ATTACHMENT 1: FINDINGS

1.0 CEQA FINDINGS

1.1 FINDING THAT A PREVIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT CAN BE USED (*State CEQA Guidelines Section 15162*)

The County Board of Supervisors finds that the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (Final SEIR) prepared for the Strauss Wind Energy Project, 18EIR-00000-00001, including the Final SEIR Revision Letter dated November 12, 2019, may be used to fulfill the environmental review requirements of CEQA for the design review of this project, Case No. 18BAR-00000-00113, as discussed in Section 6.2 of the Planning Commission Preliminary Design Review Appeal Staff Report dated February 18, 2020 and incorporated herein by reference. Development of wind turbines was evaluated in the Final SEIR and there is no new information of substantial importance which would warrant additional environmental review besides what is set forth in the Final SEIR. Therefore, the Board of Supervisors finds that no new CEQA document is required and that granting preliminary approval of the subject design review application does not trigger subsequent environmental review under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15162.

1.2 LOCATION OF DOCUMENTS

The documents and other materials which constitute the record of proceedings upon which this decision is based are in the custody of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors located at 105 East Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101.

2.0 ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS

Design Review Findings

Findings required for all Design Review applications. In compliance with Subsection 35.82.070.F.1 of the County Land Use and Development Code, prior to the approval or conditional approval of an application for Design Review the review authority shall first make all of the following findings:

2.1 Overall structure shapes, as well as parts of any structure (buildings, fences, screens, signs, towers, or walls) are in proportion to and in scale with other existing or permitted structures on the same site and in the area surrounding the subject property.

The proposed utility-scale wind energy project is located within a rural area characterized by open spaces, grazing lands and mining operations. The SWEP consists primarily of

29 wind turbine generators (WTGs) up to 492 feet tall, a 295-foot high meteorological tower, a 5,000 square-foot operations and maintenance (O&M) facility, a 7.3-mile transmission line, an electrical substation and access roads. All development would be located within an approximate 5,887-acre area.

The height, scale, location and design of the wind turbines are dictated by technical requirements at locations that adequately capture of the site's wind resource to support the proposed utility-scale wind energy project. Wind turbine locations were selected along the site's ridgelines rather than at lower elevations in order to ensure adequate power generating potential for the project's purpose. Compared to an earlier approved wind energy project proposed at this location, the SWEP includes 36 fewer WTGs, thereby reducing adverse visual impacts caused by the wind turbines to the extent feasible. Similarly, the height of the meteorological tower is necessary to record weather data to determine the most efficient operational strategy for the WTGs.

The transmission line's location was selected to minimize impacts to oak woodlands and other sensitive biological resources to the maximum extent feasible. Additionally, because of structural and operational requirements, the turbines exterior finish cannot be altered from the manufacturer's original coating and color. Aviation safety requirements also restrict the ability to change the color of the WTGs.

These elements of the project for which the design is dictated by technical requirements have shapes that are standard for wind energy projects, and they are designed at a scale intended to minimize visual impacts while still achieving the project's purpose.

The O&M building and electrical substation are in proportion to and in scale with other existing or permitted structures on the same site and in the area surrounding of the subject property. The O&M building is designed to appear as a barn or agricultural outbuilding with a scale, style and color palette that helps it conform to its agricultural setting. Landscaping in the O&M building area is minimized similar to the rolling hills dominated by grasslands which surround the site. The electrical substation, which is located on the south side of a residential neighborhood in the City of Lompoc would be screened to minimize views of the structures from public viewing areas to the extent feasible.

Based on the foregoing, this finding can be made.

2.2 Electrical and mechanical equipment will be well integrated into the total design concept.

The SWEP is a utility-scale electrical generating development. Therefore, most of SWEP's project components are comprised of electrical and mechanical equipment.

These include the 29 WTGs, a substation, an electrical switchyard, an underground communication system, a 7.3-mile overhead electrical transmission line, and lighting on the O&M facility. There are specific technical requirements that dictate some of these project components' design. With the onsite substation and switchyard, stones and gravels are needed for electrocution protection and as a fire barrier for equipment and surrounding vegetation. For security and safety, the project's switchyard and onsite substation are surrounded and secured by an 8-foot, chain-linked fence topped with three-strand barbed wire, raked outward at a 45-degree angle. The WTGs, height and location are dictated by effectively capturing the site's wind resource. The WTGs are painted white to reflect UV radiation, protecting material from degrading and to also to stand out to minimize air traffic collisions.

However, electrical and mechanical equipment will be well integrated into the total design to the greatest extent feasible. The WTGs' white color will help the turbines blend in from the ground level on cloudy days. Condition No. 5 (MM VIS-4) of the approved CUP requires submittal of a Landscape and Lighting Plan. In this plan, an appropriate colorant to reduce the visual contrast of exposed rock from installation of mechanical and electrical equipment would be required. In addition, landscaping would be required to substantially screen the switchyard pad, fencing and industrial-appearing components within the switchyard. A minimum height of six to eight-foot tall shrubs and trees would be required for the switchyard screening. The plan would include revegetating cut and fill slopes and graded area. Condition 11 (MM BIO-3) requires a revegetation plan that requires a native plant seed mix to integrate into the project surrounding environment. Facility lighting will be minimal, hooded and directed downward. All lighting on electrical and mechanical equipment will be eliminated unless it is required by a code which is included in the National Electric Safety Code Handbook Section 11. This Section states that outdoor lighting is not required at unattended stations. The switchyard and the substation will have switch only active lighting, and they will not use motion detection nor timers. On the O&M building, light fixtures must be reduced and recessed under the eaves. Therefore, this finding can be made.

2.3 There will be harmony of color, composition, and material on all sides of a structure.

The O&M facility includes a building that will be designed as a rural barn, with rustic materials, including corrugated steel sidings, a brown paint finish for doors, and a galvanized-ribbed metal roof. Rustic paved aprons will adorn the entrance to the driveway of the facility. Natural materials, such as gravel, chip seal or colored concrete will be used for the facilities' surfaces. These materials will ensure the O&M facility will be in harmony of color, composition, and material on all sides. See Attachment G of this

staff report. The O&M facility will be in the center of the project site and will be where employees and any visitors gather.

Many of the SWEP's project components are dictated by technical requirements, and design options are limited. However, the wind turbines will all have a similar appearance, being constructed of the same materials and painted the same color. Therefore, this finding can be made.

2.4 There will be a limited number of materials on the exterior face of the structure.

The O&M building materials will be designed as a rural barn, with limited materials on the exterior of the building. The exterior siding will be corrugated steel with a galvanized-ribbed metal roof. As such, the exterior face of the structure contains a limited number of materials.

Other project components, due to technical requirements would be constructed mostly out of steel. Therefore, this finding can be made.

2.5 There will be a harmonious relationship with existing and proposed adjoining developments, avoiding excessive variety and monotonous repetition, but allowing similarity of style, if warranted.

There are few adjoining developments in the vicinity of the SWEP. Existing rural residences are scattered throughout the 5,887-acre area, with residential development in southern Lompoc near the electrical switchyard site and portions of the transmission line. The operations and maintenance building will be designed as a rural barn, with rustic materials, including corrugated steel siding, a brown paint finish for doors, and a galvanized-ribbed metal roof. Rustic paved aprons will adorn the entrance to the driveway of the facility. Natural materials, such as gravel, chip seal or colored concrete will be used for the facilities' surfaces. These materials will ensure the O&M facility will be in harmonious relationship with existing developments and would create neither excessive variety nor monotonous repetition. As noted above in Finding 2.1, incorporated herein by reference, the turbines exterior finish cannot be altered from the manufacturer's original coating and color. However, according to the applicant, the coating will be limited to a single color intended to minimize their adverse visual impacts to the extent feasible. Therefore, this finding can be made.

2.6 Site layout, orientation, and location of structures and signs will be in an appropriate and well designed relationship to one another, and to the environmental qualities, open spaces, and topography of the site.

The physical setting of the project site is mostly open space, rolling hills, and low lying native plants and grasslands. The 29 WTGs are located throughout an area covering approximately 3,000 acres where their specific locations on ridgetops are dictated by the technical requirement of harnessing the site's wind resource.

The O&M building is designed as a rural agricultural barn and is in relationship to the rural open space nature of the site. It is located appropriately so that the environmental qualities and open space of the surrounding area is maintained, along with the site's rural character. Therefore, this finding can be made.

2.7 Adequate landscaping will be provided in proportion to the project and the site with due regard to preservation of specimen and landmark trees, existing vegetation, selection of plantings that are appropriate to the project, and that adequate provisions have been made for maintenance of all landscaping.

CBAR required a native seed mix for landscaping around the O&M building, which is appropriate for the project site's open space and low lying native plants and grasslands. Condition No. 5 (MM VIS-4) of the approved CUP requires submittal of a Landscape and Lighting Plan. The Landscaping Plan will require landscaping to screen the switchyard pad and revegetate cut and fill slopes and graded areas. Condition 11 (MM BIO-3) requires a revegetation plan that requires a native plant seed mix to integrate the project into the surrounding environment. The seed mix is consistent with the variety of existing native plants located on the project site Both conditions have monitoring components that ensure successful landscaping and revegetation efforts.

A final landscape plan for the SWEP will be reviewed and approved by the Central Board of Architectural Review designed to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the development and be compatible with the site's native vegetation. Therefore, this finding can be made.

2.8 Signs, including associated lighting, are well designed and will be appropriate in size and location.

The only signage that is included as part of this project are standard signs for parking, disable parking, exiting, maximum occupancy and restroom signs. None of these signs would include lighting. Following the standard procedures for these signs, the signs would be appropriate in both size and location. Therefore, this finding can be made.

2.9 The proposed development is consistent with any additional design standards as expressly adopted by the Board for a specific local area, community, or zone in compliance with Section 35.82.070.G. (Local design standards).

No additional local design standards applicable to the SWEP have been adopted by the Board of Supervisors. Therefore, this finding can be made.