Proponent's Environmental Assessment for Southern California Edison Company's Eagle Mountain-Blythe 161 kiloVolt Transmission Line Rating Remediation Project Volume 4

July 31, 2024 (PEA submittal date)

Remove existing subtransmission structures and conductors, install new subtransmission structures and conductors on existing distribution and subtransmission circuits.

The Eagle Mountain-Blythe 161 kiloVolt Transmission Line Rating Remediation Project would be located in Riverside County and the City of Blythe within the State of California.

Application A.24-XX-XX to the California Public Utilities Commission

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Chapter 6 Comparison of Alternatives

The CPUC's PEA Guidelines (*Guidelines for Energy Project Applications Requiring CEQA Compliance: Pre-filing and Proponent's Environmental Assessments*, dated November 2019; page 40) states, "All Applicants will assume that alternatives will be required for the environmental analysis and that an EIR will be prepared unless otherwise instructed by CPUC CEQA Unit Staff in writing prior to application filing." As discussed, the Eagle Mountain-Blythe 161 kiloVolt Transmission Line Rating Remediation Project (EM-B Project) involves remediation of clearance discrepancies on existing subtransmission infrastructure within an established EM-B Project alignment. Based upon SCE's analysis, no potentially significant impacts were identified and, following consultation with CPUC Energy Division, SCE is not proposing alternatives at this time. In addition, because the EM-B Project involves reconductoring portions of existing subtransmission lines rather than the construction of new subtransmission lines, alternatives that would substantially deviate from the existing alignment (i.e. alternative routes or locations) were not considered. Moreover, SCE has received written instruction on September 29, 2023 from CPUC that an alternatives analysis is not required for this PEA; therefore, this PEA does not include a comparison of alternatives.

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Chapter 7 Cumulative Impacts and Other CEQA Considerations

This Chapter presents the results of a cumulative impacts analysis for the Southern California Edison Company's (SCE) Eagle Mountain-Blythe 161 kiloVolt (kV) Transmission Line Rating Remediation Project (Project) and an analysis of the potential growth-inducing impacts associated with the Project.

7.1 Cumulative Impacts

This chapter analyzes the potential cumulative impacts related to the Project. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires lead agencies to consider the cumulative impacts of proposals under their review. CEQA Guidelines Section 15355 defines cumulative impacts as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts." According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a)(1), "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts." According to Section 15130(b)(5), the cumulative impacts analysis should "examine reasonable, feasible options for mitigating or avoiding the project's contribution to any significant cumulative effects."

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a)(3) also states that an environmental document may determine that a project's contribution to a significant cumulative impact would be rendered less-than-cumulatively considerable, and thus not significant, if a project is required to implement or fund its fair share of mitigation measure(s) designed to alleviate the cumulative impact.

In conducting a cumulative impacts analysis, the proper frame of reference is the temporal span and spatial areas in which the Project would cause impacts. In addition, Section 15130(b)(1) requires that a discussion of cumulative impacts must include either:

- A list of past, present, and probable future projects, including, if necessary, those outside the lead agency's control; or
- A summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan—or related planning document—that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect. Such plans may include a general plan, regional transportation plan, or plans for the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. A summary of projections may also be contained in an adopted or certified prior environmental document for such a plan. Such projections may be supplemented with additional information, such as a regional modeling program. Any such document will be referenced and made available to the public at a location specified by the lead agency.

The following subsections discuss whether the Project could result in significant short-term or long-term environmental impacts when combined with present, planned, and probable future projects in the area. Short-term impacts are generally associated with construction of the Project and cumulative projects, while long-term impacts are those that result from operations and maintenance (O&M) of the Project features or O&M of the cumulative projects.

7.1.1 List of Cumulative Projects

Review of the State Clearinghouse Office and Planning and Research CEQAnet, California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Current Project webpage, California Department of Transportation Project Portal, County of Riverside Planning Commission website, and U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) National NEPA Register revealed several present and probable future projects located within 2 miles of the Project. The present and probable future projects are listed in Table 7-1, along with a brief description, the jurisdiction in which it is located, distance from the Project Alignment, status, and anticipated construction schedule. These projects are shown on Figure 7.1-1.

7.1.2 Geographic Scope

The geographic scope of analysis for each resource topic is constrained to those areas where work associated with the Project would be performed or, for aesthetics, those areas where work associated with the Project would be visible.

7.1.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The subsections that follow analyze the potential cumulative impacts from Project construction by resource area. Implementation of the Project would not change the requirement for existing O&M activities for the facilities along the Project Alignment; as a result, these ongoing O&M activities would not contribute to any cumulative impacts and are not discussed further.

7.1.3.1 Aesthetics

The Project Area and vicinity (2-mile radius) in which Cumulative Projects are located contains desert views and scenic vistas comprised of mountain ranges that are interrupted by horizontal and vertical features related to existing solar and other utility infrastructure. The Project would increase the height of existing infrastructure, increase the spacing between poles, increase the diameter of some poles, and convert some pole material from wood to steel, but it would not introduce new vertical features where none currently exist. In addition, immediately north of the Eagle Mountain Substation, the Project would include the removal of approximately nine structures which would not be replaced. The majority of the Cumulative Projects described in Table 7-1 would introduce new solar facilities, battery energy storage system (BESS) infrastructure, and utility infrastructure to the landscape that would be consistent with the existing solar and utility infrastructure in the area. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to cumulatively considerable impacts on scenic vistas.

As discussed in Section 5.1, Aesthetics, the Project would have no impact on scenic resources. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to any cumulatively considerable scenic resources-related impact.

Figure 7.1-1 Cumulative Projects

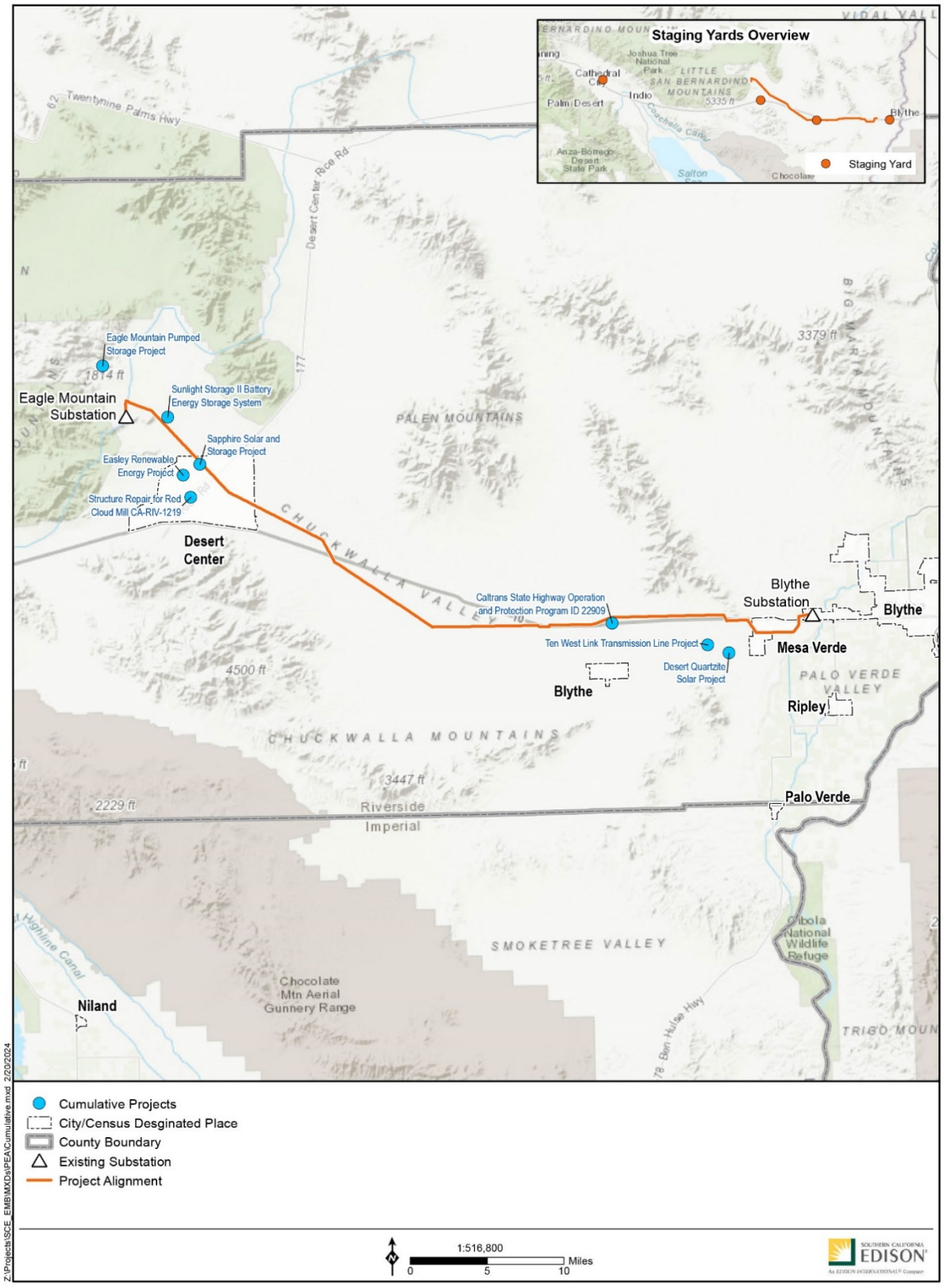

Table 7-1 List of Cumulative Projects within 2 Miles of the Project

Project	Description	Location	Approximate Distance to the Project	Status	Anticipated Construction Schedule
Easley Renewable Energy Project	Construction of a solar photovoltaic facility, battery energy storage system (BESS), and appurtenant facilities on approximately 3,735 acres of private and Bureau of Land Management- (BLM-) administered land. A 6.7-mile-long 500 kV generation tie (gen-tie) transmission line would connect to an existing substation on the Oberon Solar Project Site. The project would generate up to 400 megawatts (MW) of energy and store up to 650 MW.	Riverside County; Approximately 2 miles north of the town of Desert Center in the western portion of the Project Alignment between Rice Road and Kaiser Road.	0 mile	Planning	Unknown
Sapphire Solar and Storage Project	Construction of a 117 MW solar facility, BESS, and associated facilities on approximately 1,192 acres of private and BLM-administered land.	Riverside County; Approximately 5 miles north of Desert Center and in the western portion of the Project Alignment between Rice Road and Kaiser Road.	0 mile	Planning	Unknown
Desert Quartzsite Solar Project	Construction of a 450 MW solar photovoltaic facility, 230 kV gen-tie line, and related infrastructure on approximately 3,616 acres of BLM land.	Riverside County; Approximately 3 miles southwest of the western extent of the City of Blythe and within the eastern portion of the Project Alignment along 15th Avenue between two unnamed access roads of an existing unit of the Blythe Solar Project.	0 mile	Under Construction	February 2023 to December 2024
Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Project	Construction of two reservoirs, two dams, water conveyance tunnels, surge control facilities, an underground powerhouse, a 13.5-mile 500 kV transmission line, water supply facilities, access roads, and appurtenant facilities on 2,364 acres.	Riverside County; Approximately 12 miles northwest of Desert Center and in the western portion of the Project Alignment.	0 mile	Planning	Unknown

Project	Description	Location	Approximate Distance to the Project	Status	Anticipated Construction Schedule
Sunlight Storage II Battery Energy Storage System	Construction of a 300-MW BESS facility and associated infrastructure, gen-tie line, and access roads on approximately 30 acres of land.	Riverside County; Approximately 6 miles north of Desert Center and northeast of the western portion of the Project Alignment.	0.3 mile	Planning	Unknown
Caltrans State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) ID 22909	Upgrading water and sewer systems at Wiley's Well Safety Roadside Rest Areas and replacing water system along Route 10.	Riverside County; Approximately 10 miles east of Mesa Verde along Route 10 and south of the western portion of the Project Alignment.	0.4 mile	Planning	Fiscal year 2026 to 2027
Ten West Link Transmission Line Project	Installation of a 125-mile 500 kV transmission line between the Delaney Substation and the Colorado River Substation.	Riverside County in California and Maricopa and La Paz counties in Arizona; Spanning the Delaney Substation in Tonopah, Arizona and the Colorado River Substation in Blythe, California and south of the eastern portion of the Project Alignment.	2 miles	Under Construction	January 2023 to early 2024
Structure Repair for Red Cloud Mill CA-RIV-1219	Repairs to a structure at the Red Cloud Mill archaeological site. Repairs would include a door frame, window frame, and stabilization of a stone structure.	Riverside County; North of Desert Center east of the intersection of Oasis Road and Rice Road and southwest of the western portion of the Project Alignment.	2 miles	Planning	Unknown

Sources: BLM 2024, California Department of Transportation 2024, EDF Renewables North America 2024a, EDF Renewables North America 2024b, Riverside County Planning Department 2024a, State Water Resources Control Board 2013, Sunlight Storage II, LLC 2023, Ten West Link 2022

Temporary construction-related visual impacts could result from the presence of heavy equipment, materials, and work crews along the Project and traveling to and from the laydown yards. Vegetation removal and access road rehabilitation may be required, but no new access roads would be installed. Construction of the Project is expected to take approximately 8 months to complete in total; however, the duration of construction activities at any one location along the Project would be considerably shorter. Visual impacts from the Project construction could combine with visual impacts from the construction of the Cumulative Projects, but it would be for a duration shorter than 8 months at any given location and the primary affected viewers would be motorists along Interstate (I-) 10 and nearby roadways who would only briefly view the Project construction and any Cumulative Project construction in passing. As discussed in Section 5.1, Aesthetics, lasting visual change from the Project would be negligible as the height and width differences in the replacement poles compared to the existing poles would be minimal and the implementation of applicant proposed measure (APM) AES-1 would use non reflective finishes on subtransmission structures, non-specular and non-reflective subtransmission conductors, and non-specular and non-reflective subtransmission insulators to reduce glare and minimize contrast. Such minor modifications would not combine with the lasting effects of the Cumulative Projects to create a significant cumulative impact on the surrounding visual character. Therefore, the Project would only have an incremental contribution to cumulatively considerable impacts on the surrounding visual character.

The Project would not introduce permanent sources of light and glare. During construction, lighting may be used periodically near the end of a workday as the sun sets. If lighting is required at a construction area, SCE would use the minimum lighting necessary, orient lighting downwards, and shield lighting to eliminate off-site light spill. As result, spill of lighting off-site would be minimal and unlikely to combine with any lighting from the Cumulative Projects. SCE would implement APM AES-1, which would involve the use of non-reflective finishes on all new subtransmission structures, non-specular and non-reflective subtransmission conductors, and non-reflective and non-refractive insulators, which would reduce the potential for glare to be produced by these Project components. It is anticipated that the Cumulative Projects would implement similar measures to minimize glare. For instance, the Sunlight Storage II Battery Energy System would ensure its colors and finishes do not create excessive glare (Sunlight Storage II, LLC 2023). Therefore, Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact on light and glare.

7.1.3.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

As discussed in Section 5.2, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, the Project would result in no impacts for all agriculture-related CEQA criteria; therefore, the Project would not contribute to any cumulatively considerable agriculture-related impact. The Project Area and vicinity (2-mile radius) in which Cumulative Projects are located do not contain any forestry resources or uses; and Cumulative Projects are anticipated to have no forestry-related impacts. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact to forestry resources.

7.1.3.3 Air Quality

As presented in Section 5.3, Air Quality, the Project would have no impact in terms of conflicting with or obstructing implementation of an applicable air quality plan, and thus would not contribute to any cumulatively considerable impact.

Emissions during the construction phase would include criteria air pollutants (CAPs) that could contribute to existing or projected violations of the ambient air quality standards for ozone. During construction, uncontrolled nitrogen oxide emissions would exceed South Coast Air Quality Management District

(SCAQMD) thresholds. The Project would implement APMs AIR-1 and AIR-2 which would reduce construction emissions below all applicable thresholds. All Cumulative Projects would need to implement measures to control pollutant emissions, similar to the APMs that would be implemented for the Project. As a result, a cumulatively considerable net increase of a criteria pollutant is not anticipated.

Sensitive receptors in the Project vicinity could be exposed to increases in CAPs and Valley Fever as a result of the fugitive dust released during earth-moving activities and vehicle travel on unpaved roads. Residences in the Mesa Verde Nicholls Warm Spring community are within 2,000 feet of the existing right-of-way and sensitive receptors are also located approximately 330 feet east of Eagle Mountain Substation. Because construction would be completed across multiple sites along the Project Alignment, actual emissions at a single site near a sensitive receptor would be lower than overall Project emissions in most cases. Furthermore, the Project would control fugitive dust emissions through complying with Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) Rule 403, SCAQMD Rule 403, and implementing APM AIR-2. Of the Cumulative Projects, only Ten West Link Transmission Line Project and Desert Quartzsite Solar Project would be within the vicinity of the Mesa Verde Nicholls Warm Spring community. The construction timeline of the Ten West Link Transmission Project is not anticipated to overlap construction of the Project, and the construction timeline of the Desert Quartzsite Solar Project may only briefly overlap with construction of the Project. Thus, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable increase in fugitive dust emissions that could impact the Mesa Verde Nicholls Warm Spring community. Many of the Cumulative Projects would either not be in the immediate vicinity of the sensitive receptors near the Eagle Mountain Substation or the construction timelines of the Cumulative Projects would not overlap or only briefly overlap with the construction of the Project. Construction of the Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Project would occur across an over 2,000-acre area and thus overlap with the construction of the Project Alignment in the vicinity of the sensitive receptors near the Eagle Mountain Substation would be unlikely. As a result, the Project would not contribute to any cumulatively considerable impact.

The Project's less-than-significant impacts related to other emissions, such as those leading to objectionable odors, would not contribute to a cumulative impact because the pollutants and odors disperse rapidly with distance, and because few of the identified Cumulative Projects would overlap the Project's construction work space in proximity to a potential receptor. As a result, the Project would not contribute to any cumulatively considerable increase in other emissions that could impact sensitive receptors.

7.1.3.4 Biological Resources

The geographical area evaluated for cumulative impacts to biological resources includes areas directly affected by construction as well as adjacent habitat potentially affected by construction activities.

Construction could affect plant, amphibian, reptilian, avian, and mammalian species identified as special-status and non-listed special-status species; Cumulative Projects would have the potential for similar effects where those projects' activities occur in the presence or habitat of these species. As discussed in Section 5.4, Biological Resources, all impacts associated with the Project would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the implementation of APMs. Impacts to sensitive species and habitats during construction would be temporary and intermittent in nature (lasting only as long as construction work at a given site) and would be limited in their potential geographic scope. Each of the Cumulative Project proponents would be expected to comply with federal and state regulations promulgated for the protection of sensitive species. Therefore, no cumulatively considerable impacts to sensitive species or their habitats would be anticipated.

No impact would occur to state or federally protected wetlands, and, therefore, no cumulatively considerable impacts to state or federally protected wetlands would occur. Temporary impacts may occur to Waters of the State. The Project would obtain all applicable permits for impacts to jurisdictional waters and implement APMs to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. Cumulative Projects would similarly be required to obtain all applicable permits for impacts to jurisdictional waters, including restoration and mitigation conditions to reduce adverse impacts to these features. Due to the lack of state or federally protected wetlands in the Project Area, compliance with applicable regulations protecting state waters, and SCE's implementation of APMs, no cumulatively considerable impact to state or federal jurisdictional wetlands and waters is anticipated.

Construction of the Project would temporarily affect only small, geographically dispersed areas at any one time, resulting in temporarily altered movement paths for individual wildlife, and would not create substantial barriers to movement. As discussed in Section 5.4, Biological Resources, native wildlife nursery sites are not known to occur within the study area associated with the Project. Project construction would be unlikely to occur at the same time and place as the Cumulative Projects for extended periods of time due to the dispersed nature of the Project construction. As a result, the Project construction would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact on the movement of wildlife. New poles and lines, however, could result in a risk of collisions for birds, interfering with the movement of individuals or flocks. To avoid impacts to avian movement from new structures, all new and replacement structures and conductor for the Project would be designed to follow the intent of Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 2006 and, where determined to be high risk, lines would be marked with collision reduction devices in accordance with Reducing Avian Collisions with Power Lines: The State of the Art in 2012, reducing potential impacts to avian movement to a less than significant level. Furthermore, the permanent footprint of many of the Cumulative Projects would far exceed the permanent footprint of the Project (e.g., The Easley Renewable Energy Project, Sapphire Solar Project, Desert Quartzsite Solar Project, and Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Project would each be sited on several thousands of acres). Therefore, the Project would only have an incremental contribution to cumulative impacts on the movement of wildlife.

The County of Riverside General Plan and City of Blythe General Plan contain several policies intended to protect biological resources, including sensitive natural communities, special-status species, riparian habitat and wetlands, wildlife corridors, and to protect against the spread or introduction of noxious weed species. Implementation of general biological resources and species-specific APMs would ensure compliance with the plans. Cumulative Projects would similarly be expected to comply with local policies, ordinances, and the conditions of applicable permits. Therefore, no cumulatively considerable impacts due to conflicts with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources are anticipated.

There are no adopted Habitat Conservation Plans or Natural Community Conservation Plans within the study area, and no known approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plans covering the Project Alignment. Therefore, no cumulatively considerable impacts would occur under this criterion.

7.1.3.5 Cultural Resources

As discussed in Section 5.5, Cultural Resources, it is anticipated that SCE would either avoid or not impact the cultural resources identified by the cultural resource records searches and pedestrian surveys. SCE would implement APMs CUL-1 through CUL-4 to reduce potential impacts to previously undiscovered archaeological historical resources. Prior to construction, SCE would implement APM CUL-1, which includes the preparation and implementation of a Cultural Resources Management Plan. All potentially archaeologically historically sensitive sites within the area of potential effect would be considered

environmentally sensitive areas and avoided per APM CUL-2. Construction of the Easley Renewable Energy Project, Sapphire Solar and Storage Project, Desert Quartzsite Solar Project, and Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Project, may temporarily and spatially overlap with construction of the Project. The Cumulative Project proponents would be expected to comply with state law relating to cultural resources. With implementation of APMs, the Project's contribution to any cumulative impacts would be less than significant and would not be cumulatively considerable.

7.1.3.6 Energy

As presented in Section 5.6, Energy, the Project would result in no or less-than-significant impacts under all energy-related CEQA criteria. Construction of the Cumulative Projects would, like the Project, consume energy resources during construction; the proponents of the Cumulative Projects are anticipated, like SCE, not to waste, unnecessarily use, or inefficiently consume energy resources. Furthermore, the Project would result in no impact with respect to conflicts with or obstruction of a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency or add the capacity for the purpose of serving a non-renewable energy source. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to any cumulatively considerable impact.

7.1.3.7 Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources

Geological hazards are generally site-specific and depend on localized geologic and soil conditions. As discussed in Section 5.7, Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources, no impact would result related to rupture of a known earthquake fault, seismic-ground failure (including liquefaction), expansive soils, and septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to any cumulatively considerable impact related to these CEQA criteria.

The Project would have a less-than-significant impact related to loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground shaking or landslides. Additionally, the Project would have a less-than-significant impact on lateral spreading, subsidence, or collapse. SCE would comply with applicable laws, regulations, ordinances, and permits pertaining to structural design, geotechnical analysis, and erosion control and would implement best management practices (BMPs), a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP), and APMs where applicable. It is expected that those engaged in the construction of all Cumulative Projects would similarly comply with applicable regulations relevant to geologic and soil resources and risks. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to any cumulatively considerable impact.

Portions of the Project are located on geologic units with a high paleontological potential. SCE would implement APMs PAL-1 through PAL-3, which involve preparation and implementation of a Paleontological Resource Mitigation and Monitoring Plan, construction personnel training on procedures to implement in the event of a discovery of paleontological materials, and paleontological monitoring in high sensitivity areas during Project construction. Each of the Cumulative Projects would be required to undergo the appropriate level of project-specific environmental review, and proponents would be expected to comply with state and federal laws relating to paleontological resources. With implementation of APMs, the Project's contribution to any cumulative impacts would be less than significant and would not be cumulatively considerable.

7.1.3.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As presented in Section 5.8, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Project construction would generate emissions of GHGs from on-site construction equipment and worker trips. Over the entire construction period of the Project, approximately 3,574 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO_2) equivalents ($MTCO_2e$) would be emitted.

When amortized over a 30-year period, the increase in annual GHG emissions from the Project would be approximately 119 $MTCO_2e$ annually. These emissions would fall well below the SCAQMD and the MDAQMD numerical thresholds of significance. Therefore, the Project would not generate, either directly or indirectly, GHG emissions that would have a significant impact on the environment. As a result, the Project's contribution to any cumulative impacts would not be cumulatively considerable and would be less than significant.

GHG emissions from construction of the Project would fall well below the established numerical threshold of significance. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation and would not contribute to a cumulative impact resulting from any Cumulative Project's conflicts with such plans, policies, or regulations.

7.1.3.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The geographic scope for hazardous materials impacts includes areas near Project Sites that could be affected by a release of hazardous materials. Impacts from such releases are usually site-specific and localized. The geographic scope also includes areas affected by the Cumulative Projects listed in Table 7-1, including downgradient air, water bodies, groundwater, and areas subject to wildland fire hazards. Materials delivery routes are also included to account for the potential impacts from a traffic accident-related spill.

Construction of the Project would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with the transport, use, disposal, or foreseeable upset of, or accidents involving, hazardous materials during construction with implementation of APMs. Although construction work areas included under the Project may spatially overlap areas where work would occur under some of the Cumulative Projects, Cumulative Projects would be expected to adhere to all applicable laws and regulations to reduce the potential impacts from use of hazardous materials from those projects to less than significant level. Therefore, there would be no cumulatively considerable impacts related to the transport, use, disposal or upset involving hazardous materials.

The Project would not 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 with implementation of APMs. Although construction work areas included under the Project may spatially overlap areas where work would occur under some of the Cumulative Projects, it is anticipated that Cumulative Projects would comply with applicable laws and regulations to reduce impacts from accidental release of hazardous materials. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulative impact from the release of hazardous materials.

The Project would not occur within 0.25 mile of a school, and thus would not contribute to a cumulative impact related to this criterion.

Several Leaking Underground Storage Tanks and Cleanup Program sites are located within 0.25 mile of the Project, and all but one of these sites have a status of Completed – Case Closed. One site within 0.25 mile of the Blythe Laydown Yard has a status of Open – Inactive. Only minor grading, fencing, and rocking is proposed, and no Cumulative Projects identified in Table 7-1 would be within 0.25 mile of the open site. Furthermore, implementation of APM HAZ-1 and APM HAZ-2 would ensure that unanticipated soil contamination is appropriately handled and disposed of, and it is anticipated that the Cumulative Projects would adhere to similar best practices. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulative impact from the creation of a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

Airports within 2 miles of the Project Alignment include Blythe Airport, Desert Center Airport, and the Eagle Mountain Pumping Plant Airstrip (privately owned by Metropolitan Water District of Southern California). The Federal Aviation Administration states that proposed objects taller than 70 feet in Compatibility Zones C and D and taller than 100 feet in Compatibility Zone E of the airport influence areas (AIAs) present potential airspace obstruction issues. One proposed replacement structure of the Project would be approximately 72 feet tall (exceeding the height standard by 2 feet) in Compatibility Zone D of the Blythe Airport and would require review by the Riverside County Airport Lan Use Commission as a potential airspace obstruction. Additionally, prior to construction, SCE would submit the required Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) pursuant to Title 14, Section 77.9 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). SCE would evaluate the FAA recommendations for reasonableness and feasibility. Additionally, construction activities would be performed at a distance from airport activity sufficient to minimize safety concerns to construction personnel. The Ten West Link Transmission Line Project Environmental Impact Statement concluded that no impact to the Blythe Airport would occur (BLM 2019a). The Desert Quartzsite Solar Project would be located within Compatibility Zone E of the Blythe Airport and would not construct structures greater than 100 feet in height within Compatibility Zone E (BLM 2019b). All other Cumulative Projects would be located outside of the Blythe Airport AIA. As a result, the Project would not combine with nearby projects to create a cumulatively considerable impact on safety hazards for people residing or working in the Project Area.

The Project may require temporary road and/or lane closures on public roads and would involve the movement of oversized vehicles that could affect emergency vehicle access to and along the Project Alignment. SCE would prepare and implement required traffic control plans in accordance with required encroachment permits. With encroachment permit implementation, potential hazards from road closures would be minimal and the Project would not impair or interfere with emergency response or evacuation. SCE would coordinate activities that would require temporary closures of road lanes with emergency response agencies. Furthermore, implementation of APM TRA-1 would notify emergency response agencies prior to construction and ensure all roads remain accessible to emergency service vehicles. The Cumulative Projects would be required by law to obtain necessary encroachment permits and coordinate road and lane closures with emergency response agencies. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact on an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

The Project would implement a Fire Prevention and Emergency Response Plan to reduce the risk of fire ignition and spread. Additionally, the Project Area is sparsely populated, and it is anticipated that the Cumulative Projects would implement fire prevention practices and safety measures. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulative impact on the exposure of people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

As previously discussed, the Project would install a replacement structure that exceeds the 70-foot height limit for Blythe Airport Compatibility Zone D. SCE would submit the required Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration to the FAA pursuant to Title 14, Section 77.9 of the CFR and evaluate the FAA recommendations for reasonableness and feasibility. The Ten West Link Transmission Line Project and the Desert Quartzsite Solar Project would be located within the Blythe Airport AIA but are not expected to pose an impact or exceed the Compatibility Zone height standards. No other Cumulative Projects would be within the Blythe Airport AIA. As a result, the Project would not combine with nearby projects to create a cumulatively considerable air traffic hazard.

The Project would not use helicopters during construction, no unexploded ordnance (UXO) was identified in the Project Area, and the Project would comply with all regulations to reduce shock hazards, and thus would not contribute to a cumulative impact related to helicopter use, UXO, or excessive shock hazards.

7.1.3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

The geographic context for the cumulative impacts associated with hydrology and water quality consists of the watersheds and groundwater basins presented in Section 5.10, Hydrology and Water Quality. All Cumulative Projects are located within the same watersheds and groundwater basins as the Project.

Ground-disturbing activities associated with Project construction could expose soils to erosion, and disturbed soil sediment could enter surface watercourses, resulting in increased turbidity and alteration of waterbody characteristics. Construction may involve the use of hazardous materials (e.g., vehicle fuel, hydraulic fluid, oil, grease, solvents, paint, drilling muds, and concrete) that could contaminate surface water or groundwater in the Project Area if spilled or otherwise discharged by accident to the ground surface. SCE would prepare a Project-specific SWPPP that includes waste and materials management BMPs and erosion and sediment control measures to minimize siltation. In addition, the Project would adhere to all other applicable water quality standards set forth by the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board. As the majority of Cumulative Projects would result in disturbances of over 1 acre, these projects would also be required to prepare and adhered to SWPPPs that would outline BMPs for preventing degradation of water quality from construction activities. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact on water quality standards or waste discharge requirements.

The Project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or impede long-term sustainable management of the groundwater basins within the Project Area. Water supplies would be provided by local purveyors and direct groundwater extraction would not be required for the Project. The Project would use approximately 9.6 acre-feet over the approximately 8-month construction period, constituting a small fraction of the available water supplies. Each water agency is responsible for managing groundwater resources to ensure sufficient water supply is available. The Project would result in a minimal increase in impervious surface by approximately 0.1 acre distributed along the 53-mile-along Project Alignment. As the Project would constitute a small fraction of water capacity of the purveyors and create a marginal increase in impervious surfaces, the Project would only have an incremental contribution to cumulatively considerable impacts on groundwater supply or recharge.

The increase in impervious surfaces by 0.1 acre from the Project would create minor alterations in the existing drainage pattern. Each area of impact would be up to 64 square-feet and spread across the 53-mile Project Alignment. The Project would not alter the course of a stream or river. As the Cumulative Projects and the impervious surfaces created by the Project would be spread across a wide geographic area, the impervious surfaces would not be clustered and thus the Project would not contribute to significant alterations to existing drainage patterns that could lead to significant flooding, erosion, siltation, or runoff in any given area. Therefore, the Project would only result in an incremental contribution to cumulatively considerable impacts on existing drainage patterns.

The Project Alignment is not located within a tsunami or seiche zone. The existing Mirage Laydown Yard is located in a 100-year flood hazard zone. As described in Section 5.10, Hydrology and Water Quality, the Project would implement a SWPPP outlining BMPs (e.g., elevating materials off the ground and covering with tarps or similar) designed to limit the potential for construction materials to come into contact with stormwater, including floodwaters. As the Mirage Laydown Yard is an existing yard, a review of Cumulative Projects was not conducted within a 2-mile radius of the laydown yard. The Mirage Laydown Yard is located approximately 52 miles west of the western portion of the Project Alignment and thus the Cumulative Projects described in Table 7-1 would not combine with any impacts in the instance of flooding

of the Mirage Laydown Yard due to their distance. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulative impact on the release of pollutants due to Project inundation.

7.1.3.11 Land Use and Planning

As discussed in Section 5.11, Land Use and Planning, the Project would result in no impacts under all land use and planning-related CEQA criteria because construction activities would not divide an established community and the Project would be consistent with applicable land use policies and plans throughout the Project Alignment. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact to land use and planning.

7.1.3.12 Mineral Resources

As discussed in Section 5.12, Mineral Resources, the Project would result in no impacts under all mineral resources-related CEQA criteria during construction activities because the Project Alignment would not be located within or in proximity to a mineral resource zone of known significance or resource recovery site. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact to mineral resources.

7.1.3.13 Noise

The Project would have a less-than-significant impact related to the generation of a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels. In the instance where the construction timelines of one or more Cumulative Projects were to overlap with the Project's construction timeline, it would be unlikely that construction along the Project Alignment would occur in the vicinity of the construction of any given Cumulative Project for prolonged periods of time due to the length of the Project Alignment. Furthermore, the Cumulative Projects would be required to adhere to the applicable noise regulations and thresholds. As a result, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact on ambient noise levels in excess of applicable noise standards.

Vibration levels at all identified sensitive receptors in Riverside County and the City of Blythe would be below the threshold of significance level of 83 vibration decibels (dBs). Cumulative Projects in the vicinity of the sensitive receptors near the Project would be the Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Project, Desert Quartzsite Solar Project, and Ten West Link Transmission Line Project. The construction timeline of the Project would not overlap with the construction timeline of the Ten West Link Transmission Line Project, and the construction timeline of the Project would only briefly overlap with the final few months the Desert Quartzsite Solar Project construction. In the instance that the construction timeline of Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage and the Project's construction timeline overlap, it would be unlikely that construction activities resulting in ground vibration would occur simultaneously from both projects at a location in proximity to a sensitive receptor as Project construction would be conducted across a 53-mile-long alignment. As a result, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact on ground vibration.

As discussed in Section 5.12, Noise, Project construction workers would not be exposed to excessive noise from aircraft operations as the Project is located outside of the 55 A-weighted dB community noise equivalent level noise contour for Blythe Airport and Desert Center Airport. The construction of the Cumulative Projects in the vicinity of the Blythe Airport, the Ten West Link Transmission Line Project and Desert Quartzsite Solar Project, would not occur at the same time as the construction of the Project. The Sapphire Solar Project and Easley Renewable Energy Project would be located within 1 mile of the Desert Center Airport and construction noise from the Cumulative Projects could combine with noise from Project

construction and aircraft in the area. However, as Project construction would be dispersed across the 53-mile-long alignment, construction in the vicinity of the Desert Center Airport would be for a duration shorter than the total 8-month construction period, and Project construction activities involving equipment that generates significant noise may not occur at the same time as phases of Cumulative Project construction that would generate significant noise. As a result, the Project would only have an incremental contribution to a cumulatively considerable impact on excessive noise for people residing or working in the Project Area.

7.1.3.14 Population and Housing

As discussed in Section 5.14, Population and Housing, the Project would result in no impacts under all population and housing-related CEQA criteria during construction activities because the Project would not induce substantial population growth or displace residents or housing. Construction activities would be temporary, and the workforce would be relatively small; therefore, no permanent or long-term population growth in the Riverside County area would occur due to Project construction. Furthermore, consistent with Section 7.2, Growth-Inducing Impacts, the Project would not directly or indirectly induce population growth in the area as the Project would not expand the electrical capacity of the area to accommodate increased demand. The Project facilities and temporary construction areas would be sited to avoid existing housing, and no residential uses are included as part of the Project. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact to population and housing.

7.1.3.15 Public Services

As discussed in Section 5.15, Public Services, the Project would result in no impacts to all public services-related CEQA criteria during construction activities. The Project would not require the expansion of public facilities such as parks, hospitals, or libraries. Fire, emergency, and police services currently serve and would continue to serve the areas in and around the Project Alignment. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact to public services.

7.1.3.16 Recreation

As discussed in Section 5.16, Recreation, the Project would have no impact on neighborhood and regional parks or recreational facilities and no new recreational facilities would need to be built or expanded as a result of Project construction activities. As discussed in Section 5.14, Population and Housing, the Project would not directly or indirectly result in growth or development that would result in an increase in demand for neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities, and the Project Alignment does not cross any city or county parks or recreational facilities. The Project Alignment does not cross any recreational trails or facilities. Furthermore, the Project would not change the substantially change the character of a recreational area. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact to the use of neighborhood and regional parks or recreational facilities or damage any recreational trails or facilities.

The Project would require temporary access restrictions along I-10 during construction activities, which may potentially affect access to the Chuckwalla Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) located south of I-10. To reduce the potential impacts associated with access restrictions to this recreation area, SCE would implement APM REC-1. APM REC-1 would require SCE to coordinate with recreation facility owners prior to any temporary access restrictions to ensure facility users are aware of upcoming restrictions and can still access the facility through the use of alternative roads. The Easley Renewable Energy Project, Sapphire Solar and Storage Project, Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Project, Sunlight Storage II Battery

Energy Storage System, Caltrans SHOPP ID 22909, and Structure Repair for Red Cloud Mill CA-RIV-1219 would be located in the vicinity of the Chuckwalla Valley SRMA. Due to the temporary nature of the Project access restrictions and limited number of restriction locations, it is unlikely that temporary access restrictions related to the Cumulative Projects would occur at the same time as the restrictions from the Project. If Cumulative Projects' access restrictions and access restrictions due to Project construction happened to occur simultaneously, implementation of APM REC-1 would minimize the impact by ensuring facility users are aware of upcoming restrictions and can still access the facility through the use of alternative roads. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact on access to a designated recreation facility or area.

7.1.3.17 Transportation

The geographic scope for cumulative transportation impacts includes the regional and local roadways that may be used to access the Project or that could otherwise be impacted by construction of the Project. The geographic scope also includes the bus routes and pedestrian and bike paths in the area.

Project construction activities would be spread out along the length of the Project Alignment such that construction-related traffic would not be concentrated at one location. Construction traffic would be temporary, and any traffic increase would be negligible in the desert, rural area of the county. Likewise, the Cumulative Projects are distributed over a large geographic area and traffic or road closures associated with construction would be temporary. As a result, the Project would not create any inconsistency or conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy that establishes measures of effectiveness, and therefore would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact in this regard.

During the most vehicle-intensive phase of construction activities, there would be a 0.03 percent increase beyond the existing 61,000,000 daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in Riverside County. Therefore, the Project would combine with the VMT of the Cumulative Projects during construction and only have an incremental contribution to cumulatively considerable impacts associated with VMT.

The Project would not introduce a new design feature that would increase hazards and no cumulatively considerable impact would occur under this criterion. Heavy construction equipment would travel on public roadways to access the Project, and the movement of heavy trucks and equipment could incidentally damage road surfaces, shoulders, curbs, sidewalks, signs, and light standards. However, heavy equipment would be minimal and travel would be spread across the approximately 53-mile-long Project Alignment. It is unlikely that movement of heavy trucks and equipment from the Cumulative Projects would overlap with the Project's movement of heavy trucks and equipment at any given location. As a result, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact in this regard.

Project construction activities would occur in remote and largely uninhabited areas, and SCE would prepare and implement traffic control plans in accordance with required encroachment permits. These plans would require that construction activities be coordinated with local agencies and emergency providers and that appropriate traffic controls be implemented to maintain pedestrian and bicycle access and to reduce potential traffic delays for public transit operations and reduce hazardous conditions for people walking, biking, driving, or taking public transit. It is anticipated that the Cumulative Projects would implement traffic control plans in accordance with any required encroachment permits. Therefore, the Project would have no contribution to cumulatively considerable impacts related to people walking, biking, driving, or taking public transit, walking or biking accessibility, or public transit delay.

7.1.3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

The CPUC would consult with eligible tribes under Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1 once SCE's Permit to Construct Application is complete. Impacts on tribal cultural resources are not addressed in this Proponent's Environmental Assessment because under Assembly Bill 52, the CPUC must identify these resources during consultation. Therefore, no determination regarding cumulative impacts to tribal cultural resources can be made at this time.

7.1.3.19 Utilities and Service Systems

As presented in Section 5.19, Utilities and Service Systems, the Project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact.

Project construction activities would result in a temporary increase in water demand for dust management and concrete mixing. Water used during construction would be obtained from existing hydrants and wells operated by utilities and would represent a small fraction of the combined capacity of City of Blythe, County of Riverside CSA 51 and CSA 122, and the Palo Verde Irrigation District. As a result, the water use of the Project would only have an incremental contribution to cumulative impacts on water supplies.

Portable restrooms would be used during construction, and sanitation waste and wastewater (i.e., human-generated waste) from these restrooms would be disposed of offsite at appropriate treatment facilities. Wastewater from the portable restrooms used during Project construction would not constitute a significant addition to existing wastewater treatment commitments in the region; and existing wastewater facilities would adequately accommodate the minor, temporary increase in demand associated with Project construction while serving existing commitments. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact related to wastewater treatment.

As presented in Section 5.19, Utilities and Service Systems, the Blythe Sanitary Landfill and the Desert Center Sanitary Landfill, as well as the Eagle Mountain Class III nonhazardous solid waste landfill, have substantial remaining capacity to accommodate solid waste. The Project would not generate a considerable increase in solid waste that would exceed the capacity of the regional landfills or the existing, planned, and proposed facilities in Riverside County, and the Project would comply with all applicable solid waste regulations and policies in the Riverside General Plan's Circulation and Healthy Communities Element and the City of Blythe General Plan's Open Space and Conservation Element related to solid waste. It is anticipated that the landfills described in Section 5.19, Utilities and Service Systems, have sufficient capacity to accommodate waste generated by the Cumulative Projects. As a result, the Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact related to generation of solid waste in excess of state or local standards or the capacity of local infrastructure.

The Project would comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste. The Cumulative Projects would likewise be required to comply with all laws and regulations related to solid waste. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact related to compliance with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

No aspect of construction would increase the rate of corrosion of adjacent utility lines as a result of alternating current impacts, as construction would not include activities that would introduce or increase

electrical interference along existing pipeline facilities. As a result, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact.

7.1.3.20 Wildfire

As presented in Section 5.20, Wildfire, the Project would result in no impacts under all wildfire-related CEQA criteria because the Project is not located in or near a state-responsibility area or on land classified as a very high fire hazard zone. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact.

7.2 Growth-Inducing Impacts

7.2.1 Would the Project either directly or indirectly, foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing in the surrounding area?

As discussed in Chapter 3, Proposed Project Description, and Section 5.14, Population and Housing, Project construction would not substantially affect employment in the area. Construction would be performed by either SCE construction crews or contractors, and construction workers would generally be drawn from the local labor pool.

As further presented in Section 5.14, Population and Housing, because the Project would not expand the existing electrical capacity, it would not impact population, housing, employment, or other aspects that could either directly or indirectly foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing in the surrounding area. Therefore, no impacts would occur under this criterion.

7.2.2 Would the Project remove obstacles to population growth?

The Project would not remove land use restrictions or other obstacles to population growth. The Project would not expand the existing electrical capacity or infrastructure. Obstacles to population growth in the region served by the Project are primarily due to feasibility of development, economic constraints, permitting, and other development restrictions and regulations administered by local agencies. The Project would not affect the feasibility of development in the area, remove an obstacle to growth, or affect development of restrictions administered by local agencies. Therefore, no impacts would occur under this criterion.

7.2.3 Would the Project require the construction of new community facilities that could cause significant environmental effects?

As discussed in Section 5.14, Population and Housing, the Project would not include the construction of housing, nor would it include residential or community facility components. The Project would not expand power capacity that would trigger population growth that could result in the construction of any new or upgraded community facilities such as parks or libraries. In addition, the Project would not build public roads that would provide new access to undeveloped or underdeveloped areas or extend the need for public services to new areas. Therefore, no impacts would occur under this criterion.

7.2.4 Would the Project encourage or facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively?

As discussed in Section 7.1, above, the Project would not encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. The Project is the result of complying with CPUC General Order 95, rather than a precursor to development in the area. The Project would not provide a new source of electricity that would encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment either individually or cumulatively. Therefore, no impacts would occur under this criterion.

Chapter 8 List of Preparers

8.1 List of Preparers

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Chapter 9 References

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