CITY OF SANTA MARIA
INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION
JUNE 2024

CITY OF SANTA MARIA WELL 15 PROJECT (SP2024-0009)

Project Location: The proposed new well site would occupy approximately 0.35-acres (123 feet by 123 feet) of an active agricultural field immediately adjacent to the Santa Maria Airport airfield, northeast of the 11th Street and E Street intersection (APN 111-231-017).

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Description	The City of Santa Maria Utilities Department is proposing to develop a new potable water well, designated Well Number 15 (herein referred to as Well No. 15 or Well 15). The new Well No. 15 would be added to an existing municipal water supply network of six active wells and is designed to provide approximately 2,200 gallons per minute ("gpm") of potable water. The proposed new well site would occupy approximately 0.35-acre (123 feet by 123 feet) of an active agricultural field immediately adjacent to the Santa Maria Airport airfield, northeast of the 11th Street and E Street intersection (please refer to attached project plans prepared by Cannon, 2023). The proposed project would increase the available supply of municipal potable water that can be delivered into the City's distribution system to meet water demands, ensuring the City's capacity to supply water during peak demand situations. Development of Well No. 15 was initially projected in the City's *State Water Master Plan* (Boyle Engineering Corporation 1994). Considering prevailing water conditions in the region and insights from the *Santa Maria Urban Water Management Plan* (City 2020), which underscores the need to reduce dependence on State Water and bolster local resources for regional self-reliance. Additional water supply is anticipated to be needed because the City's State Water allocation might be limited or entirely unavailable, and there is a possibility that other wells operated by the City could experience inoperable conditions or that other emergencies could arise. Well 15 is expected to provide approximately 2,200 gallons per minute of domestic potable water, representing an important supply upgrade and meeting the goal of advancing regional self-reliance for water supply as provided in the City's Urban Water Management Plan. The proposed project site is located within a disturbed

	agricultural field, and was intentionally positioned to avoid impacts related to sensitive biological resources associated with nearby wetlands and wildlife habitat. The proposed project is located on property owned by the Airport under a 20-foot-wide easement granted to the City. The site will be accessed from E Street and existing farm roads during construction and operations. Construction activities will be limited to daylight hours, and outside the rainy season. The new well would be installed to a depth of 1,500 feet (ft) below grade surface. The proposed well facility would be located on an approximately 123 feet by 123 feet (0.35 acre) project footprint. The facility would be fenced and would house the new well and discharge manifold, electrical and water treatment buildings, electrical transformer pad, and ancillary improvements. Approximately 3,000 linear feet of potable water line would be co-located with waste line and utilities (power supply, communication, and controls) which would be constructed between the Well 15 site and existing Well 14S (see attached Proposed Pipe Alignments; Cannon, January 24, 2024). The new potable water line will be connected to the existing municipal well transmission main just west of Well 14S. The new waste line will empty into a designated water discharge area currently used by Well 14S. The project pipelines will be installed underground to allow agricultural activities to continue in the long term. The pipelines would be installed in a trench approximately 3 feet wide and 7 feet deep, and the area to be disturbed during construction of the pipelines would be 25 feet wide, representing an area of approximately 1.72 acres of temporary disturbance. The pipelines will cross under an existing agricultural road with a culverted crossing of a ditch utilizing appropriate techniques such as trenching, directional drilling or jack and bore methods to avoid impacting the drainage. An area adjacent to the Well 15 site will be used during construction and for the storage of drill cuttings, representing a temporary disturbance area of approximately 0.5 acre. The waste line would discharge into an existing basin between the cultivated fields that is used as a discharge area for waste from Well 14S. These features are seasonally maintained during farming operations and these activities will continue. Operations and maintenance of Well 15 would be conducted consistent with ongoing activities for existing City wells in the area. It is anticipated that staff will conduct regular inspections, sampling, monitoring, operations, and maintenance of the facilities during daylight hours, but nighttime access may be required for emergencies.

Location	The proposed new well site would occupy approximately 0.35-acres (123 feet by 123 feet) of an active agricultural field immediately adjacent to the Santa Maria Airport airfield, northeast of the 11th Street and E Street intersection in the City of Santa Maria, CA..
Assessor's Parcel No.	111-231-017
General Plan Designation	Open Space (OS), Airport Service (A-AS)
Zoning	OS (Open Space), CZ (Airport Clear Zone) and PD/AS-I (Planned Development/Airport Service I).
Size of Site	The proposed new well site would occupy approximately 0.35-acres (123 feet by 123 feet) of an active agricultural field immediately adjacent to the Santa Maria Airport airfield. Approximately 3,000 linear feet of potable water line would be co-located with waste line and utilities (power supply, communication, and controls) which would be constructed between the Well 15 site and existing Well 14S. The pipelines would be installed in a trench approximately 3 feet wide and 7 feet deep, and the area to be disturbed during construction of the pipelines would be 25 feet wide, representing an area of approximately 1.72 acres of temporary disturbance. The pipelines will cross under an existing agricultural ditch at the location of an existing road. An area adjacent to the Well 15 site will be used during construction and for the storage of drill cuttings, representing a temporary disturbance area of approximately 0.5 acres.
Present Use	Undeveloped/Agriculture
Proposed Uses	New potable water well and associated infrastructure.
Access	E Street and existing farm roads.
Surrounding Uses/Zoning:	
North	Light industrial and offices. Santa Maria Airport is located to the northeast.
South	Urban development within the City of Orcutt and agriculture.
East	Light industrial and offices, agriculture.
West	Tanglewood residential development.
Parking	NA
Setbacks	NA
Height	Well housing building will be 25-feet in height.
Building Coverage	NA
Landscape Area	NA

Storm Water Retardation	The project would comply with the adopted standards contained within the City of Santa Maria's Municipal Code, Chapter 8-12 (Wastewater Collection, Treatment, and Disposal) Section 8-12A (Stormwater Runoff Pollution Prevention).
Fencing	8-foot security fencing around Well housing.
Related files/Actions	NA
Applicant/Agent/Owner	City of Santa Maria
Procedure	NA

GENERAL AREA DESCRIPTION:
The proposed project is located within the Santa Maria Valley, in the southwest portion of the City of Santa Maria, adjacent to and southwest of Runway 2-20 of the Santa Maria Airport. The project area is typified by a variety of urban land uses. The project site would occupy approximately 0.35-acre (123 feet by 123 feet) of an active agricultural field immediately adjacent to the Santa Maria Airport airfield, northeast of the 11th Street and E Street intersection. The project site consists of a disturbed agricultural field (row crops) void of any development, consisting of open space adjacent to the airport. An existing agricultural drainage crosses the proposed pipeline alignment, consisting of a narrow ditch that is regularly maintained and devoid of vegetation. It is important to note that the proposed pipeline would be installed beneath the drainage at an existing road crossing to avoid impacts to the drainage feature and surrounding agricultural operations.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:
The project site includes agricultural fields surrounding and immediately adjacent to the proposed Well 15 site, the proposed pipeline alignment, and Well 14S tie-in location. Although the area surrounding the Well 15 site has been extensively developed for agriculture, residential, and industrial uses (i.e., the Airport), several drainage features including swales and ephemeral pools to the south and agricultural ditches around the well site remain along historical watercourses.

Two drainage features are present in the study area that have been altered from agricultural development in the area. A drainage feature mapped with Riverine habitat is shown originating near the proposed Well 15 site and traverses the southern portion of the agricultural field in a westerly direction. The drainage feature is no longer present as it has been eliminated by conversion to an agricultural field. Only maintained agricultural ditches and crop furrows were present in the general area at the time of the field surveys.

The project site includes another drainage feature in the northern part of the study area as Freshwater Emergent Wetland vegetation. This ditch was present at the time of field surveys within the northwestern pipeline alignment; however, this drainage has also been modified into a maintained agricultural ditch devoid of vegetation.

The historic drainage features mapped in the project area are the former headwaters of an unnamed, intermittent drainage system that once connected to Guadalupe Lake south of Betteravia. These drainages have been greatly modified by agricultural development in the area, and it is unclear if they are still hydrologically connected to Guadalupe Lake further west of the site.

The soils in the study area are Betteravia loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes and 2 to 9 percent slopes. This soil unit is composed of aeolian sands (windblown sands) and is found on remnants of alluvial fans (NRCS 2024). It is a loamy sand with an underlying cemented layer on top of stratified loamy sand to sandy clay loam (NRCS 2024). The drainage ditch, corresponding to the location of an historical intermittent drainage, has Marina sand, 2 to 9 percent slopes. This soil unit is composed of aeolian sands and is found on terraces (NRCS 2024). It is sand throughout its profile (NRCS 2024). A small area in the northwestern portion of the study area had the soil mapping unit Terrace escarpments, sandy. The study area is located on the Orcutt Dune Sheet, which is an ancient, windblown sand deposit that occurs in the southern portion of the Santa Maria Valley.

There are no natural plant communities in the proposed project footprint, which consists only of Ruderal (disturbed)/Developed and Agriculture land use types. Non-native grassland was identified along the Airport runway and south of the well location site. The agricultural fields were planted in strawberries at the time of the first survey, disked and unplanted during the second survey, and replanted in strawberries during the third survey. The well will be sited in the highly disturbed agricultural field with pipelines located in the unimproved farm roads, all on sandy soils. The tie-in location to the existing transmission main is along the edge of the Developed Well 14S facility and the E Street shoulder. The waste line discharge location would be considered Ruderal.

PROJECT REVIEW:

The environmental impacts associated with the development of the site were determined using the City of Santa Maria Staff Project Environmental Checklist (attached), on-site inspection, various computer models, and information provided by the City of Santa Maria. Potentially significant adverse environmental impacts were identified in the areas of aesthetics/visual resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, and geology and soils.

Based on the above-mentioned sources, no adverse impacts are associated with agriculture and forest resources, energy, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, utilities and service systems, and wildfire.

IMPACT SUMMARY TABLE

	Proposed Project
Size of Site	Approximately 0.35 acres of development and 1.72 acres of temporary disturbance for pipeline trenching, Construction staging would result in a temporary disturbance area of approximately 0.5 acre.
Size of Buildings	NA
Water Demand	NA
Sewage Generation	NA
Average Daily Trips	NA
P.M. Peak Trips	NA
Unmitigated Construction Emissions: (1) Reactive Hydrocarbons Nitrogen Oxides	 0.9132 pounds/day 9.7297 pounds/day

(1) CalEEMod 2020.4.0 Model.

The following discussion of the potential adverse environmental impacts includes mitigation measures which would reduce all identified impacts to a level of insignificance and are recommended to be included in the conditions of approval for the project. If the decision makers wish to delete a mitigation measure which is proposed to mitigate a significant impact, an alternative mitigation measure should be agreed to by the applicant and made part of the project. Verification that these mitigation measures have been implemented will be monitored as described in Section 8 of the City of Santa Maria's Environmental Procedures. The monitoring checklist is included at the end of this report.

Aesthetics/Visual Resources

The proposed project is located within the Santa Maria Valley, in the southwest portion of the City of Santa Maria, adjacent to and southwest of Runway 2-20 of the Santa Maria Airport. The project area is typified by a variety of urban land uses. The project site would occupy approximately 0.35-acre (123 feet by 123 feet) of an active agricultural field immediately adjacent to the Santa Maria Airport airfield, northeast of the 11th Street and E Street intersection. The project site consists of a disturbed agricultural field (row crops) void of any development, consisting of open space adjacent to the airport. An existing agricultural drainage ditch crosses the proposed pipeline alignment, consisting of a narrow ditch regularly maintained devoid of vegetation. It is important to note that the proposed pipeline would be installed beneath the drainage ditch at the location of an existing road and culvert to avoid impacts to the drainage feature and surrounding agricultural operations.

The proposed project does not require regular staffing outside of periodic maintenance as needed and the installing of security lighting is anticipated to be minimal. However, the addition of new lighting sources in the area has the potential to result in a new source of light or glare with the potential to affect daytime or nighttime views in the area. Impacts are considered significant but mitigable.

The following mitigation shall be required in order to reduce impacts to less than significant levels:

AES-1 In order to mitigate impacts related to the introduction of security lighting and impacts related to daytime or nighttime lighting and glare to less than significant levels, the following measures shall be required:

- The installation of any light poles shall be limited to 25-feet in height.
- Any security lighting shall be installed at the minimum wattage necessary for safe operations.
- Any outdoor lighting shall be shielded by a metal hood and light shall be directed downwards in order to avoid light spilling onto neighboring properties.

Air Quality

Based on the CalEEMod air quality model prepared for this project, the proposed project would not result in the exceedance of any short-term construction threshold as recommended by the SBAPCD. However, because Santa Barbara County violates the state standard for PM10, dust control measures are required for all projects involved in earthmoving regardless of the significance of fugitive dust impacts. As such, impacts related to construction emissions are considered significant but mitigable.

Construction equipment itself can be the source of air quality emission impacts and may be subject to California Air Resources Board or SBAPCD permitting requirements. Truck trips associated with the materials that will be cut from the site may also be a source of emissions subject to SBAPCD permitting requirements, subject to specific truck routing selected. Impacts related to vehicle and heavy equipment emissions are considered significant but mitigable.

The proposed project is limited to the construction activities associated with the development of Well 15. The project operational phase is limited to the operation of the new well and trips associated with well maintenance as needed. In addition, the proposed project would not require any new staff.

The Project would include the use of a portable generator to provide a temporary power source for system operation, if needed in the event of a power outage, however the use of the generator would be minimal and subject to air permitting requirements, which would further minimize potential exposure. The project would not result in substantial sources of air emissions during operation, as the project is anticipated to primarily include passenger vehicles associated with maintenance trips. Therefore, operational air quality impacts would be less than significant.

The following mitigation shall be required in order to reduce impacts to less than significant levels:

AQ-1. To mitigate fugitive dust emissions related to project construction, the following shall be implemented:

a) Reduce the amount of the disturbed area where possible;
b) Use of water trucks or sprinkler systems in sufficient quantities to prevent airborne dust from leaving the site. Increased watering frequency would be required whenever wind speeds exceed 15 mph. Reclaimed (non-potable) water should be used whenever possible;
c) All dirt stock pile areas should be sprayed daily as needed;
d) Permanent dust control measures identified in the approved project revegetation and landscape plans should be implemented as soon as possible following completion of any soil disturbing activities;
e) Exposed ground areas that are planned to be reworked at dates greater than one month after initial grading should be sown with a fast germinating, non-invasive grass seed and watered until vegetation is established;
f) All disturbed soil areas not subject to revegetation should be stabilized using approved chemical soil binders, jute netting, or other methods approved in advance by the SBAPCD;
g) All roadways, driveways, sidewalks, etc. to be paved should be completed as soon as possible. In addition, building pads should be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used;
h) Vehicle speed for all construction vehicles shall not exceed 15 mph on any unpaved surface at the construction site;
i) All trucks hauling dirt, sand, soil, or other loose materials are to be covered or should maintain at least two feet of freeboard (minimum vertical distance between top of load and top of trailer) in accordance with CVC Section 23114;
j) Install wheel washers where vehicles enter and exit unpaved roads onto streets, or wash off trucks and equipment leaving the site;
k) Sweep streets at the end of each day if visible soil material is carried onto adjacent paved roads. Water sweepers with reclaimed water should be used where feasible;
l) All of these fugitive dust mitigation measures shall be shown on grading and building plans; and
m) The contractor or builder shall designate a person or persons to monitor the fugitive dust emissions and enhance the implementation of the measures as necessary to minimize dust complaints, reduce visible emissions below 20% opacity, and to prevent transport of dust offsite. Their duties shall include holidays and weekend periods when work may not be in progress. The name and telephone number of such persons shall be provided to the SBAPCD Compliance Division prior to the start of any grading, earthwork or demolition.

AQ-2. The required mitigation measures for reducing nitrogen oxides (NOx), reactive organic gases (ROG), and diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions from construction equipment are listed below:

- Maintain all construction equipment in proper tune according to manufacturer's specifications;
- Fuel all off-road and portable diesel powered equipment with ARB certified motor vehicle diesel fuel (non-taxed version suitable for use off-road);
- Use diesel construction equipment meeting ARB's Tier 2 certified engines or cleaner off-road heavy-duty diesel engines, and comply with the State off-Road Regulation;
- Use on-road heavy-duty trucks that meet the ARB's 2007 or cleaner certification standard for on-road heavy-duty diesel engines, and comply with the State On-Road Regulation;
- Construction or trucking companies with fleets that that do not have engines in their fleet that meet the engine standards identified in the above two measures (e.g. captive or NOx exempt area fleets) may be eligible by proving alternative compliance;
- All on and off-road diesel equipment shall not idle for more than 5 minutes. Signs shall be posted in the designated queuing areas and or job sites to remind drivers and operators of the 5 minute idling limit;
- Diesel idling within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptors is not permitted;
- Staging and queuing areas shall not be located within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptors;
- Electrify equipment when feasible;
- Substitute gasoline-powered in place of diesel-powered equipment, where feasible; and,
- Use alternatively fueled construction equipment on-site where feasible, such as compressed natural gas (CNG), liquefied natural gas (LNG), propane or biodiesel.

Biological Resources

Special-Status Wildlife

The CNDDB search identified 12 special-status animal species with recorded occurrences within a five-mile radius of the project site, and other special-status animal species recorded in the Santa Maria Valley region were also assessed for their potential to occur in the project area (see attached Special-status Biological Resources Summary). The site is located in an agricultural area that is highly disturbed with soils regularly tilled. As a result, no special status wildlife are expected to be found on a permanent basis within the study area. The special status species determined to have potential to occur in the project site would be on a temporary basis while moving through the area in search of suitable habitat or while foraging and are discussed below.

The **California red-legged frog** (*Rana draytonii*; CRLF) is a federally Threatened species and a CDFW Species of Special Concern. This species requires aquatic habitats for reproduction and inhabits these sites most of the year. The types of aquatic habitats they use include seasonal and permanent ponds, intermittent and perennial streams, springs, artificial impoundments (i.e., stock ponds, reservoirs), marshes, dune

ponds and lagoons. Preferred aquatic habitat is characterized by dense shoreline or emergent vegetation, such as willows, cattails, and bulrushes, with still or slow-moving water at least 2.3 feet deep (Hayes and Jennings 1989). However, they also occupy ponds or pools with little or no emergent vegetation. Breeding habitat is typically the interface of open water with vegetative cover such as cattails or overhanging willows in shallow water less than 1 meter from the shore (USFWS 2022). Ephemeral sites must retain water at least into July/August in order for the tadpoles to reach metamorphosis. In rare instances, California red-legged frog tadpoles have been found to overwinter and transform the following year (Fellers et al. 2001), but they generally metamorphose between July and September (Jennings and Hayes 1994).

The presence of American bullfrogs (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) is negatively associated with the presence of California red-legged frogs, and they are known to be predators on the species and suspected competitors (Moyle 1973, Hayes and Jennings 1989, Christopher 2004a). Non-native fish that are commonly planted for recreational fishing, including sunfish, bass and catfish, are major predators on California red-legged frog tadpoles and may eliminate them from ponds (Hayes and Jennings 1986, Christopher 2004a). Sites that dry completely every few years may have higher quality habitat value because desiccation eliminates their predators, such as non-native fish, American bullfrogs and crayfish (*Procambarus* sp.), and maintains higher quality breeding habitat by limiting dense growth of emergent vegetation along the margins (Scott and Rathbun 2010, Doubledee et al. 2003).

Numerous records of CRLF are within 5 miles of the site, and there are three within their 1-mile dispersal distance. These three records are to the south of the proposed Well 15 site, and there are no barriers to dispersal in the intervening area. Other potentially suitable habitats observed during the surveys are the basins offsite on the west side of E Street, however these areas appear to be maintained on a periodic basis reducing the habitat quality. The agricultural ditch in the study area does not appear suitable for breeding because it is never greater than four to six inches deep, and the water levels fluctuate in the late-spring and summer due to inputs from Well 14S and surrounding agriculture. It is possible that adult frogs moving between other aquatic sites and juveniles could use this feature on a temporary basis, but the channel is regularly maintained free of vegetation, and therefore lacks suitable cover or refuge to evade predation. Frogs could move through the agricultural fields during rainy winter nights but are not likely to remain due to lack of cover.

The **California tiger salamander** (*Ambystoma californiense* population 2; CTS) Santa Barbara County Distinct Population Segment (DPS) is federally Endangered in Santa Barbara County, state listed as Threatened and is on the CDFW Watch List. The species occurs in lower elevation foothills of the Coast Range ranging from Sonoma to Santa Barbara counties, and in the Central Valley from Sacramento to Tulare County. The Santa Barbara County DPS occurs in the southernmost extent of this species' range in the northwestern portion of Santa Barbara County within the Santa Maria Basin Geomorphic Province (USFWS 2016a).

CTS inhabit areas of the state that historically had vernal pool complexes and seasonal ponds surrounded by relatively level terrain of grasslands and oak savannah. They have an obligate biphasic life cycle that requires both aquatic and terrestrial habitats. Adults spend most of their lives underground in burrows made by small mammals where they remain active feeding and moving around (Trenham 2001). Breeding sites include long-lasting rain pools, seasonal ponds, vernal pools, sag ponds, stock ponds, artificial impoundments, and permanent ponds lacking predatory fish. Natural breeding ponds, which typically are underlain by bedrock or a clay layer that retains standing water, usually become inundated in the winter or spring and dry up completely in the summer or fall. As natural breeding ponds have been lost, CTS have shifted to breeding in artificial stock ponds, which are often formed by creating a berm across a natural drainage, and may have longer hydroperiods (USFWS 2016a). They do not breed in streams or rivers, but have been found in ditches with seasonal wetland habitat and slow-moving swales (Seymour and Westphal 1994, Alvarez et al. 2013). During periods of drought when breeding ponds do not fill, they can forgo breeding for up to eight years (Trenham et al. 2000).

The western end of the agricultural ditch within the study area has been identified by the USFWS (2010) as a potential CTS breeding pond, SAMA-11. While E Street forms some impoundment of the drainage ditch, it appears unlikely for use by the species since CTS do not breed in streams with flowing water and the feature does not support a regular hydroperiod. Regular maintenance and soil disturbance from agricultural activities also reduces the quality of this area as a potential breeding location. Aerial photography review showed varying levels of saturation in this area, which is expected to be associated with waste discharge inputs from Well 14S as well as agricultural runoff. No suitable upland habitat is present surrounding the ditch but there is grassland habitat along the runway to the east and undeveloped grassland to the south 0.25 mile away, which is well within the species movement distance between upland habitat and breeding ponds. The ditch has low quality habitat for CTS due to its small size, ongoing maintenance and vegetation removal, and irregular ponding. Although the agricultural fields are not a barrier to dispersal, movement into this disturbance zone would likely result in mortality.

Seven documented CTS breeding ponds are within 1.3 miles from the project site. Undeveloped grassland habitat highly suitable for movement and dispersal lies between these ponds north of Dutard Road. It is likely that Black Road and the surrounding agricultural lands are a source of mortality but not a complete barrier to movement. The USFWS (2010) identifies three additional potential breeding ponds within 1.3 miles, some of which appear to have been impacted by agricultural activities and other land uses.

The federally Threatened **vernal pool fairy shrimp** (*Branchinecta lynchi*) is a tiny crustacean completes its life cycle in temporary ponded water of various-sized topographic depressions that occur in grasslands. They live in vernal swales (shallow, vegetated channels that carry water seasonally), vernal pools (shallow depressions in grasslands that hold water seasonally), and ephemeral (short-lived) aquatic habitats

that form on a variety of substrates, including in rock outcrops (Helm 1998). They do not occur in riverine habitats (streams), marine areas, or in permanent bodies of water. Vernal pools form where there is a soil layer below or near the surface that has limited permeability to water, where precipitation and surface runoff becomes "perched" above this layer. These soils include hardpans, claypans, volcanic flows, and non-volcanic rock. Vernal pool fairy shrimp can also occur in anthropogenic habitats such as artificial seasonal wetlands, created pools in ephemeral drainages, dozer scrapes or other excavations that hold temporary water, pooled water in road ruts and along railroad right-of-ways, and roadside ditches with no flow (Helm 1998). In order to survive in habitats with short inundation periods, vernal pool fairy shrimp have evolved a short time to reproduction and high reproductive rates. They hatch within a few days after the sites fill with water, and complete their life cycle in one season. Temporary ponded water must last at least a minimum of 18 days for fairy shrimp to reach their reproductive stage, but on average is about 40 days and populations can persist up to 139 days in continuously standing water (Helm 1998). Females produce embryos that become encased as shelled cysts, which enter a dormant stage that can survive pool drying, temperature extremes, fires, and absence of oxygen (USFWS 2003b). They can remain viable in the soil for decades and be transported to other habitats in the digestive tracts of animals. Only a fraction of viable cysts hatch each season, while the rest remain dormant in the soil to hatch in future years (USFWS 2003b).

The project site is within the Santa Barbara Vernal Pool Region where Southern Vernal Pool species and communities are known to occur (Keeler-Wolf et al. 1998). No seasonal pools are present within the project footprint. Regular plowing of agricultural fields disrupts the restrictive layer, eliminates topographic depressions, and removes native vegetation. As a result, no ephemeral pools are present in the study area, nor are any expected to be affected by the project. Vernal pool complexes are known to occur offsite to the south and southwest, and VPFS have been recorded in this general area (refer to Figure 2, Figure 5 and Figure 6). Other pools occupied by VPFS are on Airport property just west of the terminus of Foster Road. The series of vernal pools supporting vernal pool species are located along Dutard Road, which is outside the study area for this project. While VPFS can occur within artificial features, such as tire ruts, road puddles, ponded water around well facilities or furrows between crops, the regular disturbance from farming activities likely precludes this species from occurring in the project area. Furthermore, the agricultural ditch in the study area supports periodic flowing water, which is not suitable to support this species.

The **western spadefoot** (*Spea hammondii*) **northern DPS** has been proposed for Threatened status under the federal Endangered Species Act and is a CDFW Species of Special Concern. This fossorial frog (often referred to as a toad) is primarily a terrestrial species and uses aquatic habitat for breeding. It inhabits grassland, open woodland, oak savanna, and scrub habitats on flat or gentle hills (USFWS 2023a). They spend most of their lives underground in burrows to avoid desiccation during the dry season (late spring to early fall) and while sheltering during the active season (early fall to late spring) (USFWS 2023a). They breed in vernal pools, ephemeral ponds (natural or man-made), stock ponds lacking fish, roadside ditches and ruts, and streams

that dry to isolated pools but may have flow earlier in the winter. During years with sufficient precipitation that falls at the appropriate time, they emerge in large numbers and complete their reproductive period within a few months.

The western spadefoot could occur in the ephemeral ponds to the south of the study area described above as potentially suitable for or occupied by CTS, and because they can complete their larval period in a very short time, they could be found in additional ephemeral pools in grassland areas adjacent to the study area. They are not known to use cultivated fields as upland habitat for their burrows, but suitable grassland habitat is present immediately to the south of the proposed well site and potentially to the east at the Airport. There are four records of western spadefoot in the CNDDB within one mile of the study area. Due to the amount of potentially suitable habitat in the area, and the difficulty in detecting them, they are likely to occur at additional sites in which they have not yet been documented. While unlikely, it is possible for spadefoots to move onto the southeastern segment of the study area during winter rains in search of a suitable breeding site.

The **southwestern (= western) pond turtle** (*Actinemys pallida*) is proposed for listing as a Threatened species under the FESA and is a CDFW Species of Special Concern. They are semi-aquatic, having both terrestrial and aquatic life history phases. Their aquatic habitats include streams with pools, rivers, brackish lagoons, ponds, irrigation reservoirs, irrigation ditches, especially those with areas of open water and some perimeter vegetation such as bulrushes, cattails and willows (Bury et al. 2012, California Herps 2023). Logs, rocks, cattail mats, and exposed banks are used for basking. Terrestrial habitats are required for nesting, overwintering, aestivation (warm season dormancy), and movement/dispersal (USFWS 2023b). Nesting is usually in grassland habitat with sparse vegetation and sunny open areas with well compacted soils, 98 to 558 feet (30 to 170 meters) from aquatic habitats (Rathbun et al. 1992, 1993, 2002; Scott et al. 2008, California Herps 2023). In central and southern California, hatchlings leave the nest in the late-summer or early-fall, whereas in northern areas they may overwinter in the nest chamber and move to water the following spring (USFWS 2023b). There is only one record in the CNDDB of southwestern pond turtles within five miles of the site, and it is from the same general drainage system that passes through the study area approximately 1.0 mile to the northwest near Black Road. The two basins on the west side of E Street along this drainage system that were observed during the surveys could provide potential habitat on a seasonal basis. The ponded water periodically present at the west end of the agricultural ditch from agricultural runoff and well discharge is not deep enough to support this species. Although not highly conducive to movement of small wildlife such as the turtle, the agricultural fields do not have any significant barriers that would preclude them from moving through the area. The turtle would not nest in the agricultural fields due to the regular cycle of disturbance but could move through them.

The project has incorporated protection measures to avoid project effects on special-status wildlife including the amphibians and reptiles described above. Initial

consultation with the USFWS confirmed these measures would ensure project activities avoid these species. Well 15 will be constructed during the dry season and will have a very small footprint within disturbed agricultural fields that will continue to be farmed post-construction. Because the pipeline will be installed underground and below the agricultural ditch, no impacts are expected on any temporary aquatic habitat potentially used during movement by these aquatic species. As detailed above, breeding of special status wildlife is not expected on the site due to a lack of suitable habitat from the ongoing agricultural operations. The protection measures incorporated into the project also include pre-construction surveys, environmental awareness training and biological monitoring during construction, which were deemed adequate to cover the range of potential impacts that could occur from the construction and operation of Well 15. Additional specifications to fine-tune these measures are provided in the section Additional Mitigation Measures to Avoid/Reduce Potentially Significant Effects below.

A diverse group of special-status birds were determined to have potential to occur onsite, primarily on a periodic basis while moving through the area during migration and foraging.

There is no nesting habitat onsite for these species or they do not nest in this region, and as a result, project effects would be below the level of significance. Ground nesting birds and common species that are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and/or California Fish and Game Code could be adversely affected if they were nesting in grasslands to the south of the project. If project construction takes place during the nesting season (February 1st to August 31st), active nests containing eggs and/or young could be affected during ground disturbance and/or noise and human activities could disrupt nesting behavior causing the adults to abandon the nest. There are no trees within 250 feet of the site; therefore, raptors and other birds that nest in trees or dense shrubs would not be affected. Direct mortality of eggs and/or chicks, nest failure, or nest abandonment are considered significant effects under CEQA. Mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts on nesting birds to less than significant levels are provided at the end of this section.

Special-status bat species could forage over the site, but there are no structures or trees for roosting. Project effects on special-status bat species would be below the level of significance and no mitigation is needed.

The proposed well site is located along the northern boundary of **designated critical habitat for the California tiger salamander**, Unit 1 West Santa Maria/Orcutt (Figure 6; USFWS 2004). This unit consists of 4,135 acres and includes the southern portion of lands owned by the Airport. The agricultural fields where Well 15 will be located do not contain the necessary habitat attributes for critical habitat and appears the critical habitat unit was originally developed to exclude the agricultural fields. While the Well 15 footprint is just within the border of the critical habitat polygon, the pipelines and other components of Well 15 are outside the critical habitat unit.

The following mitigation shall be required in order to reduce impacts to less than significant levels:

BIO-1 Special-status Amphibian and Reptile Impact Avoidance. In addition to the protection measures incorporated into the project to avoid potential impacts on CRLF, CTS, and VPFS, the following mitigation refines those protection measures and is also required to ensure impacts to southwestern pond turtle and western spadefoot do not occur from the project:

a) A pre-construction survey of the project site shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within 48 prior to the start of construction to confirm that no special-status species are present in the work area.

   i. If CRLF, CTS, southwestern pond turtle, or western spadefoot are found during the pre-construction surveys, construction will be delayed until the individuals move out of the project area under the own volition. If any individuals of federally listed species do not move off site on their own, the City may postpone the project or be required to obtain take authorization under the federal Endangered Species Act prior to initiating project activities. State authorization would also be needed if CTS are found onsite and do not move out of harm's way prior to the start of project activities.
   ii. A report documenting results of the survey shall be provided to the Community Development Director, prior to the start of construction.

b) A qualified biological monitor familiar with CRLF, CTS, southwestern pond turtle, and western spadefoot will provide an environmental awareness training to the construction team and monitor all initial site disturbance (and exclusion fence installation, if deemed necessary). Once all ground disturbance is complete, the biological monitor does not need to be onsite full-time and can conduct periodic spot checks to document project activities. The monitor(s) must be approved by the City prior to working on the project.

BIO-2 Nesting Birds Impact Avoidance. To avoid potential impacts on nesting birds that may be present in neighboring grassland habitats, the following mitigation is required:

a) If all phases of construction take place outside of the nesting season (September 1st to January 31st), no mitigation for nesting birds would be needed. The project has been designed to take place in the dry season, therefore, the work window with no nesting bird issues is September 1st through October 31st or until significant fall rains commence.

b) For any work activities scheduled to start between February 1st and August 31st, a qualified biologist shall conduct a preconstruction survey for nesting birds within approximately 300 feet of the project area. The survey shall be

conducted within seven days before the initiation of construction for each phase of the project (i.e., surveys shall be repeated if there is a pause between any of the phases of well construction, pipeline installation or waste discharge line construction). During this survey, the qualified biologist shall search for birds exhibiting nesting behavior and attempt to locate their nests, and inspect all potential nest substrates (including bare ground) in the survey area. Any nests identified shall be monitored to determine if they are active. If no active nests are found, construction may proceed. If an active nest is found, a buffer developed by the qualified biologist shall be established around the nest. The buffer shall be delineated with flagging, and no work shall take place within the buffer area until the young have left the nest, as determined by the qualified biologist. Once nesting has ceased and the young are no longer reliant on the nest, project activities can commence in the buffer zone.

c) A report documenting results of the survey shall be provided to the Community Development Director, prior to the start of construction.

BIO-3 Construction Best Management Practices (BMPs). The following stormwater protection measures and erosion and pollution control methods shall be implemented during construction of the project to avoid impacts on water quality that could affect nearby vernal pools and the onsite agricultural ditch:

a) The project will be constructed outside of the rainy season, which is typically defined from November 1st through April 15th, and may be modified based on seasonal conditions.

b) Prior to start of construction, the disturbance limits adjacent to the agricultural ditch shall be clearly flagged or fenced so that the contractor is aware of the limits of allowable work area and to ensure vehicles are prohibited from the sensitive habitat area. Access routes, staging areas, and construction zones shall be limited to the minimum area necessary to achieve the project objectives.

c) Spill kits shall be maintained on the site, and a *Spill Response Plan* shall be in place. All project-related spills of hazardous materials within or adjacent to the project site should be cleaned up immediately.

d) All refueling, maintenance, and staging of equipment and vehicles shall occur at least 100 feet from the agricultural ditch or any sensitive habitat identified in the biological surveys. These activities shall occur in a location where a spill would not drain toward the ditch or any other aquatic habitat. All equipment and vehicles should be checked and maintained on a daily basis to ensure proper operation and to avoid potential leaks or spills. Construction staging areas should attain zero discharge of stormwater runoff into aquatic habitats.

e) No concrete washout shall be conducted on the site outside of an appropriate containment system. Washing of equipment, tools, etc. should not be allowed in any location where the tainted water could enter onsite drainages.

f) The use of chemicals, fuels, lubricants, or biocides shall be in compliance with all local, state, and federal regulations. Uses of such compounds shall observe label requirements and restrictions mandated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and other state and federal legislation.

g) Spoil storage sites shall not be located within the agricultural ditch, or where spoil could be washed into the ditch.

h) A *Sediment and Erosion Control Plan* prepared by a qualified engineer may be required by the City. The use of silt fence, straw wattles, erosion control blankets, straw bales, sandbags, fiber rolls and other appropriate techniques should be placed on or near all areas with soil disturbance to prevent erosion. Biotechnical approaches using native vegetation shall be used as feasible. All sediment and erosion control measures shall be installed per the engineer's requirements, and in place prior to October 15. These measures shall be maintained in good operating condition throughout the construction period. Methods that are not biodegradable should be removed after the end of the rainy season (late-spring or summer).

i) A *Frac-Out Plan* may be required if horizontal directional drilling is used to install the pipes under the agricultural ditch.

j) No litter or construction debris shall be placed where it can be deposited in the agricultural ditch. All such debris and waste shall be picked up daily and properly disposed of.

Cultural Resources

According to the City's General Plan Resources Management Element, the Santa Maria Valley is not a major archaeological or paleontological resource area as only a few sites have been recorded or discovered in the area. Figure RME-5 or the General Plan Resources Management Element delineates High or Moderate, Low, and Negligible Archaeological Sensitivity Areas in the City. The project site is located in Archaeological Sensitivity Area 2 – Low Sensitivity. However, ground disturbance associated with construction could have the potential to uncover previously unknown archeological deposits. As such, impacts are considered significant but mitigable.

Human graves are often associated with prehistoric occupation sites. Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code provides that it is a misdemeanor to knowingly disturb a human burial and Section 5097.99 of the Public Resources Code defines the obtaining or possession of Native American remains or grave goods to be a felony. In

addition, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 stipulates the process to be followed when human remains are encountered. Although not expected, there is the potential for the accidental discovery of human remains and potential damage or disturbance during project implementation. As such, impacts are considered significant but mitigable.

The following mitigation shall be required in order to reduce impacts to less than significant levels:

CR-1. If archaeological resources are discovered during construction, work shall be halted within 50 meters (160 feet) of the discovery until it can be evaluated by a qualified professional archaeologist. If the discovery is determined to be significant, the recommendations of the archaeologist shall be required for implementation in coordination with the City of Santa Maria.

CR-2. If human remains are discovered during construction, work shall be halted within 50 meters (160 feet) of the find. The County Coroner shall be notified in accordance with the provisions of Public Resources Code 5097.98-99, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, and the Native American Heritage Commission shall be notified in accordance with PRC Section 5097. If the remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the Commission will designate a Most Likely Descendant who will be authorized to provide recommendations for management of the human remains.

Geology and Soils

As discussed in the project geotechnical engineering report (Earth Systems Pacific, March 4, 2024) the project site is currently occupied by farm land and surrounding dirt access roads. From the north, about two-thirds of the eastern site perimeter is situated on a northwest-facing slope with approximately 60 feet of elevation gain over a horizontal distance of about 210 to 225 feet within the site (Google Earth, 2024). The proposed structures will not be located on this slope. The portion of the site located south and west of the slope gently slopes west with up to 4 feet of relief across the remainder of the site. A drainage ditch is located within the eastern corner of the site.

With respect to impacts related to soil erosion, the report indicates that the project site soils are considered to be highly erodible although considered to exhibit slow water erosion hazards. Accordingly, the report includes recommendations for stabilization of the surface soils, particularly those disturbed during construction, by vegetation or other means during and following construction to reduce the potential of erosion damage. As such, impacts are considered significant unless mitigated.

The project geotechnical engineering report provides an assessment of impacts related to project implementation and the potential for those soils to become unstable as a result of the proposed project. Specifically, the report indicates that Impacts resulting from shallow groundwater may include difficulty achieving compaction, difficult utility and foundation installation, and wet and unstable soils in trenches, foundations, or jack and bore pits. As such, soils settlement during project construction is considered a significant impact unless mitigated.

In addition to impacts related to depth to groundwater and soil settlement, the report also identifies soil suitability impacts related excavation characteristics which may result in impacts related to soil stability, or the risk of slope or sidewall failure within excavated areas. This impact is also exasperated due to the high moisture content in the soils. Impacts related to soil stability are considered significant unless mitigated. Soil corrosivity, as it relates to the soil acidity levels, and installation of the proposed pipeline within corrosive soils was also identified as a potentially significant impact unless mitigated.

GEO-1. In order to address the potential for geologic impacts related to the proposed project construction, the mitigation measure recommendations listed in Section 6.0, "Preliminary Geotechnical Recommendations", of the project geotechnical report shall be considered required elements of project construction. Please refer to the attached project geotechnical engineering report for a detailed discussion of construction and design recommendations to address potential geologic and soils impacts related to project implementation.

ENVIRONMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the information available at the time of preparation this report and, without benefit of additional information which may come to light at the public hearing, the Environmental Officer recommends that a Mitigated Negative Declaration be filed for the City of Santa Maria Well 15 Project based upon information contained in File SP2024-0009.

PREPARED BY:

City of Santa Maria
Community Development Department
110 South Pine Street, #101
Santa Maria, CA 93458

Cody Graybehl, Environmental Analyst — 6/25/24 Date

Dana Eady, Environmental Officer — 6/25/24 Date

CITY OF SANTA MARIA
Environmental Checklist / Initial Study
For City of Santa Maria Well 15 Project (SP2024-0009)

1. Project Title and Location

City of Santa Maria Well 15 Project (SP2024-0009)
Southwest of the end of Santa Maria Airport Runway (APN 111-231-017)

2. Lead Agency, Contact and Preparer

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3. Project Sponsor's Name and Address

City of Santa Maria Utilities Department
2065 East Main Street
Santa Maria, CA 93454

4. General Plan Designation

Open Space (OS), Airport -Airport Services (A-AS)

5. Zoning Designation

The site is located adjacent to the airport property and includes the following zoning designations: OS (Open Space), CZ (Airport Clear Zone) and PD/AS-I (Planned Development/Airport Service I).

6. Brief Description of Project: The City of Santa Maria Utilities Department is proposing to develop a new potable water well, designated Well Number 15 (herein referred to as Well No. 15 or Well 15). The new Well No. 15 would be added to an existing municipal water supply network of six active wells and is designed to provide approximately 2,200 gallons per minute ("gpm") of potable water. The proposed new well site would occupy approximately 0.35-acre (123 feet by 123 feet) of an active agricultural field immediately adjacent to the Santa Maria Airport airfield, northeast of the 11th Street and E Street intersection (please refer to attached project plans prepared by Cannon, 2024).

The proposed project would increase the available supply of municipal potable water that can be delivered into the City's distribution system to meet water demands, ensuring the City's capacity to supply water during peak demand situations. Development of Well No. 15 was initially projected in the City's *State Water Master Plan* (Boyle Engineering Corporation 1994). Considering prevailing

water conditions in the region and insights from the *Santa Maria Urban Water Management Plan* (City 2020), which underscores the need to reduce dependence on State Water and bolster local resources for regional self-reliance. Additional water supply is anticipated to be needed because the City's State Water allocation might be limited or entirely unavailable, and there is a possibility that other wells operated by the City could experience inoperable conditions or that other emergencies could arise. Well 15 is expected to provide approximately 2,200 gallons per minute of domestic potable water, representing an important supply upgrade and meeting the goal of advancing regional self-reliance for water supply as provided in the City's Urban Water Management Plan.

The proposed project site is located within a disturbed agricultural field, and was intentionally positioned to avoid impacts related to sensitive biological resources associated with nearby wetlands and wildlife habitat. The proposed project is located on property owned by the Airport under a 20-foot-wide easement granted to the City.

The site will be accessed from E Street and existing farm roads during construction and operations. Construction activities will be limited to daylight hours, and outside the rainy season. The new well would be installed to a depth of 1,500 feet (ft) below grade surface. The proposed well facility would be located on an approximately 123 feet by 123 feet (0.35 acre) project footprint. The facility would be fenced and would house the new well and discharge manifold, electrical and water treatment buildings, electrical transformer pad, and ancillary improvements. Approximately 3,000 linear feet of potable water line would be co-located with waste line and dry utilities (power supply, communication, and controls) which would be constructed between the Well 15 site and existing Well 14S (see attached Proposed Pipe Alignments; Cannon, January 24, 2024). The new potable water line will be connected to the existing municipal well transmission main just west of Well 14S. The new waste line will empty into a designated water discharge area currently used by Well 14S.

The project pipelines will be installed underground to allow agricultural activities to continue in the long term. The pipelines would be installed in a trench approximately 3 feet wide and 7 feet deep, and the area to be disturbed during construction of the pipelines would be 25 feet wide, representing an area of approximately 1.72 acres of temporary disturbance. The waterlines and dry utilities will cross underneath an existing agricultural ditch at the location of a road and culvert utilizing common pipe installation methods, such as an open trench, directional drilling or jack and bore to avoid impacts to the ditch. An area adjacent to the Well 15 site will be used during construction and for the storage of drill cuttings, representing a temporary disturbance area of approximately 0.5 acre.

The waste line would discharge into an existing basin between the cultivated fields that is used as a discharge area for waste from Well 14S. These features are

seasonally maintained during farming operations and these activities will continue in the long-term.

Operations and maintenance of Well 15 would be conducted consistent with ongoing activities for existing City wells in the area. It is anticipated that staff will conduct regular inspections, sampling, monitoring, operations, and maintenance of the facilities during daylight hours, but nighttime access may be required for emergencies.

7. **Surrounding Land Uses and Setting**: The proposed project is located on agricultural lands owned by the Santa Maria Public Airport and leased to private entities. The site is located to the southwest of the end of Santa Maria Airport Runway 2-20. The approach zones at the ends of the runways, including where the site is located, are designated OS and CZ with areas designated as PD/AS-I land intended to include adjacent agricultural lands as a buffer for conflicting residential uses offsite (Coffman Associates, Inc. 2019). The land uses immediately surrounding the site are limited to agriculture (row crops) and undeveloped grasslands. The Tanglewood residential development is located approximately 0.5 mile to the west of the proposed project site. Light industrial and offices within the urban area of Santa Maria are located northeast of the Airport, approximately 1.3 miles from the project site. Urban development within the community of Orcutt is located approximately 1.0 mile to the southeast of the project site.

8. **Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required:** Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 3), consisting of the review of compliance with general permit conditions for storm water management at the construction site. Easement from the Santa Maria Airport.

9. **California Native American Tribes Consultation:** Consistent with the requirements of AB 52 and Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1, The City of Santa Maria submitted invitations for project consultation to California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area as provided by the Native American Heritage Commission. Consultation invitation letters were sent on March 28, 2024, and as of the closing of the 30-day comment period on April 28, 2024, no requests for consultation were received.

1. AESTHETICS/VISUAL RESOURCES

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099,

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?				X
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				X
c. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?			X	
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?		X		

Discussion:

The proposed project is located within the Santa Maria Valley, in the southwest portion of the City of Santa Maria, adjacent to and southwest of Runway 2-20 of the Santa Maria Airport. The project area is typified by a variety of urban land uses. The project site would occupy approximately 0.35-acre (123 feet by 123 feet) of an active agricultural field immediately adjacent to the Santa Maria Airport airfield, northeast of the 11th Street and E Street intersection. Waterlines and dry utilities connecting the new well with the City's water production network will be installed within agriculturally active fields and will cross underneath an agricultural ditch at the location of an existing road and culvert. The project site consists of a disturbed agricultural field (row crops) void of any development, consisting of open space adjacent to the airport. An existing agricultural drainage crosses the proposed pipeline alignment, consisting of a narrow channel regularly maintained by agricultural activities. It is important to note that the proposed pipeline would be installed beneath the culvert structure to avoid impacts to the drainage feature and surrounding agricultural operations.

a. According to the City's General Plan, there are no unique or important scenic vistas in the immediate area of the project site. As such, the project would not result in any impacts to scenic vistas.

b. According to the California Scenic Highway Mapping System and the City's General Plan, no designated State or local scenic highway corridors are identified in the project area. Additionally, no locally significant scenic resources have been identified in the project area. As such, the project would not result in any impacts to scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

c. In addition to the 0.35-acre well facility footprint, approximately 3,000 linear feet of potable water line would be co-located with waste line and utilities (power supply, communication, and controls) which would be constructed between the Well 15 site and existing Well 14S.

   The project site is void of any structural development. The project is consistent with the existing site zoning and land use designation, and adjacent light manufacturing and airport uses. The project would not change the visual character of the site and surrounding areas from their existing urban setting. This impact would be less than significant.

d. The proposed project does not require regular staffing outside of periodic maintenance as needed and the installing of security lighting is anticipated to be minimal. However, the addition of new lighting sources in the area has the potential to result in a new source of light or glare with the potential to affect daytime or nighttime views in the area. Impacts are considered significant but mitigable.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: The following mitigation shall be required in order to reduce impacts to less than significant levels:

AES-1 In order to mitigate impacts related to the introduction of security lighting and impacts related to daytime or nighttime lighting and glare to less than significant levels, the following measures shall be required:

- The installation of any light poles shall be limited to 25-feet in height;
- Any security lighting shall be installed at the minimum wattage necessary for safe operations;
- Any outdoor lighting shall be shielded by a metal hood and light shall be directed downwards in order to avoid light spilling onto neighboring properties.

Implementation of the above measures will reduce impacts to less than significant levels.

2. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997)prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?			X	
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?			X	
c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?				X
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				X
e. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?			X	

Discussion:

The project is located in an urbanized and agricultural portion of the City of Santa Maria, adjacent to the Santa Maria Airport. The project is surrounded by associated light industrial development and agricultural fields within an undeveloped, agricultural portion of the Airport property. Pipelines would be sited in disturbed agricultural fields and farm access roads. The dry utilities will cross under an existing agricultural ditch at the location of an existing road and culvert. According to the Natural Resource Conservation Service soils map, the project site consists primarily of Betteravia loamy sand (0 to 2% slopes and 2 to 9% slopes) and Marina sand (2 to 9% slopes). Please refer to the attached Figure 3, Soils Map, for a detailed depiction of on-site soils. This is a moderately well drained soil with very slow to medium runoff potential with very slow permeability. These soils are considered to be “Class 3e”, “Class 4e” and “Class 6e” without irrigation, respectively, and are not considered to be Prime Farmland.

a-e. The project site is not zoned for agricultural use, but in an OS area where agriculture is a permittable use. The project site is not zoned for and does not support forest land. As such, project implementation would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. The project site currently supports agricultural activity (row crops); however, agricultural operations can continue with project implementation and long-term agricultural operations would be able to continue due to the relatively small

size of the development footprint (0.35-acre). According to the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program and Land Conservation Act maps, the site is identified as Unique Farmland and Grazing Land. Unique Farmland is defined as Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of agricultural crops. The project site has been situated to avoid permanent impacts to existing agricultural operations, and any short-term impacts to agricultural operations are minimized and are considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: No mitigation measures are required.

3. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?			X	
b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?		X		
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?			X	
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?			X	

Discussion:

The project lies within the South Central Coast Air Basin (SCCAB). The Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (SBAPCD) is the local agency authorized to regulate stationary air quality sources in the project area. The Federal Clean Air Act and the California Clean Air Act mandate the control and reduction of specific air pollutants. Under these Acts, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) have established ambient air quality standards for specific criteria pollutants, designed to protect public health and welfare. Primary criteria pollutants include carbon monoxide (CO), reactive organic gasses (ROG), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), particulate matter (PM_{10}), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), and lead (Pb). Secondary criteria pollutants include ozone (O_3), and fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$).

The EPA administers National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) under the Federal Clean Air Act. The EPA sets the NAAQS and determines if areas meet those standards. Violations of ambient air quality standards are based on air pollutant monitoring data and evaluated for each air pollutant. Areas that do not violate ambient air quality standards are considered to have attained the standard.

The SBAPCD monitors air pollutant levels to ensure that air quality standards are being met and develops strategies to meet the standards if they are not being met. Depending on whether or not the standards are met or exceeded, the SCCAB is classified as being n "attainment" or as "non-attainment". According to the County of Santa Barbara Attainment and Non-Attainment Classification Summary (https://www.ourair.org/air-quality-standards.) the County is classified as being in non-attainment for PM_{10} standards by the State, and O_3 is also considered a primary pollutant of concern.

Proposed projects capable of generating air pollutant emissions exceeding regionally established criteria are considered significant for purposes of CEQA analysis, whether or not such emissions have been accounted for in regional air planning. Any project that would directly cause or substantially contribute to a localized violation of an air quality standard would generate significant air pollution impacts. This includes projects that generate an increase in health risks from toxic air contaminants or introduce sensitive receptors to a site exposed to substantial health risks.

The State Air Quality Attainment Plan (AQAP) was adopted by the SBAPCD in 1991, and includes the 2019 Ozone Plan as part of the recent triennial update to the AQAP. The 2019 Ozone Plan provides a regulatory tool for maintaining attainment status and addresses the factors that threaten to increase regional NO_x and volatile organic compounds (VOC) emissions. In order for a project to be considered consistent with the 2019 Ozone Plan, the project direct and indirect emissions are required to be accounted for in the growth assumptions provided in the Plan and must be consistent with the policies adopted in the 2019 Ozone Plan. The 2019 Ozone Plan relies primarily on the land use and population projections provided by the Santa Barbara Council of Associated Governments (SBCAG) and CARB on-road emissions forecast as a basis for vehicle emissions forecasting (SBAPCD 2017).

a. CEQA Guidelines §15125(b) requires that a project be evaluated for consistency with applicable regional plans. As discussed above, the Ozone Plan addresses attainment of the State ozone standard and Federal air quality standards. The Ozone Plan projects growth in emissions based on population growth forecasts prepared by the SBCAG and other indicators. Consistency determinations are issued for commercial, industrial, residential, and infrastructure related projects that have the potential to induce population growth. A project is considered inconsistent with the Ozone Plan if it has not been accommodated in the forecast projections.

   The proposed Well 15 Project does not include any housing or commercial development, and operation and maintenance of the project would not require new employees. The proposed project would not cause or otherwise induce population growth, as the project is intended to support existing populations in the City. In addition, due to the absence of

operational emissions, the proposed project would not result in any long-term air quality impacts. As such, the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts resulting from conflicts with the applicable air quality plan.

b. The SBAPCD is currently designated as "attainment" for the federal 8-hour ozone standard (i.e., 0.07 parts per million or "ppm"), and also for the State ozone standards as well. The County is designated as unclassified/attainment for the federal $PM_{2.5}$ standard, unclassified for the State $PM_{2.5}$ standard, and non-attainment for the State PM_{10} standard.

Construction Generated Emissions

Construction-generated emissions are short term and of temporary duration, lasting only as long as construction activities occur, but possess the potential to represent a significant air quality impact. The construction of the proposed project would result in the temporary generation of emissions resulting from site preparation and earth moving, as well as from motor vehicle exhaust associated with construction equipment and the movement of equipment across unpaved surfaces and worker trips. Emissions of airborne particulate matter are largely dependent on the amount of ground disturbance associated with site preparation activities.

Based on the project plans and information provided by the project engineer, short-term construction emissions associated with the proposed project were estimated using the California Emission Estimator Model (CalEEMod).

The SBAPCD has not established quantitative thresholds of significance for short-term air pollutant emissions. However, the SBAPCD recommends that Lead Agencies use a 25 tons/year significance threshold for construction emissions of ROG and NOx, as well as other criteria emissions with the exception of CO. Please refer to Table 1, Estimated Construction Emissions, for an estimate of expected project construction emissions and applicable SBAOCD thresholds.

Table 1. Estimated Construction Emissions

	Emissions (lbs/day)					
	ROG	**NO_x**	**CO**	**SO_x**	**PM_{10}**	**$PM_{2.5}$**
SBAPCD Significance Threshold	25	25	NA	25	25	25
Project Emissions	0.9132	9.7297	7.0675	0.0141	5.7120	2.9367
Threshold Exceeded?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Source. CalEEMod emissions calculations prepared for the proposed project. See attached.						

As shown in Table 1 above, the proposed project would not result in the exceedance of any short-term construction threshold as recommended by the SBAPCD. However, because Santa Barbara County violates the state standard for PM_{10}, dust control measures are required for all projects involved in earthmoving regardless of the significance of fugitive dust impacts. As such, impacts related to construction emissions are considered significant but mitigable.

Construction equipment itself can be the source of air quality emission impacts, and may be subject to California Air Resources Board or SBAPCD permitting requirements. Truck trips associated with the materials that will be cut from the site may also be a source of emissions subject to SBAPCD permitting requirements, subject to specific truck routing selected. Impacts related to vehicle and heavy equipment emissions are considered significant but mitigable.

Operational Emissions

The proposed project is limited to the construction activities associated with the development of Well 15. The project operational phase is limited to the operation of the new well and trips associated with well maintenance as needed. In addition, the proposed project would not require any new staff.

The Project would include the use of a portable generator to provide a temporary power source for system operation, if needed in the event of a power outage, however the use of the generator would be minimal and subject to air permitting requirements, which would further minimize potential exposure. The project would not result in substantial sources of air emissions during operation, as the project is anticipated to primarily include passenger vehicles associated with maintenance trips. Therefore, operational air quality impacts would be less than significant.

Based on the above analysis, project operations would have a less than significant impact resulting from a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable Federal or State ambient air quality standard.

c. Implementation of the proposed project would result in short-term emissions of fugitive dust associated with construction activities. However, as discussed above, the project would not result in emissions that would exceed SBAPCD's significant thresholds. Compliance with applicable SBAPCD regulations would minimize potential nuisance impacts in the project vicinity. It is important to note that the project site location is within the City's Open Space area adjacent to the Santa Maria Airport and is void of neighboring residential uses. As such, construction activities would be confided to have a less than significant impact to nearby sensitive receptors.

d. Intermittent odors from construction associated with diesel exhaust could be noticeable at times to sensitive receptors in close proximity. However, given the limited short-term nature of the proposed construction, potential odors are not expected to result in odor complaints. Impacts are considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project:

The following mitigation shall be required in order to reduce impacts to less than significant levels:

AQ-1. To mitigate fugitive dust emissions related to project construction, the following shall be implemented:

a) Reduce the amount of the disturbed area where possible;

b) Use of water trucks or sprinkler systems in sufficient quantities to prevent airborne dust from leaving the site. Increased watering frequency would be required whenever wind speeds exceed 15 mph. Reclaimed (non-potable) water should be used whenever possible;

c) All dirt stock pile areas should be sprayed daily as needed;

d) Permanent dust control measures identified in the approved project revegetation and landscape plans should be implemented as soon as possible following completion of any soil disturbing activities;

e) Exposed ground areas that are planned to be reworked at dates greater than one month after initial grading should be sown with a fast germinating, non-invasive grass seed and watered until vegetation is established;

f) All disturbed soil areas not subject to revegetation should be stabilized using approved chemical soil binders, jute netting, or other methods approved in advance by the SBAPCD;

g) All roadways, driveways, sidewalks, etc. to be paved should be completed as soon as possible. In addition, building pads should be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used;

h) Vehicle speed for all construction vehicles shall not exceed 15 mph on any unpaved surface at the construction site;

i) All trucks hauling dirt, sand, soil, or other loose materials are to be covered or should maintain at least two feet of freeboard (minimum vertical distance between top of load and top of trailer) in accordance with CVC Section 23114;

j) Install wheel washers where vehicles enter and exit unpaved roads onto streets, or wash off trucks and equipment leaving the site;

k) Sweep streets at the end of each day if visible soil material is carried onto adjacent paved roads. Water sweepers with reclaimed water should be used where feasible;

l) All of these fugitive dust mitigation measures shall be shown on grading and building plans; and

m) The contractor or builder shall designate a person or persons to monitor the fugitive dust emissions and enhance the implementation of the measures as necessary to minimize dust complaints, reduce visible emissions below 20% opacity, and to prevent transport of dust offsite. Their duties shall include holidays and weekend periods when work may not be in progress. The name

and telephone number of such persons shall be provided to the SBAPCD Compliance Division prior to the start of any grading, earthwork or demolition.

AQ-2. The required mitigation measures for reducing nitrogen oxides (NO_x), reactive organic gases (ROG), and diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions from construction equipment are listed below:

- Maintain all construction equipment in proper tune according to manufacturer's specifications;
- Fuel all off-road and portable diesel powered equipment with ARB certified motor vehicle diesel fuel (non-taxed version suitable for use off-road);
- Use diesel construction equipment meeting ARB's Tier 2 certified engines or cleaner off-road heavy-duty diesel engines, and comply with the State off-Road Regulation;
- Use on-road heavy-duty trucks that meet the ARB's 2007 or cleaner certification standard for on-road heavy-duty diesel engines, and comply with the State On-Road Regulation;
- Construction or trucking companies with fleets that that do not have engines in their fleet that meet the engine standards identified in the above two measures (e.g. captive or NOx exempt area fleets) may be eligible by proving alternative compliance;
- All on and off-road diesel equipment shall not idle for more than 5 minutes. Signs shall be posted in the designated queuing areas and or job sites to remind drivers and operators of the 5 minute idling limit;
- Diesel idling within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptors is not permitted;
- Staging and queuing areas shall not be located within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptors;
- Electrify equipment when feasible;
- Substitute gasoline-powered in place of diesel-powered equipment, where feasible; and,
- Use alternatively fueled construction equipment on-site where feasible, such as compressed natural gas (CNG), liquefied natural gas (LNG), propane or biodiesel.

Implementation of the above measures will reduce impacts to less than significant levels.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California		X		

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				X
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means				X
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?				X
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				X
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				X

Discussion:

The following protection measures have been incorporated into the project to avoid and minimize the effects of construction on biological resources:

- The project has been located in an active agricultural field to avoid grassland habitat around identified ponds and swales to the south that may be used by the California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*; CTS), California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*; CRLF), and vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*; VPFS).
- Construction limits have been reduced to the minimum amount needed to complete the project and will be identified by staking in the field to limit the disturbance footprint.
- Pre-construction surveys will be conducted by qualified biologists to ensure the work area is devoid of burrows and wildlife.

- All small mammal burrows potentially used by CTS as upland refuge will be marked for avoidance.
- Construction activities will be limited to daylight hours, and outside the rainy season.
- Construction vehicles will utilize existing farm roads and be restricted to not exceed 10 miles per hour.
- Prior to construction, a qualified biologist will present a Worker Environmental Awareness Training to ensure all personnel are informed of the species that may be present in the work area and measures implemented to avoid impacts.
- A qualified biological monitor will be onsite during ground disturbance.
- Open trenches will be covered if left overnight and wildlife escape ramps will be installed every 50 feet.
- All stored pipes will be covered to ensure wildlife do not take refuge, and construction equipment will be inspected each morning to ensure animals are not present prior to work.
- If deemed appropriate, a temporary wildlife exclusion fence will be erected around the well construction site to ensure animals do not access the work zone.
- During construction, trash will be maintained in covered bins and removed from the site as needed to prevent attraction of racoons, which are known predators of CTS and CRLF.
- Stormwater Best Management Practices will be implemented during construction to avoid impacts to drainage ditches/features and offsite areas.
- Fueling and maintenance of vehicles will be sited at specific areas over 100 feet from drainage features.

Methods

The analysis of project effects on biological resources is based on a background review and field reconnaissance surveys conducted by Kevin Merk Associates, LLC (KMA). KMA conducted a desktop review of natural resources databases, maps, literature and online sources to identify special-status biological resources documented from the region that could be present in the project area. It also included Informal Consultation between the City and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding protection measures developed for the project to avoid take of CTS, CRLF, and VPFS. Please refer to attached February 4, 2024 letter from the City to USFWS and March 6, 2024 Concurrence Email from Mr. Stephen Henry, Field Supervisor of the USFWS Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office.

Time-series aerial photography (Google Earth 2024) was viewed to obtain information on the history of site conditions and surrounding area. The *National Wetlands Inventory* (NWI) was examined to evaluate the extent of any identified wetlands on the site and in the vicinity (USFWS 2024a; Figure 2). The *Web Soil Survey* (Natural Resources Conservation Service [NRCS] 2024; Figure 3) was used to identify the soil mapping units present within the study area. USGS topographic maps were also reviewed for information on hydrologic and topographic features in the project region.

KMA conducted field surveys of the project site on March 3, 2023, June 12, 2023 and January 9, 2024. The goal of the surveys was to characterize onsite conditions and assess the potential of the site to support special-status plant and animal species. Land use types followed *A Guide to Wildlife Habitats in California*, which is updated through the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System maintained by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW 2024a) and mapped using ArcGIS. Representative photographs of site conditions were compiled in a photo plate (see attached).

A query of the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB; CDFW 2024b) was conducted to identify occurrence records of special-status biological resources (plants, animals and sensitive natural communities) documented within the vicinity of the project site. This search included the Santa Maria USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle in which the project is located, and the surrounding quadrangles: Guadalupe, Orcutt and Casmalia. CNDDB records of special-status plant and animal occurrences within a five-mile buffer from the study area were mapped. Species that occur within the Santa Maria Valley were considered to be within the project vicinity compared to those that have limited distributions restricted to higher elevations of the Santa Lucia Range, immediate coast, inland dune systems, Solomon Hills and Casmalia Hills, and were considered to be outside of the project vicinity. Designated critical habitat for plant and animal species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act was identified and mapped based upon information provided in *Environmental Conservation Online System* (USFWS 2024b).

Within the list compiled of special-status species known from the project vicinity, an evaluation of those species with potential to occur in the study area was performed based upon the suitability of habitat conditions on the study area and the local distribution (geographical and elevational ranges) and specific requirements (plant communities and soils) of the species considered (see attached Special-status Biological Resources Summary).

Results

The study area for this investigation included the agricultural fields surrounding and immediately adjacent to the proposed Well 15 site, the proposed pipeline alignment, and Well 14S tie-in location. A 100-foot buffer was included around the project features as shown on the project Habitat Map (attached as Figure 4). The field surveys also included the surrounding area to characterize the regional setting and biological resources in the project area. Although the area surrounding the Well 15 site has been extensively developed for agriculture, residential, and industrial uses (i.e., the Airport), several drainage features including swales and ephemeral pools to the south and agricultural ditches around the well site remain along historical watercourses. The following provides a summary of the features in the project vicinity.

The NWI identifies two drainage features present in the study area that have been altered from agricultural development in the area. A drainage feature mapped with Riverine habitat is shown originating near the proposed Well 15 site and traverses the southern

portion of the agricultural field in a westerly direction (Figure 2). This feature is depicted as an intermittent drainage on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) 1959 Santa Maria topographic map. The drainage feature is no longer present as it has been eliminated by conversion to an agricultural field. Only maintained agricultural ditches and crop furrows were present in the general area at the time of the field surveys No wetland vegetation was present in these areas and the soils were regularly disturbed. An agricultural drainage ditch was observed in the vicinity of E Street continuing northwest within a constructed channel parallel to 11th Street. No evidence of this historic drainage feature was present in the Well 15 footprint.

The NWI maps another drainage feature in the northern part of the study area as Freshwater Emergent Wetland vegetation. This ditch was present at the time of field surveys within the northwestern pipeline alignment (Figure 2); however, this drainage has also been modified into a maintained agricultural ditch devoid of vegetation. The USGS 1959 Santa Maria topographic map identifies an intermittent drainage at this general location. Aerial photography review showed this drainage feature repeatedly disturbed over the last 10 years as part of the ongoing farming in the area. The entire drainage corridor has been intensively farmed since at least 2022. The field work conducted for this evaluation confirmed actively farmed fields were present immediately adjacent to the drainage and it was a maintained ditch devoid of vegetation. The January 2024 survey occurred following a series of rain events, and approximately two to four inches deep of flowing water was present, and entered the study area from a culvert on the Airport property and drained west to the large flood control basin at E Street (refer to the attached Photo Plate). The drainage traverses the study area in a generally southeast to northwest direction and crosses under E Street via a box culvert, and then is impounded in a large stormwater basin. This basin is managed and maintained by the Airport and water collected in the basin is pumped north into a recharge area at A Street. The E Street basin west of the study area holds water seasonally and has some patchy occurrences of arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) along with coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*).

To the north of Well 14S is another historic drainage feature that the NWI maps as Riverine. This area was inspected during field work and was an actively maintained agricultural area with no clear drainage feature with bed or bank structure present. Further to the north is a section of an historic drainage mapped by the NWI as Freshwater Emergent Wetland (Figure 2), but currently is reduced in extent by agricultural development. No wetland vegetation was observed in this area due to active farming, but several agricultural ditches were observed that drain to a culvert under E Street and then into a stormwater basin. These features are shown as intermittent drainages on the USGS 1959 topographic map, but have been altered from their historic condition and now are actively maintained agricultural ditches that support primarily agricultural runoff and stormwater flows during the winter rain season.

The historic drainage features mapped in the project area are the headwaters of an unnamed, intermittent drainage system that once connected to Guadalupe Lake south of Betteravia. These drainages have been greatly modified by agricultural development in the area, and it is unclear if they are still hydrologically connected to Guadalupe Lake. At

one time, Guadalupe Lake collected surface runoff and then discharged into Orcutt Creek, which joins the Santa Maria River near the city of Guadalupe and flows to the Pacific Ocean.

Another drainage area was observed to the south of the proposed Well 15 site that is depicted in the NWI as a combination of Riverine and Freshwater Emergent Wetland habitats. Along Dutard Road, south of the Tanglewood neighborhood, is a series of swales and sandstone outcroppings in grassland habitat. This area has surface water seasonally spread out over a wet grassland area and is shown as swale-like topography on the USGS topographic maps that drain to the southwest toward Black Road. This area has several vernal pools or ephemeral ponds mapped in the NWI as Freshwater Pond habitat that were present during the January 2024 field work. The USGS 1959 topographic map shows a large seasonal pond in this area, and field observations confirmed it is still present.

The soils in the study area are Betteravia loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes and 2 to 9 percent slopes (refer to Figure 3). This soil unit is composed of aeolian sands (windblown sands) and is found on remnants of alluvial fans (NRCS 2024). It is a loamy sand with an underlying cemented layer on top of stratified loamy sand to sandy clay loam (NRCS 2024). The drainage ditch, corresponding to the location of an historical intermittent drainage, has Marina sand, 2 to 9 percent slopes. This soil unit is composed of aeolian sands and is found on terraces (NRCS 2024). It is sand throughout its profile (NRCS 2024). A small area in the northwestern portion of the study area had the soil mapping unit Terrace escarpments, sandy. The study area is located on the Orcutt Dune Sheet, which is an ancient, windblown sand deposit that occurs in the southern portion of the Santa Maria Valley. Observations in the field were light colored marine derived sands characteristic of the region.

There are no natural plant communities in the proposed project footprint, and consisted only of Ruderal (disturbed)/Developed and Agriculture land use types (Figure 4). Including the 100 foot buffer around project activities identified non-native grassland along the Airport runway and south of the well location site. The agricultural fields were planted in strawberries at the time of the first survey, disked and unplanted during the second survey, and replanted in strawberries during the third survey. The well will be sited in the highly disturbed agricultural field with pipelines located in the unimproved farm roads, all on sandy soils. The tie-in location to the existing transmission main is along the edge of the Developed Well 14S facility and the E Street shoulder. The waste line discharge location would be considered Ruderal based on observations made during the January 2024 survey. Please refer to Figure 1 – Site Location Map, Figure 2 – Aerial Overview Map, Figure 4 – Habitat Map for further detail. An evaluation of project impacts under Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines is as follows.

Impact Analysis

a.1) Special-status Plant Species

The CNDDB search identified 11 special-status plant species with recorded occurrences within a five-mile radius of the project site (Figure 5) and other rare plant species recorded in the Santa Maria Valley region were also assessed for their potential to occur in the project area (see attached Special-status Biological Resources Summary).

The La Graciosa thistle (*Cirsium scariosum* var. *loncholepis*), a state threatened, federally endangered, California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1B.1 species, is a wetland species. No suitable wetland habitats occur along the project alignment and the agricultural ditches onsite are regularly maintained and devoid of vegetation. Further, the species was not observed during surveys and no impacts on the agricultural ditch or flood control basin would result from the project.

Other special-status plant species (none formally listed) are upland species known from the region that includes the black-flowered figwort (*Scrophularia atrata*; CRPR 1B.2), Blochman's leafy daisy (*Erigeron blochmaniae*; CRPR 1B.2), blushing layia (*Layia erubescens*; CRPR 1B.1), dune larkspur (*Delphinium parryi* ssp. *blochmaniae;* CRPR 1B.2), Hoover's bent grass (*Agrostis hooveri*; CRPR 1B.), Kellogg's horkelia (*Horkelia cuneata* var. *sericea;* CRPR 1B.2), La Purissima manzanita (*Arctostaphylos purissima*; CRPR 1B.1), San Luis Obispo monardella (*Monardella undulata* ssp. *crispa*; CRPR 1B.2), sand mesa manzanita (*Arctostaphylos rudis*; CRPR 1B.2), and Santa Barbara ceanothus (*Ceanothus impressus* var. *impressus*; CRPR 1B.2). Several other CRPR species were identified from background sources as occurring in the region (see attached Special-status Biological Resources Summary). None of these species were observed along the project alignment and would have been noticeable and identifiable during the multiple KMA field surveys.

Based on the findings from database review and series of KMA field surveys, no special status plants are expected to occur in the study area. In addition, no designated critical habitat occurs over the project site, and no impacts to special-status botanical resources or natural communities of special concern would result from the proposed project.

a.2) Special-status Animal Species

The CNDDB search identified 12 special-status animal species with recorded occurrences within a five-mile radius of the project site, and other special-status animal species recorded in the Santa Maria Valley region were also assessed for their potential to occur in the project area (see attached Special-status Biological Resources Summary). The site is located in an agricultural area that is highly disturbed with soils regularly tilled. As a result, no special status wildlife are expected to be found on a permanent basis within the study area. The special status species

determined to have potential to occur in the project site would be on a temporary basis while moving through the area in search of suitable habitat or while foraging, and are discussed below.

The **California red-legged frog** (*Rana draytonii*; CRLF) is a federally Threatened species and a CDFW Species of Special Concern. This species requires aquatic habitats for reproduction and inhabits these sites most of the year. The types of aquatic habitats they use include seasonal and permanent ponds, intermittent and perennial streams, springs, artificial impoundments (i.e., stock ponds, reservoirs), marshes, dune ponds and lagoons. Preferred aquatic habitat is characterized by dense shoreline or emergent vegetation, such as willows, cattails, and bulrushes, with still or slow-moving water at least 2.3 feet deep (Hayes and Jennings 1989). However, they also occupy ponds or pools with little or no emergent vegetation. Breeding habitat is typically the interface of open water with vegetative cover such as cattails or overhanging willows in shallow water less than 1 meter from the shore (USFWS 2022). Ephemeral sites must retain water at least into July/August in order for the tadpoles to reach metamorphosis. In rare instances, California red-legged frog tadpoles have been found to overwinter and transform the following year (Fellers et al. 2001), but they generally metamorphose between July and September (Jennings and Hayes 1994).

The presence of American bullfrogs (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) is negatively associated with the presence of California red-legged frogs, and they are known to be predators on the species and suspected competitors (Moyle 1973, Hayes and Jennings 1989, Christopher 2004a). Non-native fish that are commonly planted for recreational fishing, including sunfish, bass and catfish, are major predators on California red-legged frog tadpoles and may eliminate them from ponds (Hayes and Jennings 1986, Christopher 2004a). Sites that dry completely every few years may have higher quality habitat value because desiccation eliminates their predators, such as non-native fish, American bullfrogs and crayfish (*Procambarus* sp.), and maintains higher quality breeding habitat by limiting dense growth of emergent vegetation along the margins (Scott and Rathbun 2010, Doubledee et al. 2003).

Adults can be far from water during the winter when undergoing migrations between aquatic sites or for aestivation; they move away from aquatic sites when they dry down in the late summer or fall; and, post-metamorphic juveniles disperse away from aquatic sites where they remain in uplands for an unknown number of years. The adult migratory period is late-October through mid-May, and they are nocturnal and undergo movements at night in response to rain events (Christopher 2000, 2004b; Bulger et al. 2003). In mesic habitats along the coast, adults have been found to move through upland habitats up to a total distance of 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) in one season, with the greatest segment without encountering a water source being 0.74 miles (1.2 kilometers) (Bulger et al. 2003). Individuals migrating between aquatic sites used for summer residence and other aquatic sites used for breeding have been found to move overland distances of at least 1.7 miles (2.8 kilometers) (Bulger et al. 2003). In xeric to moderately mesic local climates where populations did not undergo breeding migrations, they also used upland habitats in winter, but remained within 200 feet (60

meters) of water (Rathbun et al. 1993, Christopher 2004b, Tatarian 2008). The USFWS uses a 1.0-mile (1.6-kilometer) radius from known localities when evaluating project sites (USFWS 2005) and for determining the extent of critical habitat within upland areas (USFWS 2010b). While undergoing terrestrial movements, they move through grassland, agricultural fields, forest, scrub, and grazed pastures (Bulger et al. 2003). While occupying upland habitats, the frogs take cover in leaf litter, thatched grasses and thick herbs, and shrubby vegetation such as willows, blackberry thickets, German ivy, and nettles, as well as downed trees and are not found out in the open during the daytime (Rathbun et al. 1993; Christopher 2000, 2004b). During the summer months (June to September) the frogs stay in close proximity to water. They may make short movements into adjacent riparian habitat or dense emergent vegetation on the shore, but remain within 16 to 26 feet (5 to 8 meters) of water (Christopher 2000, Scott and Rathbun 2001, Bulger et al. 2003). They also move up and down stream channels (Tartarian 2008). Recently metamorphosed individuals tend to have mass dispersal away from their natal ponds shortly after metamorphosis (August) even when environmental conditions were dry, and peaked during the first rainfall (early November) (Christopher 2004b).

Populations of California red-legged frogs may undergo frequent extirpation, often due to drought conditions or other habitat changes, and recolonization occurs when conditions improve due to dispersal from other suitable habitats in the vicinity. Marginally suitable habitats may be occupied in some years but not others (USFWS 2002a). During years with high precipitation that result in a large number of suitable aquatic habitats, large numbers of juveniles are produced. Subsequently, these individuals move into various aquatic sites within their dispersal ability, including seasonally wet areas and other atypical sites. Over a succession of wet years, they can literally "leap-frog" from suitable habitat patches to expand their occupancy. During prolonged droughts, the local population size and distribution shrinks to a low number of sites that have long-lasting or perennial water.

Numerous records of CRLF are within 5 miles of the site, and there are three within their 1-mile dispersal distance (Figure 6). These three records are to the south of the proposed Well 15 site, and there are no barriers to dispersal in the intervening area. Other potentially suitable habitats observed during the surveys are the basins offsite on the west side of E Street, however these areas appear to be maintained on a periodic basis reducing the habitat quality. The agricultural ditch in the study area does not appear suitable for breeding because it is never greater than four to six inches deep, and the water levels fluctuate in the late-spring and summer due to inputs from Well 14S and surrounding agriculture irrigation needs. It is possible that adult frogs moving between other aquatic sites and juveniles could use this feature on a temporary basis, but the channel is regularly maintained free of vegetation, and therefore lacks suitable cover or refuge to evade predation. Frogs could move through the agricultural fields during rainy winter nights, but are not likely to remain due to lack of cover.

The **California tiger salamander** (*Ambystoma californiense* population 2; CTS) Santa Barbara County Distinct Population Segment (DPS) is federally Endangered in Santa Barbara County, state listed as Threatened and is on the CDFW Watch List. The species occurs in lower elevation foothills of the Coast Range ranging from Sonoma to Santa Barbara counties, and in the Central Valley from Sacramento to Tulare County. The Santa Barbara County DPS occurs in the southernmost extent of this species' range in the northwestern portion of Santa Barbara County within the Santa Maria Basin Geomorphic Province (USFWS 2016a).

CTS inhabit areas of the state that historically had vernal pool complexes and seasonal ponds surrounded by relatively level terrain of grasslands and oak savannah. They have an obligate biphasic life cycle that requires both aquatic and terrestrial habitats. Adults spend most of their lives underground in burrows made by small mammals where they remain active feeding and moving around (Trenham 2001). Breeding sites include long-lasting rain pools, seasonal ponds, vernal pools, sag ponds, stock ponds, artificial impoundments, and permanent ponds lacking predatory fish. Natural breeding ponds, which typically are underlain by bedrock or a clay layer that retains standing water, usually become inundated in the winter or spring and dry up completely in the summer or fall. As natural breeding ponds have been lost, CTS have shifted to breeding in artificial stock ponds, which are often formed by creating a berm across a natural drainage, and may have longer hydroperiods (USFWS 2016a). They do not breed in streams or rivers, but have been found in ditches with seasonal wetland habitat and slow-moving swales (Seymour and Westphal 1994, Alvarez et al. 2013). During periods of drought when breeding ponds do not fill, they can forgo breeding for up to eight years (Trenham et al. 2000).

Breeding pools must retain water for at least 12 weeks for the larvae to undergo metamorphosis, and in colder weather it may take more than 4 months (USFWS 2022). Following metamorphosis, which is typically late-spring and early-summer, juveniles emigrate at night from the breeding pools to upland refuge sites such as rodent burrows and cracks in the soil (Jennings and Hayes 1994, Trenham 2001). They may also inhabit anthropogenic structures, such as pipes, septic tank drains, and wet basements. The upland habitats both adults and juveniles occupy are primarily grassland, oak savanna and coastal scrub.

The distance that a majority individuals occur from breeding pools while in upland habitats has been estimated from a minimum of approximately 0.35 to 0.5 mile (0.6 to 0.8 kilometers) (Trenham and Shaffer 2005, Orloff 2007) to 1.3 miles (2.1 kilometers) (Orloff 2007, Searcy and Shaffer 2008, 2011; Searcy et al. 2013). The maximum distance that adults have been found to move between breeding ponds and upland habitat is 1.4 miles (2.2 kilometers) (Trenham et al. 2001, Orloff 2011), and the Central California DPS is estimated to be capable of migrating up to 1.5 miles (Searcy and Shaffer 2011). The upland habitat needed to conserve 95 percent of a population is estimated to encompass areas within 1.0-mile (1.6-kilometers) from breeding ponds (Searcy et al. 2013), and the USFWS (2003a) uses a 1.24-mile (2 kilometers) buffer distance when evaluating projects. Dispersal habitat can range from flat terrain to

rolling hills, and they favor grassland but can also traverse chaparral, oak savannah and oak woodland, while avoiding urban areas, creeks, riparian areas and areas prone to flooding (cited in USFWS 2016b). Although most adults return to their natal pond to breed, some individuals disperse to new breeding ponds (Trenham 2001, Wang et al. 2009). The species depends on a series of interconnected breeding and upland habitats, and functions as a metapopulation. A metapopulation is a set of populations within an area that are linked by immigration and emigration. Many of the areas of suitable habitat may be small and support only small populations, which are frequently extirpated. In order for the metapopulation to persist, local extinctions must be balanced by dispersal from other breeding sites and subsequent recolonization. These characteristics make the species particularly sensitive to land use changes of its habitats (USFWS 2016a).

The western end of the agricultural ditch within the study area has been identified by the USFWS (2010) as a potential CTS breeding pond, SAMA-11. While E Street forms some impoundment of the drainage ditch, it appears unlikely for use by the species since CTS do not breed in streams with flowing water and the feature does not support a regular hydroperiod. Regular maintenance and soil disturbance from agricultural activities also reduces the quality of this area as a potential breeding location. Aerial photography review showed varying levels of saturation in this area, which is expected to be associated with waste discharge inputs from Well 14S as well as agricultural runoff. No suitable upland habitat is present surrounding the ditch but there is grassland habitat along the runway to the east and undeveloped grassland to the south 0.25 mile away, which is well within the species movement distance between upland habitat and breeding ponds. The ditch has low quality habitat for CTS due to its small size, ongoing maintenance and vegetation removal, and irregular ponding. Although the agricultural fields are not a barrier to dispersal, movement into this disturbance zone would likely result in mortality.

Seven documented CTS breeding ponds are within 1.3 miles from the project site. SAMA-2e, SAMA-2w and SAMA-2c are north of Dutard Street; SAMA-3 is on the west side of Black Road; SAMA-4 is along an ephemeral drainage only 0.3 mile south of the proposed well site; and, SAMA-6 and SAMA-7 are on Airport property to the west of South Blosser Road (USFWS 2010). Undeveloped grassland habitat highly suitable for movement and dispersal lies between these ponds north of Dutard Road. It is likely that Black Road and the surrounding agricultural lands are a source of mortality but not a complete barrier to movement. The USFWS (2010) identifies three additional potential breeding ponds within 1.3 miles, some of which appear to have been impacted by agricultural activities and other land uses.

The federally Threatened **vernal pool fairy shrimp** (*Branchinecta lynchi*) is a tiny crustacean completes its life cycle in temporary ponded water of various-sized topographic depressions that occur in grasslands. They live in vernal swales (shallow, vegetated channels that carry water seasonally), vernal pools (shallow depressions in grasslands that hold water seasonally), and ephemeral (short-lived) aquatic habitats that form on a variety of substrates, including in rock outcrops (Helm 1998). They do

not occur in riverine habitats (streams), marine areas, or in permanent bodies of water. Vernal pools form where there is a soil layer below or near the surface that has limited permeability to water, where precipitation and surface runoff becomes "perched" above this layer. These soils include hardpans, claypans, volcanic flows, and non-volcanic rock. Vernal pools are a unique type of wetland habitat in that they are ephemeral, filling after winter rains, and drying completely after the rains have ceased. They are wet long enough to have species composition different from the surrounding upland habitats, and the prolonged dry phase prevents the establishment of typical wetland species. Fish and other predators are excluded by pool drying, and vernal pool communities have developed unique suites of species that have developed in the absence of predators (USFWS 2003b). Vernal pool fairy shrimp can also occur in anthropogenic habitats such as artificial seasonal wetlands, created pools in ephemeral drainages, dozer scrapes or other excavations that hold temporary water, pooled water in road ruts and along railroad right-of-ways, and roadside ditches with no flow (Helm 1998). In order to survive in habitats with short inundation periods, vernal pool fairy shrimp have evolved a short time to reproduction and high reproductive rates. They hatch within a few days after the sites fill with water, and complete their life cycle in one season. Temporary ponded water must last at least a minimum of 18 days for fairy shrimp to reach their reproductive stage, but on average is about 40 days and populations can persist up to 139 days in continuously standing water (Helm 1998). Females produce embryos that become encased as shelled cysts, which enter a dormant stage that can survive pool drying, temperature extremes, fires, and absence of oxygen (USFWS 2003b). They can remain viable in the soil for decades and be transported to other habitats in the digestive tracts of animals. Only a fraction of viable cysts hatch each season, while the rest remain dormant in the soil to hatch in future years (USFWS 2003b).

The project site is within the Santa Barbara Vernal Pool Region where Southern Vernal Pool species and communities are known to occur (Keeler-Wolf et al. 1998). No seasonal pools are present within the project footprint. Regular plowing of agricultural fields disrupts the restrictive layer, eliminates topographic depressions, and removes native vegetation. As a result, no ephemeral pools are present in the study area, nor are any expected to be affected by the project. Vernal pool complexes are known to occur offsite to the south and southwest, and VPFS have been recorded in this general area (refer to Figure 2, Figure 5 and Figure 6). Other pools occupied by VPFS are on Airport property just west of the terminus of Foster Road. The series of vernal pools supporting vernal pool species are located along Dutard Road, which is outside the study area for this project. While VPFS can occur within artificial features, such as tire ruts, road puddles, ponded water around well facilities or furrows between crops, the regular disturbance from farming activities likely precludes this species from occurring in the project area. Furthermore, the agricultural ditch in the study area supports periodic flowing water, which is not suitable to support this species.

The **western spadefoot** (*Spea hammondii*) **northern DPS** has been proposed for Threatened status under the federal Endangered Species Act and is a CDFW Species

of Special Concern. This fossorial frog (often referred to as a toad) is primarily a terrestrial species and uses aquatic habitat for breeding. It inhabits grassland, open woodland, oak savanna, and scrub habitats on flat or gentle hills (USFWS 2023a). They spend most of their lives underground in burrows to avoid desiccation during the dry season (late spring to early fall) and while sheltering during the active season (early fall to late spring) (USFWS 2023a). They breed in vernal pools, ephemeral ponds (natural or man-made), stock ponds lacking fish, roadside ditches and ruts, and streams that dry to isolated pools but may have flow earlier in the winter. During years with sufficient precipitation that falls at the appropriate time, they emerge in large numbers and complete their reproductive period within a few months. Breeding activity is usually concluded by the end of March (Christopher 2018, CDFW 2023e). Ephemeral ponds must have sufficient hydroperiod for their larval period, which is at minimum 30 days but is generally 8 to 16 weeks (Morey 1998, Christopher 2018). Recently metamorphosed individuals seek refuge around the breeding pools for several days before dispersing into upland habitats, using mud cracks, cover objects, drying aquatic vegetation mats, hoof prints, and by clustering in damp pockets they excavate with a surface covering of dried mud that protects them from desiccation (Christopher 2018). Populations use upland habitats an average of 131 feet (40 meters) and a maximum of 1,968 feet (600 meters) from breeding pools (Baumberger et al. 2019, 2020). Little is known about the distance that individuals can migrate between breeding sites during dispersal, but multiple well-connected pools are needed for metapopulation persistence (Halstead et al. 2021). The northern DPS ranges along the coast from southern Santa Cruz County through southern Santa Barbara County, and through the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada foothills from Shasta County to Kern County (USFWS 2023a).

The western spadefoot could occur in the ephemeral ponds to the south of the study area described above as potentially suitable for or occupied by CTS, and because they can complete their larval period in a very short time, they could be found in additional ephemeral pools in grassland areas adjacent to the study area. They are not known to use cultivated fields as upland habitat for their burrows, but suitable grassland habitat is present immediately to the south of the proposed well site and potentially to the east at the Airport. There are four records of western spadefoot in the CNDDB within one mile of the study area. Due to the amount of potentially suitable habitat in the area, and the difficulty in detecting them, they are likely to occur at additional sites in which they have not yet been documented. While unlikely, it is possible for spadefoots to move onto the southeastern segment of the study area during winter rains in search of a suitable breeding site.

The **southwestern (= western) pond turtle** (*Actinemys pallida*) is proposed for listing as a Threatened species under the FESA and is a CDFW Species of Special Concern. They are semi-aquatic, having both terrestrial and aquatic life history phases. Their aquatic habitats include streams with pools, rivers, brackish lagoons, ponds, irrigation reservoirs, irrigation ditches, especially those with areas of open water and some perimeter vegetation such as bulrushes, cattails and willows (Bury et al. 2012, California Herps 2023). Logs, rocks, cattail mats, and exposed banks are used for

basking. Terrestrial habitats are required for nesting, overwintering, aestivation (warm season dormancy), and movement/dispersal (USFWS 2023b). Nesting is usually in grassland habitat with sparse vegetation and sunny open areas with well compacted soils, 98 to 558 feet (30 to 170 meters) from aquatic habitats (Rathbun et al. 1992, 1993, 2002; Scott et al. 2008, California Herps 2023). In central and southern California, hatchlings leave the nest in the late-summer or early-fall, whereas in northern areas they may overwinter in the nest chamber and move to water the following spring (USFWS 2023b).

Southwestern pond turtles undergo a period of dormancy in the winter. At sites with permanent water, they remain buried in the substrate during the winter (Bury et al. 2012) and may cluster in the shallow end of the pond (California Herps 2023). At ephemeral aquatic sites, they move into upland areas in late-summer or fall when water levels decline (Rathbun et al. 1993). This species is primarily diurnal, and they make overland movements during the day. They have been found to undergo movements of up to 3,596 feet (1,096 meters) within upland habitats in one season, and they occupy woodland, scrub and chaparral vegetation within 1,640 feet (500 meters) from their aquatic sites for up to 30 weeks (Reese and Welsh 1997, Rathbun et al. 2002, Pilliod et al. 2013). During winter in upland habitats, turtles remain buried under dense cover such as willow/blackberry thickets, patches of coyote brush, or Monterey pine stands (Rathbun et al. 1993). They may also use California ground squirrel burrows during dormancy (California Herps 2023). They remain underground until temperatures warm in the spring and they return to aquatic sites.

There is only one record in the CNDDB of southwestern pond turtles within five miles of the site, and it is from the same general drainage system that passes through the study area approximately 1.0 mile to the northwest near Black Road. The two basins on the west side of E Street along this drainage system that were observed during the surveys could provide potential habitat on a seasonal basis. The ponded water periodically present at the west end of the agricultural ditch from agricultural runoff and well discharge is not deep enough to support this species. Although not highly conducive to movement of small wildlife such as the turtle, the agricultural fields do not have any significant barriers that would preclude them from moving through the area. The turtle would not nest in the agricultural fields due to the regular cycle of disturbance, but could move through them.

The project has incorporated protection measures to avoid project effects on special-status wildlife including the amphibians and reptiles described above. Initial consultation with the USFWS confirmed these measures would ensure project activities avoid these species. Well 15 will be constructed during the dry season, and will have a very small footprint within disturbed agricultural fields that will continue to be farmed post-construction. Because the pipelines will be installed underground and underneath the existing culverted road, no impacts are expected on any temporary aquatic habitat potentially used during movement by these aquatic species. As detailed above, breeding of special status wildlife is not expected on the site due to a lack of suitable habitat from the ongoing agricultural operations. The protection

measures incorporated into the project also include pre-construction surveys, environmental awareness training and biological monitoring during construction, which were deemed adequate to cover the range of potential impacts that could occur from the construction and operation of Well 15. Additional specifications to fine-tune these measures are provided in the section Additional Mitigation Measures to Avoid/Reduce Potentially Significant Effects below.

A diverse group of special-status birds were determined to have potential to occur onsite, primarily on a periodic basis while moving through the area during migration and foraging. The following species could potentially stopover or forage onsite:

- **American peregrine falcon** (*Falco peregrinus anatum*)
- **Black-crowed night-heron** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)
- **Burrowing owl** (*Athene cunicularia*)
- **California gull** (*Larus californicus*)
- **California horned lark** (*Eremophila alpestris actia*)
- **Ferruginous hawk** (*Buteo regalis*)
- **Golden eagle** (*Aquila chrysaetos*)
- **Great blue heron** (*Ardea herodias*)
- **Great egret** (*Ardea alba*)
- **Lawrence's goldfinch** (*Carduelis lawrencei*)
- **Loggerhead shrike** (*Lanius ludovicianus*)
- **Long-billed curlew** (*Lanius ludovicianus*)
- **Merlin** (*Falco columbarius*)
- **Northern harrier** (*Circus cyaneus*)
- **Prairie falcon** (*Falco mexicanus*)
- **Sharp-shinned hawk** (*Accipiter striatus*)
- **Snowy egret** (*Egretta thula*)
- **Tricolored blackbird** (*Agelaius tricolor*)
- **White-tailed kite** (*Elanus leucurus*)
- **Yellow-headed blackbird** (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)

There is no nesting habitat onsite for these species or they do not nest in this region, and as a result, project effects would be below the level of significance. Ground nesting birds and common species that are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and/or California Fish and Game Code could be adversely affected if they were nesting in grasslands to the south of the project. If project construction takes place during the nesting season (February 1st to August 31st), active nests containing eggs and/or young could be affected during ground disturbance and/or noise and human activities could disrupt nesting behavior causing the adults to abandon the nest. There are no trees within 250 feet of the site; therefore, raptors and other birds that nest in trees or dense shrubs would not be affected. Direct mortality of eggs and/or chicks, nest failure, or nest abandonment are considered significant effects under CEQA. Mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts on nesting birds to less than significant levels are provided at the end of this section.

Special-status bat species could forage over the site, but there are no structures or trees for roosting. The **pallid bat** (*Antrozous pallidus*; CDFW Species of Special Concern), the **silver-haired bat** (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*; Sensitive), **Townsend's big-eared bat** (*Corynorhinus townsendii*; CDFW Species of Special Concern), **western red bat** (*Lasiurus frantzii*; CDFW Species of Special Concern) and **Yuma myotis** (*Myotis yumanensis*; Sensitive) could forage periodically over the site but there is no roosting habitat. Project effects on special-status bat species would be below the level of significance and no mitigation is needed.

The proposed well site is located along the northern boundary of **designated critical habitat for the California tiger salamander**, Unit 1 West Santa Maria/Orcutt (Figure 6; USFWS 2004). This unit consists of 4,135 acres and includes the southern portion of lands owned by the Airport. The agricultural fields where Well 15 will be located do not contain the necessary habitat attributes for critical habitat, and appears the critical habitat unit was originally developed to exclude the agricultural fields. While the Well 15 footprint is just within the border of the critical habitat polygon, the pipelines and other components of Well 15 are outside the critical habitat unit.

Critical habitat is considered essential to the conservation of the species and focused management is required to protect the primary constituent elements (PCEs) identified for the species (USFWS 2004). Critical habitat for CTS includes the geographical area occupied by the species at the time of its listing that contains the physical and biological features essential to the species' conservation. These features include space for individual and population growth and normal behavior; resources to meet physiological requirements; cover or shelter; suitable breeding sites; and, habitats protected from disturbance or are representative of the distribution of the species (USFWS 2004). The PCEs for the Santa Barbara County population of the California tiger salamander are:

1. Aquatic habitat—standing bodies of freshwater that are inundated during winter rains and hold water a minimum of 12 consecutive weeks, including natural and manmade ponds, vernal pools, and other ephemeral and permanent water bodies.
2. Upland nonbreeding habitat with underground refugia—upland habitat adjacent to breeding ponds with small mammal burrows.
3. Dispersal habitat connecting occupied locations—upland habitat between aquatic habitat and areas with small mammal burrows suitable for dispersal (USFWS 2004).

The Well 15 project footprint does not contain the physical and biological features essential to the species' conservation since it is located entirely within an agricultural field that is regularly tilled and planted. While the western end of the agricultural ditch has been identified by the USFWS (2010) as a potential CTS breeding pond (SAMA 11), it is not within critical habitat and has been regularly maintained through vegetation removal as part of the ongoing flood control and agricultural operations.

As detailed above, the agricultural ditch does not appear to support ponded surface water for a sufficient period of time during the CTS breeding season.

The study area contains potentially suitable dispersal habitat because it is within 1.24 miles of potential breeding sites and is free from barriers to CTS. However, the agricultural fields are extensive in the project area, which would be a sink for dispersing individuals due to the lack of suitable cover including small mammal burrows. The onsite agricultural ditch and any periodic aquatic habitat that may be present in the study area would not be adversely affected by the project since all construction activities will occur during the dry season and remain outside of the drainage ditch and nearby basins at E Street. Water discharged from the well into the drainage feature could be beneficial to aquatic species in the area by increasing the hydroperiod, however, agricultural activities that regularly disturb the ground are generally detrimental to this species. Overall, the project would not significantly alter potential dispersal habitat for CTS. Because the pipelines will be underground, the area can continue support CTS dispersal after construction has been completed. Only an area of approximately 15,000 square feet within the footprint of the Well 15 facility would be lost, and CTS could continue to move around the facility. Because the effects on CTS critical habitat would be minimal, no mitigation is needed.

b) *Sensitive Natural Communities*

No riparian habitat is present within or immediately adjacent to the study area. The CNDDB identified one sensitive natural community just offsite to the west of the proposed Well 15 site, Southern Vernal Pool (Figure 5; State Rarity Rank SNR). Vernal pools are also present on the adjacent parcel to the south of the proposed well site. The study area is within the Santa Barbara Vernal Pool Region where Southern Vernal Pool species and communities are known to occur south of the site (Keeler-Wolf et al. 1998). Agricultural activities have disrupted the underlying restrictive layer, eliminated topographic depressions, and removed native vegetation from the study area. Channelization of the intermittent drainage system has also altered the site's historic hydrology. Therefore, there would be no direct effects of the project on Southern Vernal Pools. Given the flat topography of the project area and erosion control and stormwater protection measures that will be implemented as part of the project, no indirect effects on offsite vernal pool habitat are expected from the proposed project.

c) *State/Federal Wetlands*

The agricultural ditch north of the proposed well site is a modified natural drainage and did not support any vegetation at the time of the January 2024 survey. Based on current flood control and agricultural operations, the onsite drainage feature does not appear to currently have a direct hydrologic connection to Orcutt Creek, the Santa Maria River or the Pacific Ocean. Therefore, based on current regulatory guidance pursuant to the Sackett Decision, this drainage is not expected to be under the jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under provisions

of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act as “waters of the United States”. It is possible that the drainage ditch may be under the jurisdiction of the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Water Code 13000 et seq.), and the California Wetlands Conservation Policy (Executive Order W-59-93), as well as CDFW under California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq. The pipelines will be installed under an existing road with drainage culvert within the potentially jurisdictional area, and therefore would not have a direct impact the drainage ditch and require permitting from these agencies. The location of the waste line for Well 15 will connect into existing infrastructure associated with Well 14S to discharge into the west end of the agricultural ditch. The discharge of well water into this feature is covered under an existing permit issued to the City by the RWQCB.

d) *Wildlife corridors, Native Wildlife Nursery Sites*

The proposed project would not affect the movement of native fish because all work will be conducted in upland areas outside of aquatic habitat, and no aquatic habitat is present onsite that could support fish. The study area is located in an agricultural area with row crops, and is adjacent to airport lands to the east and south that are open grassland. Therefore, the surrounding area lacks barriers to wildlife movement. Terrestrial and semi-aquatic wildlife species may move through the site but it contains no resources for a wildlife corridor. The proposed project would not prevent movement throughout the area because of the very small footprint and placement of the pipelines underground. The project would have no effect on the movement of birds and bats. The cultivated lands onsite are not a wildlife nursery site due to frequent disturbance and lack of native plant communities. The agricultural ditch is highly disturbed and does not support sufficient aquatic habitat to be used by amphibians and invertebrates for breeding. The proposed project will avoid impacts to the ditch, and this area will not be affected. There would be no effect of the project on the movement of fish or other wildlife and no wildlife nursery sites would be affected.

e) *Local Policies and Ordinances Consistency*

The City of Santa Maria oversees land use planning through implementation of the City’s *General Plan*. Biological resources are specifically addressed in the *General Plan Resources Management Element* (City of Santa Maria 2001). The project would not conflict with the policies related to the protection of biological resources described therein. The element describes the vernal pool complex to the southwest of the Airport as a significant wildlife habitat area. This habitat is outside of the project footprint and there would be no direct effects, and protection measures will be in place to ensure no indirect effects occur. In addition, no trees occur within the project disturbance area. Therefore, there would be no conflict with any local policies or ordinances.

f) *Habitat Conservation Plans and Natural Community Conservation Plans*

The proposed project will not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan. A final HCP has been prepared for the Laguna County Sanitation District, located approximately 1.5 miles to the west of the subject project. It covers incidental take of CTS and CRLF related to facilities improvements and maintenance on their property and easements (Santa Barbara County Department of Public Works 2017). The project site is located outside of the area covered by this HCP. A draft HCP for the Santa Maria Airport Commercial Center Project covers incidental take of the Santa Barbara County DPS of the California tiger salamander for construction on a 28-acre site on the west side of Orcutt Expressway (State Highway 135) between Foster Road and Union Valley Parkway (Sage Institute, Inc. 2021). The project site is located outside of the area covered by this HCP approximately 2.0 miles to the southeast. Betteravia Ranches, LLC (2017) has prepared an HCP for incidental take of CTS and CRLF to the southwest of the subject project. The project site is located outside of the area covered by this HCP by approximately 2.0 miles. The project site is not located in any Natural Community Conservation Plan area, and is not within any other conservation plan areas. Therefore, there would be no conflicts with these plans and no mitigation is required.

Mitigation Measures Incorporated into the Project:

BIO-1 Special-status Amphibian and Reptile Impact Avoidance. In addition to the protection measures incorporated into the project to avoid potential impacts on CRLF, CTS, and VPFS, the following mitigation refines those protection measures and is also required to ensure impacts to southwestern pond turtle and western spadefoot do not occur from the project:

a) A pre-construction survey of the project site shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within 48 prior to the start of construction to confirm that no special-status species are present in the work area.

   i. If CRLF, CTS, southwestern pond turtle, or western spadefoot are found during the pre-construction surveys, construction will be delayed until the individuals move out of the project area under the own volition. If any individuals of federally listed species do not move off site on their own, the City may postpone the project or be required to obtain take authorization under the federal Endangered Species Act prior to initiating project activities. State authorization would also be needed if CTS are found onsite and do not move out of harm's way prior to the start of project activities.
   ii. A report documenting results of the survey shall be provided to the Community Development Director, prior to the start of construction.

b) A qualified biological monitor familiar with CRLF, CTS, southwestern pond turtle, and western spadefoot will provide an environmental awareness training to the construction team and monitor all initial site disturbance (and exclusion fence installation, if deemed necessary). Once all ground disturbance is

complete, the biological monitor does not need to be onsite full-time and can conduct periodic spot checks to document project activities. The monitor(s) must be approved by the City prior to working on the project.

BIO-2 Nesting Birds Impact Avoidance. To avoid potential impacts on nesting birds that may be present in neighboring grassland habitats, the following mitigation is required:

a) If all phases of construction take place outside of the nesting season (September 1st to January 31st), no mitigation for nesting birds would be needed. The project has been designed to take place in the dry season, therefore, the work window with no nesting bird issues is September 1st through October 31st or until significant fall rains commence.

b) For any work activities scheduled to start between February 1st and August 31st, a qualified biologist shall conduct a preconstruction survey for nesting birds within approximately 300 feet of the project area. The survey shall be conducted within seven days before the initiation of construction for each phase of the project (i.e., surveys shall be repeated if there is a pause between any of the phases of well construction, pipeline installation or waste discharge line construction). During this survey, the qualified biologist shall search for birds exhibiting nesting behavior and attempt to locate their nests, and inspect all potential nest substrates (including bare ground) in the survey area. Any nests identified shall be monitored to determine if they are active. If no active nests are found, construction may proceed. If an active nest is found, a buffer developed by the qualified biologist shall be established around the nest. The buffer shall be delineated with flagging, and no work shall take place within the buffer area until the young have left the nest, as determined by the qualified biologist. Once nesting has ceased and the young are no longer reliant on the nest, project activities can commence in the buffer zone.

c) A report documenting results of the survey shall be provided to the Community Development Director, prior to the start of construction.

BIO-3 Construction Best Management Practices (BMPs). The following stormwater protection measures and erosion and pollution control methods shall be implemented during construction of the project to avoid impacts on water quality that could affect nearby vernal pools and agricultural drainage features:

a) The project will be constructed outside of the rainy season, which is typically defined from November 1st through April 15th, and may be modified based on seasonal conditions.

b) Prior to start of construction, the disturbance limits adjacent to the agricultural ditch shall be clearly flagged or fenced so that the contractor is aware of the limits of allowable work area and to ensure vehicles are prohibited from the potentially jurisdictional area and from any sensitive habitat indicated by the biological survey. Access routes, staging areas, and construction zones shall

be limited to the minimum area necessary to achieve the project objectives.

c) Spill kits shall be maintained on the site, and a *Spill Response Plan* shall be in place. All project-related spills of hazardous materials within or adjacent to the project site should be cleaned up immediately.

d) All refueling, maintenance, and staging of equipment and vehicles shall occur at least 100 feet from the mapped drainage ditch. These activities shall occur in a location where a spill would not drain toward the ditch or any other aquatic habitat. All equipment and vehicles should be checked and maintained on a daily basis to ensure proper operation and to avoid potential leaks or spills. Construction staging areas should attain zero discharge of stormwater runoff into aquatic habitats.

e) No concrete washout shall be conducted on the site outside of an appropriate containment system. Washing of equipment, tools, etc. should not be allowed in any location where the tainted water could enter onsite drainages.

f) The use of chemicals, fuels, lubricants, or biocides shall be in compliance with all local, state, and federal regulations. Uses of such compounds shall observe label requirements and restrictions mandated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and other state and federal legislation.

g) Spoil storage sites shall be carefully selected and delineated as to ensure that no spoils would be washed into any drainage feature.

h) A *Sediment and Erosion Control Plan* prepared by a qualified engineer may be required by the City. The use of silt fence, straw wattles, erosion control blankets, straw bales, sandbags, fiber rolls and other appropriate techniques should be placed on or near all areas with soil disturbance to prevent erosion. Biotechnical approaches using native vegetation shall be used as feasible. All sediment and erosion control measures shall be installed per the engineer's requirements, and in place prior to October 15. These measures shall be maintained in good operating condition throughout the construction period. Methods that are not biodegradable should be removed after the end of the rainy season (late-spring or summer).

i) A *Frac-Out Plan* may be required if horizontal directional drilling is used to install the pipes under the agricultural ditch.

j) No litter or construction debris shall be placed where it can be deposited in the agricultural ditch. All such debris and waste shall be picked up daily and properly disposed of.

Plan Requirements and Timing. The pre-construction survey results in measures BIO-1 and BIO-2 shall be provide to the City prior to the start of construction. On-going measures required by BIO-1, BIO-2 and BIO-3 shall be accomplished by the City during

construction. In the event CRLF or CTS are encountered, the City shall coordinate with the USFWS and CDFW as appropriate on obtaining take authorization before proceeding with construction.

Monitoring. City staff will review any pre-construction survey reports, and will perform onsite inspections as necessary during construction.

Effectiveness of Mitigation Measures. Potentially significant impacts to special-status wildlife or nesting birds would be feasibly mitigated to a less than significant level with implementation of the above measures.

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?				X
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?		X		
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?		X		

Discussion:

a. The project site is void of any structural development and does not contain and is not located near any historic resources identified in the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historic Resources. The project site is not identified on the City's Landmarks map or on the City's Objects of Historic Merit map as published by the City's Landmark Committee. Therefore, the project would not result in any impacts to historical resources.

b. According to the City's General Plan Resources Management Element, the Santa Maria Valley is not a major archaeological or paleontological resource area as only a few sites have been recorded or discovered in the area. Figure RME-5 or the General Plan Resources Management Element delineates High or Moderate, Low, and Negligible Archaeological Sensitivity Areas in the City. The project site is located in Archaeological Sensitivity Area 1 – High or Moderate Sensitivity. As such, ground disturbance associated with construction could have the potential to uncover previously unknown archeological deposits. Therefore, impacts are considered significant but mitigable.

Tribal Coordination and AB52
Under the requirements of AB52, Native American outreach was initiated as part of the project coordination and research effort. The City of Santa Maria contacted the Native

American Heritage Commission and local Native American groups including the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, the San Luis Obispo County Chumash Council, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, Barbareno/Ventureno Band of Mission Indians, Chumash Council of Bakersfield, and the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation; groups known to have knowledge of or ties to the project area. Please refer to Section 18, Tribal Cultural Resources, for an assessment of tribal outreach.

c. Human graves are often associated with prehistoric occupation sites. Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code provides that it is a misdemeanor to knowingly disturb a human burial and Section 5097.99 of the Public Resources Code defines the obtaining or possession of Native American remains or grave goods to be a felony. In addition, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 stipulates the process to be followed when human remains are encountered. Although not expected, there is the potential for the accidental discovery of human remains and potential damage or disturbance during project implementation. As such, impacts are considered significant but mitigable.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project:

The following mitigation shall be required in order to reduce impacts to less than significant levels:

CR-1. If archaeological resources are discovered during construction, work shall be halted within 50 meters (160 feet) of the discovery until it can be evaluated by a qualified professional archaeologist. If the discovery is determined to be significant, the recommendations of the archaeologist shall be required for implementation in coordination with the City of Santa Maria.

CR-2. If human remains are discovered during construction, work shall be halted within 50 meters (160 feet) of the find. The County Coroner shall be notified in accordance with the provisions of Public Resources Code 5097.98-99, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, and the Native American Heritage Commission shall be notified in accordance with PRC Section 5097. If the remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the Commission will designate a Most Likely Descendant who will be authorized to provide recommendations for management of the human remains.

Impacts will be reduced to less than significant levels with the implementation of the above measures.

6. ENERGY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?			X	
b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?			X	

Discussion:

The proposed project entails short-term construction activities related to the raw water pipeline intertie project in the City of Santa Maria. The project does not have the potential to consume energy resources in the long run.

Standard diesel-fueled construction equipment is proposed for use. In accordance with applicable air quality regulations, the construction equipment will be equipped with fuel-efficient engines and properly maintained. At the completion of the project, energy consumption will be limited to running the well equipment and occasional vehicle trips and equipment used for temporary maintenance activities.

Compliance with applicable standards would minimize energy consumption for lighting and other energy-using fixtures. Furthermore, the additional electricity demand for the project would be comparable to other similar projects and would not be unusual or wasteful as compared to overall local and regional demand for energy resources. For these reasons, electricity consumption of the project would not be considered inefficient or wasteful, and impacts would be less than significant. Operational fuel consumption would involve the use of motor vehicles traveling to and from the Project site for routine operation and maintenance, and occasional use of the backup generator. Impacts are expected to be less than significant.

a. As described above in Section 3, Air Quality, the proposed project will incorporate several measures to reduce emissions during short-term construction activities. In turn, these measures will result in fuel efficiencies. For example, heavy equipment will be outfitted to meet current emissions standards and haul trucks will meet CARB's emissions standards for fuel-efficient engines. Impacts are considered less than significant.

b. The proposed project will incorporate several measures to reduce emissions during short-term construction activities. In turn, these measures will result in fuel efficiencies. As such, impacts related to energy use are considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project:

Impacts are considered less than significant with the required incorporation of mitigation measures listed above under Section 3, Air Quality, and incorporation of emissions standards for fuel-efficient engines under CARB. No additional mitigation is required.

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.			X	
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?		X		
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			X	
iv. Landslides?			X	
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?		X		
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?		X		
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the most recent Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?			X	
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?			X	
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?			X	

Discussion:

The proposed project is located within the Santa Maria Valley, and east-west trending alluvial valley bound to the north by the San Rafael Range and to the south by the Casmalia Range and the Solomon Hills. The Santa Maria River traverses the valley from east to west,

to the Pacific Ocean just west of the City of Guadalupe. The Santa Maria River is formed by the convergence of the Cuyama and the Sisquoc Rivers at Fulger Point.

As discussed in the project geotechnical engineering report (Earth Systems Pacific, March 4, 2024) the project site is currently occupied by farm land and surrounding dirt access roads. From the north, about two-thirds of the eastern site perimeter is situated on a northwest-facing slope with approximately 60 feet of elevation gain over a horizontal distance of about 210 to 225 feet within the site (Google Earth, 2024). The proposed structures will not be located on this slope. The portion of the site located south and west of the slope gently slopes west with up to 4 feet of relief across the remainder of the site. A drainage ditch is located within the eastern corner of the site.

According to the City of Santa Maria General Plan Safety Element, several active, potentially active, and inactive faults exist within the region. These faults generally trend north-west. The major faults include the Santa Maria, Santa Maria River, and Casmalia Faults. These faults do not qualify for Earthquake Fault Zone status by the State Geologist under the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Act.

According to the Safety Element, liquefaction potential from ground shaking is generally low within the City due to the relatively deep groundwater levels. However, several areas of perched groundwater in the vicinity of the project site are listed in the Safety Element (Figure SE-2), resulting in potential liquefaction during an earthquake.

Landslides could potential occur in areas with steep slopes. The proposed project site is not located within a designated landslide zone or within an area with steep slopes. The project site is relatively flat in topography and is not located in the vicinity of steep slopes that would be susceptible to landslides.

As discussed under Section 2, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, the project site is underlain by Betteravia loamy sand (0 to 2% slopes and 2 to 9% slopes) and Marina sand (2 to 9% slopes). Please refer to Figure 3, Soils Map, for a depiction of on-site soils. This soil type is typified by very slow permeability, very slow surface runoff and a none-to-slight water erosion hazard.

a. The project site is located in a region with known active faults. The project site is located approximately midway between the Santa Maria Fault and the Casmalia Fault Zone. However, the project site is not located within a mapped Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. It is also important to note that the project site does not include any development for human habitation and is limited to the previously discussed well construction. The potential for surface rupture to occur on the site is determined to be low, and impacts are considered less than significant.

   Small to moderate earthquakes (with magnitudes less than 5.0 on the Richter Scale) are common in Santa Barbara County. As such, strong shaking should be expected during the lifetime of the proposed project. The project geotechnical engineering report identified seismic shaking impacts associated with the proposed well housing structure related to seismic acceleration. As a result, seismic shaking impacts are determined to

be significant but mitigable. The project report includes detailed recommendations for seismic acceleration parameters to be utilized in the design of the proposed structure. Implementation of these recommendations will reduce impacts to less than significant levels. However, it is important to note that the project does not include any structural development for human use or habitation.

Liquefaction is the loss of strength in saturated granular soils produced by seismic shaking. For this to occur, the soils must be saturated at a relatively shallow depth, of a granular (non-cohesive) nature, and be relatively loose. If those criteria are met and strong ground motion occurs, then those soils may liquefy. Based on the project geotechnical analysis and the laboratory in-situ densities and fines contents of the soils encountered during testing, and the age of the Older Alluvium formation, the soils in the report explorations have a low potential for liquefaction settlement. Further, the laboratory densities and fines contents of the soils encountered in our borings indicate low potential for seismically induced settlement of dry sand.

The project site is not located to steep slopes or in proximity to hazards associated with landslides. Landslide impacts are considered less than significant.

b. In order to determine the project impacts related to soil suitability and engineering issues at the project site, a geotechnical engineering report was prepared for the proposed water well development project (Earth Systems Pacific, March 4, 2024). With respect to impacts related to soil erosion, the report indicates that the project site soils are considered to be highly erodible although considered to exhibit slow water erosion hazards. Accordingly, the report includes recommendations for stabilization of the surface soils, particularly those disturbed during construction, by vegetation or other means during and following construction to reduce the potential of erosion damage. As such, impacts are considered significant unless mitigated.

c. The project geotechnical engineering report provides an assessment of impacts related to project implementation and the potential for those soils to become unstable as a result of the proposed project. Specifically, the report indicates that Impacts resulting from shallow groundwater may include difficulty achieving compaction, difficult utility and foundation installation, and wet and unstable soils in trenches, foundations, or jack and bore pits. As such, soils settlement during project construction is considered a significant impact unless mitigated.

   In addition to impacts related to depth to groundwater and soil settlement, the report also identifies soil suitability impacts related excavation characteristics which may result in impacts related to soil stability, or the risk of slope or sidewall failure within excavated areas. This impact is also exasperated due to the high moisture content in the soils. Impacts related to soil stability are considered significant unless mitigated. Soil corrosivity, as it relates to the soil acidity levels, and installation of the proposed pipeline within corrosive soils was also identified as a potentially significant impact unless mitigated.

d. According to the City's General Plan Safety Element, the project site is not located within an area with expansive soils. As part of the project geotechnical investigation, an expansion index test was performed on a sample of the alluvium collected in the vicinity

of the proposed structures. The expansion index test yielded a value of 6. Based on this result, ASTM classifies this material as having very low expansion potential; criteria from Section 1803.5.3 of the 2022 CBC also indicates the soils are non-expansive. Therefore, impacts related to expansive soils are considered less than significant.

e-f. The proposed project does not include development for human habitation and impacts related to septic systems are not anticipated. With respect to paleontological resources, these resources have been identified within certain geologic formations within the County. Such resources are generally found within bedrock. The proposed project and excavations are limited to soil and will not excavate into bedrock. Therefore, the probability of encountering paleontological resources is considered low and impacts are considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project:

In order to address the potential project impacts related to strong seismic shaking, soil saturation/groundwater, soil erosion, soil settlement and corrosivity associated with installation of the proposed water intertie project, the project geotechnical engineering report includes recommendations to address multiple details of the project design and construction.

GEO-1. In order to address the potential for geologic impacts related to the proposed project construction, the mitigation measure recommendations listed in Section 6.0, "Preliminary Geotechnical Recommendations", of the project geotechnical report shall be considered required elements of project construction. Please refer to the attached project geotechnical engineering report for a detailed discussion of construction and design recommendations to address potential geologic and soils impacts related to project implementation.

Implementation of the measures recommended in the project geotechnical engineering report will reduce impacts to less than significant levels.

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			X	
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?			X	

Discussion:

Data compiled by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change indicates that, in 2010, total worldwide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions were estimated to be 48,629 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent ($MMTCO_{2e}$), including emissions/removals from land use, land use change, and forestry; greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. were 6,809 $MMTCO_{2e}$, and emissions in California were 450 $MMTCO_{2e}$.

Prominent GHG emissions contributing to the greenhouse effect are carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF6). GHG emissions in excess of natural ambient concentrations are responsible for intensifying the greenhouse effect and have led to a trend of global climate change or global warming. Global sources of GHG emissions include fossil fuel combustion in both stationary and mobile sources, fugitive emissions from landfills, wastewater treatment, agricultural sources, deforestation, high global warming potential (GWP) gases from industrial and chemical sources, and other activities. While California's greenhouse gas emissions inventory is large, it has low emissions per capita.

California ranks fourth lowest of the 50 states in CO_2 emissions per capita. The largest source of greenhouse gases in California is transportation. According to the most recent ARB Scoping Plan Inventory (2022) transportation contributed an average of approximately 50% of the State's total greenhouse gas emissions during the 2019 testing. Other significant sources of CO2 include electricity production, industrial sources like refineries and cement plants, and residential sources like fossil gas.

Statewide legislation, rules and regulations that apply to GHG emissions associated with the project setting include the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (Senate Bill [SB] 375), the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill [AB] 32), Advanced Clean Cars Rule, Low Carbon Fuel Standard, Renewable Portfolio Standard, California Building Codes, and recent amendments to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to SB 97 with respect to analysis of GHG emissions and climate change impacts. In addition, Executive Order (EO) B-55-18 was issued in September 2018, establishing a new statewide goal to achieve carbon neutrality no later than 2045, and to achieve and maintain net negative emissions thereafter.

Local Regulations

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) were prepared by SBCAG and consist of local plans that include goals and policies related to the reduction of GHG emissions. The RTP is a long-range planning document that defines how the region plans to invest in the transportation system over the next 20 years based on regional goals, multi-modal transportation needs, and estimates of available funding. The RTP includes the SCS as required under SB 375. The SCS sets forth a forecasted development pattern for the region. When integrated with the transportation network and other transportation measures and policies, the SCS will reduce GHG emissions from passenger vehicles and light trucks to achieve the GHG reduction targets set by CARB. The future land use and transportation scenario presented in the SCS must

accommodate forecast populations, employment and housing sufficient to meet the needs of the population, including the State mandated Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA), while considering State housing goals.

a. As discussed under Section 3, Air Quality, project implementation is not expected to exceed established thresholds for air quality emissions. In addition, the project would include the use of a portable generator to provide a temporary power source for system operation, if needed in the event of a power outage, however the use of the generator would be minimal and subject to air permitting requirements, which would further minimize potential exposure during project operations. The project would not result in substantial sources of air emissions during operation, as the project is anticipated to primarily include passenger vehicles associated with maintenance trips.

   Limited vehicle trips associated with the project are expected and project emissions modeling shows that the project falls far below the threshold of 10,000 MT of CO_{2e} per year. As such, the project will result in less than significant impacts related to GHG.

b. The proposed project is consistent with the City General Plan, the SBCAG 2040 RTP and SCS, the 2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan, and Executive Order B-55-18, which are regulations adopted to implement a statewide, regional or local plan to reduce or mitigate GHGs. In addition, operational phase emission impacts are considered less than significant. Therefore, less than significant impacts are expected.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: No measures are required.

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			X	
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?			X	
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				X

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				X
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?			X	
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			X	
g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?				X

Discussion:

Hazardous Materials: Hazardous materials are defined as substances with physical and chemical properties of ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, or toxicity which may pose a threat to human health or the environment. This includes, for example, chemical materials such as petroleum products, solvents, pesticides, herbicides, paints, metals, asbestos, and other regulated chemical materials. Additionally, hazards include known historical spills, leaks, illegal dumping, or other methods of release of hazardous materials to soil, sediment, groundwater, or surface water. If a historical release exists, then there is a risk associated with disturbing the historical release area. The potential for risks associated with hazardous materials are varied regionally. The primary risk concerns within the project area are expected to focus on the transportation of hazardous materials in and around the community. Most of these incidents are related to the increasing frequency of transport of chemicals over roadways, railways or through industrial accidents.

Fire Hazards: Fires have the potential to cause significant losses to life, property, and the environment. Urban fire hazards result from the materials that make up the built environment, the size and organization of structures, and spacing of buildings. Additional factors that can accelerate fire hazards are availability of emergency access, available water volume and pressure for fire suppression, and response time for fire fighters. Fire hazard severity in rural areas, including areas on the edge between urban and rural land (commonly called the wildland interface), are highly influenced by the slope of the landscape and site vegetation and climate. Where wildland fires may be a threat, plant fuels are often managed by replacement planting, grazing, plowing, or mechanical clearing.

Airport Hazards: The project site is adjacent to the Santa Maria Airport property and is located approximately 500 feet from the westernmost runway.

a. In the City of Santa Maria, the use and storage of hazardous materials is primarily regulated by the Uniform Fire Code. Transport of hazardous materials and waste on public streets is primarily regulated by the California Vehicle Code and the City's Municipal Code. Storage and disposal of hazardous wastes is primarily regulated by the Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services Division (EHS) through their Hazardous Waste Generator Program as authorized by the State Health and Safety Code. Any business that stores hazardous materials in accordance with Article 80 of the Uniform Fire Code must provide either a hazardous materials inventory statement (HMIS) or a hazardous materials management plan (HMMP) to the Fire Chief of the City of Santa Maria and the County of Santa Barbara. In addition, the City of Santa Maria Fire Department and the County EHS require a Business Plan in accordance with State regulations for businesses that store and use hazardous waste (City of Santa Maria 1995).

   The proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or to the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Construction of the proposed project would be required to comply with applicable building, health, fire, and safety codes. Hazardous materials would be used in varying amounts during construction of the project. Construction and maintenance activities would use hazardous materials such as fuels (gasoline and diesel), oils, and lubricants; paints and paint thinners; glues; cleaners (which could include solvents and corrosives in addition to soaps and detergents); and possibly pesticides and herbicides. The amount of materials used would be small, so the project would not create a significant hazard to the public or to the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, assuming such use complies with applicable federal, state, and local regulations, including but not limited to Titles 8 and 22 of the CCR, the Uniform Fire Code, and Chapter 6.95 of the California Health and Safety Code. The project is not located in an area of known hazardous material contamination and is not listed on the "Cortese List" of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. As such, impacts are considered to be less than significant.

b. The proposed project would not result in the routine transport, use, disposal, handling, or emission of any hazardous materials that would create a significant hazard to the public or to the environment. Implementation of Title 49, Parts 171–180, of the Code of Federal Regulations and stipulations in the General Plan Safety Element would reduce any impacts associated with the potential for accidental release during construction. These regulations establish standards by which hazardous materials would be transported, within and adjacent to the proposed project. Where transport of these materials occurs on roads, the California Highway Patrol is the responsible agency for enforcement of regulations. Impacts are considered less than significant.

c. The nearest school, Arellanes Elementary and Middle Schools are located at 1890 Sandalwood Drive and is located approximately one mile west of the project site. As such, the project would not emit hazardous materials within on-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. No impacts are expected.

d. According to California Department of Toxic Substances Control's Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (Cortese List), the project site has not been identified as a hazardous materials site pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Therefore, the project would not result in any hazard to the public or the environment associated with identified hazardous materials sites and there would be no impact.

e. The Santa Maria Public Airport is located adjacent to the project site with the terminal located approximately one mile to the east. The project is located within airport property. According to the City of Santa Maria *General Plan Safety Element*, much of the southern portion of the City is located within the Airport Influence Area, also referred to as "Hazard Zone I". The project site and surrounding areas are located within "Hazard Zone II," which is a smaller region where more specific "Safety Areas" apply. The project site is located within Safety Area 3 of the identified Hazard Zone II. Safety Area 3 encompasses the remainder of Hazard Zone II not restricted to Safety Areas 1 and 2 and is the least restrictive. This is the area in which airport traffic patterns occur.

   The SBCAG serves as the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for Santa Barbara County. The ALUC adopted the Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Plan (ALUP) in 1993. In January 2023, the ALUC published an updated ALUP for the Santa Maria Airport. According to Figure 4-2, Santa Maria Public Airport Safety Compatibility Map, portions of the project site are located within Zone 3 (Inner Turning Zone). The ALUP provides requirements for development within each of the Safety Zones, with Zone 3 being relatively less restrictive. However, building design requirements for Safety Zones are measured in the amount of people introduced as a result of construction. Safety Zone 3 construction is limited to the introduction of up to 210 people per acre. The proposed project is limited to the development of Well 15, including well housing and infrastructure/pipelines and would not result in the introduction of any human habitation. As such, impacts are considered less than significant.

   The project is limited to the proposed well housing development and associated infrastructure. As such, the project is considered to be consistent with the airport land use compatibility standards, and with all City design standards and safety requirements. Impacts related to airport hazards would be less than significant.

f. The project does not include any characteristics or features that would interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The project is limited to the proposed water pipeline construction and impacts are expected to be less than significant.

g. The project site is not adjacent to a wildland area or characterized as residential uses intermixed with wildland areas. Therefore, the project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: Impacts are considered less than significant and no mitigation is required.

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?			X	
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?			X	
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i. Result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;			X	
ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;			X	
iii. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or			X	
iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?			X	
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?				X
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?			X	

Discussion:

The project site is located within the Santa Maria Watershed, one of the largest coastal drainage basins in California, and includes all areas tributary to the Cuyama, Sisquoc, and Santa Maria Rivers. The Santa Maria Watershed overlies the Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin ("SMRVGB"), covering more than 280 square miles in the southwestern corner of San Luis Obispo County and the northwestern corner of Santa Barbara County.

The project area is located within the Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin (3-012.01) (California Department of Water Resources. 2021). The Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin is adjudicated, which specifies that monitoring shall be sufficient to determine groundwater conditions, land and water uses, sources of water supply, and the disposition of all water supplies in the Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin. In the

adjudication process, the Santa Maria Valley River Groundwater Basin was divided into three management areas. The largest was the Santa Maria Valley Management Area. According to the 2020 Annual Report, the conditions of the Santa Maria Valley Management Area do not satisfy all of the criteria delineated in the adjudication for defining a severe water shortage.

In 2015, the State legislature approved the groundwater management law known as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act ("SGMA"). The purpose of SGMA is to protect groundwater resources over the long-term. Historically, the City of Santa Maria pumped water from the SMRVGB as its sole water supply until the City of began receiving State Water Project ("SWP") water from the Central Coast Water Authority ("CCWA") in 1997. The SMRVGB is currently under a 2008 court-ordered stipulation that allows the City of Santa Maria to obtain its water supply from local groundwater, associated return flows from imported SWP water that may be recaptured in the basin, and a share of the yield of Twitchell Reservoir operations.

The proposed project would require trenching, which could result in minimal erosion of on-site soils and potential sedimentation during heavy wind or rain events. The project would be required to comply with all local, state, and federal requirements. In addition, the mitigation measures included in Section 7. Geology and Soils, and listed in the project geotechnical engineering report would be implemented to control the discharge of pollutants, including sediment from erosion into local surface water drainages.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA"), the proposed project site is not located within the 100-year flood zone. In addition, the project area is not within a tsunami inundation area.

a. The proposed project construction consists of development of the new well and associated structures as well as on-site trenching for water piping and dry utility installation , which could result in the erosion of on-site soils and sedimentation during heavy wind or rain events. However, as discussed in Section 7. Geology and Soils above, measures will be required to reduce erosion. Additionally, the project would comply with the adopted standards contained within the City of Santa Maria's Municipal Code, Chapter 8-12 (Wastewater Collection, Treatment, and Disposal) Section 8-12A (Stormwater Runoff Pollution Prevention). With implementation of required mitigation measures and incorporation of the provisions and procedures associated with the aforementioned municipal code sections, the project would not violate water quality standards and waste discharge requirements; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. The project involves the proposed new water well and associated infrastructure and would not result in an increase in annual groundwater pumping or impede sustainable groundwater management in the basin. The City of Santa Maria derives water from multiple supply sources, including local groundwater, purchased water from the SWP, associated return flows recaptured from the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, assigned rights to water from the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, and assigned rights to

augmented yield from Twitchell Reservoir. However, the project would not introduce any new water users. As such, impacts are considered less than significant.

c.i-iv. The project is limited to the proposed construction of a new water well and associated infrastructure. Construction activities for pipeline installation would involve grading for well housing and trenching and other pipeline installation methods such as jack and bore tunneling that would disturb unpaved land within the project site. This disturbance would be temporary. Construction would be required to comply with BMPs and City of Santa Maria's Municipal Code requirements which would reduce impacts related to erosion and surface runoff. After pipeline construction, the disturbed area would be restored to its original condition, and any drainage pattern within the right-of-way would be returned to existing conditions following project construction activities.

In addition, the proposed project would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-site or off-site or create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. BMPs would be implemented during construction activities to minimize runoff and erosion. Furthermore, the project would not impede or redirect flood flows, since the project consists of underground waterlines and dry utilities. For these reasons, less than significant impacts would result from construction and operation of the project.

d. Tsunamis or "tidal waves" are seismic waves created when displacement of a large volume of seawater occurs as a result of movement on seafloor faults. The project site is located outside a tsunami hazard zone. The project is limited to the construction of the proposed well housing and an underground water pipeline connection and would have no impact related to the risk release of pollutants due to project inundation due to these areas.

e. As described above, the SMRVGB is part of an adjudicated basin managed by the courts. The project is limited to the proposed water well construction and does not include any development with the potential to introduce new water users. Therefore, the project would have less than significant impacts regarding conflicting with or obstructing applicable water quality control plans or sustainable groundwater management plans.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project:

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Physically divide an established community?			X	

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?			X	

Discussion:

a. The project site is in an area planned and zoned for the specified pipeline construction. The project site is surrounded by airport-related and industrial land uses. The proposed project would be installed underground and would be consistent with the surrounding land uses; including the following zoning designations: OS (Open Space), CZ (Airport Clear Zone) and PD/AS-I (Planned Development/Airport Service I), and OS; and applicable General Plan policies pertaining to development of the site. Therefore, the project would not conflict with any local programs, plans, or ordinances, or divide an established community. Impacts would be less than significant.

b. The project would not conflict with any policy adopted for the purposes of avoiding and/or mitigating an adverse environmental effect. Construction of the project is limited to the well housing construction and waterline and dry utility installation. The improvement of a municipal water system is consistent with the land use designations on the site and within the project area. Less than significant impact are expected.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: No mitigation measures are required.

12. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?			X	
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?			X	

Discussion:

a-b. As discussed in the City of Santa Maria Resource Management Element of the General Plan, the primary resources suitable for mining and conservation are sand, rock, and oil. The Santa Maria River channel is considered to be a valuable mineral resource for sand and rock. The project site is over five miles southwest of the Santa Maria River. The Santa Maria basin is also a significant hydrocarbon producing basin, historically allowing for the development of the oil industry throughout the region. Many of the area's oil wells have since been capped and abandoned due to the development and urbanization of the City of Santa Maria. The project site is located outside the City-designated Areas of Operational, Existing, or Abandoned Oil Facilities.

According to Figure RME-4 of the Resource Management Element, the project site is located outside of the City's Mineral Resource Zones. This zone is designated for areas containing mineral deposits. As such, the project would not result in the loss of availability of a valuable known mineral resource or locally important mineral resource recovery site. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: No mitigation measures are required.

13. NOISE

Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?			X	
b. Generation of excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels?			X	
c. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or 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 expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?			X	

Discussion:

Community noise levels are typically measured in terms of A-weighted decibels ("dBA"). A-weighing is a frequency correction that correlates overall sound pressure levels with the frequency response of the human ear. Equivalent noise level (Leq) is the average noise

level on an energy basis for a specific time period. The duration of noise and the time of day at which it occurs are important factors in determining the impact of noise on communities.

The Community Noise Equivalent Level ("CNEL") and Day-Night Average Level ("Lnd") account for the time of day and duration of noise generation. These indices are time-weighted average values equal to the amount of acoustic energy equivalent to the time-varying sound over a 24-hour period. The Noise Element of the City's General Plan includes compatibility standards for noise exposure by land use (City of Santa Maria. 2009). These include interior and exterior noise standards as shown in Table 2. Interior and Exterior Noise Standards.

Table 2. City of Santa Maria Interior and Exterior Noise Standards

Land Use Categories		Standard dB CNEL	
Category	**Uses**	**Interior**	**Exterior**
Residential	Single Family, Duplex, Multiple Family, Mobile Home	45	60
Noise-Sensitive Land Uses	Motel, Hospital, School, Nursing Home, Church, Library, and Other	45	60
Commercial	Retail, Restaurant, Professional Office	55	65
Industrial	Manufacturing, Utilities, Warehousing, Agriculture	65	70
Open Space	Passive Outdoor Recreation	-	65

a. The project site is located in an area developed with agricultural, airport-related and industrial uses. The nearest noise sensitive land uses are the Arellanes Elementary and Middle Schools, located approximately one mile from the proposed water well, both located in the County of Santa Barbara. No other sensitive receptors exist or are planned in the area.

   During the construction phase of the project, noise generated from construction activities may intermittently dominate the noise environment in the immediate area. Short-term construction noise would be limited in nature and duration; however, pipeline construction would occur in the vicinity of sensitive receptors in the community. Construction-related noise would be limited to the daytime hours of 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, consistent with City requirements. Potential construction-related noise impacts resulting from the proposed project construction activities would result in less than significant impacts.

   The proposed project is not expected to result in a significant long-term increase in traffic noise levels. The proposed project operational phase is limited to the temporary use of a generator during power failures and intermittent trips related to well maintenance. As such, noise-related impacts resulting from operation of the proposed project would be less than significant.

b. The project is not subject to substantial groundborne vibration, nor would it generate any permanent source of groundborne vibration at nearby sensitive receptors. Construction activities may generate groundborne vibration, however, these activities would be temporary, and the vibration effects of typical construction equipment is not expected to affect nearby sensitive residential receptors. Impacts are considered less than significant.

c. The project area is located within Santa Maria Airport property, adjacent to the western boundary of the Airport. Based on the ALUP and the City of Santa Maria General Plan Noise Element, Figure N-2, portions of the proposed water well are located within the Airport 60 dB noise contour. However, the project is limited to the construction of the new well housing and underground pipeline and does not include any development or with the potential to introduce sensitive receptors to excessive noise levels. Therefore, this is considered a less than significant impact.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: No mitigation measures are required.

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?			X	
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X

Discussion:

The City of Santa Maria has experienced a consistent increase in population since approximately the early 1990s, largely due to the affordable housing the City provides relative to other cities in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties and the development of programs and policies to further encourage growth and development.

a. The project consists of the proposed water well construction and pipeline connection for the purpose of serving the existing population. The project does not include a residential component and would not displace any existing housing. Impacts are considered less than significant.

b. The proposed project involves the construction of a water well and associated infrastructure. The new connection would only serve the existing customers of the RWC. The project would not displace substantial numbers of existing people, housing, or necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. No impacts would result.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: No mitigation measures are required.

15. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i. Fire protection?			X	
ii. Police protection?			X	
iii. Schools?				X
iv. Parks?				X
v. Other public facilities?				X

Discussion:

Fire protection services for the project area are provided by the City of Santa Maria. Six fire stations serve the City, the nearest station to the proposed project is Station No. 6, located at the Santa Maria Airport at 3339 Terminal Drive. The City of Santa Maria Police Department provides law enforcement services for the City. The Santa Maria-Bonita School District serves the City's elementary and junior high-schools, and the high-schools are served by the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District.

i-ii. Because the project is limited to the proposed construction of a water well and associated infrastructure, it will have no post-construction impact on the City Fire Department or Police Department. However unlikely, these departments could be required to respond to potential construction-related emergencies. Construction is considered temporary and short-term and will not significantly impact fire protection or police protection services or require the construction of new or remodeled facilities. Impacts are considered less than significant.

iii-v. The water well project is limited to the construction of the proposed water well housing and pipeline. The project would have no physical impact on schools, parks, or other public facilities and would not require the construction of new or remodeled facilities. No impact is expected to result from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: No mitigation measures are required.

16. RECREATION

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				X
b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				X

Discussion:

The City of Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Department establishes goals, policies, and implementation measures for the management, renovation, and expansion of existing, and the development of new, parks and recreation facilities in order to meet existing and projected needs and to assure an equitable distribution of parks throughout the City. The City does not identify any public trails, parks, or recreational facilities on the project site.

Public facilities fees, Quimby fees, and developer conditions are several ways the City currently funds public parks and recreational facilities. Public facility fees are collected upon construction of new residential units and currently provide funding for new community-serving recreation facilities.

a-b. The project is limited to the proposed water well construction and would not increase the use of surrounding recreational facilities and would not contribute to the physical deterioration of park facilities or necessitate the construction of new recreational facilities. No impact to recreational facilities would result from implementation of the project.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: No mitigation measures are required.

17. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?			X	
b. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?			X	
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			X	
d. Result in inadequate emergency access?			X	

Discussion:

The project is located on the western boundary of the City of Santa Maria, within the Santa Maria Airport property. Regional access to the project site is provided via Dutard Street, 11th Street and U.S. Route 101, which is located approximately 2.5 miles to the east of the proposed project area. In the Circulation Element of the City of Santa Maria General Plan, West McCoy Lane is considered a secondary arterial. Skyway Drive provides access to the Santa Maria Airport and is considered to be a primary arterial. Dutard Street and 11th Street are not listed as arterial roads under the Circulation Element.

The project applicant will be responsible for obtaining an encroachment permit and/or easement from the Airport, if needed, prior to the start of construction. If needed, the encroachment permit will require a traffic control plan. The proposed project would not generate any trips after construction has been completed.

a. The proposed project is limited to temporary construction activities and the operational phase is limited to maintenance trips as needed. As such, the project would result in a temporary increase in traffic during construction. However, traffic or vehicle miles traveled (VMT) will not increase as a result of project implementation once construction is completed.

   Construction-related vehicle trips would include workers traveling to and from the project construction site and staging area(s) and other trucks associated with equipment and material deliveries. Truck trips for materials and hauling for the water well and pipeline construction will vary depending on delivery of materials and construction vehicles. Compared to the existing level of traffic traveling on Dutard and 11th Streets, the temporary construction-related traffic would be minimal. No sidewalks or bike lanes exist along the project site or pipeline alignments. Road closures are not anticipated as needed for the project. However, in the event of any type of closure, clear signage (e.g.,

closure and detour signs) must be provided to ensure vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists are able to adequately reach their intended destinations safely. The construction contractor would prepare a construction Traffic Control Plan as part of the encroachment permit, if required, from the City of Santa Maria. This plan should address the construction schedule, street closures and/or detours, construction staging areas and parking, and planned truck routes.

Construction is a short-term, temporary activity and construction trips would account for a relatively small portion of existing traffic on area roadways. Therefore, traffic flow impacts during construction would be less than significant.

b. The City of Santa Maria Environmental Procedures and Guidelines includes a list of discretionary development projects that are not subject to VMT analysis. Specifically, the City has adopted a screening threshold stating that small discretionary development projects that would generate fewer than 110 daily trips, are not subject to VMT analysis. The proposed project falls within this category. The proposed project would not generate any trips once operational outside of occasional trips for maintenance as needed. As such, the project is expected to have a less than significant impact on the City road system.

c. The project would not substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (for example, sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses. The project operational phase would not generate significant traffic or vehicle trips once implemented. The project does not include the construction of hazardous design features and would not result in incompatible uses with the surrounding area. Impacts are considered less than significant.

d. The project operational phase trips would be limited to occasional maintenance trips if needed and would not generate significant traffic or vehicle trips once implemented. As such, the project would not have the potential to effect emergency access and impacts are considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: No mitigation measures are required.

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or			X	
ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.			X	

Discussion:

Approved in 2014, AB 52 added tribal cultural resources to the categories of resources that must be evaluated under CEQA. Tribal cultural resources are defined as either of the following:

1) Sites, features, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:

    a. Included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources; or

    b. Included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of California Public Resources Code Section 5020.1.

2) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of California Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying these criteria for the purposes of this paragraph, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American Tribe.

Recognizing that tribes have expertise with regard to their tribal history and practices, AB 52 requires lead agencies to provide notice to tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of a proposed project if they have requested notice of projects proposed within that area.

As discussed under Section 5, Cultural Resources, according to the City's General Plan Resources Management Element, the Santa Maria Valley is not a major archaeological or paleontological resource area as only a few sites have been recorded or discovered in the area. Figure RME-5 or the General Plan Resources Management Element delineates High or Moderate, Low, and Negligible Archaeological Sensitivity Areas in the City. The project site is located in Archaeological Sensitivity Area 2 – Low Sensitivity. However, ground disturbance associated with construction could have the potential to uncover previously unknown archeological deposits. As such, the applicant will be required to implement Mitigation Measures CR-1 and CR-2, consisting of stop work procedures in the event that archaeological resources are discovered during project construction and follow procedures for notification in the event human remains are encountered.

Tribal Coordination and AB52

Under the requirements of AB52, Native American outreach was initiated as part of the project coordination and research effort. The City of Santa Maria contacted the Native American Heritage Commission and local Native American groups including the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, Barbareno/Ventureno Band of Mission Indians, Chumash Council of Bakersfield, and the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation; groups known to have knowledge of or ties to the project area. No requests for consultation were received as a result of the consultation invitations.

i-ii. The project site is void of any structural development and does not contain and is not located near any historic resources identified in the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historic Resources. The project site is not identified on the City's Landmarks map or on the City's Objects of Historic Merit map as published by the City's Landmark Committee. The project site is located in Archaeological Sensitivity Area 2 – Low Sensitivity. However, ground disturbance associated with construction could have the potential to uncover previously unknown archeological deposits. Should archaeological resources be unexpectedly discovered during construction, work shall be halted until it can be evaluated by a qualified professional archaeologist and determined to be significant, and appropriate mitigation measures formulated and implemented, as identified in Mitigation Measures CR-1 and CR-2. The project would have a less-than-significant impact on tribal cultural resources.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: With the implementation of Mitigation Measures CR-1 and CR-2, impacts are considered less than signification and no additional measures are required.

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?			X	
b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?			X	
c. Result in a determination by the waste water treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?			X	
d. Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?			X	
e. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?			X	

Discussion:

The City of Santa Maria provides water and wastewater services for the project site.

Per the City's Stormwater Program, the Public Works Department is responsible for ensuring that new construction sites implement best management practices during construction, and that site plans incorporate appropriate post-construction stormwater runoff controls. Construction sites that disturb 1.0 acre or more must obtain coverage under the SWRCB's Construction General Permit.

The City of Santa Maria Utilities Department (City of Santa Maria) is currently responsible for the collection of solid waste in the project area. Waste from the project area is transported to the Santa Maria Regional Landfill.

Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) is the primary electricity provider and both PG&E and Southern California Gas Company provide natural gas services for urban and rural communities within the County of Santa Barbara.

As it relates to the proposed project, there is no housing or permanent population existing or projected within the project footprint and the project will not include any residential development. Hence, there is no additional demand for permanent public utilities or services.

The project is, in and of itself, a community utility upgrade for water infrastructure. The project would be beneficial to the City's utility systems.

Please refer to Section 10, Hydrology and Water Quality, for a discussion of project area water resources and community water supply.

a-e. The proposed project would not generate wastewater or require wastewater disposal during project construction or operation. Construction-related wastewater would be accommodated by licensed on-site portable restroom and hand-washing facilities and disposed of in accordance with existing regulations. The project will not require water use outside of temporary construction activities. The project will not generate significant solid waste, outside of construction garbage generation, which will be collected by a construction site dumpster and transferred to the Santa Maria Regional Landfill. Utility and service system impacts are considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: No mitigation measures are required.

19. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones,

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			X	
b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?			X	
c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?			X	

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?				X

Discussion:

In central California, the fire season usually extends from roughly May through October; however, recent events indicate that wildfire behavior, frequency, and duration of the fire season are changing in California. Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) are defined by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) based on the presence of fire-prone vegetation, climate, topography, assets at risk (e.g., high population centers), and a fire protection agency's ability to provide service to the area (CAL FIRE 2007). Please refer to Section 15, Public Services, for a discussion of the City's fire protection services.

The California Fire Code provides minimum standards for many aspects of fire prevention and suppression activities. These standards include provisions for emergency vehicle access, water supply, fire protection systems, and the use of fire resistant building materials.

The project area is fairly urbanized and agricultural in nature and absent of vegetation with the exception of the thin strip of vegetation along the creek that transects the project site. The topography of the project site is relatively flat and void of steep slopes which can exacerbate wildland fires.

a. The proposed project does not include any characteristics or features that would interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The project would not result in the closure of any roads. Impacts are considered less than significant.

b. The project site is currently void of any structural development and is surrounded by light industrial activities, agriculture, and the Santa Maria Airport. The site is relatively flat and lacks physical and biological features that would be conducive to wildland fire. The project site is not located within or adjacent to a designated FHSZ or a wildland area. Therefore, the project would not be exposed to risks from wildland fires and impacts are considered less than significant.

c. The site is currently void of any structural development and is surrounded by light industrial and agricultural uses as well as the Santa Maria Airport. The project does not include any development and would not result in an increased need for fire protection. The project does not include infrastructure facilities that would exacerbate fire risk and impacts are considered less than significant.

d. The project is not located within a State Responsibility Area (SRA) Fire Hazard Zone. The project is not at risk of downslope or downstream flooding or landslides resulting from a loss of vegetation in the event of a wildfire. As such, no impacts are expected.

Mitigation Measure(s) incorporated into the project: No mitigation measures are required.

CONSULTATION AND DATA SOURCES

CONSULTATION SOURCES

City Departments Consulted

	Administrative Services
	Attorney
	Fire
	Library
	City Manager
	Police
X	Public Works
X	Utilities
	Recreation and Parks

County Agencies/Departments Consulted

	Air Pollution Control District
	Association of Governments
	Flood Control District
	Environmental Health
	Fire (Hazardous Materials)
	LAFCO
X	Public Works
X	Planning and Development
	Other (list)

Special Districts Consulted

X	Santa Maria Public Airport
X	Airport Land Use Commission
	Cemetery
	Santa-Maria Bonita School District
	Santa Maria Joint Union High School
	Laguna County Sanitation District
	Cal Cities Water Company

State/Federal Agencies Consulted

	Army Corps of Engineers
	Caltrans
	CA Fish and Game
X	Federal Fish and Wildlife
	FAA
X	Regional Water Quality Control Bd.
	Integrated Waste Management Bd.

DATA SOURCES

General Plan

X	Land Use Element
X	Circulation Element
X	Safety Element
X	Noise Element
X	Housing Element
X	Resources Management Element

Other

	Agricultural Preserve Maps
X	Archaeological Maps/Reports
	Architectural Elevations
X	Biology Reports
	CA Oil and Gas Maps
X	FEMA Maps (Flood)
	Grading Plans
X	Site Plan
X	Topographic Maps
X	Aerial Photos
	Traffic Studies
	Trip Generation Manual (ITE)
X	CalEEMod Air Quality Model
X	Zoning Maps

List of Attachments

1. Figure 1 – Site Location Map
2. Figure 2 – Aerial Overview Map
3. Figure 3 – Soils Map
4. Figure 4 – Habitat Map
5. Figure 5 – CNDDB Plants Map
6. Figure 6 – CNDDB Animals Map
7. Biological Resources Summary Table
8. Photo Plate
9. City of Santa Maria Informal Consultation with USFWS (2/1/24)
10. USFWS Concurrence Email Regarding Avoidance of Sensitive Resources (3/6/24)

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MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
1. Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?		X		
2. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a 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.)			X	
3. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?			X	

The lead agency shall find that a project may have a significant effect on the environment and thereby require an EIR to be prepared for the project where there is substantial evidence, in light of the whole record, that any of the following conditions may occur. Where prior to commencement of the environmental analysis a project proponent agrees to mitigation measures or project modifications that would avoid any significant effect on the environment or would mitigate the significant environmental effect, a lead agency need not prepare an EIR solely because without mitigation the environmental effects would have been significant (per State CEQA Guidelines § 15065).

1. Incorporation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 under Section 1, Aesthetics, will reduce nighttime lighting and glare impacts to less than significant levels. Measures AQ-1 through AQ-2 under Section 3, Air Quality, will reduce air quality impacts to less than significant levels. Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 under Section 4, Biological Resources, will reduce impacts to biological resources to less than significant levels. Mitigation Measures CR-1 through CR-2, listed under Section 5, Cultural Resources, will lessen cultural and tribal cultural resource impacts to less than significant levels. Mitigation Measure GEO-1 under Section 7, Geology and Soils, will reduce geologic impacts to less than significant levels.

2. Project construction activities will be temporary, and no permanent uses will be established. Project activities will not affect present or future development of the

surrounding area. No cumulative effects are expected from the short-term project activity.

3. As discussed in each resource section above, the proposed project may result in significant but mitigable impacts to Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, and Geology and Soils. The required mitigation measures will reduce impacts to less than significant levels.

SUMMARY OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

X	Aesthetics/Visual Resources		Land Use and Planning
	Agriculture and Forest Resources		Mineral Resources
X	Air Quality		Noise
X	Biological Resources		Population and Housing
X	Cultural Resources		Public Services
	Energy		Recreation
X	Geology and Soils		Transportation
	Greenhouse Gas Emissions		Tribal Cultural Resources
	Hazards and Hazardous Materials		Utilities and Service Systems
	Hydrology/Water Quality		Wildfire

DETERMINATION

On the basis of the Initial Study, the staff of the Community Development Department:

____ Finds that the proposed project is a Class ___ **CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION** and no further environmental review is required.

____ Finds that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

__X__ Finds that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

____ Finds that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required.

____ Finds that the proposed project **MAY** have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to acceptable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on the attached sheets. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR)/SUBSEQUENT EIR/SUPPLEMENTAL EIR/ADDENDUM** is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

____ Finds that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** pursuant to acceptable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Cody Graybehl
Cody Graybehl
Environmental Analyst

Dana Eady
Dana Eady
Environmental Officer

6/25/24
Date

6/25/24
Date