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County of Santa Cruz

Department of Community Development and Infrastructure

701 Ocean Street, Fourth Floor, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Planning (831) 454-2580 Public Works (831) 454-2160
https://cdi.santacruzcountyca.gov/

MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Project: Mt. Hermon Solar Array **APN(S): 071-331-06 & 071-331-05**
Application #: 251463
Project Description:
Proposal to construct an approximately 39,800-square-foot private microgrid utility facility consisting of an 831.60 kW ground-mounted photovoltaic (PV) system with a maximum height of nine feet, on a vacant 8.88-acre parcel to provide electric power exclusively for use by the Mt. Hermon Camp and Conference Center. All excess energy will be used to offset the client's usage; this project will not have an Energy Storage System. The array is proposed to be sited on a knoll in the center of the parcel, outside of the oak woodland and needlegrass grassland habitats (Figure 1.2, Site Plan).

The project requires a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), a Conditional Site Development Permit (CSP), Biotic Report, Geotechnical Report, and a Variance to increase the lot coverage from 10% to about 10.5%. The project includes the removal of 5 significant (equal to or greater than 20 inches diameter at 4.5 feet above ground level) oak trees, the addition of a six-foot-tall perimeter fence around the array, and a new gravel road to access the site from the west over the adjacent parcel APN 071-331-05, also owned by the Mount Hermon Camp and Conference Center.

Project Location:
The project is located at the northwestern corner of Conference Drive (no situs) and East Zayante Road in the unincorporated community of Felton in central Santa Cruz County (Figure 1.1, Project Location Map). Santa Cruz County is bounded to the north by San Mateo County, to the south by Monterey and San Benito Counties, to the east by Santa Clara County, and to the south and west by Monterey Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

Owner: Mt. Hermon Association
Applicant: Mars Energy Group
Staff Planner: Rebecca Rockom
Email: Rebecca.rockom@santacruzcountyca.gov
This project will be considered

California Environmental Quality Act Mitigated Negative Declaration Findings:
Find, that this Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the decision-making body's independent judgment and analysis, and; that the decision-making body has reviewed and considered the information contained in this Mitigated Negative Declaration and the comments received during the public review period; and, that revisions in the project plans or proposals made by or agreed

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to by the project applicant would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur; and, on the basis of the whole record before the decision-making body (including this Mitigated Negative Declaration) that there is no substantial evidence that the project as revised will have a significant effect on the environment. The expected environmental impacts of the project are documented in the attached Initial Study on file with the County of Santa Cruz Planning Department located at 701 Ocean Street, 4th Floor, Santa Cruz, California. A digital copy of the document can be reviewed at the following web address: http://www.sccoplanning.com/PlanningHome/Environmental/CEQAInitialStudiesEIRs/CEQADocumentsOpenforPublicReview.aspx

Review Period Ends: 11/01/2026

Note: This Document is considered Draft until it is Adopted by the Appropriate County of Santa Cruz Decision-Making Body

Date: 10/13/2026

Signed by:
Denise Hardesty
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Denise Hardesty, Environmental Coordinator
(831) 454-5357