

September 26, 2023

Ventura County Board of Supervisors

Receive and File Planning Division Assessment Pursuant to General Plan Policy EV-4.4 and Programs COS-O and HAZ-O to Identify Suitable Lands and Priority Areas for the Development of Renewable Energy Generation and Storage Projects; Seek Board Direction on Whether to Initiate General Plan and/or County Zoning Ordinance Amendments to Implement These Programs and Policies

Case No. PL23-0075

Agenda Item No. 75



**Resource Management Agency, Planning Division
Donald Nielsen, Case Planner
Area Plans and Resources Section**

Presentation Overview

1. Project Background
2. Regulatory Setting
3. Renewable Energy Assessment
4. Policy Options and Concurrent Processing
5. Public Comment



Project Background

Background

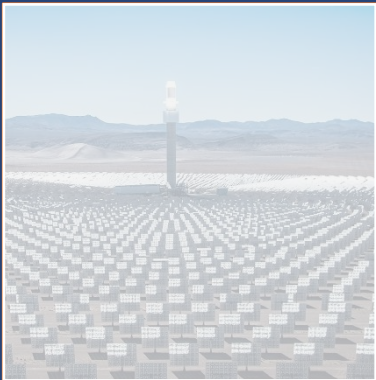


- September 2020 – Board of Supervisors adopted 2040 General Plan
- February 2023 – Per Division Work Plan started General Plan implementation for Programs COS-O, HAZ-O, and Policy EV-4.4
 - COS-O: Assessment of Suitable Lands Near Electrical Transmission and Distribution Lines for Renewable Energy Priority Zone
 - EV-4.4: Identify Locations for Renewable Energy Facilities
 - HAZ-O: Solar Concentration Restriction Near Naval Base Ventura County

Background– Renewable Energy Types



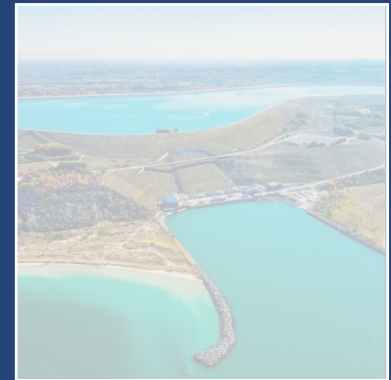
Solar Array



Wind Turbine



Energy Storage

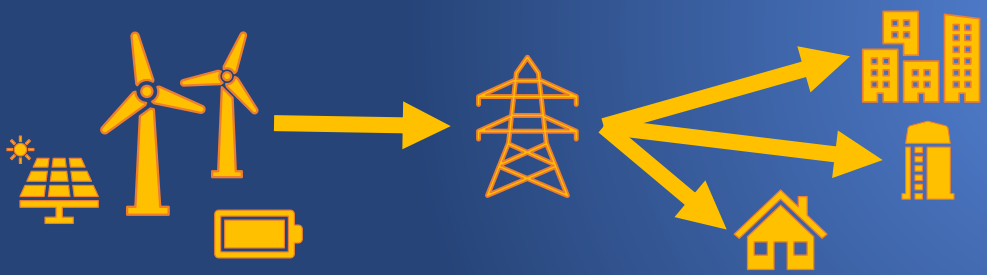


Background– Scale of Use



Grid

Energy Transferred from Facility into the Grid for Distribution



Beedy Street BESS



Fillmore Solar

Accessory

Energy Transferred from Onsite Facility to Onsite Uses



Todd Road Jail



Limoneria Ranch

Existing Projects



County Solar Facility - Fillmore



Beedy Street Energy Storage



CSUCI Solar (State Project)



Silverstrand Grid (Camarillo)





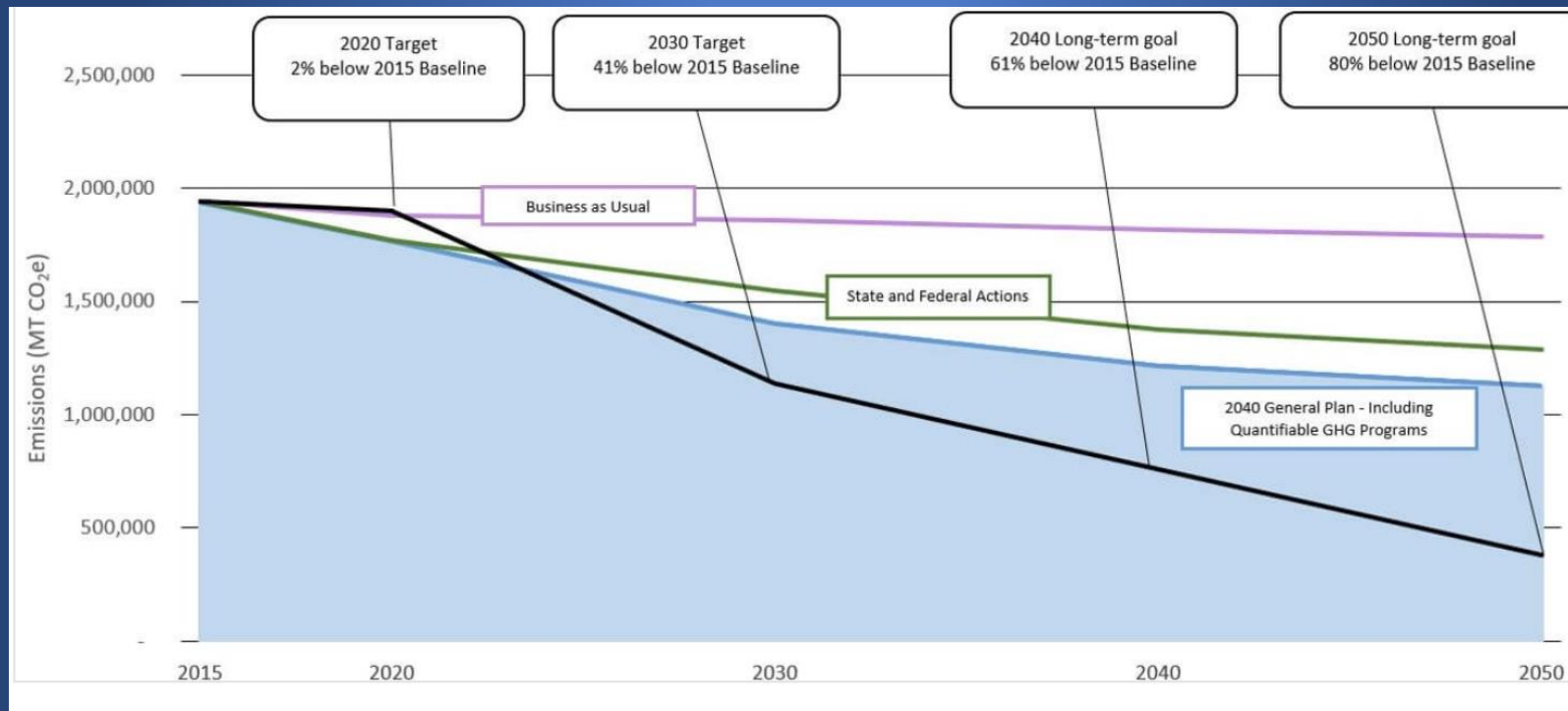
Regulatory Setting

Regulatory Setting – Ventura County General Plan



Climate Action Plan

- Appendix B summarizes goals, policies and programs from all elements
- Used to estimate planned greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions
- Required by State Mandates (California Environmental Quality Act and emissions reduction targets)



Regulatory Setting – State GHG Reduction Goals



Assembly Bill 205 (2022)

- Created new certification process for qualified projects
- Allows State Climate Energy Commission (CEC) to authorize:
 - Non-fossil-fueled powerplants,
 - Renewable energy generation and storage facilities, and
 - Facilities that manufacture, produce, or assemble specialized products, components, or systems of non-fossil-fueled powerplants and energy storage facilities

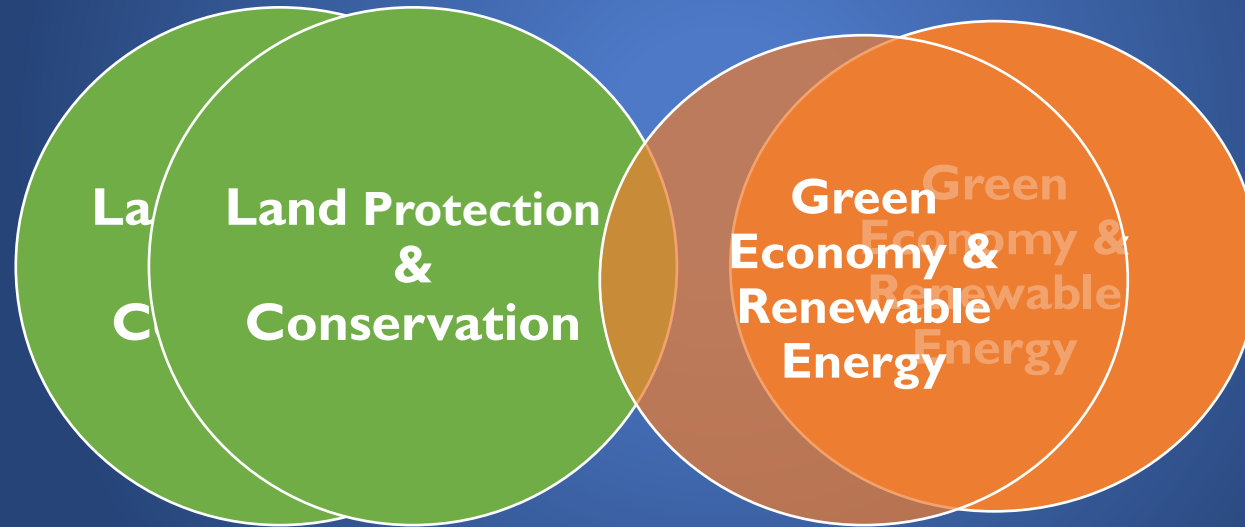
Regulatory Setting – State GHG Reduction Goals



Renewable Energy Targets

- Clean Power Alliance (CPA) target for battery energy storage MW procurement by 2035 is 1,440 MW
- County “prorated share estimate” based on CPA target:
 - About 3 acres for unincorporated County
 - About 27 acres for countywide, including cities
- CEC target for Statewide battery energy storage MW procurement by 2035 is **19,500 MW**, and County “prorated share estimate” would be **410 MW (~16 acres)**.

Regulatory Setting – VC General Plan

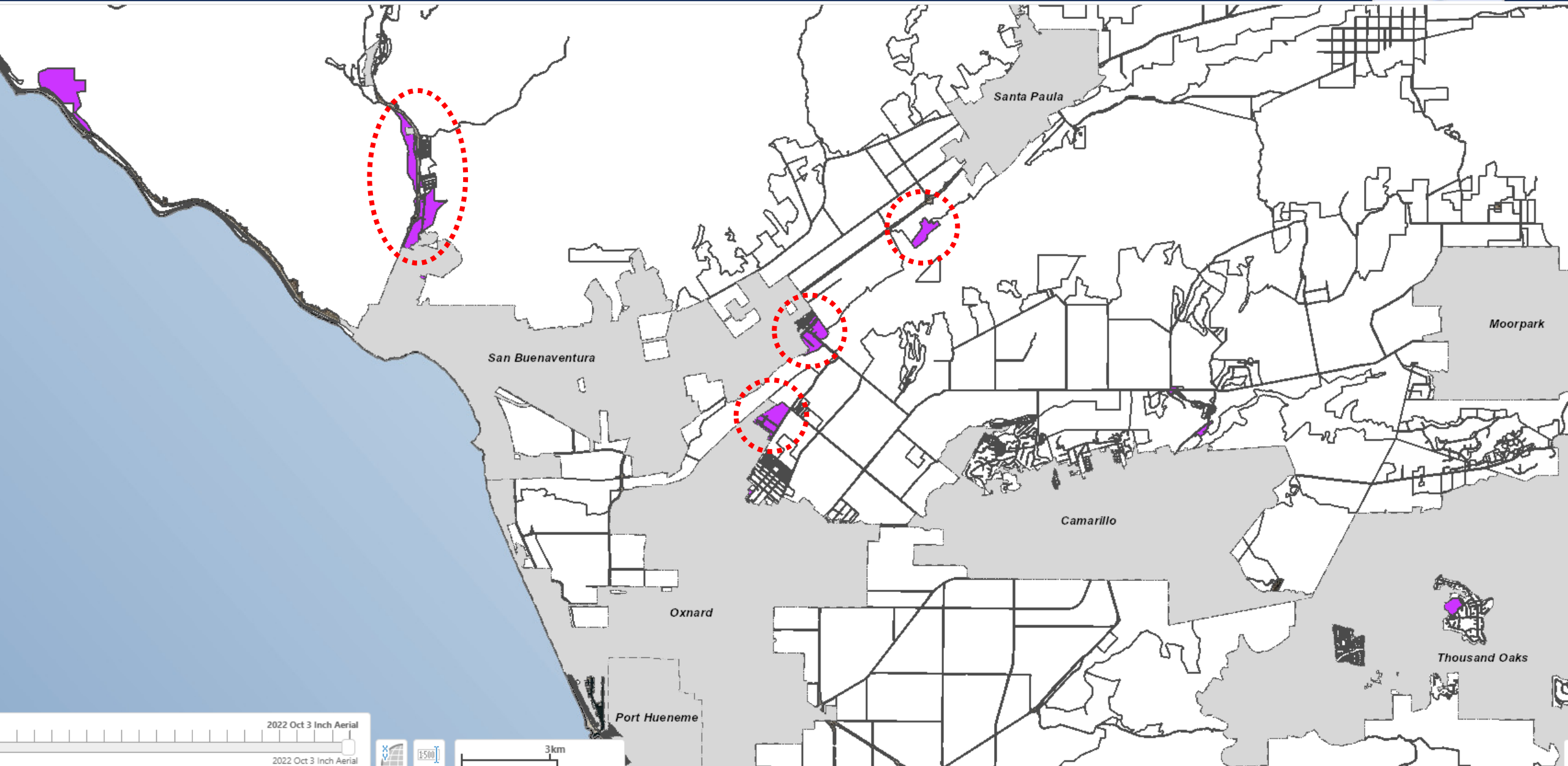


Regulatory Setting – Ventura County General Plan



- Policies support preservation of open space and agricultural lands and green economy (with renewable energy and storage)
- Battery energy storage developers seek permit pathway to allow on Open Space and Agricultural designated lands
- Program COS-O and Policy EV-4.4 suggest zoning amendments may be needed
- Policy LU-11.9--Alternative Energy and Alternative Fuel Production: The County shall allow the production of alternative energy and alternative fuels on land within the **Industrial designation** to reduce the reliance on petroleum-based fuel and greenhouse gas emissions

General Plan Lands with Industrial Designation



Regulatory Setting – Zoning Ordinances



Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance

- “Energy Production from Renewable Resources” Use
 - Does NOT include energy storage
 - Solar/wind allowed in OS, AE, and RA with Planning Commission CUP
- Energy storage allowed in Industrial M2 & M3 zones with Planning Director CUP for warehousing and storage

Coastal Zoning Ordinance

“Energy Facility”

- Includes energy storage
- Allowed in COS and CM with Planning Commission CUP
- Not allowed in environmentally sensitive habitat area (ESHA)

Regulatory Setting – SOAR, Greenbelts and Guidelines



Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources (SOAR) Initiative

Requires county-wide vote to redesignate AG, OS, or Rural lands, or change the policies and zoning to allow more intensive uses in these lands

Greenbelts

- 7 Agreements
- Supports AG and OS conservation goals
- Land uses need to be consistent with AG and OS zones

Guidelines of Orderly Development

- Urban Development should be located within cities when practical
- LAFCo staff indicated energy storage is similar to industrial uses

Regulatory Setting – SOAR



- Allowing Energy Storage within Ag or OS lands would require a public SOAR vote because:
 - Grid Scale energy storage would not exclusively serve Ag and OS uses
 - Grid scale energy storage is more intensive use than existing uses
- Required items for SOAR Amendments prior to a public vote:
 - CEQA analysis
 - Tribal coordination
 - Planning Commission and Board Hearings

Local Setting – Coordination and Outreach

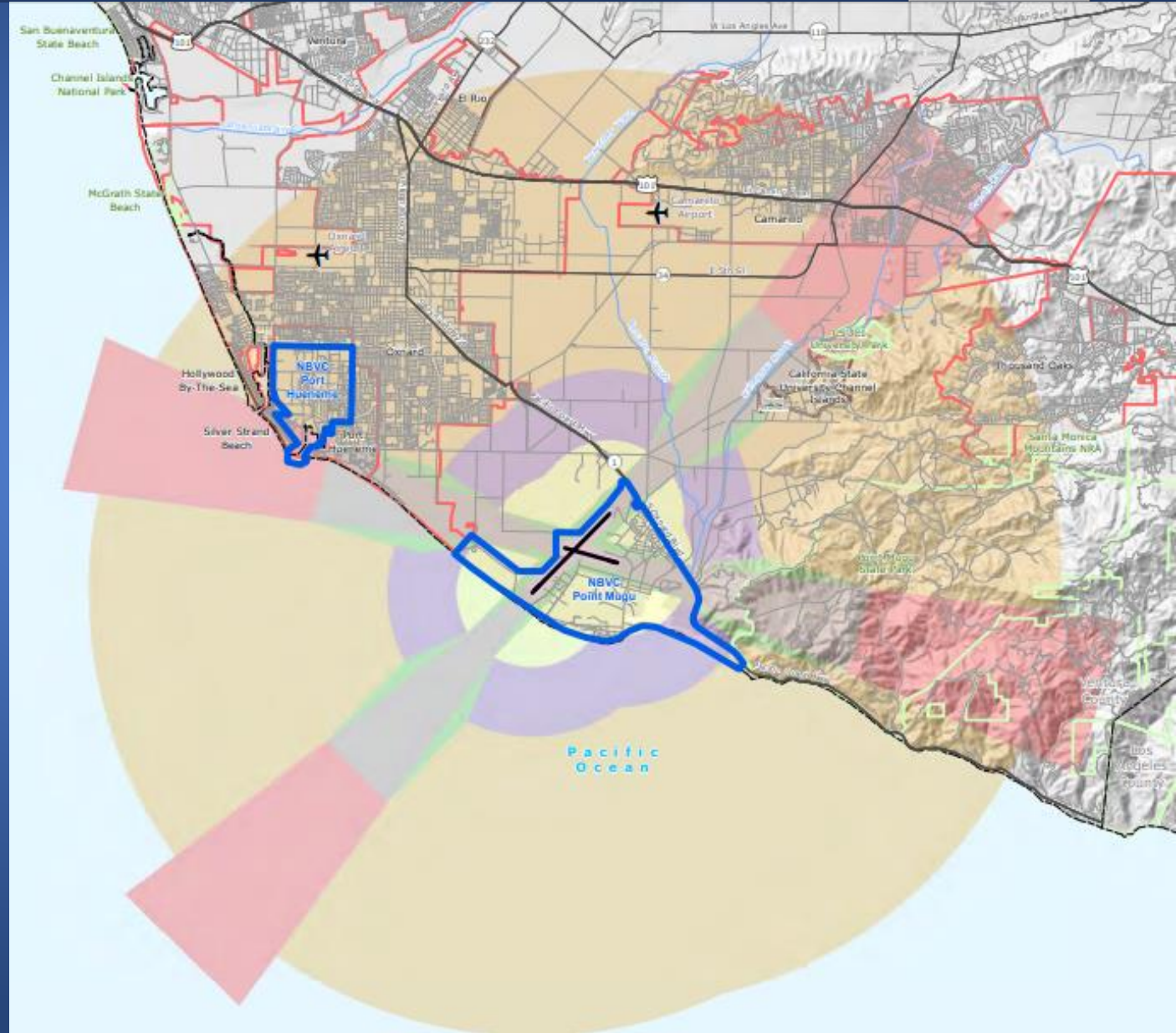


- Meetings with County Agencies
 - Fire Department, Public Works Agency, and Agriculture/Weights and Measures, etc.
- Renewable energy industry representatives and SoCal Edison
- Naval Base Ventura County and Notified Department of Defense (DOD) Siting Clearinghouse
- Email to notifications lists for General Plan Update and Interested Parties List

Local Setting – Coordination and Outreach



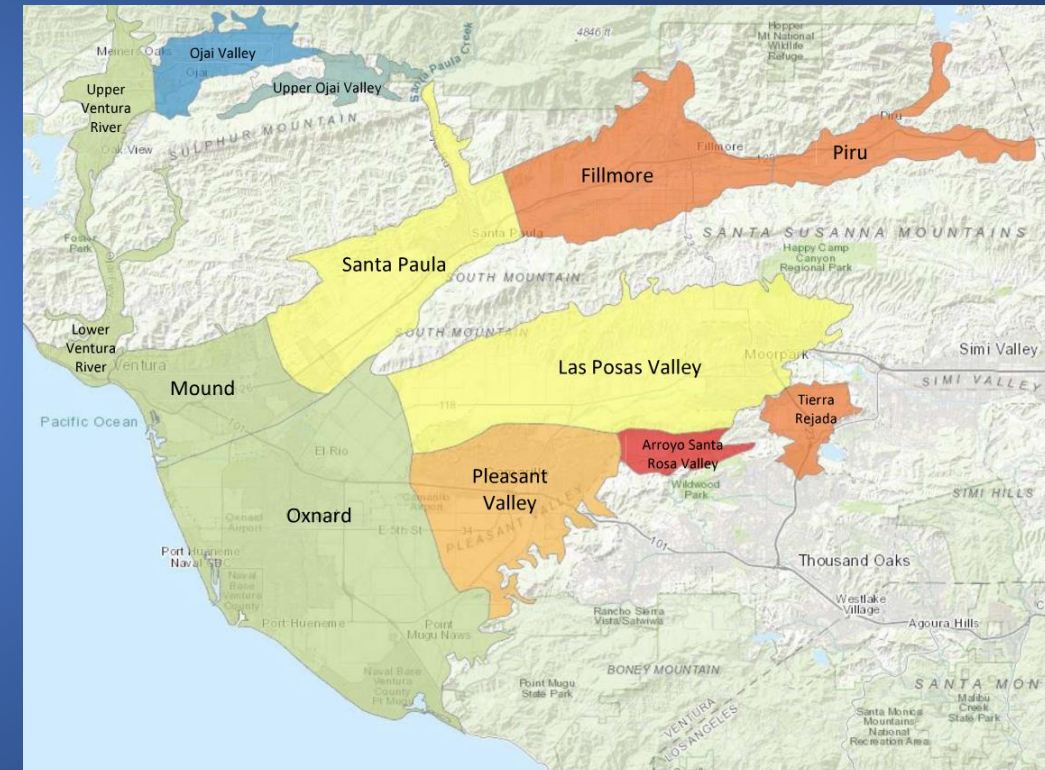
Naval Base Point Mugu seeks proximity limitations for solar concentrators, wind turbines, light and glare control (General Plan Program HAZ-O, Policy HAZ-8.5)



Map-based Risk Assessment of Agriculture



- County received a Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Planning Grant in 2021
- Intent of the SALC program is to protect and maintain existing agricultural lands to avoid development/increases in GHGs
- Map-based risk assessment of agriculture determined some groundwater sub-basins are more vulnerable to climate change than others



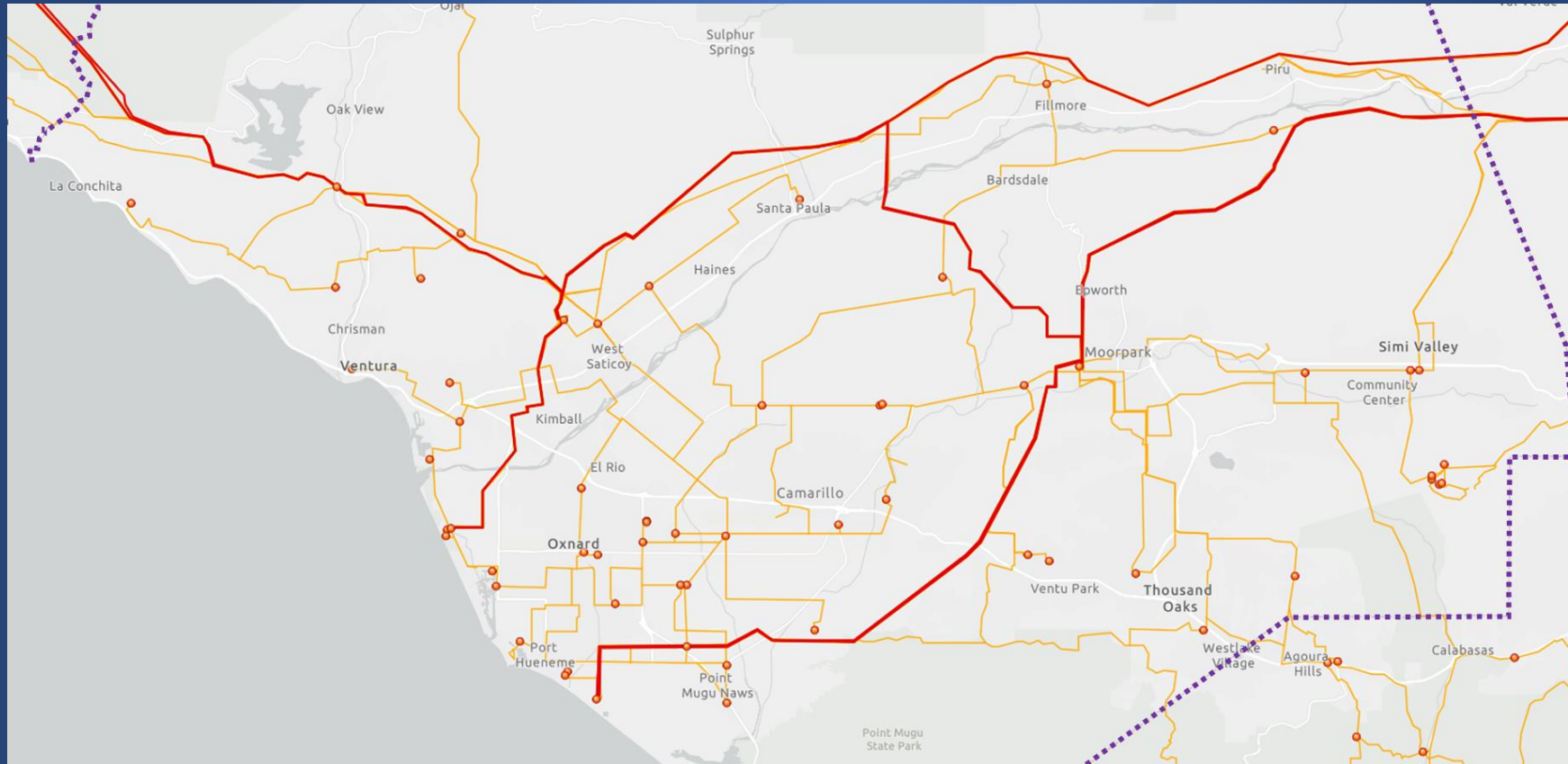


Renewable Energy Assessment

Renewable Energy Siting Assessment – Method



- Completed according to Program COS-O
- Study suitable lands near electrical transmission lines



Renewable Energy Siting Assessment – Method



- GIS-based evaluation focused on solar arrays, wind, turbines and battery energy storage (Exhibit I)
- Applied 18 criteria related to land use suitability for grid scale renewable energy projects, such as:
 - Distance to transmission and distribution lines (6 and 12 miles)
 - Steep slopes (over 20%), flood zones, fire hazard severity zones
 - California Condor ranges, wildlife corridors, wetlands.
 - Naval Base Point Mugu Accident Potential Zones etc.
 - Did not include urban residential zones, cities, and State/Federal lands



Results for Solar

tinyurl.com/2nsft542

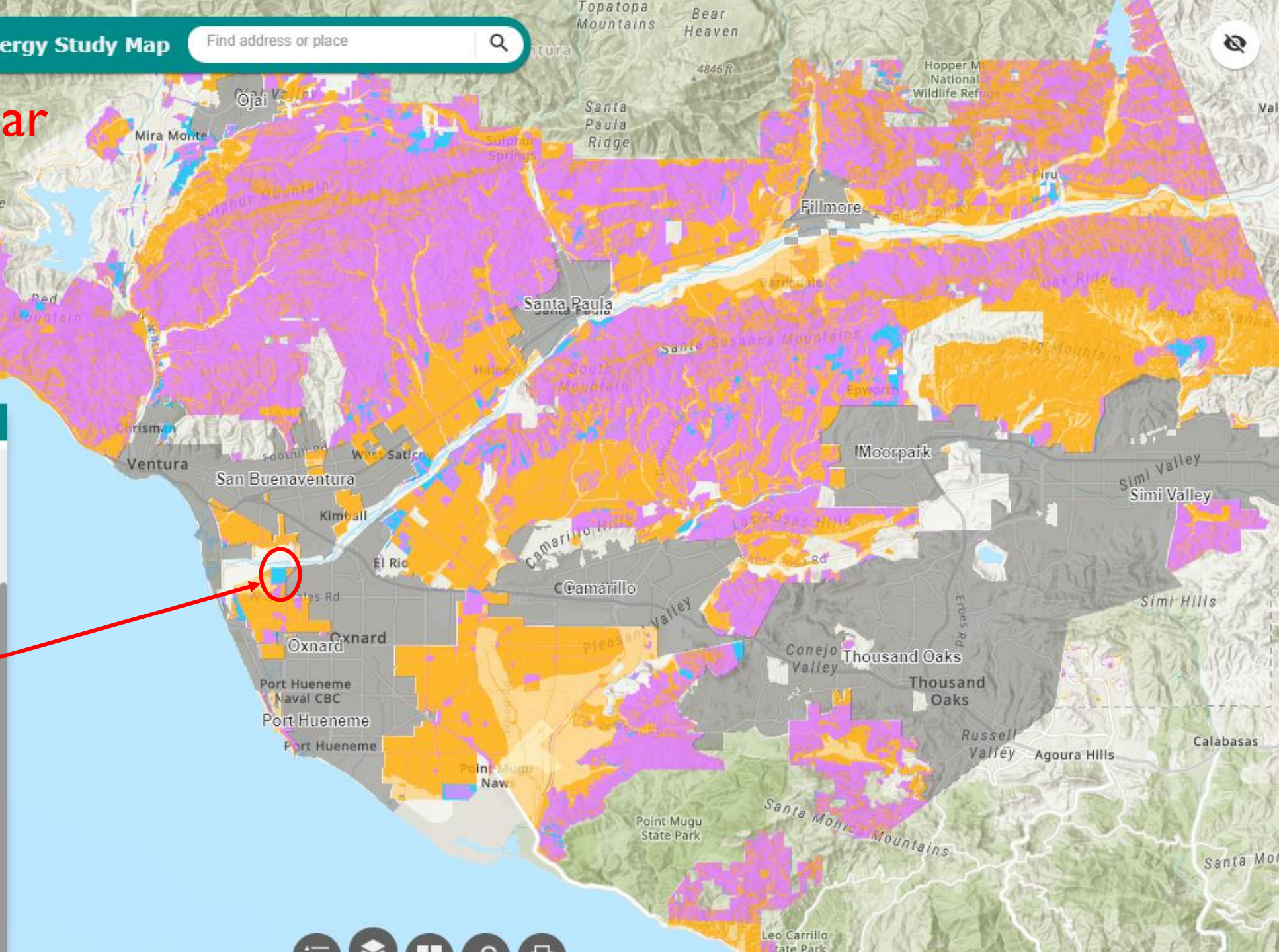


Layer List

- ☐ Zoning
- ☐ Unincorporated Parcels
- ☐ Energy Storage
- ☒ Solar Energy

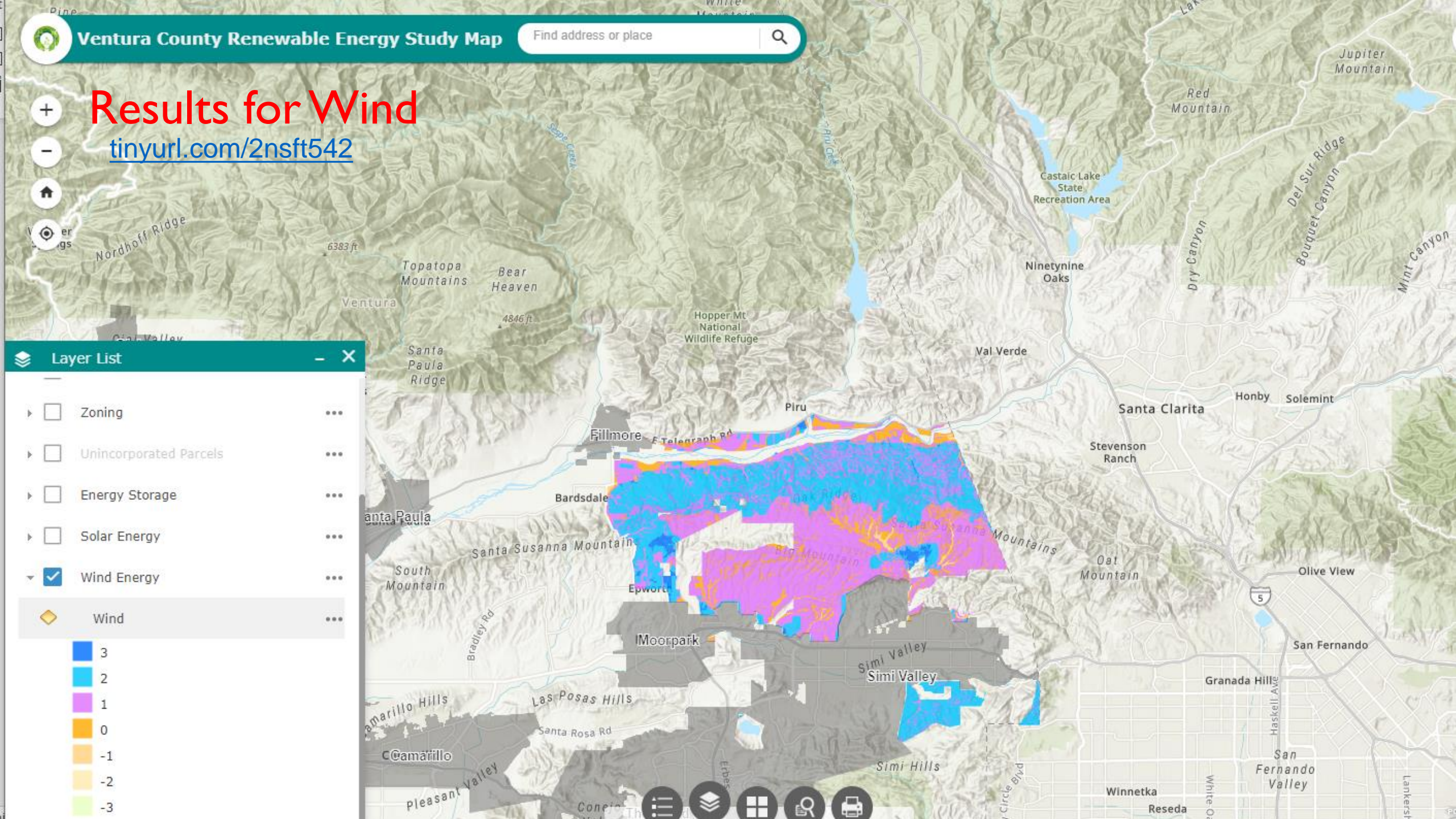
Solar

3
2
1
0
-1
-2
-3
-4

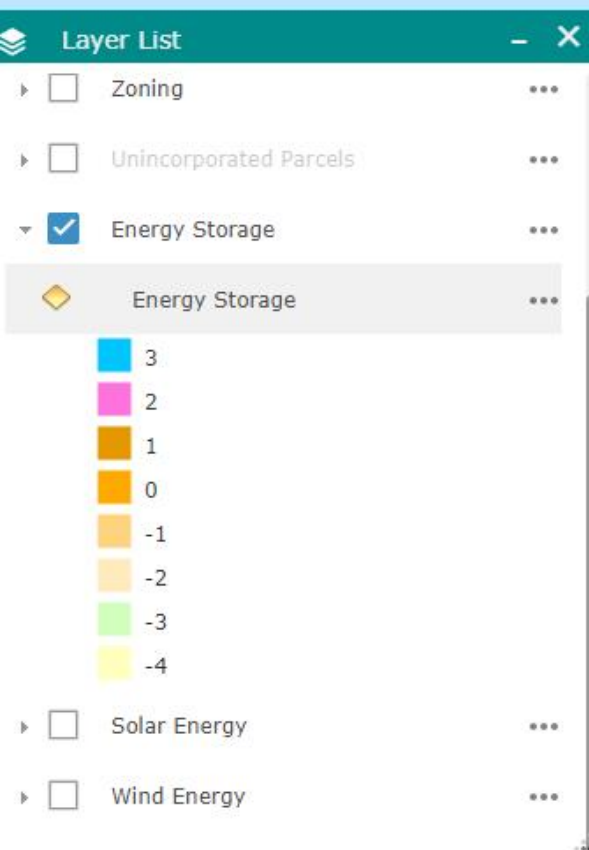


Results for Wind

tinyurl.com/2nsft542



tinyurl.com/2nsft542



Summary of Findings



Technology	Total Potential Acres	Total Potential MW	Total Optimal Acres	Total Optimal MW	Acres per MW
Solar	324,752	41,107	6,087	771	7.90
Wind	52,635	21,310	19,944	8,075	2.47
<u>Energy Storage</u>	324,752	8,118,812	1,572	39,301	0.04

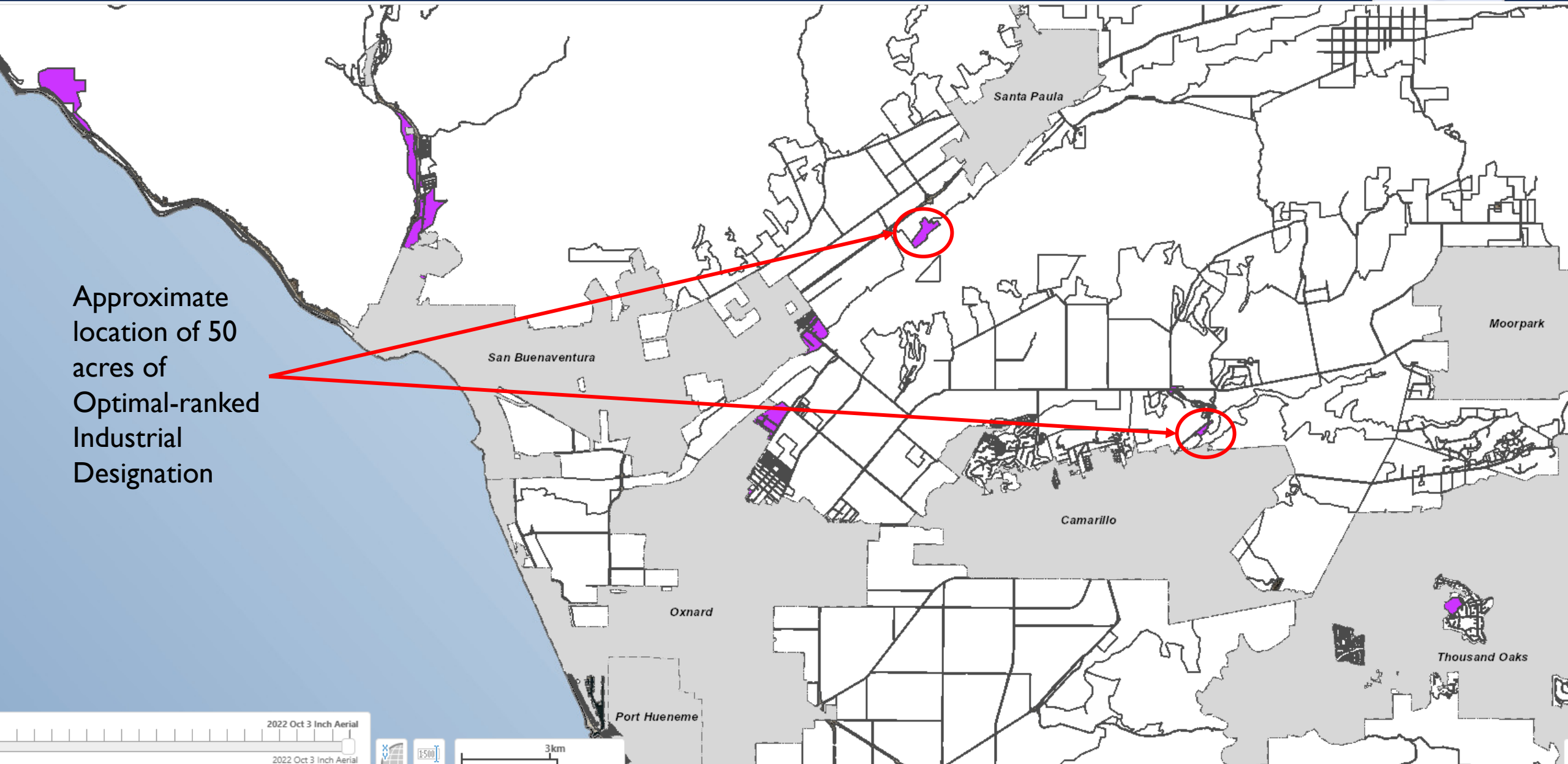
Notes: MW = megawatt. Acres and MW values are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Source: Ascent Environmental 2023.

Optimal-Ranked Battery Energy Storage Summary	
General Plan Designation	Acres
Commercial Planned Development	9
ECU-Agricultural	34
Industrial	50
Open Space	1468

- County “Prorated” Share with Clean Power Alliance Target for 2035 is 3-27 acres
- 2035 County “Prorated” Share with State CPUC is approx. 16 acres

General Plan Lands with Industrial Designation





Policy Options

Policy Options



- Grid scale battery energy storage is currently allowed only in the Industrial (M1, M2, and M3) zones and limited coastal zones
- Solar and Wind are allowed in Industrial (M1, M2, and M3), Open Space, and Agricultural Exclusive zones, and limited coastal zones

If more lands/zones are needed for battery energy storage, then consider Options 1 or 2:

- Option 1: Overlay a Priority Energy Zone
- Option 2: Amend the Zoning Ordinance Use Matrix

Policy Options



Option 1: Overlay a Priority Energy Zone to allow battery energy storage in limited acres of Open Space/Agriculture Exclusive Zones

- Utilize Assessment results
- Include proximity limitations for Naval Base
- Focus on suitable lands based on other criteria such as areas with impacted groundwater basins, CUPA/Brownfield sites, and optimal for connecting with California Independent System Operator (CAISO) energy market



Option 2: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to Allow in Limited Acres of Open Space/Agriculture Exclusive Zones

Example of Potential Use Matrix Category Amendments (NCZO, Section 8105-4)											
	OS	AE	RA	RE	RO	R1	R2	RPD	RHD	TP	TRU
ENERGY PRODUCTION FROM RENEWABLE SOURCES (3)											
Energy Production	CUP	CUP	CUP								
Energy Storage	CUP	CUP									

- Establish “Use only” with or without standards
- Less geographic specificity



If no additional lands beyond Industrial are needed for battery energy storage, then consider Option 3, No Action

- No expansion of acres/zones for battery energy storage
- No proximity limitations for Naval Base Ventura County

Option 3 “b”

- Provide development standards for solar, wind and storage

Policy Options – Concurrent Processing



Planning staff could process discretionary permit(s) parallel with ordinance amendments, and Planning Commission/ Board of Supervisors approve both during consecutive hearings

- Development review process informs the amendments, but amendments require more time
- If you Board directs staff to conduct concurrent processing with a select policy option, limit to no more than two applications
- SOAR implications

Policy Options – SOAR Vote



If you Board directs staff to administer a SOAR Vote:

- A budget adjustment and Three-Year Work Plan adjustment may be needed
- Determine Acreage limit or not
 - 10 acres of Open Space for energy storage uses, or
 - 30, 50 or 100 acres for more flexibility
- Next County-wide elections: March 5 and November 5, 2024, but there are other annual placeholder dates to conduct an election if needed

Policy Options Summary Table



	General Plan Amendment	Public SOAR Vote	Concurrent Processing in AG/OS	Lands Within At-Risk Water Table Basins (SALC Study)	Naval Base Proximity Limitation (JLUS Policies)
Option 1: Overlay Zone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Option 2: Zoning as an Allowed Use	Yes	Yes	Yes	Limited	Limited
Option 3.a: No Action-- use Industrial Zones and AB 205	No	No	No	No	No
Option 3.b: No Action on storage-- but develop standards for solar/wind/storage	No	No	No	No	Limited



- Industry Comments – Projects need to connect to California Independent System Operator Queue (i.e. the energy market)
- SOAR Representatives
- Letters Received
 - 35 Communications as of noon on 09/25/23

September 26, 2023

Ventura County Board of Supervisors

Thank you

County Staff is Available for Questions:

- Planning Staff
- County Counsel
- Ventura County Fire Department

Other Staff Available on Zoom:

- Ascent Environmental



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