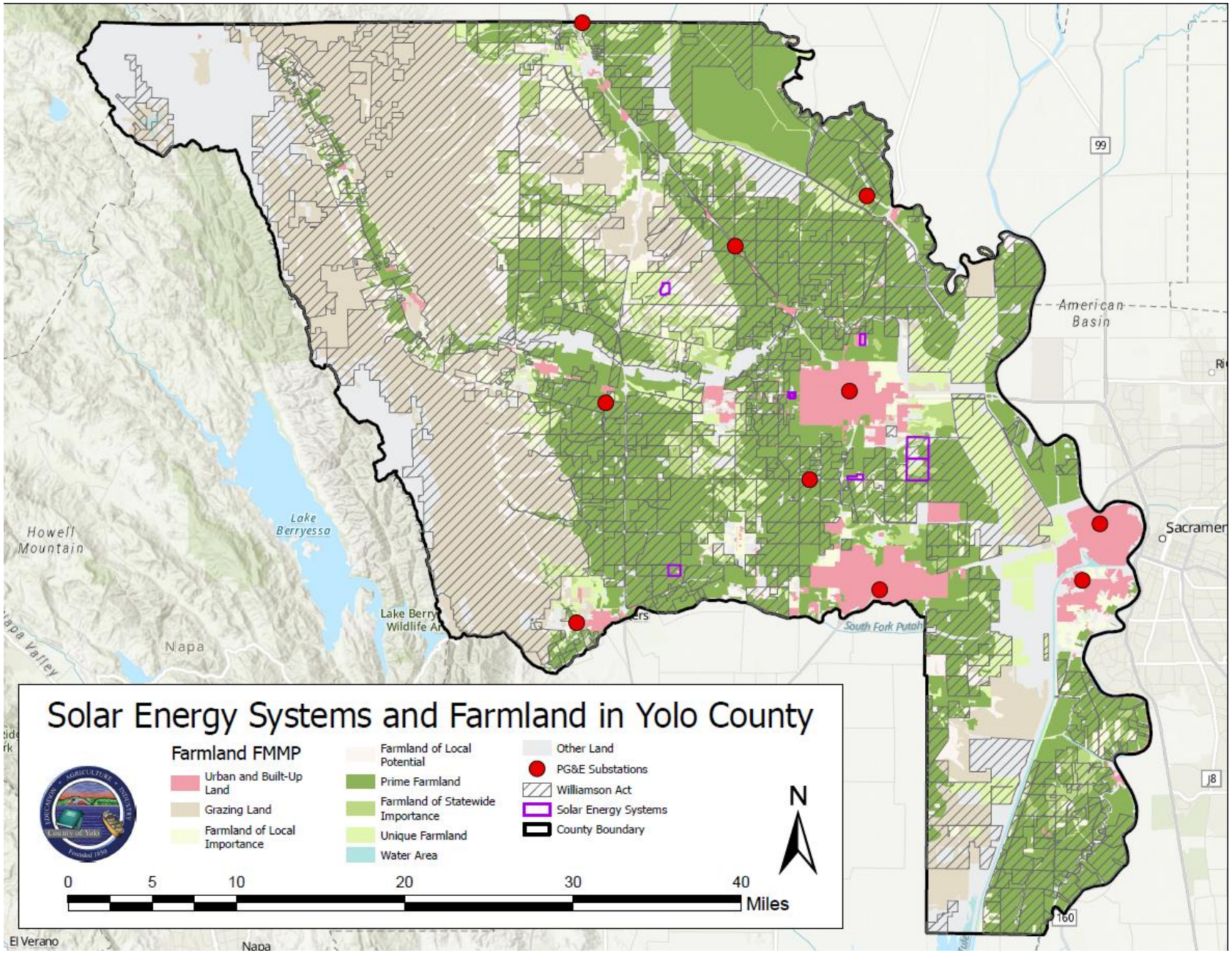
CLARK PACIFIC SOLAR

BULLERO FARMS SOLAR

CHICKAHOMINY LANDS ACCESSORY SOLAR

2.67 MW on 12.96 acres
(2.86 acres mapped as Prime)

PG&E SUBSTATION LOCATIONS



AGRIVOLTAICS AND THE FUTURE OF SOLAR IN YOLO COUNTY

- *solar grazing*
- *pollinator-friendly solar*
- *pairing crop production on solar-occupied land*
  - *native grasses and pollinator habitat have carbon sequestration benefits*

Climate Action, Adaptation, and Community Resilience

Meeting the County's commitment for achieving a carbon negative footprint

Development and use of local renewable energy sources, such as solar, will be critical to meeting the **County's goal of achieving a carbon-negative footprint by 2030**.

Local solar **reduces energy transmission losses** and **increases system resilience**.