

CHAPTER 5.0

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY

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This section identifies the cumulative impacts resulting from the proposed project. Cumulative impacts are the result of combining the potential effects of the project with other approved, proposed and reasonably foreseeable projects in the vicinity of the proposed project. Full discussion of the cumulative impacts are provided in Sections 4.1 through 4.4 and 4.6 through 4.12 under subsections 4.1.4, 4.2.4, 4.3.4, 4.4.4, 4.6.4, 4.7.4, 4.8.4, 4.9.4, 4.10.4, 4.11.4 and 4.12.4. Due to the global nature of climate change and GHG emissions and their potential effects, GHG emissions generated by an individual project were evaluated on a cumulative basis in Section 4.5.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) include a discussion of cumulative impacts that may be associated with the proposed project. According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a), “an EIR shall discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable.” The term, “cumulatively considerable” means that “the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects” (as defined by Section 15130).

As defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15355, a cumulative impact is an impact that results from the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts. A cumulative impact occurs from:

... the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

CEQA Section 15130(b) identifies the following three elements as necessary for adequate cumulative analysis:

- 1) Either:
 - a) A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency; or,
 - b) A summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or area wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact. Any such planning document shall be referenced and made available to the public at a location specified by the lead agency.
- 2) A summary of the expected environmental effects to be produced by those projects with specific reference to additional information stating where that information is available; and
- 3) A reasonable analysis of the cumulative impacts of the relevant projects. An EIR shall examine reasonable, feasible options for mitigating or avoiding the project’s contribution to any significant cumulative effects.

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Where a lead agency is examining a project with an incremental effect that is not “cumulatively considerable,” a lead agency need not consider that effect significant, but shall briefly describe its basis for concluding that the incremental effect is not cumulatively considerable.

This EIR uses both the “list” approach described above in the cumulative analysis (refer to Table 3.0-1 in Chapter 3.0, Introduction to the Environmental Analysis and Assumptions Used).

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A summary of cumulative impacts that would result from the implementation of the project is provided below. Each cumulative impact is determined to have one of the following levels of significance: less than significant, significant, or significant and unavoidable. The reader is referred to Sections 4.1 through 4.12 for a complete discussion of the project’s cumulative impacts.

AESTHETICS

Cumulative Visual Impacts

Impact 4.1.4 Implementation of the proposed project, in conjunction with existing, approved, proposed, and reasonably foreseeable projects in the vicinity of the project site, would alter the visual character of the area, resulting in a change to public views as well as increased daytime glare and nighttime lighting levels. Such impacts are typically addressed on a project-by-project basis. Therefore, cumulative impacts to visual resources are considered **less than cumulatively considerable**.

LAND USE

Cumulative Conflicts with Applicable Land Use Plans, Policies, or Regulations

Impact 4.2.2 Development of the proposed project in combination with approved, proposed and reasonably foreseeable projects in the region would not incrementally add to conflicts with applicable land use plans, policies and regulations. Each project would be required to be consistent with the applicable plans that apply to the area in which it is located. Thus, this impact is considered less than cumulatively considerable.

Cumulative Land Use Compatibility/Conflict Impacts

Impact 4.2.3 Development of the proposed project in combination with approved, proposed and reasonably foreseeable projects in the region would change the land use patterns, present potential land use conflicts, and result in conversion of agricultural lands to a solar facility. This impact is considered **less than cumulatively considerable**.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Cumulative Impacts to Intersection, Roadway and Freeway Segment LOS (Year 2013)

Impact 4.3.3 Implementation of the proposed project’s construction traffic in combination with year 2013 volumes would add traffic to study area intersections, roadways and freeways during peak construction. LOS at two intersections would operate below LOS C. This impact is considered **potentially cumulatively considerable**.

AIR QUALITY

Violate Air Quality Standard/Cause Air Quality Violation

Impact 4.4.3 The proposed project would generate criteria pollutant emissions during construction. However, the project would be required to comply with recommended and required mitigation to reduce emissions to meet threshold levels. Therefore, the project would result in a **less than cumulatively considerable impact** with regard to violating an air quality standard.

Cumulative Substantial Pollutant Concentrations

Impact 4.4.4 Implementation of the proposed project would not coincide with peak construction of other cumulative projects. Therefore, the proposed project would have a **less than cumulatively considerable impact** on DPM.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREENHOUSE GASES

Generation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Impact 4.5.1 The proposed project would generate greenhouse gas emissions. This impact is considered **less than significant**.

Conflict with an Applicable Plan, Policy, or Regulation Adopted to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Impact 4.5.2 The project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There is **no impact**.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Cumulative Exposure to Geologic and Seismic Impacts

Impact 4.6.7 Implementation of the proposed project, in combination with existing, approved, proposed, and reasonably foreseeable development, may result in cumulative exposure to geologic and seismic hazards. This is considered a **less than cumulatively considerable impact**.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cumulative impacts to Archaeological and Historic Resources

Impact 4.7.6 Implementation of the proposed project, in combination with existing, approved, proposed, and reasonably foreseeable development in the cumulative setting, has the potential to result in impacts to archaeological and historic resources. However, impacts are addressed on a project-by-project basis. Therefore, this is considered a **less than cumulatively considerable impact**.

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Cumulative Impacts to Paleontological Resources

Impact 4.7.7 Implementation of the proposed project in combination with existing, approved, proposed, and reasonably foreseeable development in the cumulative setting, has the potential to result in impacts to fossil remains and fossil bearing geological formations. However, such impacts are addressed on a project-by-project basis. Therefore, this is considered a **less than cumulatively considerable impact**.

NOISE

Cumulative Noise Increases

Impact 4.8.3 Construction and operation of the proposed project could incrementally contribute to the existing noise environment. This impact is considered **less than cumulatively considerable**.

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AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Cumulative Agricultural Resources Impacts

Impact 4.9.3 Implementation of the proposed project would incrementally add to the temporary conversion of agricultural land in Imperial County. Temporary impacts to agricultural resources are mitigated on a project-by-project basis through payment of in-lieu fees, conservation easements and/or execution of Public Benefit Agreements. Therefore, temporary impacts to agricultural resources are considered **less than cumulatively considerable**.

HAZARDOUS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Cumulative Hazards and Hazardous Materials Impact

Impact 4.10.4 The proposed project, in combination with other reasonably foreseeable projects in the vicinity of the project site, would increase the density of development in the area, thus potentially increasing the potential for the presence hazards and use of hazardous materials. However, this is considered to be a **less than cumulatively considerable impact**.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Cumulative Impact to Hydrology and Water Quality

Impact 4.11.4 The proposed project, in combination with approved, proposed and other reasonably foreseeable projects in the Salton Sea watershed would contribute to the cumulative effects of degradation of water quality and changes in runoff patterns ultimately discharging to the Salton Sea. This impact is considered **less than cumulatively considerable**.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Cumulative Impacts to Biological Resources

Impact 4.12.17 Implementation of the proposed project could have cumulative impacts on special status species, sensitive natural communities, and protected waters. However, mitigation measures are proposed to help ensure that the proposed project does not cumulatively affect any of these biological resources. Therefore, cumulative impacts are considered **less than cumulatively considerable**.

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