

SECTION 4.10

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

4.10 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

This section describes federal, state and local regulations applicable to hazards and hazardous materials. It also describes the environmental setting with regard to potential hazards within the Project area and potential hazards created as a result of implementing the proposed Project. All of the solar field site parcels were addressed as part of the “Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report Drew Solar Project North of State Route 98 at Drew Road West of Calexico, California” (GS Lyon 2018).

This section describes potential exposure to hazardous materials and/or creation of hazards that could result from implementation of the proposed Drew Solar Project. The discussion focuses on hazardous materials and hazards requiring remediation or mechanisms to prevent accidental release. Measures are identified to reduce or avoid adverse impacts anticipated from construction, operation, and decommissioning of the proposed Project. A discussion of cumulative impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials is also included in this section.

Through the scoping process, the public raised various other concerns regarding potential hazards perceived to be associated with the Project, such as exposure to electromagnetic fields, interference with radio-frequency communications, hazardous shocks, fire hazards (non-wildland/operational), valley fever, and heat island. In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, these concerns are briefly discussed below.

The potential exposure of workers to hazardous materials used at the proposed Project is addressed through mandatory compliance with all applicable codes and requirements regarding worker safety including the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Employers must inform employees of hazards associated with their work and provide those employees with special protective equipment and training to reduce the potential for health impacts from the handling of hazardous materials.

Health risks associated with exposure to diesel particulate matter (DPM) are discussed in Section 4.4, Air Quality. Seismic hazards, exposure to noise, and flood hazards are discussed in Section 4.6, Geology and Soils, Section 4.8, Noise and Section 4.11, Hydrology and Water Quality, respectively. Disposal of solar modules and batteries are discussed in Section 4.13, Public Services and Utilities under subsection 4.13.5, Solid Waste.

While there were no Recognized Environmental Concerns relative to any of the proposed solar field site parcels, the Full Build-out Scenario would represent the worst-case scenario with regard to hazards and hazardous materials because the greatest quantity of hazardous materials associated with construction would be present at one time under this scenario.

4.10.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

A. FEDERAL

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (42 USC 6901 et seq.)

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) grants authority to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to control hazardous waste from start to finish. This covers the production, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. The RCRA also sets forth a framework for the management of non-hazardous solid waste. The 1986 amendments to the RCRA enabled the EPA to address environmental problems that could result from underground tanks storing petroleum and other hazardous substances. No items that are considered hazardous were identified on the Project site. Small quantities of hazardous materials will be used and stored on-site during construction.

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Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act)

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as the Clean Water Act (CWA), is a comprehensive statute focused on restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the nation's waters. Originally enacted in 1948, the CWA was amended numerous times until it was reorganized and expanded in 1972. It continues to be amended almost on an annual basis.

Primary authority for the implementation and enforcement of the CWA rests with the EPA. The CWA authorizes water quality programs, requires federal effluent limitations and state water quality standards, requires permits for the discharge of pollutants into navigable waters, provides enforcement mechanisms, and authorizes funding for wastewater treatment works construction grants and state revolving loan programs, as well as funding to states and tribes for water quality programs. Provisions have also been added to address water quality problems in specific regions and specific waterways. The Project would be subject to the General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity (NPDES No. CAS000002) (Construction General Permit Order 2010-2014-DWQ effective February 14, 2011) during construction. Operation of the Project would be covered under Industrial Storm Water General Permit Order 97-03-DWQ (General Industrial Permit) (NPDES Permit No. CAS000001).

Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)

Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) to assure safe and healthful working conditions for men and women. OSHA authorized enforcement of the standards developed under the CWA and assists states in efforts to assure safe and healthful working conditions. OSHA also provides for research, information, education, and training in the field of occupational safety and health. The Project would be subject to OSHA requirements during construction, operations and maintenance and decommissioning.

Title 14, Part 77 of the Code of Federal Regulation, "Objects Affecting the Navigable Air Space"

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulates aviation at regional, public, private, and military airports. The FAA requires notification of structures to be constructed in excess of 200 feet in all areas (and, potentially, of structures less than 200 feet, depending on proximity of the proposed structure to public use airports). The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) also require the applicant to submit FAA Form 7460-1, Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration. Notification allows the FAA to identify potential aeronautical hazards in advance, thus preventing or minimizing any adverse impacts on the safe and efficient use of navigable airspace (49 CFR Part 77.17). Any structure that would constitute a hazard to air navigation, as defined in FAA Part 77, requires issuance of a permit from the Caltrans' Aeronautics Program. If the FAA aeronautical study determines that the structure has no impact on air navigation, a permit is not required.

Part 77, Subpart C, of the Federal Aviation Regulations limits the heights of structures, trees, and other objects in the vicinity of an airport within Compatibility Zones C and D to less than 35 feet above the level of the ground. (Note: Per the Imperial County ALUCP, Compatibility Zone C is located in areas of Common Traffic Pattern with the following impact elements: limited risk – aircraft at or below 1,000 feet AGL; frequent noise intrusion); Compatibility Zone D is located in areas of Other Airport with the following impact elements: negligible risk; potential for annoyance from overflights [Imperial County 1996a, p. 2-17]). Proponents of a project which may exceed a Part 77 limit must notify the FAA as required. Currently, there are no such locations near the existing airports in Imperial County. Proposed

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power pole structures could exceed 120 feet in height. The Applicant is currently applying for the applicable height variances in accordance with the County Code. No structures (including Gen-Tie structures) would be more than 180 feet in height. Therefore, because no portion of the proposed Project is located in Compatibility Zones C and D, Part 77 would not apply to the proposed Project.

Title 47, CFR, section 15.2524, Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Title 47 CFR section 15.2524, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) prohibits operation of devices that can interfere with radio-frequency communication. As part of the design and construction process for the Project, the Applicant will limit the conductor surface electric gradient in accordance with the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers Radio Noise Design Guide.

B. STATE

Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations

Hazardous Materials Defined

A material is considered hazardous if it appears on a list of hazardous materials prepared by a federal, state, or local agency, or if it has characteristics defined as hazardous by such an agency. According to Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 66260.10, a hazardous material is defined as:

...A substance or combination of substances which because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical or infectious characteristics, may either (1) cause, or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible, or incapacitating reversible, illness; or, (2) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or environment when improperly treated, stored, transported or disposed of or otherwise managed.

This definition includes, but is not limited to, any chemical requiring a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) per Hazardous Substances defined at Health and Safety Code 25501(q), materials listed in 49 CFR 172, and Hazardous Waste.

Chemical and physical properties that cause a substance to be considered hazardous include the properties of toxicity, ignitability, corrosivity, and reactivity (22 CCR sections 66261.20 through 66261.24). Factors that influence the health effects of exposure to hazardous materials include dosage, frequency, the exposure pathway, and individual susceptibility. The proposed Project would require use of small amounts of hazardous materials (such as diesel fuel, oil and grease for heavy equipment, transformer fluid) during construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning.

California Environmental Protection Agency

The California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) establish rules governing the use of hazardous materials and the management of hazardous waste. Applicable state and local laws include the following:

- Public Safety/Fire Regulations/Building Codes
- Hazardous Waste Control Law
- Hazardous Substances Information and Training Act
- Air Toxics Hot Spots and Emissions Inventory Law
- Underground Storage of Hazardous Substances Act
- Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

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Small quantities of hazardous materials would be used and stored at the Project site for miscellaneous, general maintenance activities that would be subject to state and local laws.

Department of Toxic Substances Control

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has primary regulatory responsibility for the management of hazardous materials and the generation, transport, and disposal of hazardous waste under the authority of the Hazardous Waste Control Law (HWCL). Enforcement is delegated to local jurisdictions that enter into agreements with DTSC.

California's Secretary of Environmental Protection established a unified hazardous waste and hazardous materials management regulatory program as required by Health and Safety Code Chapter 6.11. The unified program consolidates, coordinates, and makes consistent portions of the following six existing programs:

- Hazardous Waste Generations and Hazardous Waste On-site Treatment
- Underground Storage Tanks
- Hazardous Material Release Response Plans and Inventories
- California Accidental Release Prevention Program
- Aboveground Storage Tanks (spill control and countermeasure plan only)
- Uniform Fire Code Hazardous Material Management Plans and Inventories

The statute requires all counties to apply to the Cal EPA Secretary for the certification of a local unified program agency. Qualified cities are also permitted to apply for certification. The local Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) is required to consolidate, coordinate, and make consistent the administrative requirements, permits, fee structures, and inspection and enforcement activities for these six program elements within the county. Most CUPAs have been established as a function of a local environmental health or fire department.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal participates in all levels of the CUPA program including regulatory oversight, CUPA certifications, evaluations of the approved CUPAs, training, and education. The DTSC serves as the CUPA in Imperial County.

Small quantities of hazardous materials would be transported to and from each solar field site parcel and used and stored at the Project site for miscellaneous, general operations and maintenance activities.

California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), General Order 95 (GO-95), "Rules for Overhead Electric Line Construction"

GO-95 governs clearance requirements to prevent hazardous shocks, grounding techniques to minimize nuisance shocks, and maintenance and inspection requirements. These standards ensure that the appropriate clearances would be reliably maintained between the proposed electric collector line and crossings of existing electric line installations. The proposed Project would be designed in accordance with the GO-95.

California Public Utilities Commission, General Order 52 (GO-52)

GO-52 governs the construction and operation of power and communications lines to prevent or mitigate interference resulting from such lines. The proposed Project would be subject to this order.

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California Public Utilities Commission, General Order 131-D, “Rules for Planning and Construction of Electric Generation Line and Substation Facilities in California”

GO-131-D specifies application and noticing requirements for new line construction including electromagnetic field (EMF) reduction. The proposed Project would be subject to this order.

Title 8, California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 2700 et seq. “High Voltage Safety Orders”

Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations specifies requirements and minimum standards for safety when installing, operating, working around, and maintaining electrical installations and equipment. The proposed Project would be subject to Title 8.

National Electrical Safety Code

The National Electrical Safety Code specifies grounding procedures to limit nuisance shocks and specifies minimum conductor ground clearances. The proposed Project would be subject to this code and would be designed with a grounding system providing an adequate path-to-ground to permit the dissipation of current created by lightning and ground faults.

14 California Code of Regulations (CCR), Sections 1250 – 1258, “Fire Prevention Standards for Electric Utilities”

Title 14 of the CCR, sections 1250 through 1258 provides specific exemptions from electric pole and tower firebreak. Title 14 CCR sections 1250 through 1258 also provides conductor clearance standards and specifies when and where standards apply. These standards address hazards that could be caused by sparks from conductors of overhead lines, or that could result from direct contact between the line and combustible objects. The proposed Project would be subject to these standards.

C. LOCAL

County of Imperial General Plan

Both natural and man-made hazards are addressed in the Imperial County General Plan. The Seismic and Public Safety Element also contains a set of goals and objectives for land use planning and safety, emergency preparedness, and the control of hazardous materials. The goals and objectives, together with the implementation programs and policies provide direction for development.

Table 4.10-1 analyzes the consistency of the Project with the applicable goal and objectives relating to public safety in the Imperial County General Plan. While this EIR analyzes the Project’s consistency with the General Plan pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15125(d), the Imperial County Board of Supervisors ultimately determines consistency with the General Plan.

**TABLE 4.10-1
IMPERIAL COUNTY GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS**

General Plan Goal and Objectives	Consistent with General Plan?	Analysis
SEISMIC AND PUBLIC SAFETY ELEMENT		
Control Hazardous Materials		
Goal 3: Protect the public from exposure to hazardous materials and wastes.	Yes	The County has adopted an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and a Fire Prevention and Explosives Ordinance to protect the

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**TABLE 4.10-1
IMPERIAL COUNTY GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS**

General Plan Goal and Objectives	Consistent with General Plan?	Analysis
		<p>public from exposure to hazardous materials wastes. The EOP provides a comprehensive, single source of guidance and procedures for the County to prepare for and respond to significant or catastrophic natural, environmental or conflict-related risks that produce situations requiring coordinated response. The County of Imperial Fire Prevention and Explosives Ordinance, Section 53101-53300, contains provisions for the purpose of prescribing regulations governing conditions hazardous to life and property from fire or explosion. Such measures in this Ordinance include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage of flammable materials • Storage of radioactive materials • Permit required for sale and use of fireworks • Abatement of weeds and other vegetation <p>The proposed Project does not involve exposure of the public to hazardous materials and wastes. Prior to using or storing hazardous materials on the Project site, the Applicant would be required to prepare a Hazardous Material Management Plan or other similar plans for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario, as applicable. Thus, the proposed Project is consistent with this goal for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.</p>
<p>Objective 3.1 Discourage the transporting of hazardous materials/waste near or through residential areas and critical facilities.</p>	<p align="center">Yes</p>	<p>The Project is in a rural portion of the County with very few residential structures in the area. The Project area does not contain, nor is located near, critical facilities such as a hospital or fire station. Additionally, no schools are located on or adjacent to the solar field site parcels. In addition, large quantities of hazardous</p>

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**TABLE 4.10-1
IMPERIAL COUNTY GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS**

General Plan Goal and Objectives	Consistent with General Plan?	Analysis
		materials are not required as part of construction, operations and maintenance, or decommissioning of the proposed Project. Therefore, the proposed Project is consistent with this objective for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.
Objective 3.2 Minimize the possibility of hazardous materials/waste spills.	Yes	As noted under the analysis for Goal 3, prior to using or storing hazardous materials on any of the solar field site parcels, the Applicant would prepare a Hazardous Material Management Plan (per Health and Safety Code Sections 25500-25519) or other similar plans, as applicable for the proposed Project. In addition, special training would be implemented to avoid accidental spills during refueling of equipment at the time of construction. Therefore, the proposed Project is consistent with this objective for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.
Objective 3.3 Discourage incompatible development adjacent to sites and facilities for the production, storage, disposal, and transport of hazardous materials/waste as identified in the County General Plan and other regulations.	Yes	The solar field site parcels are surrounded by agricultural lands and solar energy facilities similar to the proposed Project. The proposed Project is compatible with surrounding uses and none of the solar field site parcels are adjacent to any hazardous facilities. Therefore, the proposed Project is consistent with this objective for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Imperial County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan

The Imperial County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) sets forth the criteria and policies which the Imperial County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) uses assessing the compatibility between the principal airports in Imperial County and proposed land use development in the areas surrounding them. The ALUCP primarily deals with review of local general plans, specific plans, zoning ordinances and other land use documents covering broad geographic areas. Certain individual land use development proposals also may be reviewed by the ALUC as provided in the policies identified in the ALUCP. The ALUC does not have authority over existing incompatible land uses or the operation of any

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airport. The Project was presented to the ALUC at a meeting on June 24, 2018. The Project was found to be consistent with the ALUCP.

Imperial County Office of Emergency Services – Emergency Operations Plan

The Imperial County Fire Department (ICFD) is the local Office of Emergency Services (OES) in Imperial County. The County Fire Chief is the OES Coordinator. An Assistant OES Coordinator maintains the OES program for the County of Imperial. ICFD acts as the lead agency for the Imperial County Operational Area (OA) and provides leadership in all phases of developing the emergency management organization, including public education, training, emergency operations, interagency coordination, and plan development (Imperial County OES, 2007).

The Imperial County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) provides a comprehensive, single source of guidance and procedures for the County to prepare for and respond to significant or catastrophic natural, environmental, or conflict-related risks that produce situations requiring coordinated response. It further provides guidance regarding management concepts relating to response and abatement of various emergency situations, identifies organizational structures and relationships, and describes responsibilities and functions necessary to protect life and property. The EOP is consistent with the requirements of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) as defined in Government Code Section 8607(a) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security National Incident Management System (NIMS) for managing response to multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional emergencies. SEMS/NIMS incorporates the use of the Incident Command System (ICS), mutual aid, the operational area concept, and multi/interagency coordination. The Project site is in Zone 1-B of Fire/Emergency Management/Staging and Shelter Zones in the EOP (Imperial County OES, 2007, p. 73).

County of Imperial Fire Prevention and Explosives Ordinance

The County of Imperial Fire Prevention and Explosives Ordinance, sections 53101-53300, contains provisions for the purpose of prescribing regulations governing conditions hazardous to life and property from fire or explosion. Measures in this Ordinance include the following:

- Storage of flammable materials
- Storage of radioactive materials
- Permit required for sale and use of fireworks
- Abatement of weeds and other vegetation

Weed and vegetation control would be enforced as part of operations and maintenance of the proposed Project.

4.10.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

A. PROJECT SITE

The proposed Project is located on approximately 855 gross acres (762.8 net acres) of undeveloped agricultural lands in Imperial County owned by the Imperial Irrigation District (IID). The proposed Project site is located on six parcels (052-170-039-000, 052-170-067-000, 052-170-031-000, 052-170-032-000, 052-170-056-000, and 052-170-037-000) approximately 6.5 miles southwest of the City of El Centro, California and 7.5 miles directly west of Calexico, California. As shown in Figure 2.0-2 in Chapter 2.0, Project Description, the Project site is generally located south of Kubler Road, east of the Westside Main Canal, north of State Route (SR) 98 and west of Pulliam Road. The site is crossed and bordered by field

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roads, irrigation drainage channels and concrete irrigation ditches. Drew Road bisects the Project site north-south.

Phase I Environmental Site Assessment

Information contained in this section is summarized from the “Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report Drew Solar Project North of State Route 98 at Drew Road West of Calexico, California” (GS Lyon 2018). This document is provided on the attached CD of Technical Appendices as **Appendix I** of this EIR.

The purpose of a Phase I ESA is to determine if any recognized or potential environmental conditions are present on the Project site. The American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) defines a “recognized environmental condition” (REC) as “any hazardous substance or petroleum product under conditions that indicate an existing, past, or material threat of release into the structures on the property or into the ground, groundwater, or surface water of the property.” The term REC includes hazardous substances and petroleum products even under conditions that might be in compliance with laws. The term is not intended to include “de minimis” conditions which refer to a condition that generally does not present a threat to human health and/or the environment and that generally would not be subject to an enforcement action if brought to the attention of appropriate governmental agencies (GS Lyon 2018, p. 23).

The Phase I ESA included results of a site reconnaissance to identify current conditions of the solar field site parcels and adjoining properties, a review of various readily available federal, state, and local government agency records, and review of available historical site and site vicinity information.

Background Review

Historical Use Records

ASTM E1527-13 requires the environmental professional to identify all obvious uses of the property from the present back to the properties first developed use or 1940, whichever is earliest. This information is collected to identify the likelihood that past uses have led to RECs in connection with the properties. This task is accomplished by reviewing standard historical sources to the extent that they are necessary, reasonably ascertainable, and likely to be useful. These standard records include aerial photographs, fire insurance maps, property tax files, land title records, topographic maps, city directories, telephone directories, building department records, and zoning/land use records.

The general type of historical use (i.e., commercial, retail, residential, industrial, undeveloped, office) should be identified at 5-year intervals, unless the specific use of the property appears to be unchanged over a period longer than 5 years. The historical research is complete when the use is defined or when data failure occurs. Data failure occurs when all of the standard historical sources have been reviewed, yet the property use cannot be identified back to its first developed use or to 1940. Data failure is not uncommon in trying to identify the use of the property at 5-year intervals back to first use or 1940, whichever is earlier.

GS Lyon reviewed historical records to identify obvious uses of the subject properties from the present back to the properties first developed use, or to 1940, whichever is earlier. The results of this research and data failure, if encountered, are presented in the following sections.

Title Records

GS Lyon was provided with preliminary title records for review as part of this assessment. No liens were found from reviewing the preliminary report (see **Appendix I** of this EIR for the full report).

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Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps are large scale maps depicting the commercial, industrial, and residential sections of various cities across the United States. Since the primary use of the fire insurance maps was to assess the buildings that were being insured, the existence and location of fuel storage tanks, flammable or other potentially toxic substances, and the nature of businesses are often shown on these maps.

Due to the rural undeveloped nature of the sites and vicinity, no Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps were available for the subject sites. A “No Coverage” letter for the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps is included in Appendix E of the Phase I ESA included in **Appendix I** of this EIR.

Aerial Photographs

Aerial photographs obtained from the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) archives dating back to 1937 were reviewed for historical development of the subject sites. Reproductions of the historical aerial photographs reviewed are included in Appendix C of the Phase I ESA included in **Appendix I** of this EIR.

The 1937, 1949, 1953, 1956, 1965, 1976, 1985, 1996, 2002, 2008, 2013 and 2014 aerial photographs show the subject sites developed as agricultural fields.

The 2014 aerial photograph is similar to the 2013 photograph with the addition of photovoltaic solar power generation facilities constructed on adjacent properties.

Street Directories

GS Lyon Consultants contracted Environmental Data Resources, Inc. (EDR) of Shelton, Connecticut to conduct a search of historic city directories for the subject properties (Appendix I of the Phase I ESA included in **Appendix I** of this EIR). City directories are used for locating individuals and businesses in a particular urban or suburban area. City directories are generally divided into three sections: a business index, a list of resident names and addresses, the name and type of businesses (if unclear from the name). While city directory coverage is comprehensive for major cities, it may be spotty for rural and small towns.

EDR Digital Archive: The EDR Digital Archive for the years 1992, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2014 were reviewed. No listings are shown for the subject sites. No service stations, chemical manufacturers, petroleum manufacturers, distributors, or automotive repair facilities were noted at or in the immediate

Historical Topographic Maps

Historic topographic maps (1940, 1943 and 1937), USGS 15 Min. Heber, CA Quadrangle, showed the subject site with five rural residences spread across the site. The (1957, 1976 and 2012) maps do not show any structures within the subject site. The maps can be found in Appendix D of the Phase I ESA included in **Appendix I** of this EIR.

Historical Telephone Directories

Telephone Directories: Telephone directories for the Imperial County businesses published in 1941, 1955, and 1968 were reviewed. No service stations, chemical manufacturers, petroleum manufacturers, distributors, or automotive repair facilities were noted at or in the immediate vicinity of the subject sites.

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Historical Use Summary

Summary of the Historical Use of Property

Based on a review of the historical information, the subject properties were first developed prior to 1937 for agricultural use. The subject sites have been used for agricultural use since the late-1930's.

Summary of the Historical Use of Adjacent Properties

Historically, the properties located immediately adjacent to the subject properties have been agricultural use lands with scattered rural residential homes.

Site Reconnaissance

On November 6, 2017, a reconnaissance survey of the solar field site parcels was conducted. The site visit consisted of driving the perimeter of the Project site and randomly crossing each APN. The reconnaissance included visual observations or surficial conditions at the sites and observation of adjoining properties to the extent that they were visible from public areas.

The site reconnaissance was limited to visual and/or physical observation of the exterior and interior of the Project site and its improvements, the current uses of the Project site and adjoining properties, and the current condition of the Project site. The site visit evaluated the Project site and adjoining properties for potential hazardous materials/waste and petroleum product use, storage, disposal, and accidental release including the following: presence of tank and drum storage; mechanical or electrical equipment likely to contain liquids; evidence of soil or pavement staining or stressed vegetation; ponds, pits, lagoons, or sumps; suspicious odors; fill and depressions; or any other condition indicative of potential contamination. The site visit did not evaluate the presence of asbestos-containing materials, radon, lead-based paint, mold, indoor air quality, or structural defects, or other non-scope items (GS Lyon 2018, p. 16).

Site Conditions

The Project site is currently farmed as ten agricultural fields. One transformer was observed on a power pole along Drew Road near the Mount Signal Drain #1. No evidence of leakage from the transformer was noted and IID records indicate that all transformers in the Imperial Valley have been tested for PCB content. All transformers containing PCB's have been replaced by the IID (GS Lyon 2018, p. 5).

Groundwater

The groundwater in the area of the Project site is brackish and is typically encountered at a depth of 6 to 10 feet below the ground surface. Depth to groundwater may fluctuate due to the localized geologic conditions, precipitation, irrigation, drainage and construction practices in the region. Based on the regional topography, groundwater flow is assumed to be generally towards the north within the Project site. Flow directions may also vary locally in the vicinity of each parcel (GS Lyon 2018, p. 6).

Reconnaissance Observations

Although various features on the solar field site parcels have potential to contain hazardous substances or potential contamination, the Phase I ESA determined that proposed Project's activities and features do not constitute RECs. Aspects evaluated are briefly discussed below based on details provided in the Phase I ESA (GS Lyon 2018).

Hazardous Substances and Petroleum Products

No operations that use, treat, store, dispose of, or generate hazardous materials or petroleum products on the Project site during the site reconnaissance (GS Lyon 2018, p. 17).

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Storage Tanks

During the site reconnaissance, no obvious visual evidence indicating the current presents of Underground Storage Tanks (i.e. vent pipes, fill ports, etc.) was noted. Likewise, no obvious visual evidence indicating the historical presence of Aboveground Storage Tanks (i.e. secondary containments, concrete saddles, etc.) was observed (GS Lyon 2018, p. 17).

Odors

No obvious strong, pungent, or noxious odors were noted on the Project site during the site reconnaissance (GS Lyon 2018, p. 17).

Drums and Containers

During the site reconnaissance, no drums or storage containers were observed on the Project site other than portable tanks containing anhydrous ammonia which is used for fertilizer for the fields (GS Lyon 2018, p. 17).

Unidentified Substance Containers

No open or damaged containers with unidentified substances was observed on the Project site during the site reconnaissance (GS Lyon 2018, p. 18).

Suspect Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) Containing Equipment

No potential PCB-containing equipment such as electrical transformers, capacitors, and hydraulic equipment were observed on the Project site or immediate vicinity during the site reconnaissance (GS Lyon 2018, p. 18).

Pits, Ponds and Lagoons

No pits, pods or lagoons were noted on the Project site during the site reconnaissance (GS Lyon 2018, p. 18).

Stained Soils or Pavement

No evidence of significantly stained soil or pavement was noted on the Project site during the site reconnaissance (GS Lyon 2018, p. 18).

Stressed Vegetation

No evidence of stressed vegetation attributed to potential contamination was noted on the Project site during the site reconnaissance (GS Lyon 2018, p. 18).

Solid Waste

No dumpsters or solid waste containers exist on the Project site during the site reconnaissance (GS Lyon 2018, p. 18).

Wastewater

Storm water flows to the northeast and towards the Mount Signal Drain No. 1 (Imperial Irrigation District earthen farm drainage channel) (GS Lyon 2018, p. 18).

Wells

No evidence of wells (dry wells, drinking water, observation wells, groundwater monitoring wells, irrigation wells injection wells or abandoned wells) was noted on the Project site during the site reconnaissance (GS Lyon 2018, p. 19).

Septic System

No septic systems are present on the Project site (GS Lyon 2018, p. 19).

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Asbestos Containing Materials

The potential for asbestos containing materials to be present on the Project site is very low due to the lack of structures (GS Lyon 2018, p. 19).

Lead Based Paint

The potential for lead based paint residues existing at the Project site is very low due to the lack of development on the Project site (GS Lyon 2018, p. 19).

Radon

The Project site is located in Zone 3 as shown on the EPA Map of Radon Zones. This zone indicates a predicted average indoor radon screening level of less than 2 pCi/L (GS Lyon 2018, p. 19).

Agricultural Use

The parcels comprising the Project site have been in agricultural use since the late 1930's. Residues of currently available pesticides and currently banned pesticides such as DDT/DDE may be present in near surface soils in limited concentrations. The concentrations of these pesticides found on the other Imperial Valley agricultural sites are typically less than 25% of the current regulatory threshold limits (GS Lyon 2018, p. 20).

Adjoining Properties

The properties adjoining the Project site are within a rural agricultural area of southwestern Imperial Valley north of SR 93 on either side of Drew Road west of Calexico. Properties surrounding the Project site are either agricultural fields or photovoltaic solar farms built within the last 4 years. A rural residence and farm equipment repair shop is located adjacent to the southern boundary of the property between Drew Road and SR 93. The Westside Main Canal is located adjacent to the southwestern boundary of the property.

Emergency Plans

The County of Imperial has adopted the "Imperial County Operational Area - Emergency Operations Plan," which addresses the County's planned response to extraordinary emergency situations associated with natural disasters, technological incidents, and nuclear defense operations. The plan identifies certain open space areas and public buildings to serve as emergency shelters when residents must be relocated. None of the solar field site parcels are designated as an emergency shelter area on the Fire/Emergency Management/Staging and Shelter Zone Map (Imperial County OES 2007).

Fire Hazard/Smoke

The potential for a major fire in the unincorporated areas of the County is generally low. According to the Draft Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the Local Responsibility Area (LRA) Map for Imperial County prepared by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF 2007a), the Project area is located in an area characterized having moderate or unzone fire hazard. The nearest high fire hazard severity zones are approximately 20 miles to the west.

Valley Fever

Valley Fever is an illness caused by a fungus (*Coccidioides immitis* and *C. posadasii*) that grows in soils under certain conditions. Favorable conditions for the Valley Fever fungus include low rainfall, high summer temperatures, and moderate winter temperatures. Soils within the Imperial Valley, including the Project area, fit the profile to harbor Valley Fever spores. When soils are disturbed by the wind or other activities such as construction and farming, Valley Fever fungal spores become airborne. The spores present a potential health hazard when inhaled. Individuals in occupations such as construction,

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agriculture, and archaeology have a higher risk of exposure due to working in areas of disturbed soils which may have the Valley Fever fungus. Infection risk is highest in California during a six-month period from June to November. Animals are also susceptible to the disease. In extreme cases, the disease can be fatal, though the majority of Valley Fever cases are very mild with over 60 percent or more of infected people having no symptoms or flu-like symptoms (BLM 2010).

Valley Fever is not transmitted directly from person to person. Of those infected with *coccidioidomycosis*, approximately 60 percent may be asymptomatic. Following an incubation period of 1 to 3 weeks, clinical manifestations occur in 40 percent of infected persons and range from influenza-like illness, such as cough, fever, or difficulty breathing, to severe pneumonia, and rarely, disseminated disease. Disseminated infection, which can be fatal, most commonly involves skin and soft tissues, bones, and the central nervous system (CDPH 2017, p. 4).

Imperial County has a relatively low Valley Fever incidence rate. Data as of September 10, 2017 indicated that there were 5 cases in 2011; 12 cases in 2012; 5 cases in 2013; 0 cases in 2014; 2 cases in 2015; and 9 cases in 2017 (CDPH 2017, p. 7).

4.10.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

A. STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The impact analysis provided below is based on the following CEQA Guidelines, as listed in Appendix G. The Project would result in a significant impact to hazards and hazardous materials if it would result in any of the following:

- a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.
- b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.
- c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.
- d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.
- e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area.
- f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
- g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

B. ISSUES SCOPED OUT AS PART OF THE INITIAL STUDY

Several criteria were eliminated from further evaluation as part of the Initial Study. Criterion “c” was eliminated because the Project area is not located within one-quarter mile of an existing school. Furthermore, the Project would not create any hazardous emissions. Therefore, this issue is not discussed further in this EIR.

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Criterion “d” was eliminated because, as confirmed by the Phase I ESAs performed for the Project, none of the solar field site parcels are listed as hazardous materials sites pursuant to government Code Section 65962.5. Therefore, this issue is not discussed further in this EIR.

Criteria “e” was eliminated because the solar field site parcels are not located within two miles of a public airport. The two proposed Gen-Tie lines are not located within the airport compatibility zones associated with any of the public airports in Imperial County. The Johnson Brothers Airport is approximately 5.75 miles east of the Project site and the Naval Air Facility El Centro is approximately 8 miles to the north. According to Figure 3G (Compatibility Map-Naval Air Facility, El Centro) of the ALUCP, none of the solar field site parcels are within any of the Naval Air Facility, El Centro land use compatibility zones (Imperial County 1996). Based on the Project’s location, construction and operational workers would not be subject to a safety hazard or excessive noise associated with a public airport. Thus, this issue is not discussed further in this EIR.

Criterion “f” regarding interference with an adopted emergency plan was eliminated from analysis. As identified in the Seismic and Public Safety Element of the County of Imperial General Plan (County of Imperial, n.d.), the "Imperial County Emergency Plan" addressed the County's planned response to extraordinary emergency situations associated with natural disasters, technological incidents, and nuclear defense operations. The proposed circulation plan for the Project site will be required to provide emergency access points and safe vehicular travel. In addition, local building codes would be followed to minimize flood, seismic, and fire hazard. Thus, the proposed Project would not impair the implementation of, or physically interfere with, any adopted emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans. No impact is identified with regard to interference with an adopted emergency plan, and this issue is not discussed further in this EIR.

Lastly, criterion “g” was eliminated because the solar field site parcels are not characterized as an area of urban/wildland interface. According to the Imperial County Natural Hazard Disclosure (Fire) Map prepared by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF 2000), the Project site does not fall into an area characterized as either: (1) a wildland area that may contain substantial forest fire risk and hazard; or (2) a very high fire hazard severity zone. Thus, the Project site would not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to significant risk of loss injury or death involving wildland fire. No impact is identified for this issue area this issue is not discussed further in this EIR.

C. ISSUES OF GENERAL PUBLIC CONCERN

Several hazards of potential concern to the public have been previously raised on solar projects in the Imperial Valley. CEQA Guidelines 15128 states that an “EIR shall 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.” CEQA Guidelines 15143 states that an “EIR shall focus on the significant effects on the environment. The significant effects shall be discussed with emphasis in proportion to their severity and probability of occurrence.” Finally, CEQA Guidelines 15151 requires the agency to provide an adequate, complete and good faith effort at full disclosure so decisions can be intelligently made, but it does not require an exhaustive of “perfect” analysis.

While these concerns were raised by the public, the issues do not require detailed study either because the probability of occurrence is low or there is not a sufficient body of evidence to support that the issues represent hazards that would be caused by the Project. Therefore, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines 15151, while there may be disagreement among experts, the analysis below makes a good faith effort at full disclosure to assist decision-makers with making a decision that intelligently accounts for environmental consequences.

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Electromagnetic Fields

Both electric and magnetic fields occur together whenever electricity flows. Electric voltage (electric field) and electric current (magnetic field) from the proposed Gen-Tie lines would create the potential for electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure.

The available evidence as evaluated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and other regulatory agencies has not established that such fields pose a significant health hazard to exposed humans. To date, there are no health-based federal regulations or industry codes specifying environmental limits on the strengths of fields from power lines. Likewise, the State has not adopted any specific limits or regulation on EMF levels related to electric power facilities (BLM/CEC 2010). In addition, the CPUC issued Decision D.06-01-042 in 2006, which states: “at this time we are unable to determine whether there is a significant scientifically verifiable relationship between EMF exposure and negative health consequences...however, this decision directs the Commission’s Energy Division to pursue and review all available studies regarding EMF, and to review scientific information and report on new findings. Should such studies indicate negative EMF health impacts, we will reconsider our EMF policies, and open a new rulemaking if necessary” (CPUC 2006). No new rulemaking has been opened.

The EPA acknowledges public concern regarding potential adverse health effects associated with EMF from power lines; however, the EPA also states that: “Much of the research about power lines and potential health effects is inconclusive...The general scientific consensus is that, thus far, the evidence available is weak and is ‘not sufficient to establish a definitive cause-effect relationship.’” (EPA 2006). In addition, the “Preliminary Opinion on Potential Health Effects of Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields (EMF)” prepared by the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) stated that “The few available studies on combined exposure to EMF of different frequency ranges do not provide sufficient information to challenge existing risk assessment; in addition in most experiments an absence of effects has been reported.” Further, with regard to health effects from co-exposure of EMF and other stressors, SCENIHR concluded that “The available literature suggests that EMF exposure may modify the effects of chemicals or other physical agents. However, the reports on combined effects lack consistency and are not linked to specific experimental conditions. Therefore, further research is needed in order to clarify any relevance of combined exposures to human cancer risk under real life exposure conditions, and to explore the potentially beneficial (protective) effects of such exposures.” (SCENIHR 2013).

Based on the foregoing discussion explaining that the probability of EMF occurrence is low, and the evidence to support that EMFs are hazards that would be caused by the Project is insufficient, the potential for EMF levels to cause a hazardous health condition is not analyzed further in this EIR.

Interference with Radio-Frequency Communications

Radio-frequency interference can be produced by the physical interactions of line electric fields. Such interference is due to the radio noise produced by the action of the electric fields on the surface of the energized conductor. The process involved is known as “corona discharge” (also discussed in Section 4.8, Noise), but is referred to as “spark gap electric discharge” when it occurs within gaps between the conductor and insulators or metal fittings (BLM/CEC 2010). When generated, spark gap electric discharge manifests itself as perceivable interference with radio or television signal reception or interference with other forms of radio communication. The level of interference depends on factors such as line voltage, distance from the line to the receiving device, orientation of the antenna, signal level, line configuration and weather conditions. As a result, maximum interference levels are not specified as design criteria for modern transmission lines. The level of any such interference usually

4.10 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

depends on the magnitude of the electric fields involved and the distance from the line. The potential for such impacts is rendered insignificant reducing the line electric fields and locating the line away from inhabited areas.

As described above, medium voltage collection lines would be used to transmit the electricity from the panel array fields to the Project substation(s). Substations/switchgear may be connected to one another through lines up to 230-kV that ultimately connect to the Mount Signal Solar Farm gen-tie. The proposed collector and Gen-Tie lines would be built and maintained in keeping with all applicable standards and regulations, including GO-95, the CPUC's "Rules for Overhead Electric Line Construction." GO-95 establishes standards to ensure that the appropriate clearances would be reliably maintained between the proposed electric collector line and crossings of existing electric line installations. The environmental impacts from spark gap electric discharge interference can be potentially significant for lines 345-kV or above, but not for 230-kV and lower voltage lines as included in the proposed Project. Therefore, because the probability of interference with radio communications is low, and the body of evidence to support the existence of hazards at the voltage of lines proposed for the Project is insufficient, this issue is not analyzed further in this EIR.

Hazardous Shocks

Hazardous shocks are those that could result from direct or indirect contact between an individual and an energized line. No design-specific federal regulations have been established to prevent hazardous shocks from overhead power lines (BLM/CEC 2010). Safety is assured within the industry from compliance with the requirements specifying the minimum national safe operating clearances applicable in areas where the line might be accessible to the public. The proposed electrical collection lines and the Gen-Tie lines that the collector lines would connect to would be located in rural areas making it highly unlikely that the public would come in contact with the line. In addition, the Project would be designed, constructed, and operated to meet or the requirements of GO-95.

Lightning protection at the substation would be designed in accordance with the requirements of American National Standards Institute (ANSI)/Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) 998 using a combination of lightning masts and static wire. GO-95 governs clearance requirements to prevent hazardous shocks, grounding techniques to minimize nuisance shocks, and maintenance and inspection requirements. These standards ensure that the appropriate clearances would be reliably maintained between the proposed electric collector line and crossings of existing electric line installations. Therefore, because the probability of hazardous shock occurrence is low and the body of evidence is insufficient to support that shocks are hazards, the potential for hazardous electric shock is not analyzed further in this EIR.

Fire Hazard (Non-Wildland/Operational)

The PV modules and ancillary equipment are constructed of fire-resistant material. Additionally, the Project includes routine weed abatement and landscape maintenance. The O&M building(s) would be constructed in accordance with local building codes. On-site fire-fighting equipment and training are features of the Project in the required Fire Prevention Plan. Finally, emergency fire access to nearby properties would not be hindered or restricted by the Project. As such, the Project represents a negligible increase in fire potential. With these Project features, there is a low probability of a significant fire hazard. Therefore, because the probability of fire hazard is low, the potential for non-wildland fires is not analyzed further in this EIR.

4.10 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Valley Fever

Construction of the proposed Project would occur in an area favorable to the growth of *Coccidioides immitis*, a fungus that causes the flu-like sickness “Valley Fever.” Construction activities would disturb the soil and cause the fungal spores to become airborne, potentially putting construction personnel and wildlife at risk of contracting Valley Fever. However, Imperial County is not considered to have a high incidence of Valley Fever (BLM 2011). While the potential exposure of workers to Valley Fever spores could occur during construction, compliance with ICAPCD Regulation VIII which regulates emissions of fugitive dust (refer to Section 4.4, Air Quality) would be effective in reducing airborne dust. Fugitive Dust Requirements for Control of PM_{2.5} would, when implemented, minimize the spread of fungal spores thereby reducing potential for contracting Valley Fever during Project construction, operation, and decommissioning. With implementation of Regulation VIII, there is a low probability of a significant exposure to Valley Fever. Furthermore, the existing agricultural operations at the solar field site parcels already disturb the soil and could potentially cause fungal spores to become airborne, potentially putting farmworkers and wildlife at risk of contracting Valley Fever. Therefore, there is no evidence that the Project creates any increase in impacts to exposure Valley Fever, much less an impact that would rise to the level of significance. Therefore, because the probability of occurrence of any significant increase in exposure is so low, the potential for exposure to Valley Fever is not analyzed further in this EIR.

D. METHODOLOGY

The analysis of hazardous materials is twofold: hazards potentially existing on the solar field site parcels; and hazardous materials that would be used as part of Project construction, operations and maintenance, and decommissioning.

Potential existing hazards were assessed based on information contained in the “Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report Drew Solar Project North of State Route 98 at Drew Road West of Calexico, California” (GS Lyon 2018). The Phase I ESA is provided on the attached CD of Technical Appendices as **Appendix I** of this EIR.

Some hazardous materials would be used on a short-term basis during construction and decommissioning. Others would be stored on-site for use during operation and maintenance. Therefore, this analysis was conducted by examining the choice and amount of chemicals to be used, the manner in which the Applicant would use the chemicals, the manner by which they would be transported to the facility, and the way in which the Applicant plans to store the materials on the solar field site parcels during construction and decommissioning and the CUPs during operation. The greatest amount of chemicals used, transported and stored on the solar field site parcels have the potential to occur during the Full Build-out Scenario (regardless of near-term or long-term). Therefore, the Full Build-out Scenario is considered the worst-case scenario for the purposes of this analysis.

E. PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Hazardous Materials Transport, Use, Disposal and Accidental Release

Impact 4.10.1 Implementation of both the Full Build-out Scenario and Phased Build-out Scenario would use some hazardous materials for the construction, operations, and decommissioning phases and could create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. All materials would be transported, used and disposed of in accordance with all applicable local, state and federal requirements. Therefore, impacts associated with accidental release during hazardous materials transport, use and disposal are considered **less than significant** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

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FULL BUILD-OUT SCENARIO/PHASED BUILD-OUT SCENARIO

The Full Build-out Scenario and all the CUPs (CUP#17-0031 thru CUP#17-0035 and CUP#18-0001) would require the same activities for the construction, operations and maintenance, and decommissioning of the proposed Project. Likewise, both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased Build-out Scenario would be developed with similar solar modules and ancillary infrastructure. Therefore, the transport, use, and disposal of potential hazards and hazardous materials would be the same for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Construction

Transport

Some hazardous materials would be required during construction of the proposed Project. These include diesel fuel, oil and grease for heavy equipment as well as paints and solvents. Large quantities of these materials are not anticipated to be necessary but would require transport to the solar field site parcels. All hazardous materials (such as diesel fuel, oil and grease for heavy equipment) transported to the solar field site parcels during construction would occur in compliance with DTSC regulations. Therefore, the likelihood of an accidental release during transport or residual contamination following accidental release is not anticipated and impacts are considered **less than significant** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Use and Storage

The proposed Project would require use of some hazardous materials during construction. Limited quantities of hazardous materials would be stored or used on site. These include diesel, gasoline, motor oil and hydraulic fluids and lube oils for vehicles and equipment, and mineral oil for the substation transformers and PCS switchgear. The Project would also be required to comply with State laws and County Ordinance restrictions which regulate and control hazardous materials handled on site.

The Applicant will submit and receive a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) in accordance with a Stormwater Pollution and Prevention Plan (SWPPP) approved by the County. The SWPPP shall include source control and treatment control Best Management Practices (BMPs) which would address the use and storage of potentially hazardous materials.

No acutely toxic hazardous materials would be used and none of the materials are anticipated to pose a significant potential for off-site impacts such as contamination through a large release of chemicals. Appropriate training and supervision of on-site personnel would be provided throughout construction of both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased Build-out Scenario regarding management of materials and wastes and responding to hazardous releases or spills or other site emergencies. This training would include the procedures to follow during any site emergency, and appropriate reporting of spills, releases, or other emergencies to Imperial County, and local emergency service providers. The Project features include personnel to oversee all aspects of a hazardous materials management plan. Both the Full Build-out Scenario and Phased Build-out Scenario would include a site-specific Injury and Illness Prevention Program designed to meet the OSHA and California OSHA (CalOSHA) requirements. The Program must be a written plan that includes procedures and is put into practice (CalOSHA 2014). The following elements are required for the written plan:

- Management commitment/assignment of responsibilities;
- Safety communications system with employees;
- System for assuring employee compliance with safe work practices;
- Scheduled inspections/evaluation system;
- Accident investigation;

4.10 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

- Procedures for correcting unsafe/ unhealthy conditions;
- Safety and health training and instruction; and
- Recordkeeping and documentation.

As part of the Injury and Illness Prevention Program, each CUP owner would follow BMPs. Any hazardous materials used during construction would be appropriately handled and stored. Therefore, potential for accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials used or stored during construction is considered **less than significant** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Disposal

During construction, typical construction wastes such as wood, concrete, and miscellaneous packaging materials as well as some broken PV or CPV modules would be generated. Spill cleanup procedures and kits would be made readily available near hazardous materials and waste. Solid wastes, such as trash and debris, would be collected on a regular basis and stored in designated areas.

Construction wastes would be disposed of in accordance with local, State and federal regulations, and recycling would be used to the greatest extent possible. Left-over or spent materials such as used oil filters, used batteries, used hydraulic fluid, oils, and grease would be generated during Project construction. Any spent or surplus hazardous wastes would be transported off-site for disposal in accordance with DTSC regulations regarding hazardous materials disposal. The DTSC regulates hazardous materials/waste through the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) Imperial Hazardous Materials/Waste Unit. Detailed information about the use, storage and disposal of hazardous materials would be provided in the Hazardous Materials Management Plan (Health and Safety Code Chapter 6.11) that is required to be developed by the construction contractor.

Any modules that are broken or damaged during construction will be collected and recycled or disposed of in accordance with the Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Likewise, any damaged batteries discovered during construction will be collected and recycled or disposed of in RCRA (Ferrara, pers. comm., 2018). Therefore, potential for accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials being disposed of during construction is considered **less than significant** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Operation

Transport

Hazardous materials used during Project operation of both the Full Build-out Scenario and Phased Build-out Scenario would be similar to those used during construction and could include diesel fuel, oil and grease for heavy equipment as well as paints and solvents. However, during Project operations, less of these materials are likely to be necessary because the activities required to operate and maintain the facilities would be less intensive than construction activities. Even though less of the hazardous materials would be required, transportation of the materials to the site and throughout the site during Project operations would be necessary. However, similar to Project construction, all transported hazardous material would occur in compliance with DTSC regulations. Therefore, likelihood of an accidental release during transport or residual contamination following accidental release is not anticipated and impacts are considered **less than significant**.

Use and Storage

Operation of both the Full Build-out Scenario and Phased Build-out Scenario would require the use of some hazardous materials (diesel, gasoline, motor oil and hydraulic fluids and lube oils for vehicles and

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equipment, and mineral oil for the substation transformers and PCS switchgear). All such materials would be used and stored with proper containment to avoid leaks and spills.

In addition, energy storage systems included as part of the Project may contain hazardous materials such as Nickel Metal Hydride, Nickel Cadmium, Lead Acid depending on the technology chosen. Brief descriptions of potential technologies are provided below:

Battery-Based Energy Facility Hazardous Materials

In order to provide a definitive description of hazardous materials and hazardous wastes used or generated at a battery-based energy storage facility in California, specific knowledge of the battery technology used at such a facility must be identified. (Note: In California, all batteries to be discarded are hazardous waste per waste battery guidance.¹) Currently, the battery technologies under consideration can be classified into two categories and include:

Category 1: Existing Technologies with Proven Performance

Lithium Ion: Lithium ion battery technologies include a system of small connected lithium ion battery cells, which are not serviceable. As such, cells are replaced occasionally based on performance. In California, all such cells are hazardous materials when used based on the lithium component of the cell and are hazardous waste when discarded requiring management under 22 CCR Division 4.5.

Lead-Acid (serviceable or sealed): Lead-acid battery technologies include a system of connected lead-acid batteries, which may be serviceable or sealed. Individual lead-acid batteries are replaced occasionally based on performance. In California, all such batteries are hazardous materials when used based on the sulfuric acid component of the battery as the electrolyte as well as the lead component. Lead-acid batteries are a listed Recyclable Hazardous Waste when discarded requiring specific management under 22 CCR 66266.81.

Category 2: New Technologies

In addition to Category 1 technologies, the Project may also utilize storage technologies that operate based upon the principles of potential including but not limited to compressed air or pumped storage, Nickel Metal Hydride, Nickel Cadmium, antiperovskites or other batteries, including but not limited to solid state batteries that may be approved for commercial use within the United States of America, and flywheels (Ferrara pers. comm., 2018b).

Cooling Systems: Category 1 battery technologies and flow battery technologies would require cooling systems (either Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning [HVAC] or chillers with cooling towers). Coolants and additives to chillers are Hazardous Materials. HVAC units use ozone-depleting chemicals carrying specific management requirements under federal and state rules.

Transformers: A battery-based energy storage facility would add additional transformers to a solar project. The transformers would not be different than other transformers at the site, but all transformer fluids meet the definition of hazardous materials.

As with Project construction, operation of both the Full Build-out Scenario and Phased Build-out Scenario would also be required to comply with hazardous materials State laws and County Ordinance restrictions, provide appropriate training and supervision of on-site staff, prepare and obtain approval of a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, and prepare and implement a site-specific Health and Safety Plan designed to meet the OSHA and CalOSHA requirements. Therefore, potential for accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials used or stored during

¹ <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/reducwaste/Batteries/>

4.10 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Project operation is considered **less than significant** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Disposal

Similar to Project construction, spent materials and wastes (used oil filters, used batteries, used hydraulic fluid, oils, and grease) would be generated during Project operation for both the Full Build-out Scenario and Phased CUP Scenario. However, during Project operations, less of these materials are likely to be necessary after installation of the solar arrays because the activities required to operate and maintain the facilities would be less intensive than construction activities. Nevertheless, the spent materials and wastes would be transported off-site for disposal according to applicable provisions of Health and Safety Code Section Sections 25160-25166.5, and in accordance with DTSC regulations regarding hazardous materials disposal. The DTSC regulates hazardous materials/waste through the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) Imperial Hazardous Materials/Waste Unit. Detailed information about the use, storage and disposal of hazardous materials would be provided in the Hazardous Materials Management Plan (Health and Safety Code Chapter 6.11) that is required to be developed by the construction contractor.

As described in the discussion of Project, any broken, damaged or degraded solar modules or batteries discovered during operation will be collected and recycled or disposed of in RCRA (Ferrara, pers. comm., 2018). Therefore, potential for accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials being disposed of during operations and maintenance is considered **less than significant**.

Decommissioning/Reclamation

Transport

Hazardous materials used during decommissioning of the Project would be similar in type and quantity to those used during Project construction and could include diesel fuel, oil and grease for heavy equipment as well as paints and solvents. These materials are likely to be used because the activities required to decommission the facilities would be similar in nature to construction activities and transportation of the materials to the site and throughout the site during decommissioning would be necessary. However, similar to the construction phase, all transported hazardous material would occur in compliance with DTSC regulations. Therefore, likelihood of an accidental release during transport or residual contamination following accidental release is not anticipated and impacts are considered **less than significant** during Project decommissioning of both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario. Following reclamation, hazardous materials similar to those currently used in association with agricultural production are anticipated to be used.

Use and Storage

Decommissioning of both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased Build-out Scenario would require the use of some hazardous materials (diesel, gasoline, motor oil and hydraulic fluids and lube oils for vehicles and equipment, and mineral oil for the substation transformers and PCS switchgear). During the Project decommissioning, an amount of these materials comparable to the materials required for construction are likely to be necessary because the activities required to decommission the facilities would be similar in nature to construction activities. Additionally, no acutely toxic hazardous materials would be used and none of the materials necessary are anticipated to pose a significant potential for off-site impacts such as contamination through a large release of chemicals under both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Similar to Project construction, decommissioning of both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario, would also be required to comply with hazardous materials State laws and County Ordinance restrictions, provide appropriate training and supervision of onsite staff, prepare and obtain approval of

4.10 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, and prepare and implement a site-specific Health and Safety Plan be designed to meet the OSHA and CalOSHA requirements. Therefore, potential for accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials used or stored during Project operation is considered **less than significant** during Project decommissioning for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Disposal

Similar to Project construction, spent materials and wastes (used oil filters, used batteries, used hydraulic fluid, oils, and grease) would be generated during decommissioning for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario. Spill cleanup procedures and kits would be made readily available near hazardous materials and waste. Solid wastes, such as trash and debris, would be collected on a regular basis and stored in designated areas.

Similar to Project construction, the spent materials and wastes would be transported off-site for disposal according to Health and Safety Code Sections 25160-25166.5, and in accordance with DTSC regulations regarding hazardous materials disposal. The DTSC regulates hazardous materials/waste through the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) Imperial Hazardous Materials/Waste Unit. Detailed information about the use, storage and disposal of hazardous materials would be provided in the Hazardous Materials Management Plan (Health and Safety Code Chapter 6.11) that is required to be developed by the construction contractor.

As described in the discussion of Project construction, any broken, damaged or degraded solar modules or batteries discovered during operation will be collected and recycled or disposed of in RCRA (Ferrara, pers. comm., 2018). Therefore, potential for accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials being disposed of during Project decommissioning is considered **less than significant** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Overall, impacts associated with the creation of a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials are considered **less than significant** in association with both the Full Build-out Scenario and Phased CUP Scenario.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance After Mitigation

Not applicable.

Hazard Through Upset/Release of Hazardous Materials

Impact 4.10.2 No hazardous materials that could be a significant hazard to the public or the environment were identified on the proposed solar field site parcels. Therefore, impacts associated with hazard through upset/release of hazardous materials are considered **less than significant** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

FULL BUILD-OUT SCENARIO/PHASED BUILD-OUT SCENARIO

As previously noted, the Project-specific Phase I ESA conducted historical and regulatory database research, as well as a site reconnaissance survey to determine the extent of potential hazardous materials and conditions on the Project site. After a thorough investigation and analysis of data related to potentially hazardous materials (PCBs, ASTs, USTs, solid waste, and hazardous waste) located within the solar field site parcels and adjoining property conditions, the ESA concluded that no evidence of RECs were identified (GS Lyon 2018, p. 22).

4.10 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Additionally, all the CUPs would contain similar solar modules and ancillary infrastructure and would also require the same activities for the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of the proposed Project. Therefore, the transport, use, and disposal of potential hazards and hazardous materials would be the same for all CUPs. The discussion below is applicable to both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Construction

As previously stated, the ESA concluded that no evidence was found of RECs in connection with the parcels comprising the Project site (GS Lyon 2018, p. 22). Therefore, potential for hazards to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions during construction is considered **less than significant** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Herbicides/Pesticides

The solar field site parcels have been farmed since the late 1930's and most are currently in agricultural production. The Phase I ESA noted that based on the historical use of the solar field site parcels as field crops, residues of currently available pesticides and currently banned pesticides such as DDT/DDE may be present in near surface soils in limited concentrations. The concentrations of these pesticides found on other Imperial Valley agricultural sites are typically less than 25% of the current regulatory threshold limits and are not considered as significant environmental hazard. The presence and concentration of near surface pesticides at the Project site can be accurately characterized only by site-specific sampling and testing (GS Lyon 2018, p. 20). However, this is considered a *de minimis* condition. Therefore, impacts associated with herbicides/pesticides are considered **less than significant** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls

During the site visit conducted for the ESA, one IID pole-mounted transformers was observed along Drew Road. The transformer is owned by and is the responsibility of the IID. All transformers containing PCBs have been replaced by IID (GS Lyon 2018, p. 16).

Additionally, if, during construction activities, on-site transformers that require removal are found to contain PCBs, the contractor would be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local regulations included in the Hazardous Material Management Plan to be prepared for the Project. Therefore, impacts associated with transformers potentially containing PCBs are considered **less than significant** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Operation

As previously discussed with regard to construction, the Phase I ESA concluded that no evidence was found of RECs in connection with any of the parcels within the Project site (GS Lyon 2018, p. 23). Therefore, potential for hazards to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions during operations and maintenance is considered **less than significant** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Herbicides/Pesticides

Less soil disturbance would occur during Project operations compared to Project construction. However, some dust producing activities may occur. As previously discussed for Project construction, residual *de minimis* concentrations of DDT/DDE may be present in shallow soil of the solar field site parcels. However, the potential presence of residual concentrations of DDT/DDE in the shallow on-site soils is not considered to be a REC because the potential presence of low concentrations of agricultural chemicals on the Project site is not anticipated to be at hazardous levels (GS Lyon 2018, p. 23). Additionally, any potential for air dispersion of pesticide residues in dust during grading activities would

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be minimized by the fugitive dust control plan implemented by the Applicant in accordance with ICAPCD Regulation VIII requirements, as discussed in Section 4.4, Air Quality. No direct impact (exposure during construction) or indirect impact (exposure following construction) would occur relative to pesticide residue in association with operations and maintenance of both the Full Build-out Scenario and Phased CUP Scenario. Therefore, impacts associated with exposure to pesticide residue during operations and maintenance would be **less than significant** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Decommissioning/Reclamation

As previously discussed for Project construction, the Phase I ESA concluded that no evidence was found of RECs in connection with any of the parcels within the Project site (GS Lyon 2018, p. 22). Therefore, potential for hazards to the public or environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions during decommissioning is considered **less than significant** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Herbicides/Pesticides

As a result of the removal of the Project infrastructure, decommissioning of the proposed Project would result in a similar amount of soil disturbance as the construction phase. As previously discussed in association with Project construction, residual concentrations of pesticides such as DDT/DDE may be present in shallow soil of the solar field site parcels. However, the potential presence of residual concentrations of pesticides in the shallow on-site soils is not considered to be a REC and no soil remediation was necessary or recommended in the Project ESA (GS Lyon 2018, p. 22) because the potential presence of low concentrations of agricultural chemicals on the Project site is not anticipated to be at hazardous levels. Additionally, any potential for air dispersion of pesticide residues in dust during grading activities would be minimized by the fugitive dust control plan implemented by the Applicant in accordance with ICAPCD Regulation VIII requirements, as discussed in Section 4.4, Air Quality. No direct impact (exposure during decommissioning) or indirect impact (exposure following reclamation) would occur relative to pesticide residue in association with decommissioning of both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario. Therefore, impacts associated with exposure to pesticide residue during decommissioning would be **less than significant** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance After Mitigation

Not applicable.

4.10.4 CUMULATIVE SETTING, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

A. CUMULATIVE SETTING

The geographic scope of the cumulative setting for hazards and hazardous materials is a one-mile radius from the geographical center point of the solar field site parcels. One mile is the standard ASTM standard search distance for hazardous materials. This geographic scope encompasses an area larger than the Project area and provides a reasonable context wherein cumulative projects in the vicinity of the proposed Project could affect hazards and hazardous materials. Based on Table 3.0-1 (Proposed, Approved and Reasonably Foreseeable Projects in the Region) in Chapter 3.0, Introduction to the Environmental Analysis and Assumptions Used, there are three other projects from the cumulative projects list within the geographic scope: Centinela Solar, Calexico I-B, and a portion of Signal Solar Farm.

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B. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Cumulative Hazards and Hazardous Materials Impact

Impact 4.10.3 The proposed Project, in combination with other reasonably foreseeable projects in the vicinity of the solar field site parcels, would increase the density of development in the area, thereby potentially increasing the potential for the presence of hazards and use of hazardous materials. However, hazards are addressed on a case-by-case basis through federal and state hazardous materials laws, regulations, and policies. Therefore, cumulative hazards and hazardous materials impacts are considered **less than cumulatively considerable** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

FULL BUILD-OUT SCENARIO/PHASED CUP SCENARIO

Three of the projects identified in the list of cumulative projects are within a one-mile radius of the Project area, and are therefore considered within the geographic scope for the consideration of cumulative effects from hazardous materials sites. These projects could contribute to cumulative adverse effects from hazards and hazardous materials.

CUP #17-0031 thru CUP#17-0035 would contain similar solar modules and ancillary infrastructure and would also require the same activities for the construction, operations and maintenance, and decommissioning of the proposed Project. CUP#18-0001 would allow development of energy storage as a component of solar on lands zoned A-2 and A-3. The discussion below is applicable to the both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Construction

The potential exists for additional hazardous materials to be transported, used and generated in association with increased development in the vicinity of the proposed Project site. Both the proposed Project and the other cumulative Projects within a one-mile radius would involve the storage, use, disposal, and transport of hazardous materials to varying degrees during construction. Accidental release of hazardous materials during construction can be mitigated to less than significant levels through compliance with various federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies regarding transport and use of hazardous materials. It is reasonable to expect that the proposed Project and other cumulative Projects would implement and comply with these existing hazardous materials laws, regulations, and policies. Additionally, the proposed Project includes measures to avoid spills (i.e. training and supervision of on-site personnel regarding management of materials and wastes). Based on the nature of the proposed Project as a solar energy generation facility, it would not result in the generation or transport of substantial quantities of hazardous materials or present the potential for release of hazardous materials. Therefore, the proposed Project's contribution to cumulative transport of hazardous materials impacts during construction would be **less than cumulatively considerable** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Any existing on-site hazards, if present on any of the cumulative Project sites, are localized and site-specific. Potential impacts are not expected to combine with similar impacts of past, present, or reasonably foreseeable projects. Mitigation measures would be developed to minimize the impacts of any cumulative project on a project-specific level. The proposed Project and other cumulative projects would also be required to comply with applicable regulations regarding the presence of onsite hazards during construction. Compliance with Regulation VIII (discussed in Section 4.4, Air Quality) has been developed for the proposed Project to reduce dust related impacts. Other projects located in the cumulative setting will also be required to implement Regulation VIII. Following implementation of any required mitigation measures and compliance with applicable regulations, each project's impacts to

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hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant. Therefore, the Project's contribution to cumulative hazardous materials impacts is considered **less than cumulatively considerable** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Operation

The potential exists for additional hazardous materials to be transported, used and generated in association with increased development in the vicinity of the proposed Project site. Both the proposed Project and the other cumulative Projects within a one-mile radius would involve the storage, use, disposal, and transport of hazardous materials to varying degrees during operation and maintenance. Accidental release of hazardous materials during operation and maintenance can be mitigated to less than significant levels through compliance with various federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies regarding transport and use of hazardous materials. It is reasonable to expect that the proposed Project and other cumulative projects would implement and comply with these existing hazardous materials laws, regulations, and policies. Additionally, the proposed Project includes measures to avoid spills. Based on the nature of the proposed Project as a solar energy generation facility, it would not result in the generation or transport of substantial quantities of hazardous materials or present the potential for release of hazardous materials.

While the specific battery technology has not been identified, all battery storage facilities would be required to comply with local, state and federal regulations regarding operation. This includes transport as well as handling. During operation, batteries would be housed in buildings or storage containers with proper temperature monitoring and fire suppression systems. Therefore, the proposed Project's contribution to cumulative transport of hazardous materials impacts during operation and maintenance would be **less than cumulatively considerable** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Existing on-site hazards, are localized and site-specific. Potential impacts are not expected to combine with similar impacts of past, present, or reasonably foreseeable renewable energy projects. Mitigation measures would be developed to minimize the impacts of any cumulative project on a project-specific level. The proposed Project and other cumulative projects would also be required to comply with applicable regulations regarding the presence of onsite hazards during operation and maintenance. The Project would comply with ICAPCD Regulation VIII to reduce dust related impacts. Likewise, other projects located in the cumulative setting will be required to implement this Regulation as well as project-specific mitigation measures. Following implementation of any required mitigation measures and compliance with applicable regulations, each project's impacts to hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant. Therefore, the Project's contribution to cumulative hazardous materials impacts is considered **less than cumulatively considerable** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Decommissioning/Reclamation

The potential exists for additional hazardous materials to be transported, used and generated in association with increased development in the vicinity of the proposed solar field site parcels. Both the proposed Project and the other cumulative projects within a one-mile radius would involve the storage, use, disposal, and transport of hazardous materials, including battery storage systems, to varying degrees during decommissioning. Accidental release of hazardous materials during decommissioning can be mitigated to less than significant levels through compliance with various federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies regarding transport and use of hazardous materials. It is reasonable to expect that the proposed Project and other cumulative projects would implement and comply with these existing hazardous materials laws, regulations, and policies. Additionally, compliance with State laws and Federal regulations require that measures are taken to avoid spills. Based on the nature of the

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proposed Project as a solar energy generation facility, it would not result in the generation or transport of substantial quantities of hazardous materials or present the potential for release of hazardous materials during decommissioning. Any broken, damaged or degraded solar modules or batteries discovered during operation will be collected and recycled or disposed of in RCRA (Ferrara, pers. comm., 2018). Therefore, the proposed Project's contribution to cumulative transport of hazardous materials impacts during decommissioning would be **less than cumulatively considerable** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Existing onsite hazards are localized and site-specific. Potential impacts are not expected to combine with similar impacts of past, present, or reasonably foreseeable projects. Mitigation measures would be developed to minimize the impacts of any cumulative project on a project-specific level. The proposed Project and other cumulative projects would also be required to comply with applicable regulations regarding the presence of on-site hazards during decommissioning. The Project would comply with Regulation VIII to reduce dust related impacts. It is anticipated that the other projects located in the cumulative setting will be required to implement similar mitigation measures. Following implementation of any required mitigation measures and compliance with applicable regulations, each project's impacts to hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant. Therefore, the Project's contribution to cumulative hazardous materials impacts during decommissioning is considered **less than cumulatively considerable** for both the Full Build-out Scenario and the Phased CUP Scenario.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance After Mitigation

Not applicable.