FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact
Liv O'Keeffe, California Native Plant Society/ lokeeffe@cnps.org / 916-738-7602

Parties Reach Settlement Over the Coyote Creek Agrivoltaic Ranch Project

Agreement includes significant measures to protect oaks and other wildlife.

October 16, 2026, *Sacramento, Calif.* – Today, environmental and recreation groups reached an agreement with the Delaware-based Sacramento Valley Energy Center (SVEC), LLC, regarding the Coyote Creek Agrivoltaic Ranch Project, planned for eastern Sacramento County. The groups settling with SVEC include the California Native Plant Society (CNPS), Sierra Club, Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS), California Four Wheel Drive Association, American Sand Association, and the Blue Ribbon Coalition.

The settlement follows a November 2025 Sacramento County Board of Supervisors decision to approve the Coyote Creek project, a solar-energy plan to develop 1,412 acres on the oak-studded hills of the 2,704-acre Barton Ranch Property. As approved, the project would have destroyed thousands of blue oaks and other native heritage trees, with significant impacts to the property's wetlands, rare plants, and wildlife. Today's agreement reduces the impact on mature blue oaks from approximately 3,500 trees lost to no more than 200.

"People tend to be offered false choices between the things we need—clean energy, housing, and nature," said CNPS Sacramento Valley Chapter member and environmental consultant Carol Witham. "This settlement proves that Sacramento County doesn't have to settle for wholesale habitat destruction when faced with competing needs. While we never want to see intact habitat destroyed, we appreciate the hard work of all parties involved to reach the best possible outcome following the Board's decision."

In addition to increased oak protection, the settlement terms also include a reduced project footprint, better wildlife corridors with 1,369 acres of onsite conservation, additional oversight for oak tree replanting, prohibition of the use of rodenticides, and funding directed to enhance habitat and propagate rare native plants in the Sacramento region.

"We want the public to know that conservation itself is a climate solution," said Heather Fargo, president of ECOS and former mayor of Sacramento. "A single oak, like those in this project, can trap vast amounts of carbon per year, making oaks what we call a 'nature-based solution.' We're glad to have reached a much better outcome and want to encourage our decision-makers to reject

indiscriminate destruction of habitat and pursue better outcomes in the future. Sacramentans deserve that."

Notice of the project first became public as part of the public process mandated by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a disclosure law that gives communities an opportunity to review and comment on the environmental impacts of projects.

In comment letters, environmental groups warned the supervisors ahead of their vote that the project's Environmental Impact Report was too deeply flawed to support sound decision-making, and more than 900 people submitted comments at the November Board of Supervisors meeting, 95% of which were opposed to the project.

However, CEQA is not intended to stop projects. When decision-makers approve projects despite concerns about inadequate environmental review or mitigation measures, affected organizations may turn to litigation as a last resort to seek compliance with the law.

"With this agreement, the remainder of the property is now permanently conserved, preventing any further expansion of development," Sierra Club Motherlode Chapter Conservation Chair Sean Wirth. "We were able to move from what would have been an environmental tragedy to a compromise that goes a long way toward protecting the abundance of life on this special landscape."

###

California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is a statewide nonprofit organization that protects California's native plants and their natural habitats through science, education, stewardship, gardening, and advocacy. CNPS has more than 13,000 members and 35 chapters supporting its mission throughout California and Baja California, Mexico. Learn more at cnps.org.

The Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS) is a coalition of Sacramento area environmental organizations that work to protect the lands, waters, wildlife and native plants in the Sacramento region to drive conversation and action for good planning. Learn more at ecosacramento.net.

Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is America's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with millions of members and supporters. In addition to protecting every person's right to get outdoors and access the healing power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit www.sierraclub.org.