

Notice of Exemption**Form D**

To: Office of Planning and Research
 PO Box 3044
 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113
 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: California Energy Commission
 1516 Ninth Street, MS-48
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Project Applicant: The Neil Jones Food Company

Project Title: TomaTek Solar Microgrid Project

Project Location – Specific: 2502 N St

Project Location – City: Firebaugh 93622

Project Location – County: Fresno

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The purpose of this project is to design, install and operate a microgrid system to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, ensure reliability, and reduce operating costs at the TomaTek Processing Facility located in the City of Firebaugh. The project will occur within the existing developed area of an existing tomato processing facility. The microgrid system consists of a solar photovoltaic (PV) system with integrated battery energy storage system (BESS) and microgrid controller. The approximately 6.5 megawatt solar PV system will be roof mounted on three existing buildings, which is estimated to produce the equivalent to a 55 percent offset of the facility's current electricity usage. The solar PV system will be used to offset daily electricity usage at the facility as well as charge the onsite BESS. The BESS and microgrid controller will enable the facility to operate essential components in case of power outage for at least four hours, which will increase the overall GHG emission efficiency of the facility by significantly reducing wasted product that typically occurs during unplanned power outages. Installation of the microgrid system will require minor foundation and electrical work, including five small concrete pads at existing paved areas and approximately 2,800 linear feet of two-foot-wide trench. The project will take place entirely within the existing facility boundary and all materials will be installed outdoors. The City of Firebaugh, acting as the lead agency, reviewed the project and determined it does not require approval of a discretionary permit by their local agency. On January 29, 2020 the City filed a notice of exemption pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15268 with the Fresno County Clerk.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Energy Commission

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: The Neil Jones Food Company

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial Exemption (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(1); Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(3); Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(4); Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number
Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15301 and 15304
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number. PRC § 21080.35
- Common Sense Exemption. (Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, §15061(b)(3))

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Reasons why project is exempt:

This project will involve the installation of solar energy systems on the roofs of three existing buildings and pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.35 is exempt from CEQA. The installation of the solar photovoltaic panels will enable the generation of energy for onsite use at an existing tomato processing facility in the City of Firebaugh. Associated equipment will not occupy more than 500 square feet of ground surface and will be located on the same or immediately adjacent parcel as the solar panels. The project does not involve a federal Clean Water Act permit; streambed alteration permit; or removal of specific required or native trees. For the reasons, this project is statutorily exempt from CEQA under Pub. Res. Code § 21080.35.

This project will involve the installation of a ground mounted BESS and microgrid controller within the fully developed property of an existing tomato processing facility in the City of Firebaugh. The project has been deemed an allowed modification to the existing food production facility use by the City of Firebaugh and does not require a local discretionary permit. The microgrid system installation will be a minor alteration to existing paved areas within the interior of the property, with no expansion beyond the existing tomato processing operation and will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment. The project will not result in a significant cumulative impact, damage resources within a scenic highway, cause substantial adverse change to the significance of a historical resource, or be located on a listed hazardous waste site. Therefore, the project falls under the categorical exemption listed in California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15301.

The project to install a microgrid system including roof mounted solar arrays, a ground mounted BESS and microgrid controller involves minor grading, trenching, and backfilling to provide an alternate source of power for the existing tomato processing facility. The BESS and microgrid controller will enable the facility to operate essential components in case of power outage for at least four hours, which will increase the overall GHG emission efficiency of the facility. These activities will not have a significant effect on the environment or impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern. The project will not involve the removal of trees. Therefore, the project is categorically exempt under California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15304.

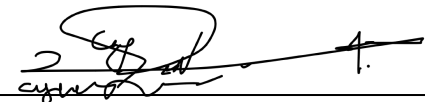
Each exemption is an independent basis for finding the project exempt.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Cyrus Ghandi **Area code/Telephone/Ext:** 916-327-1506

If filed by applicant:

- 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
- 2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature:  **Date:** 4/14/2020 **Title:** ECS I

Signed by Responsible Agency

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

APR 15 2020

Date received for filing at OPR: STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.