

Introduction

As described in Chapter 1, *Introduction*, of this Draft EIR, the Initial Study (Appendix E) identified environmental resource topics that were determined to be potentially significant or less than significant with mitigation measures that would be analyzed in full detail in the Draft EIR. This section describes the structure and format of the analysis for each of the 11 environmental resources addressed herein and defines the terminology used in characterizing the level of significance for each potential impact from the Project and, where appropriate, associated mitigation. Chapter 3 presents, and in some cases summarizes, the evaluations made in the Technical Reports, which are provided as appendices to this Draft EIR.

The following 11 environmental resource topics addressed in this chapter were determined by SJPPA to require further evaluation as identified in the Initial Study (Appendix E).

• Agriculture	20	• Hazards and Hazardous Materials
• Air Quality	21	• Hydrology and Water Quality
• Biological Resources	22	• Noise
• Cultural Resources	23	• Transportation
• Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources	24	• Tribal Cultural Resources
	25	• Cumulative

Organized by environmental resource area, this chapter provides an integrated discussion of the regulatory setting, environmental setting, and impact analyses (including mitigation measures for potentially significant impacts) associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project.

For resource areas where it was determined that less than significant or no impact would occur (i.e., land use and planning, mineral resources, and wildfire), a brief evaluation is provided in Chapter 4, *Other CEQA-Required Analysis*. The No Project Alternative is addressed in Chapter 5, *Alternatives*.

Chapter Organization

This chapter is organized into the following environmental resource sections:

- 3.1, *Agriculture*
- 3.2, *Air Quality*
- 3.3, *Biological Resources*
- 3.4, *Cultural Resources*

- 1 • 3.5, *Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources*
- 2 • 3.6, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*
- 3 • 3.7, *Hydrology and Water Quality*
- 4 • 3.8, *Noise*
- 5 • 3.9, *Transportation*
- 6 • 3.10, *Tribal Cultural Resources*
- 7 • 3.11, *Cumulative*

8 Each environmental resource section in this chapter includes the following information:

- 9 • **Introduction:** Presents an overview of the environmental resource addressed in the Draft EIR.
- 10 • **Regulatory Setting:** Identifies the federal, state, regional, and local laws, as well as regulations,
11 ordinances, and policies that are relevant to each environmental resource area and would be
12 applicable to the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project.
- 13 • **Environmental Setting:** Establishes the baseline condition of an environmental resource in the
14 area at the time of, or prior to, the publication of the Notice of Preparation, which could be
15 affected by implementation of the Project. A specific study area is identified for each
16 environmental resource as the extent of a study area varies with each resource. The Study Area
17 is defined as the limits of an area in which impacts could be expected to occur for each
18 environmental resource. The environmental setting provides the basis of analysis of potential
19 impacts related to each resource.
- 20 • **Impact Analysis:** Describes the methodology used for the analysis, the criteria used to
21 determine the significance of potential impacts, and corresponding discussion of impacts
22 associated with the Project. For each potential impact, the analysis makes a significance
23 determination (i.e., no impact, less than significant, potentially significant, less than significant
24 with mitigation, or significant and unavoidable). If required to reduce a potentially significant
25 impact, feasible mitigation measures are identified.

26 Approach to Impact Analysis

27 Significance Criteria

28 The significance criteria used in this Draft EIR to define the level at which an impact would be
29 considered significant in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) are
30 presented under the subheading *Thresholds of Significance* in each environmental resource section.
31 In accordance with Section 15022(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, the SJJPA uses significance criteria
32 based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G; factual or scientific information and data; and regulatory
33 standards of federal, state, regional, and local jurisdictions in which Project facilities are proposed.

1 Impact Identification and Levels of Significance

2 Each environmental resource section identifies and lists impacts sequentially. For example, BIO-1
3 denotes the presentation of the first impact in Section 3.3, *Biological Resources*. An impact statement
4 precedes the discussion of each impact and provides a summary of the impact topic. In addition, the
5 potential impacts related to construction of the Project are generally discussed before the potential
6 impacts related to operation of the Project.

7 The level of significance associated with an impact is determined by comparing the environmental
8 effects of constructing, operating, and maintaining the Project, with the existing environmental
9 conditions, and applying the identified significance threshold. This Draft EIR uses a variety of terms
10 to describe the levels of significance of impacts identified within the environmental analysis. Each
11 impact is categorized as one of the following.

- 12 • **No impact:** The Project would not cause any adverse change in the environment.
- 13 • **Less than significant impact:** The Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the
14 environment as the specified standard of significance would not be exceeded; thus, no
15 mitigation measures are required. An impact is considered beneficial if it would result in the
16 improvement of an existing physical condition of the environment. Beneficial impacts are
17 identified within this less than significant impact significance category.
- 18 • **Potentially significant impact:** The Project would cause a substantial adverse change in the
19 physical conditions of the environment in excess of the specified standard. Typically, the level of
20 significance of an impact is prior to the application of feasible mitigation measures.
- 21 • **Less than significant impact with mitigation:** The Project would cause a substantial adverse
22 change in the physical conditions of the environment in excess of the specified standard of
23 significance; however, one or more feasible mitigation measures would reduce environmental
24 effects to levels below the specified standard of significance.
- 25 • **Significant and unavoidable impact:** The Project would cause a substantial adverse change in
26 the physical condition of the environment; there is no feasible mitigation available or, even with
27 implementation of feasible mitigation measures, the Project would cause a significant adverse
28 effect on the environment in excess of the specified standard of significance.

29 Mitigation Measures

30 CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(1) states that an EIR “shall describe feasible measures which
31 could minimize significant adverse impacts.” Mitigation measures identified in this Draft EIR were
32 developed during the analysis and are designed to reduce, minimize, or avoid potential
33 environmental impacts associated with the Project. Mitigation measures, if needed, are numbered
34 sequentially to correspond to the impacts they address and are based on order of appearance of
35 mitigation measures by resource topic. For example, Mitigation Measure BIO-1 refers to the first
36 mitigation measure presented in Section 3.3, *Biological Resources*.

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