

G. Other CEQA and NEPA Requirements

Section G includes discussions of various topics required by CEQA and/or NEPA, including an environmental justice analysis (Section G.1), a description of growth inducing effects (Section G.2), and a discussion of significant irreversible and irretrievable changes (Section G.3). Section G.4 describes the significant and unavoidable impacts (Class I) identified in Sections D.2 through D.14. Section G.5 presents the relationship between short-term uses and long-term productivity of the environment with regard to the project. Section G.6 describes the energy requirements and conservation potential of the project and Section G.7 presents the effects found not to be significant.

G.1 Environmental Justice

On February 11, 1994, President Clinton issued an “Executive Order on Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations” (Executive Order 12898, 1994). This Order is designed to focus Federal attention on environmental and human health conditions in minority communities and low-income communities. The Order is further intended to promote non-discrimination in Federal Programs substantially affecting human health and the environment and to provide for information access and public participation relating to such matters.

The approach in this EIS/SEIR is to achieve compliance with the letter and spirit of the President's Executive Order by addressing the question of whether and how the impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives (as described in Section D of this EIR/EIS) may disproportionately affect minority (sometimes referred to as people of color) populations and low-income populations.

This section analyzes the distributional patterns of minority populations and low-income populations on a regional basis and characterizes the distribution of such populations adjacent to the proposed and alternative pipeline corridors. We then focus on the existing environmental conditions and impacts relative to these populations and analyze how project impacts affect these populations, focusing on possible disproportionate effects and potential exacerbation of existing conditions.

The aim of the analysis in this section is to achieve compliance with the letter and spirit of Executive Order 12898 and to address any community concerns raised in the scoping process for this EIS/EIR. The Environmental Justice analysis is based on a three-step process:

1. Perform a screening level analysis to determine the general areas in which a potential for environmental justice impacts occurs
2. Review comments collected during public scoping meetings and agency consultation for the Proposed Project to determine if other, previously unidentified areas should also be analyzed
3. Perform a detailed environmental justice impact analysis for each area identified in steps 1 and 2, using demographic data for U.S. Census block groups¹ (or if necessary U.S. Census blocks²) to evaluate impacts of the transmission line on surrounding neighborhoods.

¹ A census block group is a statistical subdivision of a census tract. Block groups generally contain between 300 and 3,000 people, with an optimum size of 1,500 people.

² A census block is a geographic area bounded by visible and/or invisible features shown on a map prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau. Generally, the boundary of a census block must include at least one addressable feature;

Each of these steps is described further below.

G.1.1 Screening Level Analysis

The purpose of an environmental justice screening analysis is to determine whether a low-income and/or minority (people of color) population exists within the potential affected area of a proposed Action. As defined by the “Final Guidance for Incorporating Environmental Justice Concerns” contained in EPA’s NEPA Compliance Analysis (Guidance Document) (EPA, 1998), minority (people of color) and low-income populations are identified where either:

- The minority or low-income population of the affected area is greater than 50 percent of the affected area’s general population; or
- The minority or low-income population percentage of the area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis.

In 1997, the President’s Council on Environmental Quality issued Environmental Justice Guidance that defines minority and low-income populations as follows:

- “Minorities” are individuals who are members of the following population groups: American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian or Pacific Islander; Black not of Hispanic origin; or Hispanic (without double-counting non-white Hispanics falling into the Black/African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American categories)
- “Low-income populations” are identified as populations with mean annual incomes below the annual statistical poverty level.

All jurisdictions within one-half mile of the Proposed Project and its alternatives are included in the screening analysis in this section. In the screening analysis, the percentages of minority and low-income populations were examined for each jurisdiction. For purposes of consistency and in compliance with U.S. BLM guidelines, U.S. Census data is used to determine minority and low-income population percentages along the entire ROW. If the jurisdiction has a population of greater than 50 percent for either the low-income or minority categories, it is identified for more detailed analysis. If a jurisdiction’s minority and low-income populations are less than 50 percent for any of these categories, no further environmental justice analysis was performed on the jurisdiction. No jurisdictions were identified for further analysis during Public Scoping and outreach activities.

Table G-1 lists the jurisdictions within one-half mile of the Proposed Project and its alternatives, along with the low-income percentage and minority percentage of the population of each jurisdiction. The low-income percentage is the percentage of a jurisdiction’s population with a median annual income below the statistical poverty threshold determined by the U.S. Census Bureau. The minority percentage is the percentage of a jurisdiction’s population categorized in the 2000 U.S. Census as Black/African-American, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Native American, Hispanic/Latino (without double-counting non-white Hispanics falling into the Black/African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American categories), or two or more races.

that is, a street or road. A block is the smallest geographic entity for which the Census Bureau tabulates decennial census data.

Table G-1. Population Characteristics of Communities along Project Route

Project Area	Jurisdiction	Low-Income Percentage	Minority Percentage
California – West of Devers	San Bernardino County	15.8%	56.2%
	Colton	19.6%	79.5%
	Grand Terrace	7.4%	38.4%
	Loma Linda	15.1%	54.3%
	Redlands	10.5%	36.5%
	Riverside County	14.2%	49.0%
	Calimesa	12.2%	18.1%
	Beaumont	20.2%	42.2%
	Banning	19.9%	47.6%
	Morongo Indian Reservation	18.0%	85.5%
	San Gorgonio Pass, CCD*	17.4%	39.4%
	Romoland	25.9%	56.2%
	Nuevo	10.2%	33.8%
	San Jacinto	20.3%	47.7%
	Cabazon	32.3%	45.0%
California – Devers–Harquahala	Desert Hot Springs, CCD*	21.3%	45.8%
	Palm Springs	15.1%	32.9%
	Cathedral City	13.6%	57.6%
	Agua Caliente Indian Reservation	10.5%	17.5%
	Cathedral City–Palm Desert, CCD*	10.0%	35.6%
	Indio	21.5%	80.7%
	Rancho Mirage	5.9%	12.8%
	Chuckwalla, CCD*	22.4%	69.9%
	Palo Verde, CCD*	21.2%	58.2%
Arizona	La Paz County	19.6%	36.3%
	Colorado River Indian Reservation	21.8%	57.8%
	Ehrenberg	22.7%	33.9%
	Quartzsite	13.5%	7.6%
	Maricopa County	11.7%	33.8%
	Buckeye, CCD*	17.1%	41.7%

* CCD (Census County Division) is a subdivision of a county that is a relatively permanent statistical area established cooperatively by the Census Bureau, State, and local governments. The CCD for a particular county region was used if data specific to unincorporated communities within that region were not available.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000 (http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_program=DEC&_lang=en)

None of the jurisdictions listed above in Table G-1 have low-income populations of greater than 50 percent. However, nine of the jurisdictions have minority populations of greater than 50 percent. Consequently, the following jurisdictions have been identified under the screening level analysis for further detailed analysis to determine if the Proposed Project and its alternatives would result in disproportionate impacts in these areas:

- San Bernardino County
- City of Colton
- City of Loma Linda
- Morongo Indian Reservation
- Town of Romoland
- City of Cathedral City
- City of Indio
- Chuckwalla Census Collection District (CCD)
- Palo Verde CCD
- Colorado River Indian Reservation.

G.1.2 Environmental Justice Analysis

G.1.2.1 Methodology

Significance Criteria for Environmental Justice Impacts

An environmental justice impact resulting from the Proposed Project or its alternatives could potentially occur if:

- More high minority block groups are within one-half mile of the ROW than either medium minority block groups or low minority block groups
- More low-income block groups are within one-half mile of the ROW than either medium-income block groups or high-income block groups.

Either of these conditions would constitute a disproportionate impact on these populations by the project. Identification of an area which would be disproportionately affected by the project does not by itself, however, constitute an environmental justice impact. Analysis of impacts for all disciplines is presented in Section D, Environmental Analysis, of this EIR/EIS for the Proposed Project and alternatives. Where available, mitigation measures are presented in each section to ensure that impacts associated with construction and operation of the Proposed Project would be less than significant. An impact that is less than significant in an area identified as having the potential for environmental justice impacts would not be considered a disproportionate environmental justice impact. A disproportionate environmental justice impact would occur; however, if a significant, unavoidable impact (Class I) were to occur in an area identified as having the potential for a high-minority or low-income population in accordance with the methodology described in this section.

Analysis Methodology

Within each of the jurisdictions identified above, areas of high-minority populations and their locations are identified as those block groups having a total minority population percentage within the highest one-third (33⅓% in terms of minority percentage) of all block groups in their respective jurisdiction. These groups are classified as high minority block groups. Those block groups having a total minority population percentage within the lowest one-third (33⅓%) of the block groups in their counties are classified as low minority block groups. Those block groups having a total minority population percentage that is greater than the upper bound of minority population percentage for the low minority block groups, but less than the lower bound for the high minority block groups, are classified as medium minority block groups.

Areas of low-income populations and their locations are identified in the jurisdictions as those census block groups having an annual per-capita income level that is in the lowest one-third (33⅓%) of the block groups in their respective jurisdictions. These block groups are classified as low-income block groups. Those block groups having an annual per-capita income level in the highest one-third (33⅓%) of the block groups in their respective counties are classified as high-income block groups. Those block groups having an annual per-capita income level that is greater than the upper bound for the low-income block groups, but less than the lower bound of the high-income block groups, are classified as medium-income block groups. Thus, all of the block groups in a county are divided into the highest one-third, a middle one-third, and the lowest one-third in terms of medium per-capita income.

G.1.2.2 Proposed Project

Approximately 39 block groups in the nine jurisdictions identified for detailed environmental justice analysis have at least some portion of their area within one-half mile (on either side) of the centerline of the Proposed Project route. The block groups in San Bernardino County within one half-mile of the Proposed Project either partially or fully fall within the boundaries of the Cities of Colton and Loma Linda. Consequently, impacts to these block groups are analyzed below for Colton and Loma Linda and are not analyzed separately for San Bernardino County. Additionally, while the Proposed Project would affect one block group on the Colorado River Indian Reservation, the ROW would be more than one half-mile from any populated area. As there would be no populations in the vicinity of the Proposed Project on the Colorado River Indian Reservation, there would be no disproportionate impacts to populations on the Colorado River Indian Reservation. No further analysis of environmental justice impacts to the Colorado River Indian Reservation is performed herein.

All of the block groups in the jurisdictions have been classified, with respect to minority population percentage and low-income percentage, in accordance with the criteria discussed above in Section G.1.2.1. The results of this classification are summarized for Cathedral City, Chuckwalla CCD, Colton, Indio, Loma Linda, Morongo Indian Reservation, and Palo Verde CCD in Table G-2 for the Proposed Project.

Devers–Palo Verde No. 2 Transmission Line Project
G. OTHER CEQA AND NEPA REQUIREMENTS

Table G-2. Proposed Project – Total Number of Block Groups in Each Classification and Number of Block Groups in Each Classification within 0.5 Miles of Proposed Project for Each Jurisdiction

County	Block Group Classification	No. of Block Groups Jurisdiction-wide (% of Block Groups in Jurisdiction)	No. of Block Groups within 0.5 Miles of ROW (% of Block Groups within 0.5 Miles of ROW)
Cathedral City	High-minority	9 (32%)	0 (0%)
	Medium-minority	10 (36%)	1 (50%)
	Low-minority	9 (32%)	1 (50%)
	Low-income	10 (36%)	1 (50%)
	Medium-income	9 (32%)	1 (50%)
	High-income	9 (32%)	0 (0%)
	Total (all) block groups	28 (100%)	2 (100%)
Chuckwalla CCD	High-minority	2 (33%)	2 (50%)
	Medium-minority	2 (33%)	2 (50%)
	Low-minority	2 (33%)	0 (0%)
	Low-income	2 (33%)	1 (25%)
	Medium-income	2 (33%)	1 (25%)
	High-income	2 (33%)	2 (50%)
	Total (all) block groups	6 (100%)	4 (100%)
Colton	High-minority	14 (33%)	2 (18%)
	Medium-minority	14 (33%)	4 (36%)
	Low-minority	15 (35%)	5 (45%)
	Low-income	14 (33%)	1 (9%)
	Medium-income	15 (35%)	4 (36%)
	High-income	14 (33%)	6 (55%)
	Total (all) block groups	43 (100%)	11 (100%)
Indio	High-minority	8 (28%)	0 (0%)
	Medium-minority	11 (38%)	0 (0%)
	Low-minority	10 (34%)	1 (100%)
	Low-income	10 (34%)	0 (0%)
	Medium-income	10 (34%)	0 (0%)
	High-income	9 (31%)	1 (100%)
	Total (all) block groups	29 (100%)	1 (100%)
Loma Linda	High-minority	6 (32%)	4 (31%)
	Medium-minority	6 (32%)	4 (31%)
	Low-minority	7 (36%)	5 (38%)
	Low-income	7 (36%)	4 (31%)
	Medium-income	6 (32%)	5 (38%)
	High-income	6 (32%)	4 (31%)
	Total (all) block groups	19 (100%)	13 (100%)
Morongo Indian Reservation	High-minority	2 (33%)	2 (50%)
	Medium-minority	2 (33%)	2 (50%)
	Low-minority	2 (33%)	0 (0%)
	Low-income	2 (33%)	2 (50%)
	Medium-income	2 (33%)	1 (25%)
	High-income	2 (33%)	1 (25%)
	Total (all) block groups	6 (100%)	4 (100%)
Palo Verde CCD	High-minority	4 (36%)	1 (33%)
	Medium-minority	5 (45%)	1 (33%)
	Low-minority	2 (18%)	1 (33%)
	Low-income	4 (36%)	1 (33%)
	Medium-income	4 (36%)	1 (33%)
	High-income	3 (27%)	1 (33%)
	Total (all) block groups	11 (100%)	3 (100%)

Cathedral City

Cathedral City has a total of two census block groups that lie within one-half mile of the Proposed Project route. The location of the Proposed Project route and the Cathedral City census block groups are illustrated in Figure G-1. Of the two, neither is classified as a high-minority block group. One is classified as a medium, and one is classified as a low-minority block group. One of the two census block groups within one-half mile of the Proposed Project route is classified as a low-income block group. The other is classified as a medium-income block group. Because the ROW would not affect any high minority block groups, and because the ROW would affect both a medium and a low-income block group equally, there would be no disproportionate impacts to high minority and low-income populations. No environmental justice impacts would occur within Cathedral City.

Chuckwalla CCD

The Chuckwalla CCD has a total of six census block groups that lie within one-half mile of the Proposed Project route, two of which have no population according to the 2000 U.S. Census. The location of the Proposed Project route and the Chuckwalla CCD census block groups are illustrated in Figure G-2. Of the four populated block groups, two are classified as high minority block groups and two are classified as medium minority block groups. No block groups within one half-mile of the ROW are classified as low minority block groups. One of the four populated census block groups that lie within one-half mile of the Proposed Project route is classified as a low-income block group, one is classified as a medium-income block group, and two are classified as high-income block groups. As the number of high minority block groups within one half-mile of the ROW is less than the medium and low minority block groups, and because the number of low-income block groups is less than either the medium and high-income block groups, no disproportionate impacts to high minority or low-income populations would occur. No environmental justice impacts would occur within the Chuckwalla CCD.

Colton

Colton has a total of 11 census block groups that lie within one-half mile of the Proposed Project route. Of the 11, two are classified as high minority block groups. The location of the Proposed Project route and the Colton census block groups are illustrated in Figure G-3. Four are classified as medium, and five are classified as low minority block groups. Only one of the 11 potentially affected census block groups is classified as a low-income block group. Four of the 11 block groups are classified as medium-income block groups, while six are classified as high-income block groups. Because the ROW would affect more medium and low minority block groups than high minority block groups, and because the number of medium and high-income block groups are both higher than the number of low-income block groups potentially affected there would be no disproportionate impacts to high minority or low-income populations. No environmental justice impacts would occur within the City of Colton.

Indio

The City of Indio has only one census block group that lies within one-half mile of the Proposed Project route which is categorized as a low minority block group. The location of the Proposed Project route and the City of Indio census block group are illustrated in Figure G-4. No high minority block groups would be within one half-mile of the ROW. The one census block group in the City of Indio that lies within one-half mile of the Proposed Project route is categorized as a high-income block group. No low-income block groups would be within one half-mile of the ROW. Consequently, no disproportionate impacts to high minority populations or to low-income populations would occur. No environmental justice impacts would occur within the City of Indio.

Loma Linda

The City of Loma Linda has 13 census block groups that lie within one-half mile of the Proposed Project route. The location of the Proposed Project route and the Loma Linda census block groups are illustrated in Figure G-5. Of the 13 block groups, five would be low minority block groups, four would be medium minority, and four would be high minority. Four of the 13 block groups would be low-income, five would be medium-income, and four would be high-income. Because there are as many or more medium and low minority block groups than high minority block groups, and because there are as many or more medium and high-income block groups than low-income block groups, there would be no disproportionate impacts to high minority or low-income populations. No environmental justice impacts would occur within the City of Loma Linda.

Morongo Indian Reservation

The Morongo Indian Reservation has a total of four census block groups that lie within one-half mile of the Proposed Project route. The location of the Proposed Project route and the Morongo Indian Reservation census block groups are illustrated in Figure G-6. Of the four, two are classified as high minority block groups. Two are classified as medium, and no block groups are classified as low minority block groups. As there would be as many medium minority block groups affected as high minority block groups, no disproportionate impacts would occur to high minority populations within the Morongo Indian Reservation.

Of the four Morongo Indian Reservation census block groups that lie within one-half mile of the Proposed Project route, two are classified as low-income block groups (with a combined year 2000 population of 2,670). One of the four block groups is classified as a medium-income block group, and one is classified as a high-income block group. Because more low-income block groups would be affected by the Proposed Project than medium or high-income block groups, the Proposed Project would disproportionately impact low-income populations within the Morongo Indian Reservation.

While other impacts to the population in this area could be mitigated to be less than significant, one significant and unmitigable impact (Class I) would occur within the Morongo Indian Reservation. Section D.1 (Air Quality) identified a significant and unmitigable impact (Class I) associated with the generation of dust and exhaust emissions that could be a nuisance and hazard to populations on the Morongo Indian Reservation during construction of the Proposed Project (Impact AQ-1). Although only two low-income block groups would be affected by the Proposed Project, because there is only one medium-income and one high-income block group affected, this would constitute a significant and unmitigable environmental justice impact (Class I) in this location.

Palo Verde CCD

The Palo Verde CCD has a total of three census block groups that lie within one-half mile of the Proposed Project route. The location of the Proposed Project route and the Palo Verde CCD census block groups are illustrated in Figure G-7. Of the three block groups, one is classified as a high minority block group, one is classified as a medium minority block group, and one is classified as a low minority block group. Similarly, one of the three block groups is classified as low-income, one is classified as medium-income, and one is classified as high-income. Because the ROW would affect each of these block groups equally, no disproportionate impacts to high minority or low-income populations would occur. No environmental justice impacts would occur within the Palo Verde CCD.

Figure G-1. Environmental Justice – Cathedral City
[CLICK HERE TO VIEW](#)

This page intentionally blank.

Figure G-2. Environmental Justice – Chuckwalla CCD
[CLICK HERE TO VIEW](#)

This page intentionally blank.

Figure G-3. Environmental Justice – Colton
[CLICK HERE TO VIEW](#)

This page intentionally blank.

Figure G-4. Environmental Justice – Indio
[CLICK HERE TO VIEW](#)

This page intentionally blank.

Figure G-5. Environmental Justice – Loma Linda
[CLICK HERE TO VIEW](#)

This page intentionally blank.

Figure G-6. Environmental Justice – Morongo Indian Reservation
[CLICK HERE TO VIEW](#)

This page intentionally blank.

Figure G-7. Environmental Justice – Palo Verde CCD
[CLICK HERE TO VIEW](#)

This page intentionally blank.

G.1.2.3 Alternatives

Approximately 15 block groups have at least some portion of their area within one-half mile (on either side) of the centerline of the alternatives to the Proposed Project. All of the block groups in the study area have been classified, with respect to minority population percentage and low-income population percentage, in accordance with the criteria discussed above. The results of this classification are summarized in Table G-3 for the alternatives. Table G-3 lists only the jurisdictions where the alternatives would be different from the Proposed Project. The analyses below consider only the environmental justice impacts of the alternative segment, and does not consider the environmental justice impacts of the project as a whole with the inclusion of the alternative segment. The summary of alternatives at the end of this section presents the environmental justice impacts of the alternatives in the context of the whole of the project route.

Table G-3. Alternatives – Total Number of Block Groups in Each Classification and Number of Block Groups in Each Classification within 0.5 Miles of Alternatives for Each Applicable Jurisdiction

County	Block Group Classification	No. of Block Groups Jurisdiction-wide (% of Block Groups in Jurisdiction)	No. of Block Groups along Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative (% of Block Groups along Alternative)	No. of Block Groups along Alligator Rock Alternatives (% of Block Groups along Alternative)	No. of Block Groups along Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative (% of Block Groups along Alternative)
Cathedral City	High-minority	9 (32%)	0 (0%)	n/a	n/a
	Medium-minority	10 (36%)	1 (50%)	n/a	n/a
	Low-minority	9 (32%)	1 (50%)	n/a	n/a
	Low-income	10 (36%)	1 (50%)	n/a	n/a
	Medium-income	9 (32%)	1 (50%)	n/a	n/a
	High-income	9 (32%)	0 (0%)	n/a	n/a
	Total (all) block groups	28 (100%)	2 (100%)	n/a	n/a
Chuckwalla CCD	High-minority	2 (33%)	2 (50%)	2 (75%)	n/a
	Medium-minority	2 (33%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	n/a
	Low-minority	2 (33%)	0 (2%)	0 (0%)	n/a
	Low-income	2 (33%)	1 (25%)	1 (33%)	n/a
	Medium-income	2 (33%)	1 (25%)	1 (33%)	n/a
	High-income	2 (33%)	2 (50%)	1 (33%)	n/a
	Total (all) block groups	6 (100%)	4 (100%)	3 (100%)	n/a
Indio	High-minority	8 (28%)	0 (0%)	n/a	n/a
	Medium-minority	11 (38%)	0 (0%)	n/a	n/a
	Low-minority	10 (34%)	1 (100%)	n/a	n/a
	Low-income	10 (34%)	0 (0%)	n/a	n/a
	Medium-income	10 (34%)	0 (0%)	n/a	n/a
	High-income	9 (31%)	1 (100%)	n/a	n/a
	Total (all) block groups	29 (100%)	1 (100%)	n/a	n/a
Morongo Indian Reservation	High-minority	2 (33%)	n/a	n/a	1 (33%)
	Medium-minority	2 (33%)	n/a	n/a	1 (33%)
	Low-minority	2 (33%)	n/a	n/a	1 (33%)
	Low-income	2 (33%)	n/a	n/a	2 (75%)
	Medium-income	2 (33%)	n/a	n/a	0 (0%)
	High-income	2 (33%)	n/a	n/a	1 (25%)
	Total (all) block groups	6 (100%)	n/a	n/a	3 (100%)
Romoland	High-minority	1 (33%)	n/a	n/a	0 (0%)
	Medium-minority	1 (33%)	n/a	n/a	1 (50%)
	Low-minority	1 (33%)	n/a	n/a	1 (50%)
	Low-income	1 (33%)	n/a	n/a	0 (0%)
	Medium-income	1 (33%)	n/a	n/a	1 (50%)
	High-income	1 (33%)	n/a	n/a	1 (50%)
	Total (all) block groups	3 (100%)	n/a	n/a	2 (100%)

Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative

The Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative has a total of seven census block groups that lie within one-half mile of the alternative route within Cathedral City, Chuckwalla CCD, and the City of Indio. Because the Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative follows the same route as the Proposed Project, environmental justice impacts in Cathedral City, Chuckwalla CCD, and the City of Indio would

be the same as for the Proposed Project. No environmental justice impacts would occur to minority or low-income populations as a result of the Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative.

Alligator Rock Alternatives

The Alligator Rock Alternatives would all be within one-half mile of the same census block groups, so are analyzed here together. The Alligator Rock Alternatives have a total of three census block groups that lie within one-half mile of the alternative route within the Chuckwalla CCD. Of the three, two are classified as high minority block groups (with a combined year 2000 population of 9,761). One block group is classified as medium, and no blocks are classified as low minority block groups. Because more high minority block groups would be affected by the alternative than medium or low minority block groups, impacts associated with the Alligator Rock Alternatives would appear to be disproportionate to high minority populations within the Chuckwalla CCD.

The Alligator Rock Alternatives are located in a largely undeveloped portion of Riverside County, with the nearest population center being Desert Center. Census block groups in the Chuckwalla CCD are up to 45 miles across. While an environmental justice analysis of the census block groups within one-half mile of the Alligator Rock Alternatives indicate that they would affect disproportionately more high minority block groups than other block groups, the size of the block groups distorts the accuracy of the analysis. In this case, the alternatives may be one-half mile from a block group, but 25 miles from the nearest population center in the block group. Consequently, a more detailed analysis of the census blocks surrounding these alternatives was performed. Analysis of the census blocks (smaller census divisions which make up the census block groups) within one-half mile of the alternatives indicates that of the 26 blocks within one-half mile, only 8 are populated. Categorizing these into lower-, middle-, and high minority blocks, there would be three low, three medium, and two high minority block groups. The alternatives would pass through all of these, so there would be no disproportionate impacts.

Of the three Alligator Rock Alternatives census block groups that lie within one-half mile of the alternative routes, one is classified as an low block group. One of the three block groups is classified as a medium-income block group, while one is classified as a high-income block group. Because all three block groups would be affected equally by the alternative, no disproportionate impacts to low-income populations would occur within the Chuckwalla CCD as a result of these alternatives. No environmental justice impacts would occur to low-income populations as a result of the Alligator Rock Alternatives.

Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative

The Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative would diverge from the Proposed Project east of the Morongo Indian Reservation and would turn southeast and come within one half-mile of Palm Springs, Cabazon, Beaumont, Banning, San Jacinto, and Nuevo before terminating at Valley Substation in Romoland. The screening analysis identified the Morongo Indian Reservation and Romoland for environmental justice analysis for this alternative.

The Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative has a total of two census block groups that lie within one-half mile of the alternative route in Romoland. The location of the Proposed Project route and the Romoland census block groups are illustrated in Figure G-8. One of the block groups is classified as a medium-minority block group and the other is a low-minority block group. One is classified as a high-income block group and the other is a medium-income block group. As no low-income or high-minority block groups would be affected by this alternative, no environmental justice impacts would occur in Romoland as a result of the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative.

The Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative has a total of three census block groups that lie within one-half mile of the alternative route within the Morongo Indian Reservation. Of the three total block groups, one is classified as a high minority block group. One is classified as medium, and one is classified as a low minority block group. As there would be as many medium and low minority block groups affected as high minority block groups, no disproportionate impacts would occur to high minority populations within the Morongo Indian Reservation. No environmental justice impacts would occur to minority populations as a result of the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative.

Of the three Morongo Indian Reservation census block groups identified that lie within one-half mile of the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative route, two are classified as low-income block groups. None of the three block groups are classified as medium-income block groups, and one is classified as a high-income block group. Because more low-income block groups would be affected by the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative than medium or high-income block groups, low-income populations within the Morongo Indian Reservation would be disproportionately impacted by this alternative.

While other impacts to the population in this area could be mitigated to be less than significant, one significant and unmitigable impact (Class I) would occur within the Morongo Indian Reservation. Section D.1 (Air Quality) identified a significant and unmitigable impact (Class I) associated with the generation of dust and exhaust emissions that could be a nuisance and hazard to populations on the Morongo Indian Reservation during construction of the alternative (Impact AQ-1). Although only two low-income block groups would be affected by the Proposed Project, because there is only one medium-income block group and no high-income block groups affected, this would constitute a significant and unmitigable environmental justice impact (Class I) in this location.

Alternatives Summary

As described above for the Proposed Project, the only jurisdiction along the Proposed Project route where significant and unmitigable (Class I) environmental justice impacts would occur is in the Morongo Indian Reservation. In the analysis of the alternatives, with the exception of the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative, no environmental justice impacts were identified in the portion of the alternative route that differed from the Proposed Project. Consequently, because most of the alternatives to the Proposed Project do not differ in their route through the Morongo Indian Reservation, all of the alternatives to the Proposed Project except the Devers-Valley No. 2 would result in the same environmental justice impacts as the Proposed Project, including the significant and unmitigable (Class I) impact to low-income populations on the Morongo Indian Reservation. The Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative, the one alternative which would avoid traversing Morongo Indian Reservation land, would still be within one half-mile of Morongo Indian Reservation census block groups and would impact the same low-income populations that the Proposed Project would, resulting in the same significant and unmitigable (Class I) impacts to low-income populations.

G.2 Growth Inducing Effects

Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR discuss the ways in which a proposed project may foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. The discussion must additionally address how a proposed project may remove obstacles to growth, or encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. Typically, the growth-inducing potential of a project would be considered significant if it fosters growth or a concentration of population above what is assumed in local and regional land use plans, or in projections made by regional planning

Figure G-8. Environmental Justice – Romoland
[CLICK HERE TO VIEW](#)

This page intentionally blank.

authorities. Significant growth impacts could also occur if a project provides infrastructure or service capacity to accommodate growth levels beyond those permitted by local or regional plans and policies.

G.2.1 Growth Caused by Direct and Indirect Employment

As indicated in Section B, Project Description (Table B-5, 500 kV Transmission Line Labor Force and Equipment Requirements), the maximum workforce necessary for construction of both the Devers-Harquahala and West of Devers portions of the Proposed Project is anticipated to be a total of 385 personnel. Because at some stages of the project, multiple locations would be under construction simultaneously, a maximum estimated average daily workforce is assumed for each portion of the Proposed Project.

For the Devers-Harquahala segments, the maximum daily workforce would be 211 personnel while the maximum daily workforce for the West of Devers segments would be 174 personnel. Although there are portions of the project route that have low populations, large local construction workforces are generally available throughout the project route due to large population centers in Maricopa, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties.

- In Maricopa County, the maximum required Proposed Project workforce of 211 personnel would comprise 0.14 percent of the total construction workforce available in the county.
- La Paz County has an estimated total construction workforce of 726 personnel, but it is anticipated that project construction in La Paz County would draw on the workforces of Riverside and Maricopa Counties.
- In Riverside County, the required Proposed Project workforce would comprise 0.30 percent and 0.24 percent of the total construction workforce available in the county for construction of the Devers-Harquahala segments and West of Devers segments, respectively.
- West of Devers construction in San Bernardino County would require 0.19 percent of the total San Bernardino County construction workforce.

Personnel for operation and maintenance would be drawn from local populations. Consequently, no workers are expected to relocate permanently during project construction and no new demand to local housing would be expected. Because no personnel are expected to permanently relocate as a part of the Proposed Project, the project would not result in new demand to local public services or facilities serving the Proposed Project route.

Section D.14, Socioeconomics, provides a detailed assessment of the existing labor force within the Proposed Project area. Due to the location of DPV2, and the size of the labor force within the La Paz and Maricopa Counties in Arizona, and Riverside and San Bernardino Counties in California, it is assumed that the labor force required for construction would come from within the four-county area. At the peak of construction-related activities, the Proposed Project would require an estimated 0.13 percent of the total four-county construction workforce, the majority of which would be expected to commute to and from the Proposed Project's work sites. Although a limited number of construction personnel may choose to stay at existing local hotels during construction in lieu of commuting, there is an adequate supply of hotels and visitor-related services within the Proposed Project area to temporarily accommodate out-of-town (non-commuting) personnel. Therefore, no growth in residential housing or services would occur. Over the long term, the Proposed Project would have no impact on population growth, as no long-term increase in employment would result from Proposed Project operations.

G.2.2 Growth Related to Provision of Additional Electric Power

As outlined in Section A.2.1 (Statement of Purpose and Objectives), the primary purposes of the Proposed Project are to:

- Increase California’s access to low-cost energy by adding 1,200 MW of transmission import capability into California from the Southwest. This is expected to substantially benefit California by reducing energy costs.
- Enhance competition among generating companies supplying energy to California.
- Provide additional transmission infrastructure to support and provide an incentive for the development of future energy suppliers selling energy into the California energy market.
- Provide increased reliability of supply, insurance value against extreme events, and flexibility in operating California’s transmission grid.

As such, the Proposed Project is not intended to supply power related to growth for any particular development, either directly or indirectly and would not result in direct growth inducing impacts. However, the Proposed Project could facilitate growth indirectly in the project area through the additional increased capacity of electric power that it would make available. As discussed in Section A.2 (Purpose and Need for the Proposed Project), the Proposed Project would be operated at 500 kV east of Devers and 230 kV west of Devers in order to meet STEP recommendations for new transmission in Arizona and California. The transmission line would be built so that as power loads increase, future overloading of transmission facilities would be avoided. The CAISO analysis indicated that even with implementation of the STEP short-term upgrades completed in 2006, there would still be substantial congestion on the grid between Arizona and California. The CAISO’s analysis of DPV2 further indicated that the project scope and cost appear to be appropriate in benefiting the Arizona and California power grid by increasing voltage support in southern California and enhancing system operational flexibility by providing CAISO operators with more options in responding to transmission and generation outages (CAISO, 2005). By increasing capacity and reducing generation outages, the Proposed Project would increase power reliability and could, therefore, be considered growth inducing.

Sections D.14.2 (Socioeconomics Environmental Setting for the Proposed Project – Devers Harquahala) and D.14.3 (Socioeconomics Environmental Setting for the Proposed Project – West of Devers) provide a description of the existing populations within the Proposed Project area. Both locally and regionally, the Proposed Project area is experiencing substantial population growth, which is reflected in the large number of proposed and planned future residential development projects listed in Tables F-1 and F-3 and shown in Figures F-1a through F-1d as well as Figure F-4. This growth is expected to occur with or without implementation of the Proposed Project. With implementation of the Proposed Project, SCE is responding to anticipated future load growth in a timely manner and would be consistent with current STEP planning recommendations. An assessment of the potential significant cumulative impacts of the Proposed Project is provided in Section F of this EIR/EIS (Cumulative Scenario and Impacts).

G.3 Significant Irreversible and Irretrievable Changes

Pursuant to Section 15126.2 (c) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must address significant irreversible and irretrievable environmental changes that would be caused by a Proposed Project. These changes include uses of nonrenewable resources during construction and operation, long-term or permanent access to previously inaccessible areas, and irreversible damages that may result from project-related accidents.

Implementation of the Proposed Project would result in the consumption of energy as it relates to the fuel needed for construction-related activities. Approximately 1,345,000 gallons of gasoline, 363,000 gallons of diesel, and 88,000 gallons of Jet fuel would be required for project construction. Additionally, construction would require the manufacture of new materials, some of which would not be recyclable at the end of the Proposed Project's lifetime, and the energy required for the production of these materials, which would also result in an irretrievable commitment of natural resources. The anticipated equipment, vehicles, and materials required for construction of the Proposed Project are detailed in Section B.3 (Project Construction). Maintenance and inspection of the Proposed Project would not change appreciably from SCE's existing activities in project area, and thus would not cause a substantial increase in the consumption or use of nonrenewable resources.

Implementation of the Proposed Project would additionally require the permanent loss of approximately 160.1 acres of vegetation and habitat, which equals 15.2 percent of the total land (1052.1 acres) disturbed for construction. Assuming that the mitigation measures for biological resources recommended in this EIR/EIS (see Section D.2) would be implemented, project-induced loss of vegetation and habitat would be less than significant.

The majority of access required for construction and operation of the Proposed Project would utilize existing public ROWs and access roads. A total of approximately 53.7 acres of land would be disturbed for access road clearing and grading activities. Therefore, new public access to previously inaccessible areas would be negligible.

During the Proposed Project's operational phase, the transport of electrical power generated from nonrenewable resources (e.g., natural gas, nuclear) would continue.

Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would require the use of a limited amount of hazardous materials such as fuel, lubricants and cleaning solvents. Additionally, during Project construction and operation preexisting soil or groundwater contamination could potentially be encountered. All hazardous materials would be stored, handled, and used in accordance with established SCE Best Management Practices (BMPs) and applicable federal, State, and local regulations, including a construction-phase Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and operational-phase Hazmat Business Plan and Storm Water Management Plan. Assuming appropriate implementation of these plans and practices, as well as the mitigation measures recommended in Section D.10 (Public Health and Safety), potential environmental accidents associated with the Proposed Project would be less than significant.

G.4 Significant Environmental Effects which Cannot be Avoided if the Proposed Project is Implemented

The environmental impacts of the Proposed Project are described in the environmental analysis sections in Section D. Impacts that are significant and cannot be reduced to less than significant levels through the application of feasible mitigation measures have been characterized as Class I impacts. All significant and unavoidable Class I impacts resulting from the Proposed Project are summarized below. Complete descriptions of these impacts are presented in Section D.

Visual Resources

Significant and unavoidable Class I impacts would occur to visual resources at Key Viewpoint 4 on Crystal Hill Road in Kofa National Wildlife Refuge (Impact V-7) and Key Viewpoint 10 in the Alligator Rock ACEC (Impact V-15). Visual resource impacts at Key Viewpoint 4 would result from new

towers increasing visual contrast, skylining, and blocking views of travelers pursuing back-country and off-highway recreation opportunities in a predominantly natural desert setting. At Key Viewpoint 10, the moderate level of visual change due to increased structure contrast, industrial character, view blockage, and skylining would not be consistent with Interim BLM VRM Class II management objective, and consequently would be significant and unavoidable

Wilderness and Recreation

A significant and unavoidable Class I impact to wilderness and recreation resources would occur through the 24-mile portion of Kofa NWR traversed by the Proposed Project (Impact WR-2). Although the Proposed Project would be located adjacent to DPV1, operation of the new transmission line would change the character of this recreation and wilderness area, significantly diminishing its recreational value.

Agriculture

The minimum acreage required for a parcel of Prime Farmland to be entered into a Williamson Act contract is 10 acres. Consequently, this amount is used as a threshold of significance for determining the significance agricultural impacts. The Proposed Project would result in the permanent conversion of 13.6 acres of Prime Farmland (Impact AG-3) within the Harquahala Valley/Harquahala Plain to non-agricultural use, resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact to agricultural resources.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

There is a potential for construction and operation of the Proposed Project to affect known historic properties as well as unknown buried prehistoric and historical archaeological sites, unidentified buried Native American human remains. In many cases, impacts to these cultural resources would be mitigated or avoided. If the impacts to these cultural resources resulting from project activities cannot be mitigated to be less than significant, or if the impacts cannot be avoided, Class I significant impacts would occur to cultural resources.

Noise

Permanent noise levels along the ROW would increase due to corona noise from operation of the Proposed Project transmission lines (Impact N-2), resulting in significant and unavoidable Class I impacts in the Palo Verde Valley (Colorado River to Midpoint Substation) and Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation segments of the Proposed Project route.

Air Quality

A significant and unavoidable Class I impact to air quality would occur as a result of construction generating dust and exhaust emissions in excess of the SCAB thresholds within the SCAQMD (Impact AQ-1). The Proposed Project's NOx and PM10 emissions, even after implementation of mitigation measures, would remain above the SCAQMD daily significance threshold values. Additionally, fugitive dust mitigation measures would also be above local significance thresholds, resulting in localized PM10 impacts for nearby sensitive receptors within SCAQMD jurisdiction.

G.5 Relationship Between Short-Term Uses and Long-Term Productivity of the Environment

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 1500 et seq.) require that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) discuss issues related to environmental sustainability. In general, this EIS discussion is not included as environmental effects for which either significance is defined, or mitigation is recommended. However, the discussion, as it relates to environmental consequences, must be included in the EIS, including consideration of “the relationship between local short-term uses of man’s environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity” (42 United States Code [USC] Section 4332[C] [iv]).

The Proposed Project would result in short-term impacts due to construction-related activities, including: establishment of temporary marshalling yards, access and spur roads, and temporary pulling and splicing sites; construction of new lattice steel towers and tubular steel poles; construction of structures such as Midpoint Substation, the optical repeater facility, series capacitor banks, and the Harquahala Mountain communications facility; upgrade of switchyards, substations, and existing communications facilities; removal of lattice steel towers West of Devers; and reconductoring existing transmission lines. The Proposed Project’s construction-related activities are detailed in Section B.3.

Short-term adverse impacts to biological resources, visual resources, land use, wilderness and recreation, agriculture, cultural and paleontological resources, noise, transportation and traffic, public health and safety, air quality, water resources, geology and soils, and socioeconomics would occur during Proposed Project construction. The Impact Summary Tables at the end of the Executive Summary summarize these impacts; mitigation measures to reduce these impacts to a level of less than significant (Class II) are detailed in each resource/issue-specific analysis contained within Section D and listed in the Impact Summary Tables.

During Proposed Project construction, local spending by contractors on personnel, materials, equipment, lodging, food, entertainment, and other miscellaneous purchases would occur. The economic effect of this spending would be considered a beneficial short-term impact on local businesses.

Over the operational lifetime of the Proposed Project, long-term adverse impacts associated with biological resources, visual resources, land use, wilderness and recreation, agriculture, cultural and paleontological resources, noise, traffic and transportation, public health and safety, air quality, water resources, and geology and soils would occur. These long-term impacts are summarized the Executive Summary of this EIR/EIS.

G.6 References

U.S. EPA. 1998. Final Guidance for Incorporating Environmental Justice Concerns in EPA’s NEPA Compliance Analysis. April.