

# CHAPTER 24

## GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

This chapter presents an analysis of the potential growth inducing impacts of the No Action Alternative and the other alternatives. To provide context for the growth inducement assessment, this chapter also briefly describes population growth projections in the study area. This chapter does not include future community or recreational developments that are not described in the general plans for Imperial and Riverside counties.

### CEQA GUIDELINES RELATED TO GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

Under the CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must consider and discuss growth inducing impacts. The growth inducing impact analysis must discuss the ways in which the alternatives could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. An alternative will have a growth inducing impact if it directly or indirectly:

- removes obstacles to population growth;
- requires the construction of additional community service facilities that could cause significant environmental effects; or
- encourages and facilitates other activities that would significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively.

In addition, Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines provides that “it must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.”

### POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTIONS

Under the No Action Alternative, the Imperial and Riverside county region is expected to experience substantial growth over the next few decades. The population growth projections by the California Department of Finance for both counties are summarized in Table 24-1 and provided in more detail in Chapter 12.

**Table 24-1**  
**Population Projections for Imperial and Riverside County**

	Imperial County	Riverside County
<b>Total Population</b>		
2000	143,660	1,553,902
2010	178,201	2,165,148
2020	214,386	2,675,648
2030	254,989	3,180,411
2040	296,656	3,717,961
2050	339,506	4,305,161
<b>Change in Total Population, 2000-2050</b>		
Total Population Change	195,846	2,751,259
Total Percent Change	136.33%	177.05%
Average Annual Percent Change	1.73%	2.06%

Source: DOF, 2005

Numerous state, regional, and local agencies use these projections in conjunction with local projections and projections developed by the Southern California Association of Governments to assist in planning for the projected growth, including the need for water supply, additional housing, police, and fire services, along with roads, highways and alternative transportation. This increase in population is anticipated to occur regardless of the implementation of restoration actions at the Salton Sea.

## **METHODS USED FOR ANALYSIS OF GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS**

The growth inducing impacts of each alternative were evaluated by comparing the direct and indirect effects to the expected future conditions as described by the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative was used as the basis for comparison because the alternatives would be constructed some time in the future. Therefore, it is more appropriate to use the No Action Alternative as the basis for comparison to provide a more realistic description of the environmental and human conditions near the Salton Sea at the actual time of construction and operations and maintenance of the alternatives.

The alternatives could result in growth through a variety of mechanisms including:

- Economic activity generated by construction and operations and maintenance;
- Land use changes on exposed areas; and
- Economic activity and quality of life factors improved by improved ecological, water quality, and air quality conditions at the Salton Sea.

### **Construction and Operations and Maintenance Effects**

The assessment of construction related effects includes an assessment of whether or not the relative magnitude of temporary and permanent jobs that would be created by the alternatives would exceed the anticipated future workforce to fill these positions. If the temporary and permanent jobs that would be created by the alternatives exceed the anticipated future workforce, then workers may be drawn to the area to fill open positions, possibly requiring additional housing and related infrastructure and encouraging economic growth in the area.

The construction of the alternatives would temporarily increase employment in the area. As described in Chapter 12, the number of workers required during the peak construction year for the No Action Alternative and Alternatives 1 through 8 would range from 500 to 2,000 workers. These workers would be required for a number of years, depending on the alternative, to complete construction activities.

The long term operations and maintenance activities would increase long term or permanent employment in the area. An additional 100 to 350 workers would be required for operations and maintenance activities for the No Action Alternative and Alternatives 1 through 8.

### **Land Use Changes Effects**

Assessing the growth inducing impacts of land use changes on areas currently inundated by the Salton Sea is difficult as these effects may not be within the control of the future implementing agencies. Rather these land uses would be under the control of the appropriate land use agencies (such as Imperial and Riverside counties and the Torres Martinez Tribe), which may adopt new or modify existing land use and zoning designations for other exposed, non-federal lands, including any areas where facilities would be located. The potential land use designations for some of these newly exposed areas are not known at this time. Therefore, the analysis of growth inducing impacts due to land use changes on exposed Sea Bed is addressed qualitatively.

## **Improved Ecological, Water Quality, and Air Quality Effects**

Assessing the growth inducing impacts of improved ecological, water quality, and air quality conditions in the Salton Sea area is difficult as these effects are not within the control of the future implementing agency. Growth driven by improved ecological conditions can result from (1) general population growth as conditions improve in the area, and (2) growth stimulated by new or improved recreational opportunities. As the ecological conditions improve in the area, the area may become more attractive for individuals and families resulting in population growth. However, it is important to remember that population growth is generally driven by a combination of economic and quality of life factors, including, but not limited to availability of jobs, quality of schools, land and housing costs, and congestion and connectivity of transportation routes. As new or improved recreational opportunities are developed, economic and population growth may occur as recreational visitors spend money on goods and services in the area and as some recreational visitors decided to relocate to the area. Growth driven by improved environmental conditions is difficult to quantify and can occur very slowly over a long period of time. Therefore, the analysis of growth inducing impacts due to improved ecological conditions is addressed qualitatively.

## **ANALYSIS OF GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS**

The analysis below includes a description of the No Action Alternative relative to growth inducement and discusses whether the alternatives would have growth inducing effects. The evaluation of growth inducing effects of the alternatives considers the direct effects of construction and operations and maintenance, and the indirect effects that could result from improved ecological, water quality, and air quality conditions at the Salton Sea.

### **Criteria: Foster Economic or Population Growth or the Construction of Additional Housing**

#### **No Action Alternative**

As described in Chapter 12, about 500 workers would be required during the peak construction years and fewer workers in other years during operations and maintenance. Most of the workers would be earthwork equipment operators and laborers with workers in the trades primarily for hydraulic structures, pumping plants, and filtration plants. This work force would represent less than one percent of the total construction workers projected for the Imperial and Riverside counties for the period from the present to 2020. To determine if these construction jobs could be provided by workers in Imperial and Riverside counties, the projected types of workers were compared to projections completed by California Employment Development Department (2006a) for 2012. Based on this comparison, construction efforts would represent less than 2 percent of the projected number of equipment operators and laborers in Imperial and Riverside counties in 2012. Therefore, the work force required to implement the No Action Alternative could be provided by the projected work force in Imperial and Riverside counties, and no additional growth is expected to be required to accommodate workers under the No Action Alternative.

The No Action Alternative would expose lands previously inundated by the Salton Sea. The Torres Martinez Tribe has adopted land use and zoning designations for all Reservation lands, including those currently inundated by the Salton Sea. However, the appropriate land use agencies (such as Imperial and Riverside counties) may adopt new land use and zoning designations for other exposed, non-federal lands, including any areas where facilities would be located. The potential land use designations for some of these newly exposed areas are not known at this time, but could include residential, commercial, agricultural, or other uses, encourage economic or population growth depending on future zoning, and be considered to be growth inducing.

Imperial Irrigation District also owns lands within the inundated area of the Sea Bed. It would be possible for these lands to be reclaimed for cultivation without additional regulatory agency approvals.

### Alternatives 1 through 8

As described in Chapter 12, the number of workers required during the peak construction year for Alternatives 1 through 8 would range from 1,000 to 2,000 workers as shown in Table 24-2. These values represent 2 to 3 percent of the projected construction work force in Imperial and Riverside counties by 2020, and 4 to 7 percent of the projected equipment operator and laborer work force. Therefore, it is anticipated that workers would be drawn from the labor force existing within the study area at the time of construction, and no additional growth is expected to be required to accommodate workers.

**Table 24-2**  
**Projected Work Force during Peak Construction Year by Alternative**

	<b>Number of Workers</b>	<b>As a Percent of the Total Work Force in Imperial and Riverside Counties</b>	<b>As a Percent of the Projected Equipment Operators and Laborer Work Force</b>
Alternative 1	1,000	2%	4%
Alternative 2	1,500	2%	6%
Alternative 3	1,500	2%	6%
Alternative 4	1,500	2%	6%
Alternative 5	1,500	2%	6%
Alternative 6	2,000	3%	7%
Alternative 7	2,000	3%	7%
Alternative 8	2,000	3%	7%

Source: See Chapter 12 for more information.

As described in Chapter 12, the number of workers required during operations and maintenance for Alternatives 1 through 8 would range from 25 to 300 workers as shown in Table 24-3. These values represent less than 1 percent of the projected Transportation and Utilities sector work force in Imperial and Riverside counties in 2012. Because the number of workers needed is a small percentage of the projected available workers, it is anticipated that workers would be drawn from the labor force existing within the study area, and no additional growth is expected to be required to accommodate these workers.

**Table 24-3**  
**Projected Work Force during Operations and Maintenance by Alternative**

	<b>Number of Workers</b>	<b>As a Percent of the Projected Transportation and Utilities Sector Workers</b>
Alternative 1	200	Less than 1%
Alternative 2	300	Less than 1%
Alternative 3	300	Less than 1%
Alternative 4	25	Less than 1%
Alternative 5	300	Less than 1%
Alternative 6	350	Less than 1%
Alternative 7	200	Less than 1%
Alternative 8	300	Less than 1%

Source: See Chapter 12 for more information.

Implementation of the alternatives would result in improved ecological, water quality, and air quality conditions at the Salton Sea. However, these conditions are not likely to be realized for many years (likely many decades). Although improved conditions are anticipated in the future, substantial growth is projected to occur in the area regardless of these conditions, as shown in Table 24-1; and, therefore, these improved conditions are not expected to be driving forces for economic and population growth in the Imperial and Coachella valleys. Rather, population and economic growth are generally driven by other economic and quality of life factors, such as availability of jobs, quality of schools, land and housing costs, congestion and connectivity of transportation routes (both for new business and population), and other similar factors.

The improvements to the ecological conditions at the Salton Sea may indirectly improve some ecological based recreational opportunities, such as birdwatching, and, in some alternatives, sport fishing and other water based recreation opportunities. Birdwatching opportunities currently exist at or near the Salton Sea, and improvements to the ecological conditions may draw a substantial additional number of new birding enthusiasts, such that substantial economic opportunities would be provided. Improvements to the Salton Sea that could indirectly increase water based recreation improvements could result in an increase in economic activity around the Salton Sea. However, these opportunities probably could be accommodated by projected commercial growth described in Imperial and Riverside county general plans and would not be expected to promote residential growth beyond what is already projected.

Some of the alternatives would expose lands previously inundated by the Salton Sea, and the implementing agency would need to work with the appropriate land use planning agency with regard to land use and zoning designations for these newly exposed areas, as described above under the No Action Alternative. Although the land use designations for some of these newly exposed areas are not known at this time, it is anticipated that if a substantial amount of new development (residential, industrial, or commercial) was proposed, changes in the restoration actions under Alternatives 1 through 8 would need to be modified to be compatible with the land uses. This would need to be evaluated in environmental documentation related to changes in general plans.

## **Criteria: Remove Obstacles to Population Growth**

### **No Action Alternative**

As described above, the No Action Alternative includes the growth projected for the area by state, regional, and local agencies. Numerous state, regional, and local agencies are tasked with planning for projected growth, including the need for water supply, additional housing, police and fire services, roads, highways, and alternative transportation. The No Action Alternative does not include the construction of public facilities that would remove obstacles to population growth beyond what is projected by State, regional, and local agencies.

However, the Salton Sea itself could be considered an obstacle to population growth on the currently inundated area. Under the No Action Alternative, up to 81,000 acres would be exposed which could remove an obstacle to growth in those particular areas. As described above, newly exposed areas could include some uses resulting in localized growth or additional cultivated lands.

### **Alternatives 1 through 8**

Alternatives 1 through 8 would not remove obstacles to population growth because they would not result in new water supplies, new regional transportation routes, new or improved economic opportunities, a substantial number of new jobs, new schools, new houses, or removal of other obstacles to population growth in the study area. As described above, the alternatives would result in improved ecological, water quality, and air quality conditions in the long term, but would not include specific facilities to improve recreational or economic opportunities of the area.

The alternatives specifically do not include development on the exposed areas of the Sea Bed. Therefore, the alternatives would not remove obstacles to population growth within the current Salton Sea.

### **Criteria: Require the Construction of Additional Community Service Facilities that Could Cause Significant Environmental Effects**

#### **No Action Alternative**

The No Action Alternative would require the construction of facilities along the shoreline or in the Sea Bed, as considered in this PEIR. It is anticipated that facilities outside of this area would be limited to extensions of access roads or power distribution lines from existing facilities in the area. The extension of the roads, distribution lines, or other similar facilities should be evaluated in project-level analyses. It is not anticipated that the extension of these facilities would be used by areas of projected growth adjacent to the shoreline or in the Sea Bed because growth is either already projected for these areas (such as the Bombay Beach and Salton City area) or not currently anticipated for these areas (such as the area around the Salton Sea State Recreation Area). If currently inundated areas are developed for community land uses, then separate environmental documentation would need to be completed as part of the respective general plan amendment to address these growth inducing effects and other issues.

#### **Alternatives 1 through 8**

Similar to the No Action Alternative, Alternatives 1 through 8 would require the construction of facilities along the shoreline or in the Sea Bed, as considered in this PEIR. It is anticipated that facilities outside of this area would be limited to extensions of access roads or power distribution lines from existing facilities in the area, and the extension of roads, distribution lines, or other similar facilities should be evaluated in project-level analyses. However, for similar reasons to those described for the No Action Alternative, it is not anticipated that the extension of these facilities would be used by areas of projected growth adjacent to the shoreline or in the Sea Bed.

### **Criteria: Encourage and Facilitate Other Activities that Would Significantly Affect the Environment**

#### **No Action Alternative**

The conditions at the Salton Sea under the No Action Alternative are not likely to encourage and facilitate other activities, including recreational or economic opportunities that would significantly affect the environment.

#### **Alternatives 1 through 8**

As previously described, Alternatives 1 through 8 would improve the ecological, water quality, and air quality conditions at the Salton Sea. These improved conditions may result in potential recreational and economic opportunities that would not exist under the No Action Alternative. This could encourage and facilitate other activities, such as development of marinas and shoreline tourist/recreation based businesses. Development and use of recreational facilities could affect the environment, however, these facilities are not included in the alternatives considered in the PEIR and would need to be evaluated in project-level analyses, including the potential for growth inducing effects.