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California Solar Generation: U.S. Energy Information Administration Notes Decreased Output by California Independent System Operator Due to Wildfires

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The United States Energy Information Administration (“EIA”) stated in a September 30th report that smoke from the California wildfires has decreased solar generation by the California Independent System Operator (“CAISO”).

The CAISO is stated to encompass 90 percent of the utility-scale solar capacity in California.

Solar generation is stated to have declined nearly 30 percent in the first two weeks of September 2020. This is attributed to wildfire smoke which is stated to contain:

. . . small, airborne particulate matter particles that are generally 2.5 micrometers or smaller (referred to as PM2.5).

Such matter reduces the amount of sunlight that can reach solar panels.

As a result, during the first two weeks of September 2020, solar-powered generation in CAISO was stated to be 13.4 percent lower than at the same time the previous year. This has occurred despite the growth in installed solar generating capacity in California (noting California has added 659 megawatts of utility-scale solar-powered generation capacity).

A copy of the EIA report can be downloaded [here](#).