Chapter 1

Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The North Sky River Wind Energy Project and Jawbone Wind Energy Project (proposed project or project) are two projects proposed by separate applicants that will be collectively addressed in one Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The North Sky River Project is proposed by North Sky River Energy, LLC and the Jawbone Wind Energy Project is proposed by Jawbone Wind Energy, LLC. The proposed project requires approval of zone change requests and a conditional use permit (CUP) and if approved would allow for the commercial production of 339 Megawatts (MW) of electricity from wind turbine generators (WTGs) on an 13,535-acre site in unincorporated Kern County, California (Figure 1-1). Land ownership in the vicinity of the project site is comprised of interspersed parcels of private land under the jurisdiction of Kern County, federal land managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and other federal and municipal lands. Proposed project WTGs would be located entirely on private land under Kern County jurisdiction, with some access roads, underground transmission collector lines and an overhead generation-tie (gen-tie) line occurring on BLM-managed land.

Power generated at the project would be transferred to the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) grid along the existing Wilderness transmission line and sold to a power purchaser (via a power purchase agreement), who in turn would sell energy output to California investor-owned utilities, municipalities, or other purchasers, in furtherance of the goals of the California Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards and other similar renewable programs in the State.

This Draft EIR has been prepared by Kern County as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EIR provides information about the environmental setting and impacts of the proposed project and alternatives. It informs the public about the project and its impacts and provides information to meet the needs of local, State, and federal permitting agencies that are required to consider the project. The EIR will be used by Kern County to determine whether to approve the zone changes and grant the CUPs for the project.

This Executive Summary summarizes the requirements of the CEQA Statute and Guidelines, provides an overview of the proposed project and alternatives, identifies the purpose of the Draft EIR, outlines the potential impacts of the project and the recommended mitigation measures, and discloses areas of controversy and issues to be resolved.

1.2 Project Summary

The proposed project is to construct and operate a wind energy generation facility on 13,535 acres. The project proponent is requesting a change in zone classification to incorporate the Wind Energy (WE) Combining District to the base district for 1,292 acres of the 13,535-acre project site (Figure 1-2).