

Executive Summary

ES.1 Purpose of this Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report

The United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) are proposing the San Luis Low Point Improvement Project (SLLPIP) to address water supply reliability and schedule certainty issues for SCVWD associated with low water levels in San Luis Reservoir. The SLLPIP alternatives would help to maintain a high quality, reliable, and cost-effective water supply for SCVWD, and would ensure that they receive their annual Central Valley Project (CVP) contract allocations at the time and at the level of quality needed to meet their existing water supply commitments.

Reclamation, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Lead Agency, and SCVWD, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency have prepared this joint Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) to comply with NEPA and CEQA. This Draft EIS/EIR analyzes the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of implementing the SLLPIP. Along with the environmental documentation process, Reclamation and SCVWD have completed a feasibility study to identify and analyze alternatives. The Feasibility Report documenting the study findings has been released for review concurrently with this Draft EIS/EIR.

ES.2 Project Background

Reclamation owns and jointly operates San Luis Reservoir with the California Department of Water Resources to provide seasonal storage for the CVP and the State Water Project (SWP). San Luis Reservoir is capable of receiving water from both the Delta-Mendota Canal (DMC) and the California Aqueduct. This enables the CVP and SWP to pump water into the reservoir during the wet season (October through March) and release water into the conveyance facilities during the dry season (April through September) when demands are higher. Deliveries from San Luis Reservoir to the San Felipe Division of the CVP, which includes SCVWD, flow west through Pacheco Pumping Plant and Conduit.

During the summer, high temperatures and declining water levels in San Luis Reservoir create conditions that foster algae growth. The thickness of the algae blooms vary, but typically average about 35 feet in depth. The water quality within the algal blooms is not suitable for municipal and industrial (M&I) water users relying on existing water treatment facilities in Santa Clara County.

Figure ES-1 shows the intake and outlet facilities associated with the reservoir. As water levels decline to the point that the algae is in the vicinity of the Upper Intake, that intake is no longer used. The low point problem occurs when the water levels decline to the point that the algae blooms are near the Lower Intake.

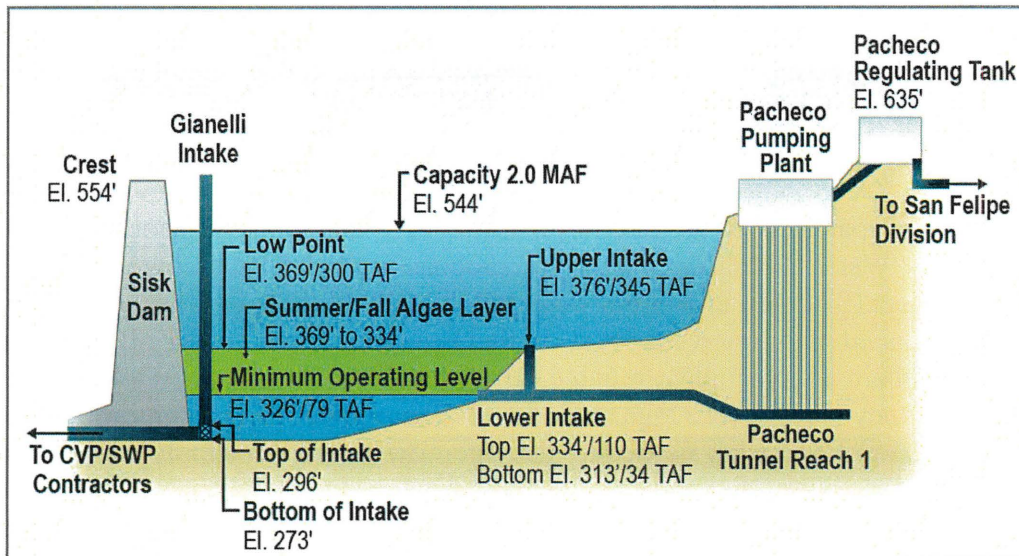


Figure ES-1. Reservoir Intake and Outlet Facilities

If water levels fall below an elevation of 369 feet above mean sea level (MSL) (300 thousand acre-feet [TAF]), SCVWD cannot withdraw water from San Luis Reservoir for M&I purposes because of water quality issues. San Luis Reservoir is the only delivery route for SCVWD's CVP supplies; therefore, SCVWD cannot access CVP supplies for M&I purposes during low-point events.

ES.3 Purpose and Need/Project Objectives

The Lead Agencies are proposing the SLLPIP for the purpose of optimizing the water supply benefit of San Luis Reservoir while reducing additional risks to water users by:

ES.3.1 Primary Objectives

- Avoiding supply interruptions when water is needed by increasing the certainty of meeting the requested delivery schedule throughout the year to South-of-Delta contractors, including SCVWD, dependent on San Luis Reservoir.
- Increasing the reliability and quantity of yearly allocations to South-of-Delta contractors, including SCVWD, dependent on San Luis Reservoir.

ES.3.2 Secondary Objective

- Provide opportunities for ecosystem restoration.

ES.4 Study Area

The study area for this EIS/EIR (Figure ES-2) includes San Luis Reservoir and its related water infrastructure (including the San Felipe Division's water intakes and associated infrastructure); Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta (Delta); California Aqueduct; South-of-Delta CVP and SWP contractors; SCVWD service area, including the Santa Teresa Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in San Jose; and Pacheco Reservoir and the surrounding vicinity, Pacheco Creek, Pajaro River, San Felipe Lake and Miller Canal.

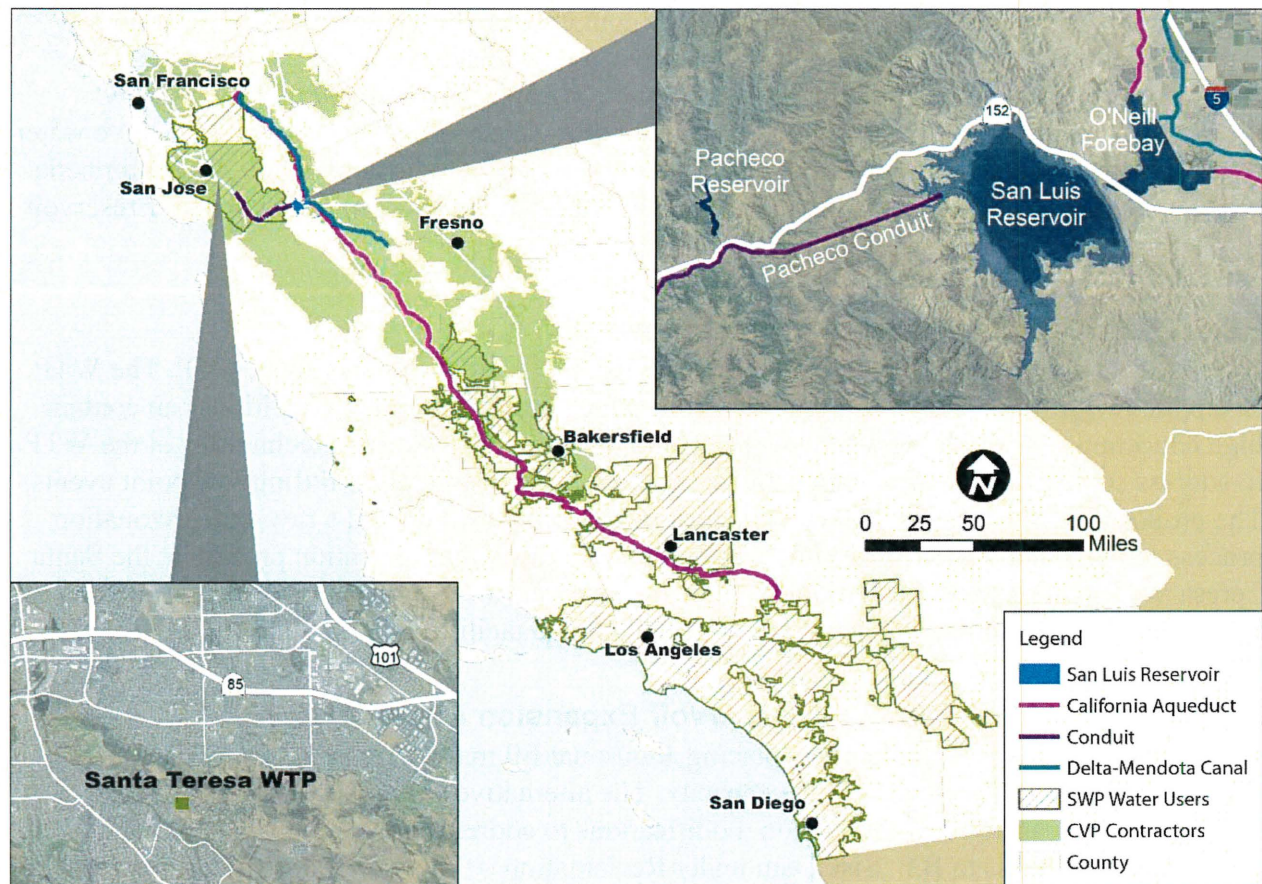


Figure ES-2. San Luis Low Point Improvement Project Study Area

ES.5 Alternatives Evaluated in this EIS/EIR

ES.5.1 Alternative 1 - No Action/No Project Alternative

Both NEPA and CEQA require the evaluation of a No Action or No Project Alternative, which presents the reasonably foreseeable future conditions in the absence of the proposed project. The purpose of the No Action or No Project Alternative is to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the project to the impacts of not approving the project. The No Action/No Project Alternative would leave the current operations at San Luis Reservoir unchanged.

SCVWD would continue annual operations planning to anticipate curtailment of CVP supply, and would cope with its uses and sources of imported and local water supplies. CVP agricultural contractors would continue to rely on the current water supply allocation process.

ES.5.2 Alternative 2 - Lower San Felipe Intake Alternative

Alternative 2 includes construction of a new, lower San Felipe Intake to allow reservoir drawdown to its minimum operating level without algae reaching the San Felipe Intake. Moving the San Felipe Intake to an elevation equal to that of the Gianelli Intake would allow operation of San Luis Reservoir below the 300 TAF level without creating the potential for a water supply interruption to SCVWD. As part of this alternative, a new intake would be constructed and connected to the existing San Felipe Division Intake via approximately 20,000 feet of new pipeline or tunnel. The lower intake facility would allow the San Felipe Division to receive water from the lower reservoir levels that do not contain high concentrations of algae. A hypolimnetic aeration facility would also be constructed to increase dissolved oxygen levels in lower reservoir levels to prevent taste and odor issues.

ES.5.3 Alternative 3 - Treatment Alternative

Alternative 3 would implement technology retrofits at SCVWD's Santa Teresa WTP. The WTP is supplied with water from San Luis Reservoir, which during low point conditions can contain high concentrations of algae. Alternative 3 would develop new treatment technology at the WTP to address some of the negative impacts associated with increased algae during low point events. The proposed improvements evaluated under this alternative would add a raw water ozonation process to the Santa Teresa WTP. Implementation of a raw water ozonation process at the Santa Teresa WTP will require installation of a new ozone contactor, new ozone generation equipment housed in a new building, and new liquid oxygen storage facilities.

ES.5.4 Alternative 4 - San Luis Reservoir Expansion Alternative

Alternative 4 would be completed by placing additional fill material on the dam embankment to raise the dam crest to increase storage capacity. The alternative would build upon the dam embankment expansion and foundation modifications to address the seismic concerns. The seismic modifications to B.F. Sisk Dam under Reclamation's Safety of Dams (SOD) Act, as amended, that the San Luis Reservoir Expansion Alternative would build on are included in this alternative as connected actions as defined under NEPA. Alternative 4 would allocate the increased capacity to the CVP only. This expanded capacity would be operated in the same way as the current CVP portion of San Luis Reservoir, with the reservoir used for seasonal storage.

ES.5.5 Alternative 5 - Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Alternative

Alternative 5 includes construction and operation of a new dam and reservoir, pump station, conveyance facilities, and related miscellaneous infrastructure. The new dam and reservoir would be constructed on Pacheco Creek 0.5 mile upstream from the existing North Fork Dam and would inundate most of the existing Pacheco Reservoir. The proposed total storage for the new reservoir is 141,600 acre-feet (AF), with an active storage of 140,800 AF. The full pool elevation would be 694 feet and would inundate an additional 1,245 acres, for a total of 1,385 total acres inundated. Water would be collected in the new reservoir during the winter months

from runoff from the local watershed area, and diversion of CVP supplies from the Pacheco Conduit. Alternative 5 would be operated by SCVWD to both improve habitat conditions for steelhead in Pacheco Creek and improve SCVWD water supply reliability, including during drought periods and emergencies. In addition, SCVWD will transfer 2,000 AF of its CVP water contract supplies (in below normal water years), directly or through transfer and exchanges, in perpetuity to Reclamation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' Refuge Water Supply Program (RWSP), for use in the Incremental Level 4 water supply pool for wildlife refuges.

ES.6 Impact Summary

This section summarizes significant impacts generated by the action alternatives evaluated in this EIS/EIR and the mitigation measures identified to address those impacts. These significant impacts and mitigation measures are listed in Table ES-1 and described in further detail in Chapter 4 of the EIS/EIR. Areas of controversy and issues to be resolved (CEQA Guidelines Section 15123) are discussed in Chapter 6 of the EIS/EIR.

Table ES-1. Significance Effect Analysis Summary

Significance Criteria	Alt.	Significance Determination (W/O Mitigation, W Mitigation)	Mitigation	Evaluation Support
Water Quality				
Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off-site or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff.	2	Construction - S, LTS	WQ-1	Section 4.1.4
	3	Construction - S, LTS	WQ-1	Section 4.1.5
	4	Construction - S, LTS	WQ-1	Section 4.1.6
	5	Construction - S, LTS	WQ-1	Section 4.1.7
Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan.	2	S, LTS	WQ-1	Section 4.1.4
	3	S, LTS	WQ-1	Section 4.1.5
	4	S, LTS	WQ-1	Section 4.1.6
	5	S, LTS	WQ-1	Section 4.1.7
Result in effects on water quality related beneficial uses.	1	S, SU	--	Section 4.1.3
Surface Water Supply				
Substantially reduce the annual supply of water available to the CVP, SWP, or other water users.	1	S, SU	--	Section 4.2.3, Appendix B, Appendix N
	4	S, SU (Short-term, with shear key)	None	Section 4.2.6, Appendix B, Appendix N

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Significance Criteria	Alt.	Significance Determination (W/O Mitigation, W Mitigation)	Mitigation	Evaluation Support
Geology and Soils				
Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature	2	S, LTS	PR-1	Section 4.5.4
	4	S, LTS	PR-1	Section 4.5.6
	5	S, LTS	PR-1	Section 4.5.7
Air Quality				
Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan	2	Tunnel Option Constr. - S, LTS Pipeline Option Constr. - S, LTS	Tunnel - AQ-1, AQ-2, AQ-3 Pipeline - AQ-1, AQ-2, AQ-3, AQ-4, AQ-5	Section 4.5.4 Appendix O
	4	Constr. - S, SU	AQ-1, AQ-2, AQ-6	Section 4.5.6 Appendix O
	5	Constr. - S, SU	AQ-1, AQ-2	Section 4.5.7 Appendix O
Greenhouse Gas				
Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that could have a significant impact on the environment.	2	S, LTS	GHG- 1	Section 4.8.4 Appendix P
	4	S, LTS	GHG- 1	Section 4.8.6 Appendix P
	5	S, LTS	GHG- 1	Section 4.8.7 Appendix P
Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.	2	S, LTS	GHG- 1	Section 4.8.4 Appendix P
	4	S, LTS	GHG- 1	Section 4.8.6 Appendix P
	5	S, LTS	GHG- 1 Carbon Offsets	Section 4.8.7 Appendix P
Visual Resources				
Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista (areas with Scenic Attractiveness Class A or Class B classifications are considered scenic vistas)	2	Operation - S, LTS	VIS-1, VIS-3	Section 4.9.4
Substantially damage scenic resources within a State scenic highway corridor.	2	S, LTS	VIS-4	Section 4.9.4
	4	S, LTS	VIS-4	Section 4.9.6
Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings or conflict with applicable regulations governing scenic quality.	2	S, LTS	VIS-2	Section 4.9.4
Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.	2	S, LTS	VIS-1	Section 4.9.4
	4	S, LTS	VIS-1	Section 4.9.6
	5	S, LTS	VIS-1	Section 4.9.7

Significance Criteria	Alt.	Significance Determination (W/O Mitigation, W Mitigation)	Mitigation	Evaluation Support
Noise and Vibration				
Expose sensitive receptors to noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance.	4	Construction – S, SU	NOISE-1, NOISE-2, HAZ-5	Section 4.10.6 Appendix E1
	5	Construction – S, SU Operation – S, LTS	NOISE-1, NOISE-2, NOISE-3, HAZ-5	Section 4.10.7 Appendix E1
Cause a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project.	2	Tunnel Option – S, SU	NOISE-1	Section 4.10.4 Appendix E1
	3	S, LTS	NOISE-1	Section 4.10.5 Appendix E1
	4	S, SU	NOISE-1, NOISE-2, HAZ-5	Section 4.10.6 Appendix E1
	5	S, SU	NOISE-1	Section 4.10.7 Appendix E1
Traffic and Transportation				
Substantially increase traffic hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible use.	2	S, LTS	TR-1	Section 4.11.4
	3	S, LTS	TR-1	Section 4.11.5
	4	S, LTS	TR-1	Section 4.11.6
	5	S, LTS	TR-1	Section 4.11.7
Result in inadequate emergency access.	2	S, LTS	TR-1	Section 4.11.4
	3	S, LTS	TR-1	Section 4.11.5
	4	S, LTS	TR-1	Section 4.11.6
	5	S, LTS	TR-1	Section 4.11.7
Hazards and Hazardous Materials				
Increase the risk of exposure from hazardous materials to the public and construction workers during alternative construction onsite, during the transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials offsite, and during long-term operations and maintenance activities.	4	Construction – S, LTS	HAZ-5	Section 4.12.6
	5	Construction – S, LTS	HAZ-5	Section 4.12.7
Interfere with an active remediation site which could create a hazard to the public or the environment if contaminated soil and/or groundwater is encountered and released to the environment.	2	S, LTS	HAZ-1	Section 4.12.4
	4	S, LTS	HAZ-6	Section 4.12.6
Conflict with activities and operations at airports near or within the project area during construction, resulting in safety hazards for pilots or people working and residing in the area.	2	S, LTS	HAZ-3, HAZ-4	Section 4.12.4
	4	S, LTS	HAZ-3, HAZ-4	Section 4.12.6

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Temporarily interfere with an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan for the project vicinity as a result of construction traffic and traffic controls impacting local roads.	2	S, LTS	TR-1	Section 4.12.4
	4	S, LTS	TR-1	Section 4.12.6 Section 4.11.8
	5	S, LTS	TR-1	Section 4.12.7 Section 4.11.8
Increase the risk of wildfire within the vicinity of the project area through the use of mechanical equipment during construction	2	S, LTS	HAZ-2	Section 4.12.4
	4	S, LTS	HAZ-2	Section 4.12.6
	5	S, LTS	HAZ-2	Section 4.12.7
Aquatic Resources				
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	5	Construction – S, LTS Operation (Pacheco Creek/Pajaro River) – S, LTS	BIO-1, BIO-2	Section 4.13.7 Appendix L2
Terrestrial Resources				
Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as an endangered, threatened, candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW, NMFS, or USFWS	2	Construction – S, LTS	BIO-1, TERR-1 through TERR-15	Section 4.14.4
	3	Construction – S, LTS	BIO-1 TERR-6	Section 4.14.5
	4	Construction – S, LTS Operation – S, LTS	BIO-1, TERR-1 through TERR-15	Section 4.14.6
	5	Construction – S, LTS Operation – S, LTS	BIO-1, BIO-2 TERR-1 through TERR-15	Section 4.14.7
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 CDFW, NMFS, or USFWS	2	S, LTS	TERR-1, TERR-3, TERR-4, TERR-14, TERR-15, TERR-16, TERR-17	Section 4.14.4
	4	S, LTS	TERR-1, TERR-3, TERR-4, TERR-14, TERR-15, TERR-16	Section 4.14.6
	5	S, LTS	TERR-1, TERR-16, TERR-18	Section 4.14.7
Have a substantial adverse effect on Federally or State protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coast, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means	2	S, LTS	TERR-14, TERR-16	Section 4.14.4
	4	S, LTS	TERR-14, TERR-16	Section 4.14.6
	5	S, LTS	TERR-16	Section 4.14.7

Significance Criteria	Alt.	Significance Determination (W/O Mitigation, W Mitigation)	Mitigation	Evaluation Support
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	4	S, LTS	TERR-12, TERR-13, TERR-15	Section 4.14.6
	5	S, LTS	TERR-12, TERR-15	Section 4.14.7
Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, or adopted HCP, NCCP, or other approved local, regional, or State conservation plan	2	S, LTS	TERR-1 through TERR-17	Section 4.14.4
	3	S, LTS	BIO-1, TERR-18	Section 4.14.5
	4	S, LTS	TERR-1 through TERR-14, TERR-17	Section 4.14.6
	5	S, LTS	TERR-1, TERR-18	Section 4.14.7
Land Use and Agricultural Resources				
Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract	5	SU, LTS	LU-1	Section 4.12.7
Recreation				
Substantially reduce access to or close recreation areas as a result of project construction	2	S, LTS	REC-1	Section 4.17.4, Section 4.17.8
	4	S, LTS	REC-1	Section 4.17.6, Section 4.17.8
Reduce access to recreation uses through long-term operational changes to water levels in recreational water bodies	4	S, LTS (trail closures)	REC-2	Section 4.17.6, Section 4.17.8, Appendix N
Cultural Resources				
Result in adverse effects to historic properties listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP, and/or substantial adverse changes to historical resources, unique archaeological resources, or tribal cultural resources listed or eligible for listing in the CRHR or result in the disturbance of human remains	2	S, SU	CR-1, CR-2, CR-3	Section 4.20.4 Appendix K
	4	S, SU	CR-1, CR-2, CR-3	Section 4.20.6 Appendix K
	5	S, SU	CR-1, CR-2, CR-3	Section 4.20.7 Appendix K

Key: Alt = alternative; CDFW = California Department of Fish and Wildlife; CRHR = California Register of Historical Resources; HCP = Habitat Conservation Plan; LTS = less than significant; NCCP = Natural Communities Conservation Plan; NI = no impact; NMFS = National Marine Fisheries Service; NRHP = National Register of Historic Places; S = Significant; SU = significant and unavoidable; USFWS = United States Fish and Wildlife Service; W = with; WO = without

ES.6.1 Alternative 2 - Lower San Felipe Intake Alternative

Impacts across the study area associated with the development and long-term operation of a new, lower San Felipe Intake through either the pipeline or tunnel option would be generated during construction of the new intake infrastructure followed by long-term changes in the operation of

San Luis Reservoir with the avoidance of low point event water supply interruptions to SCVWD deliveries.

Construction of the new lower intake facility infrastructure would generate impacts on surface water quality resulting both from the disturbance of soils in construction and staging areas and the associated potential for increases in erosion along with subsurface construction activity in San Luis Reservoir and potential for increases in turbidity from reservoir floor disturbance. Construction activities would also result in air quality and greenhouse gas emissions with the potential to exceed significance thresholds. Implementation of mitigation including the installation of diesel oxidation catalysts on all off-road construction equipment, the selection of marine propulsion and auxiliary engines with selective catalytic reduction capable of achieving an 85 percent reduction in nitrogen oxides (NOx), and the purchase of carbon offsets would reduce these impacts to a less than significant level. Modifications to the study area's visual setting during the construction of Alternative 2 through the introduction of construction equipment and the disturbance of areas where construction is underway could generate impacts to visual resource experiences for visitors to the San Luis Recreation Area and viewers passing by the reservoir on nearby State Route (SR) 152. These impacts on visual setting would be mitigated to less than significant levels through the shielding of construction lighting used during nighttime construction, the strategic use of locations out of sight of major nearby viewing points including SR 152 for spoils storage and disposal, and design requirements for new infrastructure in the viewshed to minimize any new visual contrast or distraction they could generate. Noise generated by construction of the tunnel option under Alternative 2 would result in a significant and unavoidable impact, temporarily increasing the noise level on local roads. The use of area roadways by trucks and construction workers accessing the construction areas at San Luis Reservoir could cause temporary impacts to traffic safety on those roadways. This impact would be mitigated to a less than significant level with the installation of signage along impacted roadways warning motorists of slow-moving construction traffic and lane closures, and the use of traffic controls like flaggers or temporary traffic lights where construction equipment will be entering roadways. Construction activities could also generate significant impacts on sensitive terrestrial habitats including wetland and riparian vegetation communities, disturb terrestrial wildlife, nesting birds, adversely impact special status plant species and conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. Mitigation measures including pre-construction surveys, establishment of buffers, construction monitoring, compensatory mitigation where impacts could not be avoided would reduce all of these potential impacts to a less than significant level. Finally, impacts to historic properties and/or historical resources associated with Alternative 2 could be significant given the area's rich cultural history. CEQA mitigation measures including avoidance of known resources, training of construction personnel on the cultural sensitivity in the area, monitoring for inadvertent discovery of new resources by a qualified archaeologist, and coordination with culturally associated Native American tribes would be implemented to reduce the potential for significant impacts. Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for NEPA, adverse effects to historic properties will be resolved (i.e., avoided, minimized, or mitigated) through the completion of the Section 106 process and the execution of an agreement document (Memorandum of Agreement or Programmatic Agreement). No feasible measures have been identified to offset potential impacts to previously identified cultural resources in areas that will remain inundated during construction.

Once constructed, Alternative 2 would allow for the continued delivery of CVP water supplies from San Luis Reservoir to SCVWD in periods when the reservoir is drawn below the 300 TAF low point level by diverting the water from lower levels below the reservoir surface to depths that do not contain concentrations of algae. Alternative 2 would support the uninterrupted delivery of SCVWD CVP deliveries from San Luis Reservoir in all low point years.

ES.6.2 Alternative 3 - Treatment Alternative

Alternative 3 would implement new technology retrofits at SCVWD's Santa Teresa WTP. In comparison to Alternative 2, the construction actions required to implement Alternative 3 would result in fewer significant impacts requiring mitigation given the smaller construction area, implementation at the existing WTP at an area already disturbed, and shorter overall construction schedule.

Following the completion of construction, Alternative 3 would be similar to Alternative 2 by allowing for the continued delivery of CVP water supplies from San Luis Reservoir to SCVWD in periods when the reservoir is drawn below the 300 TAF low point level by making that water treatable the WTP and would support the uninterrupted delivery of SCVWD CVP deliveries from San Luis Reservoir in all low point years.

ES.6.3 Alternative 4 - San Luis Reservoir Expansion Alternative

Alternative 4 would complete major construction actions at San Luis Reservoir to raise the B.F. Sisk Dam embankment and increase storage capacity in the reservoir. The construction generated significant effects on water quality, paleontological resources, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, visual resources, noise, traffic conditions, hazards, terrestrial resources, and cultural resources would be similar in type to those in Alternative 2 but given the longer construction schedule required for implementation of this alternative these impacts are larger in total magnitude over the full course of the alternative's development. The mitigation measures identified to address the impacts described above under Alternative 2 would also be implemented under Alternative 4 to help reduce the severity of these potential impacts.

By increasing total storage capacity in the reservoir and allowing it to fill above its current maximum operating level, Alternative 4 would support the delivery of additional water supply to SCVWD in some years with low point conditions when compared to the No Action/No Project Alternative, partially reducing SCVWD unmet demand in those years. Operation of the expanded San Luis Reservoir would not result in significant operational changes and would not require significant additional water diversions from the Delta.

ES.6.4 Alternative 5 - Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Alternative

Alternative 5 would, much like Alternative 2 and Alternative 4, implement a major construction action over multiple years, with similar significant water quality, paleontological resources, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, visual resources, noise, traffic conditions, hazards, terrestrial resources, and cultural resources impacts. This project would also result in altered streamflow downstream of the dam along Pacheco Creek. Also, Alternative 5 would have a significant impact on land use and aquatic resources. Alternative 5 would also implement mitigation measures to help reduce the severity of those impacts.

Following the completion of construction, Alternative 5 would support the diverting of SCVWD's CVP supply in San Luis Reservoir earlier in the year prior to the summer months when the reservoir is typically drawn down to the 300 TAF level. CVP water stored in Pacheco Reservoir could then be released through the summer while supplies from San Luis Reservoir would be inaccessible to SCVWD. In addition, given the expanded Pacheco Reservoir's proposed size it would be able to support the storage of local inflow from the watershed that would further support the reservoir's use in support of downstream ecosystem benefits on Pacheco Creek and as an emergency supply for SCVWD to respond to potential CVP and SWP water supply interruptions.

ES.7 CEQA Proposed Project

For the purpose of CEQA, SCVWD has identified Alternative 5 as the Proposed Project. SCVWD's identification of a Proposed Project does not foreclose any alternatives or mitigation measures. All of the alternatives have been analyzed at a comparable level in this Draft EIS/EIR. Reclamation has not identified a preferred alternative in this Draft EIS/EIR for NEPA purposes. Consistent with Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 46.425, the Final EIS/EIR will identify a NEPA preferred alternative for implementation (or alternatives if more than one exists).

SCVWD and Reclamation are seeking input on the alternatives and their environmental effects during the public review of this Draft EIS/EIR. SCVWD and Reclamation will consider feedback received during the public review on the Draft EIS/EIR and the environmental impacts associated with each alternative when developing the Final EIS/EIR and selecting an alternative for implementation. Any alternative could be selected by the lead agencies following the conclusion of environmental review. SCVWD has identified Alternative 5 as the Proposed Project for CEQA because of the wide range of public and non-public benefits. Benefits identified include ecosystem improvements at Pacheco Creek and San Joaquin River watershed, flood control, emergency water supplies, groundwater recharge and M&I water supply, and M&I water quality (SCVWD 2017).

ES.8 Environmentally Preferable/Superior Alternative

CEQ Regulations Section 1505.2(b) require identification of an environmentally preferable alternative, and CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2) requires an EIR to identify an environmentally superior alternative. However, the CEQ regulations and CEQA Guidelines do not require adoption of the environmentally preferable/superior alternative as the preferred alternative for implementation. The identification of the preferred alternative is independent of the identification of the environmentally preferable/superior alternative, although the identification of both will be based on the information presented in this EIS/EIR.

Section 1505.2(b) of the CEQ Regulations requires the NEPA lead agency to identify the environmentally preferable alternative in a Record of Decision (ROD). The CEQ Regulations define the environmentally preferable alternative as "...the alternative that will promote the

national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA's Section 101. Ordinarily, this means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources.”

This Draft EIS/EIR provides a substantive portion of the environmental information necessary for Reclamation to determine the environmentally preferable alternative and for SCVWD to determine the environmentally superior alternative. However, the public and other agencies reviewing a Draft EIS/EIR can assist the lead agency to develop and determine the environmentally preferable/superior alternative by providing their views in comments on the Draft EIS/EIR. In this Draft EIS/EIR, Reclamation and SCVWD have identified Alternative 5 as the environmentally preferable/environmentally superior alternative because of the ecosystem benefits to the Pacheco Creek and San Joaquin River watersheds it provides. Reclamation and SCVWD will consider feedback during the public review phase of the Draft EIS/EIR on the environmental benefits and impacts of each alternative when developing the Final EIS/EIR and ROD.

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