

# UNLOCKING THE SALTON SEA'S RENEWABLE ENERGY POTENTIAL



“ Located in the Imperial and Coachella [valleys] of Southern California, the Salton Sea represents one of the most abundant sources of renewable energy in the state, including the most prolific geothermal capacity in the world.”

— California State Senate Select Committee on California's Energy Independence

## NEW CLEAN ENERGY FOR CALIFORNIA

The Imperial Irrigation District's **Salton Sea Restoration and Renewable Energy Initiative** seeks to develop up to 1,700 megawatts of geothermal energy at the Salton Sea, with solar, wind and biofuels projects to potentially follow in subsequent phases.

Home to the Salton Sea, California's Imperial Valley represents an abundant supply of untapped renewable energy resources. The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) estimates the Valley's renewable energy generating potential at a minimum of 10,000 megawatts. The Salton Sea itself possesses more geothermal capacity than anywhere else in the nation. An estimated 2,000 megawatts of geothermal energy awaits development, in addition to the 544 megawatts already providing reliable, base load power from facilities at the Salton Sea to California energy consumers.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the DRECP have also recognized the area surrounding the Sea as ideal for new solar development. BLM's recently designated West Chocolate Mountains Renewable Energy Evaluation Area includes lands along the Salton Sea designated for solar and geothermal development. Research is also underway to determine how best to develop biofuels from algae found at the nutrient-rich Sea.

In addition to spurring new jobs and economic development in Imperial Valley, unlocking the Salton Sea's renewable energy potential can help meet real and immediate energy needs. California's ambitious 33 percent (and rising) renewable energy standard requires a significant increase in the amount of clean energy delivered to the grid and, ultimately, energy consumers. The closure in 2013 of the San Onofre nuclear power plant has left a 2,200 megawatts shortage in California's energy supply – an amount that clean, renewable energy from the Salton Sea can help replace.

## A SOLUTION FOR SALTON SEA RESTORATION

In addition to providing a reliable and renewable energy source for California, producing new clean energy at the Salton Sea will also generate much-needed funds for restoration activities such as wildlife habitat and air quality management. These activities will help address the Sea's decline, which will reach a tipping at the end of 2017 when mandated mitigation water inflows cease and hasten water quality and air pollution problems. As an added benefit, renewable energy projects sited on exposed Sea lakebed can help control harmful dust emissions, improving the health of surrounding communities and the environment.

## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP FOR RESPONSIBLE ENERGY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

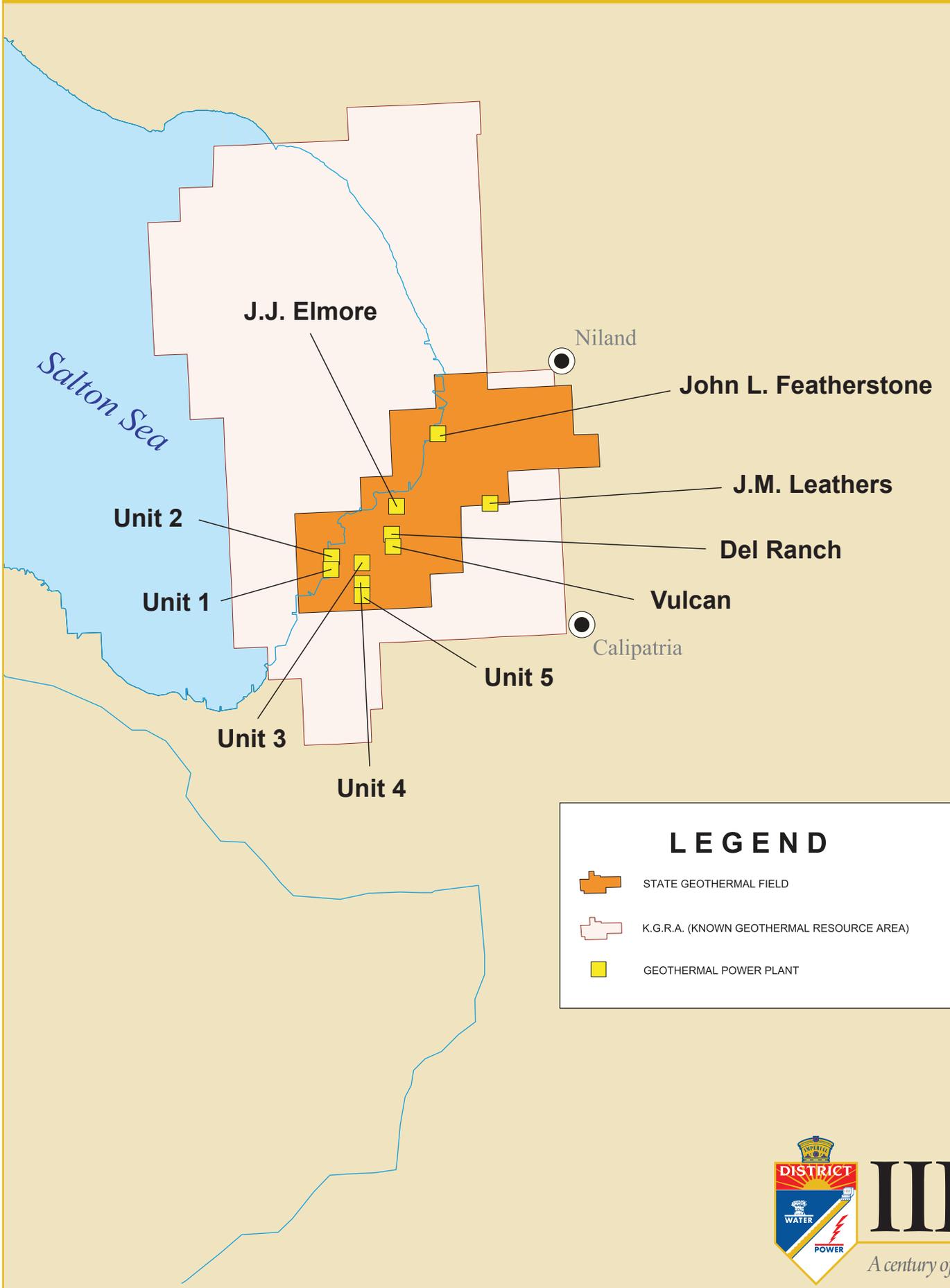
In order to ensure responsible renewable energy planning and development at the Salton Sea, the Imperial Irrigation District is working closely with local, regional, state, and federal partners to implement the following components of this initiative:

- Designating the Salton Sea area as a renewable energy zone, in concert with Imperial County
- Conducting environmental assessments on the best places to site renewable energy development, in coordination with Imperial County and the DRECP as well as environmental stakeholders
- Pledging the use of IID land and mineral assets for new renewable energy projects and habitat, and securing a commitment from the federal government to use government-owned lands at and around the Sea for renewable energy development
- Pursuing public-private partnerships with energy developers for new geothermal energy facilities – to potentially be followed by wind, algae and solar energy projects in later stages
- Establishing an “open season” during which renewable energy developers can bid for projects
- Planning and securing funding for a new transmission line with export capacity of up to 1,700 megawatts to deliver renewable energy from Imperial Valley to energy consumers throughout the state



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# GEOHERMAL GENERATION PLANTS AT THE SALTON SEA



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