

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

7.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ANALYSIS

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7.0.1 SCOPE OF THE EIR ANALYSIS

The Environmental Analysis chapter of this EIR presents the environmental and regulatory setting, impacts, and mitigation measures for each of the following technical issue areas (Sections 7.1 through 7.16):

- 7.1 Surface Water Hydrology, Water Quality, and Water Supply
- 7.2 Groundwater Hydrology and Quality
- 7.3 Fisheries Resources
- 7.4 Terrestrial Biological Resources
- 7.5 Visual Resources
- 7.6 Agricultural Resources
- 7.7 Air Quality
- 7.8 Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources
- 7.9 Recreation
- 7.10 Land Use and Planning
- 7.11 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 7.12 Noise
- 7.13 Cultural and Paleontological Resources
- 7.14 Public Services and Utilities
- 7.15 Traffic and Transportation
- 7.16 Energy

7.0.2 SECTION FORMAT

Each section contains: (1) a description of the proposed project elements that have the potential to affect the technical issue area under discussion; (2) methods of analysis; (3) standards of significance used to evaluate the significance of project impacts; (4) physical setting; (5) regulatory setting; and (6) impacts and mitigation measures. The physical and regulatory setting provides a point of reference for assessing the environmental impacts of the proposed project. Setting information is presented for 1995 (the year prior to implementation of any part of the Monterey Amendment) and 2003 (the year the NOP for this EIR was published). Only changes in the 1995 physical and regulatory setting are described in the 2003 setting. This includes setting information for elements of the Settlement Agreement.

The setting discussion is followed by an impacts and mitigation discussion. The impact and mitigation portion of each section includes statements of potential impact, which are prefaced by a number in **bold-faced** type. An explanation of each potential impact and a discussion of the

analysis and conclusion reached regarding its significance follow each impact statement. All mitigation measures pertinent to each individual impact are presented following the impact. The degree to which the identified mitigation measure(s) would reduce the impact is also described.

An example of the impacts and mitigation format is shown below.

7.X-X Statement of potential impact for the proposed project in bold type.

Two time periods are evaluated for each impact: Impacts that occurred between 1995 and 2003 (based on 1995 and 2003 conditions) that are discussed under the **1995 – 2003** header; and future impacts that are anticipated to occur between 2003 and 2020 (based on 2003 and 2020 conditions) that are discussed under the **Future Impacts** header.

The discussion of impacts for the proposed project is presented in paragraph form, and a determination of the impact's significance for each time period is presented in ***bold italic type***.

Mitigation Measures

The mitigation measures are preceded by a statement declaring the ***level of significance*** after implementing the mitigations.

7.X-X Statement of what, if any, mitigation measures are required.

The mitigation measures are followed by a discussion of how the proposed measure mitigates the identified impact and to what level of significance.

7.0.3 TERMINOLOGY

This Draft EIR uses the following terminology to describe environmental effects of the proposed project in Chapter 7:

- **Standards of Significance:** A set of criteria used by the lead agency to determine at what level or “threshold” an impact would be considered significant. Standards of Significance used in this EIR include those discussed in the CEQA Guidelines; criteria based on factual or scientific information; criteria based on regulatory standards of local, State, and federal agencies; and criteria adopted by the California Department of Water Resources. In determining the level of significance, the analysis assumes that the proposed project would comply with relevant federal, State, and local regulations and ordinances.
- **Less Than Significant Impact:** A project impact is considered less-than-significant when it does not reach the standard of significance and would therefore cause no substantial change in the environment (no mitigation required).
- **Potentially Significant Impact:** A potentially significant impact is an environmental effect that may result in a substantial adverse change in the environment; however, additional information is needed regarding the extent of the impact to make the determination of significance. For CEQA purposes, a potentially significant impact is treated as if it were a significant impact. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to reduce these effects to the environment where feasible.
- **Significant Impact:** A project impact is considered significant if it would result in a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions of the environment. Significant

impacts are identified by the evaluation of project effects in the context of specified significance criteria. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to reduce these effects to the environment where feasible.

- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact:** A project impact is considered significant and unavoidable if it would result in a substantial adverse change in the environment that cannot be feasibly avoided or mitigated to a less-than-significant level if the project is implemented. Findings of Overriding Considerations must be adopted if impacts cannot be mitigated.
- **Cumulative Impacts:** According to CEQA, “cumulative impacts refer to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts” (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15355). CEQA requires that cumulative impacts be discussed when the “project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable” (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130 (a)).
- **Mitigation Measures:** The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15370) define mitigation as:
 - (a) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
 - (b) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree of magnitude of the action and its implementation;
 - (c) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
 - (d) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and
 - (e) Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.