

6.0 OTHER CEQA RELATED TOPICS

6.1 Introduction

CEQA requires the discussion of significant irreversible environmental changes, growth-inducing impacts, and areas of unavoidable significant environmental impacts for the proposed action. The following discussion addresses these issues as they relate to the development of the proposed Project site.

6.2 Growth-Inducing Impacts

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) indicates a project could be identified as growth-inducing if it “could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.” Also, the EIR must discuss the characteristics of a project that could encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. Growth can be induced in a number of ways, such as through the elimination of obstacles to growth, the stimulation of economic activity within the region, or the establishment of policies or other precedents that directly or indirectly encourage additional growth. Induced growth would be considered a significant impact if it can be demonstrated that the potential growth, directly or indirectly, significantly affects the environment.

The elimination of either physical or regulatory obstacles to growth can be considered a growth-inducing effect, though not necessarily a significant one. A physical obstacle to growth typically involves the lack of public service infrastructure. The extension of public service infrastructure, including roadways, water mains, and sewer lines, into areas that are not currently provided with these services could induce new development. The Project would not involve the construction of new roadways or utility lines.

Regarding employment, the proposed Project would not induce substantial growth of the limited number of workers (temporary or permanent) and their origin. Up to 50 daily workers would be present on-site during construction (during peak construction activity). It is anticipated that the workforce for the proposed Project would be available within the existing regional workforce versus the potential for immigration to occur as a result of the proposed Project, which could result in the increased demand for housing and local services. The Project would store excess electrical energy when electricity production exceeds demand and returning this electricity to the grid at a later time when demand is high to accommodate and support existing demand and projected growth, but it would not foster any new growth.

6.3 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) requires a discussion of any significant irreversible environmental change that would be caused by a proposed project. Generally, a project would result in significant irreversible changes if:

- The primary and secondary impacts would generally commit future generations to similar uses (such as highway improvement that provides access to a previously inaccessible area)
- The project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c))
- The project would involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project

Development of the Project would involve the consumption of some non-renewable, locally limited natural resources, and/or slowly renewable natural and energy resources (i.e., fossil fuels, lumber, and water) associated with construction activities. The Project would incorporate a number of sustainable practices that reduce the consumption of energy; nonetheless, construction activities related to the Project would result in an irretrievable commitment of nonrenewable energy resources, primarily in the form of fossil fuels, natural gas, and gasoline and diesel for automobiles and construction equipment. During Project operation, minimal amounts of oil, gas, and other non-renewable resources would be used associated with maintenance activities, including fuel for vehicles traveling to and from the project site on an infrequent basis. However, assuming that those commitments occur in accordance with the adopted goals, policies, and implementation measures of the Imperial County General Plan, as a matter of public policy, those commitments have been determined to be acceptable. The Imperial County General Plan ensures that any irreversible environmental changes associated with those commitments will be minimized. Therefore, the non-renewable resources demand by the Project is not considered to be significant.

CEQA Guidelines also require a discussion of the potential for irreversible environmental damage caused by environmental accidents associated with the Project. While the Project would result in the use, transport, storage, and disposal of minor amounts of hazardous materials during construction and operation, as described Section 3.5, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, all such activities would comply with applicable local, State and Federal laws related to the use, storage and transport hazardous materials, which significantly reduces the likelihood and severity of accidents that could result in irreversible environmental damage. The Project itself does not include any uniquely hazardous uses that would

require any special handling or storage. Further, the Project does not contain any industrial uses that would use or store acutely hazardous materials.

6.4 Environmental Effects Found to Be Less than Significant

Section 15128 of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR “contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR.”

Imperial County has engaged the public in the scoping of the environmental document. Comments received during scoping have been considered in the process of identifying issue areas that should receive attention in the SEIR. The contents of this SEIR were established based on an IS/NOP (see Appendix A) prepared in accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines and on public and agency input received during the scoping process. Issues that were found to have no impact or less-than-significant impacts during preparation of the IS/NOP do not need to be addressed further in this Draft SEIR. Based on the findings of the NOP and the results of scoping, a determination was made that the following resource areas would not be significantly impacted by the proposed project, and are therefore not addressed in this Draft SEIR:

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Noise
- Transportation

After further study and environmental review in this Draft SEIR, project-level impacts in the following areas would be less than significant or could be reduced to less-than-significant levels with mitigation measures:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning

- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

No further discussion of these topics is warranted. For a complete analysis of these impacts, please refer to Appendix A of this document.

6.5 Significant and Unavoidable Environmental Impacts

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(b) requires discussion of any significant impacts that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. Potential impacts from the Project would be reduced to less than significant levels after the incorporation of proposed mitigation measures, as discussed in Chapter 3. No significant and unavoidable impacts were identified in this Draft SEIR.