

California ag land may turn into farms of green energy

By Todd Woody, New York Times

LEMOORE – Thousands of acres of farmland here in the San Joaquin Valley have been removed from agricultural production, largely because the once fertile land is contaminated by salt buildup from years of irrigation.

Green

But large swaths of those dry fields could have a valuable new use in their future – making electricity.

Farmers and officials at Westlands Water District, a public agency that supplies water to farms in the valley, have agreed to provide land for what would be one of the world's largest solar energy complexes, to be built on 30,000 acres.

At peak output, the proposed Westlands Solar Park would generate as much electricity as several big nuclear power plants.

Unlike some renewable energy projects blocked by objections that they would despoil the landscape, this one has the support of environmentalists.

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