



# JUST THE **FACTS**

## TOPAZ SOLAR FARMS

### OVERVIEW

Topaz Solar Farms is located on 4,700 acres of private land in San Luis Obispo County, Calif. The project was completed in March 2015 and is one of the largest solar projects in the world. The 550-megawatt photovoltaic project generates enough renewable energy to power approximately 180,000 average California homes.



Topaz Solar Farms generates electricity with no emissions, no waste production, no water use and has the smallest carbon footprint of any PV technology. The project uses photovoltaic modules that are mounted at a 25 degree angle, capturing maximum sun exposure. The tallest component of the array and mounting structure is typically 5.5 feet above grade.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company purchases the energy generated by the Topaz project under a 25-year power purchase agreement. The site is adjacent to the existing 230-kV Morro Bay-to-Midway transmission line, which provides access to transmission capacity.

The Topaz project is built on previously disturbed agricultural land in an area within PG&E's service territory with the best solar insolation.

Working closely with San Luis Obispo County, state and federal resource agencies, and national and local environmental groups, Topaz was developed to avoid, minimize and mitigate environmental impacts. Following the end of project operations, the area will be restored, leaving more than 20,000 acres that will be protected in perpetuity as native species habitat.

- Productive grassland habitat for native plants and animals while passively farming the sun's energy.
- No panel washing is required. Annual rainfall in the Carrisa Plains is sufficient to clean the panels.
- Year-round vegetation monitoring provides dust control and habitat for native species. Annually, a variety of grazing methods are used throughout the project footprint for vegetation management.

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- Between 2015 and 2020, monitoring efforts of the San Joaquin kit fox – a federally listed endangered species – will be done throughout the project footprint and the surrounding mitigation lands.



- Situated on nonprime agricultural land, animals can graze throughout the project footprint within wildlife movement corridors. The movement corridors support Pronghorn Antelope and Tule Elk.
- The project has no impact on Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp and Longhorn Fairy Shrimp; there is no nesting habitat for the Mountain Plover on-site, so impact is negligible.
- The modules installed at Topaz are made from reusable materials and, to the extent possible, the components are recycled.

### ABOUT BHE RENEWABLES

An industry leader in solar energy generation ownership, BHE Renewables is dedicated to the communities where its projects are located. The company continues to develop its portfolio with noncarbon resources that bring economic and environmental benefits to stakeholders and works to meet community needs by supporting local events and initiatives.

BHE Renewables’ solar projects include the 550-megawatt Topaz Solar Farms in San Luis Obispo County, Calif., the 586-megawatt Solar Star projects, two co-located projects in Kern and Los Angeles counties in California; the 290-megawatt\* Agua Caliente project in Yuma County, Ariz.; and the 50-megawatt Pearl project and 110-megawatt Alamo 6 project, both located in Pecos County, Texas. BHE Renewables also is developing 96 megawatts of community solar garden projects in Minnesota across 28 individual projects.

### MEDIA INQUIRIES

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\*BHE Renewables owns a 49 percent interest in Agua Caliente.