



# Topaz Solar Farm

San Luis Obispo County, California, USA

<b>Owner:</b>	MidAmerican Solar
<b>Developer:</b>	First Solar, Inc.
<b>Size:</b>	550MW (AC)
<b>Status:</b>	Construction
<b>Type:</b>	Ground-Mount
<b>Power Output For:</b>	~160,000 average California homes
<b>CO<sub>2</sub> Displacement:</b>	~377,000 metric tons per year* (~73,000 cars off the road)

## Overview

First Solar, Inc., a leading manufacturer of photovoltaic (PV) panels and provider of solar solutions, is developing a 550 megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) solar farm in San Luis Obispo County, California. Located on the northwestern corner of the Carrisa Plains, the Topaz Solar Farm will produce sufficient electricity to power approximately 160,000 average California homes, displacing approximately 377,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions per year, the equivalent of taking approximately 73,000 cars off the road. In January 2012, MidAmerican Solar acquired the Topaz Solar Farm. First Solar will continue to build, operate and maintain the project. Construction began November 28th, 2011 and is expected to be complete by early 2015.

## Project Timeline

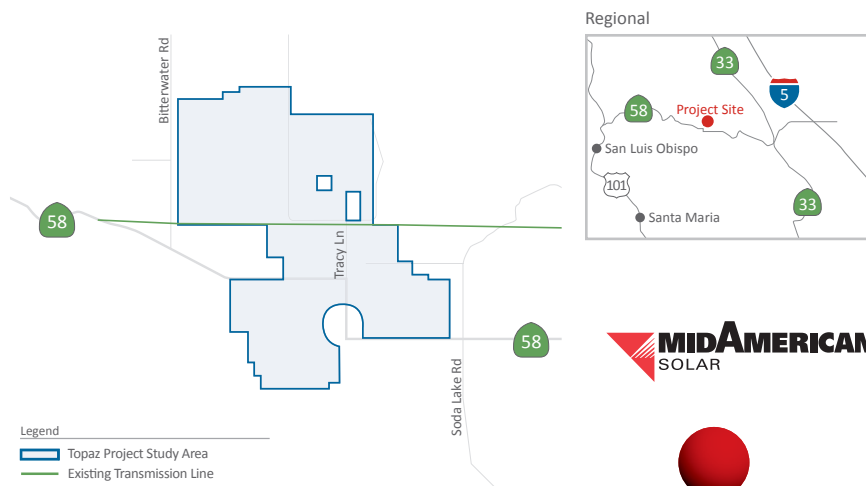


The Topaz Solar Farm will contribute to both San Luis Obispo County and state objectives for clean, renewable energy sources, helping to meet California's goal for utilities to secure at least 33% of their electricity from renewable energy sources by 2020.

## Project at a Glance

- 550MW (AC) of clean, renewable power
- Located on approximately 3,500 acres
- Approximately 400 jobs created
- No water used to generate electricity
- Minimal noise
- Low visual impact
- Panels recycled after useful lifespan

## Location



Legend  
 Topaz Project Study Area  
 Existing Transmission Line



\* San Luis Obispo County, "Topaz Solar Farm Environmental Impact Report," March 2011.

## Community

First Solar is committed to being a good neighbor through our community involvement and through the environmentally mindful design of our solar projects. We work with the residents and community members of the Carrisa Plains area and San Luis Obispo County as we construct the Topaz Solar Farm. Our goal is to collaborate with local residents to build a project that benefits the community and is one of which we can all be proud.

The project is creating approximately 400 construction jobs and 15 long-term positions while providing indirect benefits to dozens of businesses in San Luis Obispo County. These benefits are expected to average \$3 million to \$4 million a year. We also are dedicated to meeting the needs of the community by supporting local organizations and providing educational benefits for area schools and colleges.

## Environment

First Solar projects have a low environmental impact. When in operation, our systems generate electricity with no air emissions, no waste production, no water use, and have the smallest carbon footprint of any PV technology. The solar

panels for the Topaz Solar Farm will stand approximately five and a half feet above ground at their top edge, minimizing visual impact. Since there are no moving parts, the project will produce virtually no noise. No concrete will be used for the mounting racks; instead, steel I-beams will be driven into the ground. The land will remain largely unaffected and can be used for other purposes at the end of the project's lifespan. All on-site waste materials that can be recycled, such as pallets and cardboard, will be recycled.

The Topaz Solar Farm is sited on agricultural land at the northwestern edge of the Carrisa Plains, miles from the more sensitive habitats in the Carrizo Plain National Monument. The project requires minimal construction of new transmission infrastructure due to existing transmission lines on-site. In addition, the design of the project requires minimal site disturbance and allows continual growth of vegetation beneath and between the rows of panels, preserving wildlife habitat such as that of the San Joaquin kit fox.

## Project Benefits

- Establishes San Luis Obispo County as a world leader in renewable energy, helping reach state and local goals
- Wages and benefits from approximately 400 jobs over a three-year period
- Ongoing payroll and local purchases of materials and services during operation expected to average \$3 million to \$4 million per year
- Sales tax and property tax revenue of \$16 million for San Luis Obispo County
- Educational benefits for local schools

## First Solar's Approach

**Clean.** When in operation, First Solar systems generate electricity with no air emissions, no waste production, no water use, and have the smallest carbon footprint of any PV technology.

**Affordable.** By driving down the cost of solar generation, First Solar continues to make new strides in meeting the worldwide demand for clean, renewable energy.

**Sustainable.** First Solar's proven business model delivers viable energy solutions on a global scale—environmentally and socially, as well as financially.

**Global.** With a worldwide footprint of manufacturing and project development capabilities, First Solar is able to scale renewable energy solutions to meet the diverse needs of nations around the globe.

## Questions or Comments

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