

## 4.11 POPULATION AND HOUSING

This section describes the affected environment and regulatory setting for population and housing resources at the Project sites and vicinity. This section also examines the proposed Projects' consistency with applicable plans and policies and describes population and housing impacts that would result from construction and operation of the proposed Projects.

### Scoping Issues Addressed

During the scoping period for the Projects, two public scoping meetings were conducted and written comments were received from agencies and the public. No issues related to population and housing were raised during the scoping period.

### Applicant's Reports

Information used in preparing this section and in the evaluation of potential impacts on population and housing was derived from a number of sources, including a Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA) for the HR-2 Project prepared by Onaka and Douglas Ford in 2010. The Fiscal Impact Analysis can be found within Appendix L in Volume II (Technical Appendix) of this EIR.

### 4.11.1 EXISTING SETTING

#### REGIONAL SETTING

The County of Imperial's economy is based on agriculture and energy. The County's leading commodities include livestock, field crops, and vegetables, but the economy is beginning to diversify to include manufacturing and technology services. Other significant contributors to the local economy are government, geothermal electric power plants, state prisons, retail trade, and services.

#### Project Sites

The Project sites are situated in an unincorporated area of the County of Imperial 2.3 miles west-southwest of the Town of Niland and east of the Salton Sea (see Chapter 3, Project Description, Figure 3-1). Adjacent properties to the north, east, and south contain existing and proposed IID managed marshlands and irrigated farmland is also located within the area surrounding the Project sites. In addition, a commercial algae production facility is located south of the Project sites. This facility includes a mobile home which, at the time of the publication of the NOP, served as a residence for the facility caretaker. The commercial algae facility is no longer in operation and is not part of the proposed Projects.

The nearest population center to the Project sites is the census-designated place (CDP) of Niland. The nearest residence is approximately 0.5 mile north-northwest of the Project sites, along English Road. Energy Source, LLC (Hudson Ranch Power II LLC's parent company) owns the home and is allowing the current tenant to remain in the residence until Fall 2012. This residence would be demolished prior to the

start of construction of either the HR-2 or SmCP-2 Project. The next closest residence is located 1.4 miles northwest of the Project site.

## Population

The 2010 U.S. Census Bureau reported that the population of the County of Imperial was 174,528. This includes a population of 1,006 in the Town of Niland (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Population projections and growth for these areas are summarized in Tables 4.11-1 and 4.11-2, respectively. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of Niland decreased by 12% between 2000 and 2010, while the County of Imperial increased by 5.4% during the same period (Table 4.11-2).

**TABLE 4.11-1 PROJECT AREA POPULATION AND PROJECTIONS**

CITY/COUNTY	2000 POPULATION	2010 POPULATION	2020 PROJECTION	2030 PROJECTION
Niland CDP	1,143 <sup>(1)</sup>	1,006	N/A	N/A
City of Calipatria	7,289 <sup>(1)</sup>	7,705	N/A	N/A
County of Imperial	142,361 <sup>(1)</sup>	174,528 <sup>(2)</sup>	239,149 <sup>(3)</sup>	283,693 <sup>(3)</sup>

Sources:

- (1) U.S. Census Bureau 2000 a-c
- (2) U.S. Census Bureau 2010 a-c
- (3) County of Imperial 2008

**TABLE 4.11-2 PROJECT AREA POPULATION GROWTH 2000 - 2010**

CITY/COUNTY	2000 - 2010	PERCENT
Niland CDP	-137	-12 %
City of Calipatria	416	5.7%
County of Imperial	32,167	22.6%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 a-c, 2010 a-c; County of Imperial 2008

## Housing

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of total housing units in the County of Imperial in 2010 was 56,067. Of this total, 1,121 were in the City of Calipatria and 489 were in the Town of Niland. The housing vacancy rate in County of Imperial increased by 2% between 2000 and 2010, and in the City of Calipatria increased by 4% during the same time period. The Town of Niland experienced a 5% increase in housing unit vacancy between 2000 and 2010. The total number of housing units and the vacancy rates for these locations are shown in Table 4.11-3.

**TABLE 4.11-3 PROJECT AREA HOUSING**

LOCATION	HOUSING UNITS (2000)		HOUSING UNITS (2010)	
	TOTAL UNITS	NUMBER OF VACANT UNITS (VACANCY RATE)	TOTAL UNITS	NUMBER OF VACANT UNITS (VACANCY RATE)
Niland	530	108 (20%)	489	122 (25%)
City of Calipatria	961	62 (6%)	1,121	113 (10%)
County of Imperial	43,891	4,507 (10%)	56,067	6,941 (12%)

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 d-f, 2010a-c

## 4.11.2 REGULATORY SETTING

### FEDERAL AND STATE

There are no federal or state regulations applicable to the Projects with respect to population and housing.

### LOCAL

#### **County of Imperial General Plan**

The Housing Element is one of the seven County of Imperial General Plan elements mandated by the State of California, as articulated in Section 65580 and 65589.8 of the Government Code. Each city and county is required to discuss how it will meet its fair share of the housing needs in the state. The purpose of the Housing Element is to ensure that local governments adequately plan to meet the housing needs of all people within the community.

The County of Imperial Housing Element for 2008–2014 includes policies that address housing, employment, and growth management, as well as the adequate provision of resources, facilities, and services (County of Imperial 2008). The Housing Element contains a number of goals and policies to encourage continuous analysis and evaluation of population trends and housing needs to allow for the development of sites and facilities that sustain population growth in the County and development in existing communities. The Housing Element also acknowledges the governmental, environmental, infrastructure, and land use constraints on residential development in the County.

Other goals and policies of the County of Imperial General Plan include those that encourage growth in the more urbanized areas of the County, as well as those that encourage preservation of agricultural uses and industries (County of Imperial 1996).

### **4.11.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

#### **STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The impact analysis provided below is based on California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Appendix G. An impact is considered significant if the Projects would:

1. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., the extension of roads or other infrastructure).
2. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
3. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES**

No EPMs were identified for population and housing.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

Research was conducted on demographics, population, and housing conditions. Information was gathered from the Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA) prepared by Onaka and Douglas Ford in 2010 (Appendix L), the U.S. Census Bureau, the California Department of Finance, and other existing documents and information sources.

Because the SmCP-2 Project would be dependent on the geothermal brine produced by the HR-2 geothermal flash plant, it would not be constructed /could not operate without the HR-2 geothermal flash plant. However, the HR-2 Project could operate without SmCP-2. Therefore, the population and housing analysis considered (a) construction and operation impacts of HR-2 only; and (b) construction and operation impacts of HR-2 + SmCP-2.

#### **HR-2 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

Impact POP-1: The proposed HR-2 Project would not induce substantial population growth in an area either directly or indirectly.

The estimated population increase anticipated for both the HR-2 and SmCP-2 Projects would be 171 persons, as shown in Table 4.11-4.

**TABLE 4.11-4 PROJECT AREA ESTIMATED POPULATION GROWTH FOR HR-2 AND SMCP-2 PROJECTS<sup>(1)</sup>**

PROJECT	FULL TIME EMPLOYEES	RATIO OF NEW WORKERS TO REGION <sup>(2)</sup>	NO. OF NEW WORKERS	EMPLOYMENT TO POPULATION RATIO <sup>(3)</sup>	ANTICIPATED POPULATION INCREASE
HR-2	14 <sup>(1)</sup>	50%	7	3.29	23
SmCP-2	90 <sup>(2)</sup>	50%	45	3.29	148
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>		<b>52</b>		<b>171</b>

Sources:

(1) EnergySource 2012

(2) Simbol Inc., 2012

(3) Onaka et al. 2010

The proposed HR-2 Project includes the construction and operation of a geothermal facility on agricultural land in a semi-rural area in eastern County of Imperial. The proposed HR-2 Project would require a peak construction work force of up to 175 construction workers and it is presumed that a majority of this workforce would be comprised of local County of Imperial residents.

The proposed HR-2 Project would also require 14 full-time staff for facility operations. It is expected that up to 50% of these permanent workers would relocate from areas outside of the County (see Appendix L). Based on a population to annual average employment ratio of 3.29, the County would experience a net population increase of approximately 23 people (14 operational staff  $\div$  2 = 7 x 3.29 = 23) as a result of development of the HR-2 Project (Onaka et al. 2010, p. II-1).

This population increase would not put a strain on the local housing market, and no residential development is associated with the proposed Project. Because there are more than 7,000 vacant housing units in County of Imperial, a net increase of 23 persons could be accommodated with the existing housing stock.

Therefore, implementation of the HR-2 Project would not induce substantial population growth in Imperial County. Likewise, the implementation of the HR-2 Project would not indirectly induce growth by creating new opportunities for local industry. Therefore, a less than significant impact would result.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Impact POP-2: The proposed HR-2 Project would not displace substantial numbers of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

The HR-2 Project would be located on land designated for agricultural and geothermal use. Energy Source, LLC (Hudson Ranch Power II LLC's parent company) owns a single residential unit, approximately 0.5 miles northeast of the HR-2 Project site and is allowing the current tenant to remain in the residence until fall 2012. This residence would be demolished prior to the start of construction of either the HR-2 or SmCP-2 Project. With the exception of this single off-site residential structure, construction and operation of the proposed HR-2 Project would not displace substantial numbers of existing housing or necessitate the construction of any replacement housing; therefore, no adverse impact would result under this criterion.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Impact POP-3: The proposed HR-2 Project would not displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

As stated above, Energy Source, LLC (Hudson Ranch Power II LLC's parent company) owns a single residential unit, approximately 0.5 miles northeast of the Project site and is allowing the current tenant to remain in the residence until fall 2012. This residence would be demolished prior to the start of construction of either the HR-2 or SmCP-2 Project. Aside from this single resident, no additional residents would be displaced by the HR-2 Project. Therefore, construction and operation of the HR-2 Project would not displace substantial numbers of people nor would it necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. No adverse impact would result under this criterion.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

### **SMCP-2 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

Impact POP-1: The proposed SmCP-2 Project would not induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly or indirectly.

The proposed SmCP-2 Project includes the construction and operation of a mineral extraction facility on agricultural land in a semi-rural area in eastern County of Imperial. The proposed SmCP-2 Project would require an average construction workforce of 175 workers and would create 90 full-time jobs for plant operations.

It is expected that the construction workforce would be local residents and up to 50% of the permanent workforce would relocate from areas outside of the County. Based on a ratio of 3.29 for population to annual average employment in 2009 (Onaka et al. 2010, p. II-1), the SmCP-2 Project would result in a net population

increase of 148 persons (90 operational staff  $\div$  2 = 45 x 3.29 = 148) (see Table 4.11-4).

Combined, the HR-2 and SmCP-2 Projects would result in a net population increase of 171 people (23 + 148 = 171), which would not put a strain on the local housing market. Because there were approximately 7,000 vacant housing units in the County of Imperial in 2010, a net increase of 171 persons could be accommodated with the existing housing stock. Implementation of the HR-2 and SmCP-2 Projects would, therefore, not induce substantial population growth in the County of Imperial. Likewise, the implementation of the Projects would not indirectly induce growth by creating new opportunities for local industry. Therefore, a less than significant impact would result.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Impact POP-2: The proposed SmCP-2 Project would not displace substantial numbers of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

The SmCP-2 Project would be located on land designated for agricultural and geothermal use. Construction and operation of the SmCP-2 Project would not require the removal of existing housing units, nor would it require the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. As previously discussed, Energy Source, LLC (Hudson Ranch Power II LLC's parent company) owns a single residential unit, approximately 0.5 miles northeast of the Project sites, which would be demolished prior to the start of construction of either the HR-2 or SmCP-2 Project. With the exception of this single off-site residential structure, construction and operation of both the HR-2 and SmCP-2 Projects would not result in the displacement of substantial numbers of existing housing or necessitate the construction of any replacement housing. Therefore, no adverse impacts would result under this criterion.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Impact POP-3: The proposed SmCP-2 Project would not displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

As previously stated, Energy Source, LLC (Hudson Ranch Power II LLC's parent company) owns a single residential unit, approximately 0.5 miles northeast of the Project sites, which would be demolished prior to the start of construction of either the HR-2 or SmCP-2 Project. Aside from this single resident, no additional residents would be displaced by the SmCP-2

Project. The construction of replacement residential units would not be required. Therefore, no adverse impact would result under this criterion.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

#### 4.11.4 REFERENCES

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