

4.14 PUBLIC SERVICES

4.14.1 Regulatory Setting

California Office of Emergency Services (OES)

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services provides services and oversight in order to increase safety and preparedness throughout California. The agency provides strong guidance and encourages collaboration and meaningful partnerships between agencies. The mission of OES is founded in public service under the California Emergency Services Act. The goal is to protect lives and property by effectively preparing for, preventing, responding to, and recovering from all threats, crimes, hazards, and emergencies (OES 2014).

California Fire Code and Guidelines

The California Fire Code was established by the California Building Standards Commission, including collaboration with the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Division of State Architect, the Office of the State Fire Marshal, the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, the California Energy Commission, the California Department of Public Health, the California State Lands Commission, the Board of State and Community Corrections, and the California Building Standards Commission. The California Fire Code and Guidelines provide guidance regarding general requirements, emergency planning and preparedness, building equipment and design features, instructions for special occupancies and operations, and hazardous materials (CBSC 2013).

California Health and Safety Code

The California Health and Safety Code establishes regulations for health care services, health research, local health and safety, health care facilities, health care service plans, local administration, community facilities, and state-county partnerships, among many other categories (California Health and Safety Code 2014).

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) is a state agency that provides fire protection and stewardship to the privately owned wildlands within the state. Cal Fire also provides emergency services in coordination with local governments. According to their website, Cal Fire responds to approximately 5,600 wildland fires each year and responds to over 350,000 emergency calls each year (Cal Fire 2014). Cal Fire also assists other fire departments when resources are available, as part of the California Master Mutual Aid Agreement (DCREP 2014).

The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection adopted the Strategic Fire Plan for California in 2010, which provided guidelines for reducing the risk of wildfire, including fire suppression. The plan divides California into operational units to deal with fire suppression in specific areas. Imperial County is located in the San Diego Unit (DCREP 2014).

California Occupational Safety and Health Administration

The California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) is a state agency that strives to protect workers from job-related health and safety hazards. Cal/OSHA establishes standards as well as

enforcement and consultation programs (Cal/OSHA 2014). OSHA operates under the U.S. Department of Labor as part of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

Imperial County General Plan

The *Seismic and Public Safety Element* of the Imperial County General Plan addresses the goals and policies related the public services and public safety within the County. Policies related to public services include the following:

Goal 1: Include public health and safety considerations in land use planning.

Objective 1.8: Reduce fire hazards by the design of new developments.

Goal 2: Minimize potential hazards to public health, safety, and welfare and prevent the loss of life and damage to health and property resulting from both natural and human-related phenomena.

Objective 2.1: Ensure the adequacy of existing emergency preparedness and evacuation plans to deal with identified hazards and potential emergencies.

The *Parks and Recreation Element* of the Imperial County General Plan provides a framework for the provision and stewardship of County parks and recreational facilities for the enjoyment of County residents and visitors. *The Parks and Recreation Element* applies to all the unincorporated land within the County.

Imperial County Year 2006 Development Impact Fees Ordinance

The 2006 Development Impact Fees Ordinance was approved by the Imperial County Board of Supervisors in November 2006 and requires "...new development both in the countywide and unincorporated areas to supplement the fair share costs of public facilities, equipment and services necessitated by such new development..." (County 2006, pg. 1).

Imperial County Fire/ Office of Emergency Services – Emergency Operations Plan

The Imperial County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan provides the procedures for Imperial County in order to prepare for and respond to emergencies or natural disasters. In addition, the Emergency Operations Plan outlines the organizational structures, relationships, and responsibilities related to coordinating responses for various emergency situations. The Emergency Operations Plan provides guidance for the cities, special districts, and private organizations that play a role in emergency response situations throughout the County operational area (County 2007b).

Imperial County-Mexicali Emergency Response Plan

The Binational Prevention and Emergency Response Plan between Imperial County, California, and the city of Mexicali, Baja California, was established as part of a joint contingency plan (JCP) between the United States of America (U.S.) and Mexico. The JCP was signed in 1999 and provided a foundation for collaboration for the border area and the basis for preparedness, mitigation, response, and prevention of hazardous substances along the inland international boundary. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was developed to reinforce the jurisdictional cooperation between the two nations. The MOU

with the corresponding emergency preparedness and response plan was developed with the support of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (County 2005).

4.14.2 Existing Environmental Setting

Fire Protection

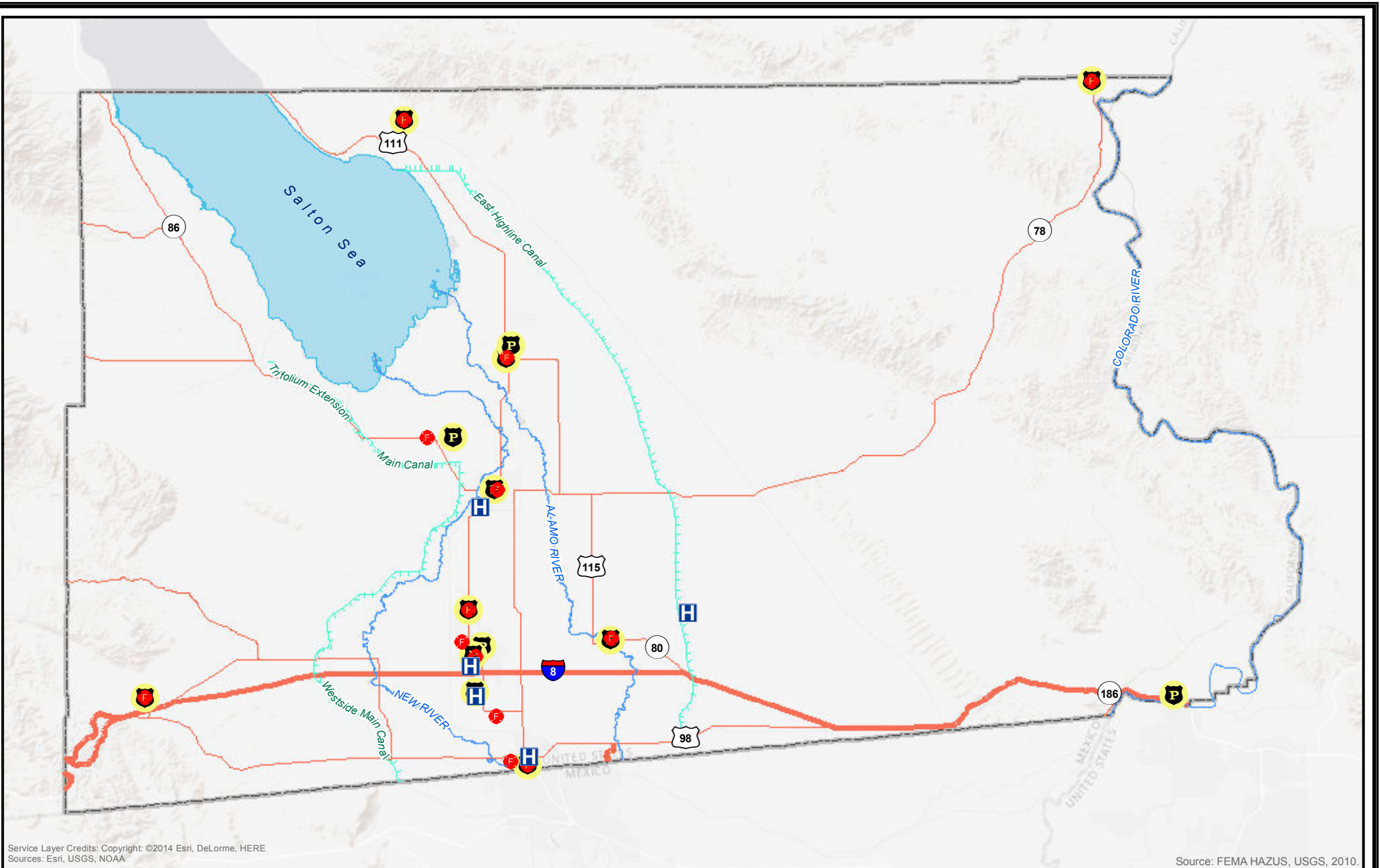
Fire protection in Imperial County is currently provided by the Imperial County Fire Department/OES. The headquarters is located in the City of Imperial at 2514 La Brucherie Road; and substations are located in Heber, Seeley, Imperial, and Palo Verde. Staff includes 8 staff personnel, 31 full-time fire suppression personnel, and 20 reserve personnel (ICPDS 2012). The Imperial County Fire Department provides services including responses to fire, medical, rescue, hazardous materials, prevention, and hazardous device incidents. The average response time is approximately five minutes, but the response time varies based on the location of the incident. In the remaining unincorporated areas of the County, fire protection services are provided based on a mutual aid agreement with other agencies throughout the County (ICPDS 2011). Table 4.14-1 presents the locations of the fire stations throughout the County, while Figure 4.14-1 displays the locations of the fire stations throughout the County.

Table 4.14-1: Fire Stations in Imperial County

Fire Station	Address
Imperial County Fire Department Headquarters	2514 La Brucherie Road, Imperial, CA
Imperial County Fire Department Substation – Heber	1078 Dogwood Road, Heber, CA
Imperial County Fire Department Substation – Seeley	1828 Park Street, Seeley, CA
Imperial County Fire Department Substation – City of Imperial	2514 La Brucherie Road, Imperial, CA
Imperial County Fire Department Substation – Palo Verde	112 US Highway 78, Palo Verde, CA




Law Enforcement

The Imperial County Sheriff's Office provides police protection within the County. The Imperial County Sheriff's Office is headquartered in El Centro at 328 Applestill Road (Imperial County Sheriff's Office 2013). Imperial County Sheriff's Office substations are located in Brawley, Salton City, and Winterhaven, with resident deputies located in the unincorporated communities of Ocotillo, Bombay Beach, Niland, and Palo Verde. The Imperial County Sheriff's office has a staff of approximately 300 sworn, non-sworn, and civilian employees (County 2011). The average response time would be difficult to estimate due to the size of the County and multiple other factors that could affect the response time such as available personnel, workload, and distance (County 2011). Each of the cities within Imperial County also has a police department to serve its incorporated area. Similar to fire protection, the County has a Mutual Aid Agreement for police protection emergencies. In addition, the California Highway Patrol provides some police protection services within the County, including traffic regulation enforcement, emergency accident management, and service and assistance on State roadways or highways (Imperial County Sheriff's Office 2013). Table 4.14-2 displays the locations of the police stations throughout the County.



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Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA

Source: FEMA HAZUS, USGS, 2010.

- Legend**
-  Police Station
 -  Fire Station
 -  Hospital

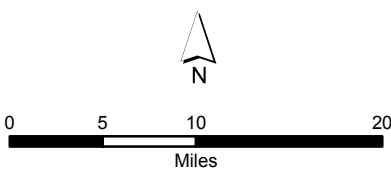


Figure 4.14-1
Imperial County Geothermal/Alternative Energy
and Transmission Element Update PEIR
Police, Fire, and Emergency Services

Table 4.14-2: Law Enforcement Stations in Imperial County

Police Station	Address
Imperial County Sheriff's Office Headquarters	328 Applestill Road, El Centro, CA
Imperial County Sheriff's Office Substation – Brawley	220 Main Street, Brawley, CA
Imperial County Sheriff's Office Substation – Salton City	251 S. Marina Drive, Salton City, CA
Imperial County Sheriff's Office Substation – Winterhaven	513 2 nd Avenue, Winterhaven, CA
Imperial County Sheriff's Office – Niland Station	218 1 st Street, Niland, CA
Imperial County Sheriff's Office – Palo Verde Station	112 Highway 78, Palo Verde, CA

Schools

Imperial County includes the following 16 school districts:

- Brawley Elementary School District
- Brawley Union High School District
- Magnolia Elementary School District
- Mulberry Elementary School District
- Calexico Unified School District
- Calipatria Unified School District
- Central Union High School District
- El Centro Elementary School District
- McCabe Union School District
- Meadows Union School District
- Heber Elementary School District
- Holtville Unified School District
- Imperial Unified School District
- Seeley Union School District
- Westmorland Elementary School District
- San Pasqual Valley Unified School District

In addition, San Diego State University has campuses located in Calexico and Brawley. Furthermore, Imperial Valley College, a community college, is located within the County (Imperial County Office of Education 2013). Figure 4.14-2 shows the locations of schools within the County.

The Brawley Elementary School District is located in the City of Brawley with five schools – four elementary schools and one middle school – serving grades Kindergarten through 8th grade. Approximately 3,700 students attend schools within the Brawley Elementary School District (Brawley Elementary School District 2013).

Magnolia Union Elementary School District consists of a small, rural elementary school that has approximately 130 students in Kindergarten through 8th grades. The district is located in the City of Brawley but serves students from the surrounding agricultural areas including Calipatria and Holtville. A modernization project was completed in 2006-2007, where all facilities were either renovated or replaced; and in the summer of 2011 roof repairs were completed (Magnolia Union Elementary 2012, 2013).

Mulberry Elementary School District is located 10 miles from the City of Brawley in northeastern Imperial County. The district consists of one school, which serves students in Kindergarten through 8th grades. The number of students ranges from approximately 70 to 90, depending on the school year. In the spring of 2004, the school underwent modernization and new construction projects, including a new Cafeteria/Multipurpose Room, a new kitchen, and new classroom and restroom facilities (Mulberry Elementary School 2013).

Calexico Unified School District is located in the City of Calexico and includes seven elementary schools, two junior high schools, one 9th grade campus, one comprehensive high school, one continuation high school, and an adult education program. The number of students within the district is approximately 9,200 (Calexico Unified School District 2013).

Calipatria Unified School District is located in the Cities of Calipatria and Niland. The district includes two elementary schools with Kindergarten through 4th grades, one middle school with 5th through 8th grades, and one high school. The district includes approximately 1,200 students (Calipatria Unified School District 2013).

Central Union High School District includes two comprehensive high schools, one continuation high school, and one adult school and is located in the City of El Centro. Enrollment at the Central Union High School District is approximately 4,200 students (Central Union High School District 2012).

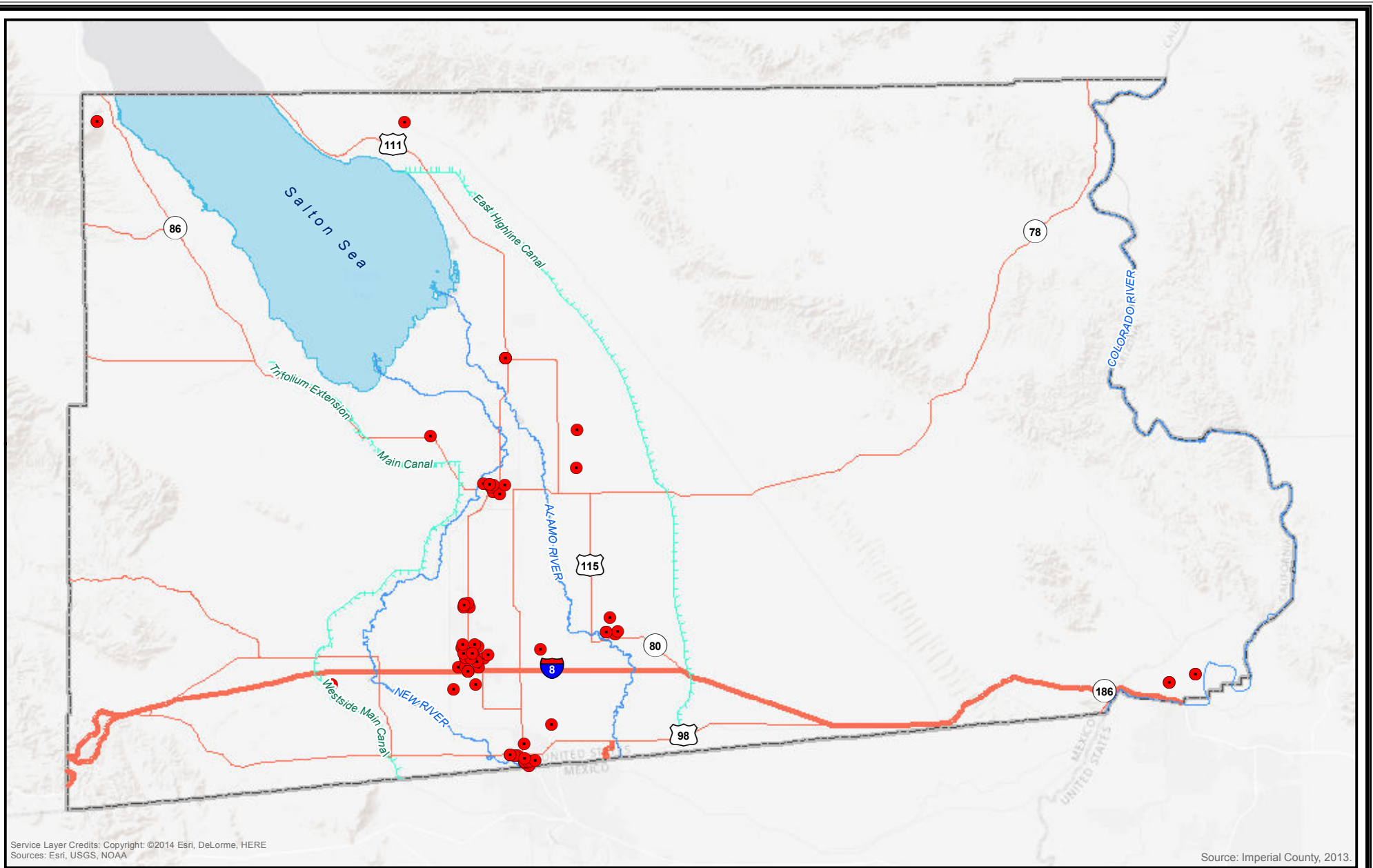
El Centro Elementary School District is located in the City of El Centro and includes approximately 5,000 students. Schools within the district include eight elementary schools, one magnet school for 4th through 6th grades, one middle school, one junior high school, and one home school academy (El Centro Elementary School District 2013).

McCabe Union Elementary School District is located in the City of El Centro and serves Kindergarten through 8th grades. The district includes two school sites, the McCabe site for Kindergarten through 3rd grades and the Corfman site for 4th through 8th grades. Enrollment in the McCabe Union Elementary School District is approximately 1,200 students. Recent upgrades to the campuses include relining the district's sewer plant in 2009, upgrading the district's water plant, and concrete repairs after a 7.2-magnitude earthquake in 2010 (McCabe Union Elementary School District 2012).

Meadows Union Elementary School District serves the southern region of Imperial County, including rural areas outside the City of El Centro. Meadows Union Elementary School District is a one-school district with Kindergarten through 8th grades, serving approximately 500 students (Meadows Union Elementary School District 2012).

Heber Elementary School District consists of two elementary schools in the community of Heber, serving Kindergarten through 8th grades. The district has an enrollment of approximately 1,140 students (Heber Elementary School District 2012).

Holtville Unified School District includes two elementary schools, one middle school, one comprehensive high school, one continuation high school, and one homeschooling academy with 7th through 12th grades. The district is located in the City of Holtville and has approximately 1,600 students within (Holtville Unified School District 2012).

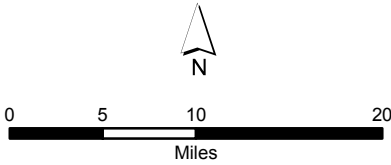


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 Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA

Source: Imperial County, 2013.

Legend
 ● School Location

Figure 4.14-2
 Imperial County Geothermal/Alternative Energy
 and Transmission Element Update PEIR
 School Locations



The Imperial Unified School District is located in the City of Imperial and serves approximately 3,700 students within the district. The district includes two elementary schools, one intermediate school, one continuation school, and one high school (Imperial Unified School District 2013).

Seeley Union School District is a single-school district serving Kindergarten through 8th grades. The district includes approximately 390 students and is located in the community of Seeley (Seeley Union School District 2013).

Westmorland Union Elementary School District is located in the community of Westmorland and serves students from Kindergarten through 8th grades. Approximately 390 students are enrolled in the district, which is a one-school district. The most recent maintenance projects completed at the school included exterior painting, removing wallpaper and painting the front office, and installing new computers in the computer lab room (Westmorland Union Elementary School District 2012).

San Pasqual Valley Unified School District includes the communities of Winterhaven, Bard, and the Quechan Indian Nation, as well as other incorporated areas. The district includes one elementary school, one middle school, a comprehensive high school, and an alternative high school and has an enrollment of approximately 780 students (San Pasqual Valley Unified School District 2012).

Table 4.14-3: School Districts and Schools within Imperial County

District	School	Address
Brawley Elementary School District		261 "D" Street, Brawley CA
	J.W. Oakley Elementary School	1401 "B" Street, Brawley, CA
	Myron D. Witter Elementary School	150 "K" Street, Brawley, CA
	Miguel Hidalgo Elementary School	615 S. Cesar Chavez Street, Brawley, CA
	Phil D. Swing Elementary School	245 West "A" Street, Brawley, CA
	Barbara Worth Junior High School	385 "D" Street, Brawley, CA
Magnolia Union Elementary School District	Magnolia Elementary School	4502 Casey Road, Brawley, CA
Mulberry Elementary School District	Mulberry Elementary School	1391 East Rutherford Road, Brawley, CA
Calexico Unified School District		901 Andrade Avenue, PO Box 792 Calexico, CA
	Calexico High School	1030 Encinitas Avenue, Calexico, CA
	Aurora High School	641 Rockwood Avenue, Calexico, CA
	Robert F. Morales – Adult Center	901 Andrade Avenue, Calexico, CA
	De Anza 9 th Grade Academy	824 Blair Avenue, Calexico, CA
	Enrique Camarena Junior High School	800 E. Rivera Street, Calexico, CA
	William Moreno Junior High School	1201 Kloke Road, Calexico, CA
	Blanche Charles Elementary	1201 Kloke Road, Calexico, CA
	Cesar Chavez Elementary	1251 E. Zapata Street, Calexico, CA
	Dool Elementary	800 Encinitas Avenue, Calexico, CA

Table 4.14-3: School Districts and Schools within Imperial County

District	School	Address
	Jefferson Elementary	1120 E. 7 th Street, Calexico, CA
	Kennedy Gardens Elementary	23000 Rockwood Avenue, Calexico, CA
	Mains Elementary	655 W. Sheridan Avenue, Calexico, CA
	Rockwood Elementary	1000 Rockwood Avenue, Calexico, CA
Calipatria Unified School District		501 W. Main Street, Calipatria, CA
	Bill E. Young Middle School	601 W. Main Street, Calipatria, CA
	Calipatria High School	601 W. Main Street, Calipatria, CA
	Fremont Primary School	401 W. Main Street, Calipatria, CA
	Grace Smith School	501 W. Main Street, Calipatria, CA
Central Union High School District		351 Ross Avenue, El Centro, CA
	Central Union High School	1001 Brighton Avenue, El Centro, CA
	Desert Oasis High School	1302 South 3 rd Street, El Centro, CA
	Southwest High School	2001 Ocotillo Drive, El Centro, CA
	Central Union Adult School	1302 South 3 rd Street, El Centro, CA
El Centro Elementary School District		1256 Broadway, El Centro, CA
	De Anza Magnet School	1530 S. Waterman, El Centro, CA
	Desert Garden Elementary	1900 S. 6 th Street, El Centro, CA
	Harding Elementary	950 S. 7 th Street, El Centro, CA
	Hedrick Elementary	550 S. Waterman, El Centro, CA
	IV Home School Academy	2370 W. Main Street, El Centro, CA
	Kennedy Middle School	900 N. 6 th Street, El Centro, CA
	Lincoln Elementary School	200 N. 12 th Street, El Centro, CA
	Martin Luther King Elementary School	1950 Villa, El Centro, CA
	McKinley Elementary School	1177 N. 8 th Street, El Centro, CA
	Sunflower Elementary School	2450 W. Main Street, El Centro, CA
	Washington Elementary School	223 S. 1 st Street, El Centro, CA
	Wilson Junior High School	600 S. Wilson, El Centro, CA
McCabe Union Elementary School District	Corfman Site/McCabe Site	701 W. McCabe Road, El Centro, CA
Meadows Union Elementary School District	Meadows School	2059 Bowker Road, El Centro, CA
Heber Elementary School District	Heber Elementary School	1052 Heber Avenue, Heber, CA
	Dogwood Elementary School	44 E. Correll Road, Heber, CA
Holtville Unified School District	Freedom Academy	621 E. 6 th Street, Holtville, CA

Table 4.14-3: School Districts and Schools within Imperial County

District	School	Address
	Holtville High School	755 Olive Avenue, Holtville, CA
	Holtville Middle School	800 Beale Avenue, Holtville, CA
	Finley Elementary	627 E. 6 th Street, Holtville, CA
	Pine Elementary	3295 Holt Road, Holtville, CA
	Webb Continuation High School	522 W. 8 th Street, Holtville, CA
Imperial Unified School District		219 North "E" Street, Imperial, CA
	Ben Hulse Elementary	303 South "D" Street, Imperial, CA
	T.L. Waggoner Elementary	627 Joshua Tree Street, Imperial, CA
	Frank Wright Middle School	885 N. Imperial Ave, Imperial, CA
	Imperial High School	517 W. Barioni Blvd, Imperial, CA
	Imperial Avenue Holbrook School	322 N. Imperial Ave, Imperial, CA
Seeley Union School District	Seeley Elementary School	1812 W. Rio Vista, Seeley, CA
Westmorland Union Elementary School District	Westmorland Elementary School	200 S. "C" Street, PO Box 88, Westmorland, CA
San Pasqual Valley Unified School District	San Pasqual Valley Elementary School, Middle School, High School	676 Baseline Road, Winterhaven, CA

Parks

Five parks are operated by the Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department (ICPDS). These include Sunbeam Lake Park, Wiest Lake, Red Hill Park, Ocotillo Community Park, and Palo Verde Park. These County parks offer a variety of passive and active recreation opportunities, including playground equipment, basketball courts, picnic tables, barbeque grills, campsites, walking trails, boating and fishing opportunities, and open space for passive recreation (ICPDS 2013a).

Other park facilities not operated by the County include:

- Heber Dunes Park, which is currently being leased to the California Department of Parks and Recreation
- Pioneer's County Park, which is managed by the Imperial County Historical Society
- Heber Community Park, which is maintained by the Heber Public Utility District
- Salton City Park, which is managed by the Salton Community Services District
- Osbourne Park, which is operated by the Bureau of Land Management
- two privately managed neighborhood parks in Heber
- a neighborhood park in Salton City managed by the Salton Community Services District
- Salton Sea State Recreation Area

- Picacho State Recreation Area
- Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
- Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation and Wilderness Area, overseen by the Bureau of Land Management (ICPDS 2013b)

Libraries

The Imperial County Free Library (ICFL) offers library and information services to the residents of Imperial County who are located outside the city limits of Brawley, Calexico, El Centro, and Imperial. The ICFL includes four libraries located in the communities of Calipatria, Heber, Holtville, and Salton City (ICFL 2013).

Recreational Facilities

In addition to the parks, recreational programs and activities include Little League and BMX races at Sunbeam Lake Park and hunting activities during the allowed hunting season (in allowable game fields) (ICPDS 2013c).

4.14.3 Significance Criteria

The thresholds for significance of impacts for the analysis are based on the environmental checklist in Appendix G of the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. Consistent with the CEQA Guidelines and the professional judgment of the County's staff and environmental consultants, the proposed Project would result in a significant impact on the environment if it would:

- Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:
 - 1) Fire protection
 - 2) Police protection
 - 3) Schools
 - 4) Parks
 - 5) Other public facilities

4.14.4 Impacts and Mitigation

PS-1: Result in physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire protection facilities, or new facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project has taken steps to avoid impacts to existing fire protection facilities by developing a 0.5-mile buffer around all urban areas for the overlay zones. Additionally, project proponents of future renewable energy facilities would likely seek sites that do not include, or are not immediately adjacent to, fire protection facilities in rural areas. Renewable energy facilities typically require large tracts of vacant land with few or no structures on them, thereby minimizing the potential for displacement of existing fire protection facilities located in rural areas.

As described in Section 4.13.4 above, development of future renewable energy facilities under the proposed Project may require some specialized workers from outside the region during both construction and operation; however, construction of future renewable energy facilities associated with the proposed Project would occur over a long period of time, and it is unlikely that a large number of future facilities would be developed concurrently. Consequently, it is unlikely that a substantial number of construction personnel would relocate to Imperial County at one time and thereby increase demand for fire protection services. Similarly, the number of permanent workers with specialized skills relocating to Imperial County for operation of future facilities would be relatively low and is not expected to increase demand for fire protection services. Furthermore, future renewable energy facilities developed under the proposed Project would be required to pay their proportional share of local infrastructure improvement costs per the 2006 Development Impact Fees Ordinance. These fees would be used for fire protection services as well as ongoing operating and maintenance costs. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation measures would be required.

PS-2: Result in physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered police protection facilities, or new facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project has taken steps to avoid impacts to existing police protection facilities by developing a 0.5-mile buffer around all urban areas for the overlay zones. Additionally, project proponents of future renewable energy facilities would likely seek sites that do not include, or are immediately adjacent to, police protection facilities in rural areas. Renewable energy facilities typically require large tracts of vacant land with few or no structures on them, thereby minimizing the potential for displacement of existing police protection facilities located in rural areas.

As described in Section 4.13.4 above, development of future renewable energy facilities under the proposed Project may require some specialized workers from outside the region during both construction and operation; however, construction of future renewable energy facilities associated with the proposed Project would occur over a long period of time, and it is unlikely that a large number of future facilities would be developed concurrently. Consequently, it is unlikely that a substantial number of construction personnel would relocate to Imperial County at one time and thereby increase demand for police protection services. Similarly, the number of permanent workers with specialized skills

relocating to Imperial County for operation of future facilities would be relatively low and is not expected to increase demand for police protection services. Furthermore, future renewable energy facilities developed under the proposed Project would be required to pay their proportional share of local infrastructure improvements costs per the 2006 Development Impact Fees Ordinance. These fees would be used for police protection services as well as ongoing operating and maintenance costs. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation measures would be required.

PS-3: Result in physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered school facilities, or new facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project has taken steps to avoid impacts to existing schools by developing a 0.5-mile buffer around all urban areas for the overlay zones. Additionally, project proponents of future renewable energy facilities would likely seek sites that do not include, or are immediately adjacent to, schools in rural areas. Renewable energy facilities typically require large tracts of vacant land with few or no structures on them, thereby minimizing the potential for displacement of existing schools located in rural areas.

Furthermore, the proposed Project would be limited to construction of future renewable energy facilities within the proposed overlay zones and would not construct any new housing that would result in an increase in population or student generation requiring construction of new schools. As described in Section 4.13.4 above, the number of new workers required for construction and operation of future renewable energy facilities developed under the proposed Project would be relatively low and would not require construction of new schools. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation measures would be required.

PS-4: Result in physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered recreation facilities, or new facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project has taken steps to avoid impacts to existing park facilities by developing a 0.5-mile buffer around all urban areas for the overlay zones, thereby preventing impacts to park facilities within urban areas. The overlay zones do include land within, or immediately adjacent to, several recreational areas, including Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area, Plaster City Off-Highway vehicle area, and wildlife refuges providing passive recreation opportunities such as the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge and Imperial National Wildlife Refuge. Future renewable energy facilities could avoid impacts to recreation facilities by incorporating adequate setbacks and other design features that would preserve recreational activities. Adequate setbacks and other design features would allow the proper protection necessary to ensure the safety of park or open space visitors and preserve views that are part of the recreational value of the park or open space area.

Furthermore, the proposed Project would be limited to construction of future renewable energy facilities within the proposed overlay zones and would not construct any new housing that would result in an increase in population requiring construction of new recreation facilities. As described in Section 4.13.4 above, the number of new workers required for construction and operation of future renewable energy facilities developed under the proposed Project would be relatively low and would not require construction of new recreation facilities.

Furthermore, opportunities exist for development of future renewable energy facilities to be coordinated with restoration of existing recreation facilities. The Salton Sea Authority could restore a large portion of the Salton Sea through filtration and use the remaining portion of the Salton Sea for geothermal and solar energy development. Due to the Salton Sea being fed by agricultural runoff, the water body is experiencing water quality problems, including increasing salinity and issues associated with the nutrients in the agricultural runoff. The restoration efforts would focus on habitat enhancement and the reestablishment of Salton Sea as a major recreational area and tourist destination. Incorporation of recreational opportunities into the restoration plan for the Salton Sea combined with adherence to local setbacks and buffer zones for facilities developed under the proposed Project would ensure that impacts on recreation would be less than significant. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation measures would be required.

PS-5: Result in physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered public facilities, or new facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project has taken steps to avoid impacts to libraries, post offices, and other public facilities by developing a 0.5-mile buffer around all urban areas for the overlay zones. Additionally, project proponents of future renewable energy facilities would likely seek sites that do not include, or are not immediately adjacent to, other public facilities in rural areas. Renewable energy facilities typically require large tracts of vacant land with few or no structures on them, thereby minimizing the potential for displacement of libraries, post offices, or other existing public facilities located in rural areas. As described in Section 4.13.4 above, the number of new workers required for construction and operation of future renewable energy facilities developed under the proposed Project would be relatively low and would not require construction of new libraries, post offices, or other public facilities. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation measures would be required.

4.14.5 Cumulative Impacts

It is not anticipated that future renewable energy facilities developed under the proposed Project would result in cumulative impacts related to public services. Future renewable energy facilities developed under the proposed Project as well as foreseeable projects within the County would be required to pay their proportional share of the local costs of infrastructure improvements consistent within the County 2006 Development Impact Fees Ordinance. Payment of these fees would ensure that public services would be adequately provided at a regional level and ensure that cumulative impacts would be less than significant.