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Wal-Mart settles two environmental lawsuits over planned Perris and Yucca Valley stores

By Tiffany Hsu

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. settled two lawsuits over the environmental impact of two proposed stores in California, the Center for Biological Diversity announced Monday.

Environmentalists had claimed that the Supercenters did not meet greenhouse-gas emission requirements set by the California Environmental Quality Act.

The mega-retailer agreed to install three rooftop solar projects with at least 250 kilowatts of capacity each, according to letters sent to officials in Perris and Yucca

Valley, where Wal-Mart plans to develop Supercenters.

The stores also will be designed with more stringent efficiency measures, according to the letters, which were signed by representatives from Wal-Mart and others on Thursday. The plans will include LED lighting, recycling programs and centralized energy management systems that monitor and control energy use, analyze refrigeration temperatures and more.

“Some of these measures may not be appropriate at every location, but the information gained from the Perris store may lead to broader

application,” according to one letter, which also was signed by the Center for Biological Diversity and the Coalition for Honest Environmental Evaluation in Perris.

The Yucca Valley settlement also included a \$120,000 contribution to the Mojave Desert Land Trust for land conservation purposes. And although the Center for Biological Diversity and the Coalition for Environmental Integrity in Yucca Valley both agreed not to object to or disrupt the opening of the Wal-Mart location, the coalition still can endorse an initiative that would block or limit development of the super store.