

E.2.6 Agriculture

The BCD Alternative would diverge from the Interstate 8 Alternative between MP 39 and 40, traversing north between the Carrizo Gorge Wilderness and Campo Reservation, then turn west and traverse near the Manzanita Reservation before entering Cleveland National Forest. This 19.5-mile alternative would rejoin the Interstate 8 Alternative at MP 58.

E.2.6.1 Environmental Setting

As shown in Table E.2.6-1, the BCD Alternative would traverse or be adjacent to Active Agricultural Operations and Williamson Act lands. No DOC Farmlands would be traversed by or be adjacent to the alternative. Figures Ap.LU E.2-1 and -2 in the Agricultural Resources map appendix at the end of Section E.2.6 provide an illustration of Agricultural Resources traversed by or adjacent to the BCD Alternative.

The BCD Alternative would traverse or be adjacent to grazing operations between MPs BCD-0 to BCD-8 and MPs BCD-10 to BCD-12. Grazing operations apply to calves and cattle that graze in unirrigated pastures. The route of the alternative would traverse or be adjacent to Williamson Act lands between MPs BCD-1 to BCD-7 and MPs BCD-12 to BCD-19.6.

Table E.2.6-1. BCD Alternative Agricultural Resources

Milepost	DOC Farmlands	Active Agricultural Operations	Williamson Act Lands ¹
BCD 0-1	None	Grazing Operations	None
BCD 1-7	None	Grazing Operations	APN ² : McCain Valley (AG PRES) Size (Acres): 13797
BCD 7-8	None	Grazing Operations	None
BCD 10-12	None	Grazing Operations	None
BCD 12-19.6	None	None	APN: Mt Laguna (AG PRES) Size (Acres): 45753

¹ Williamson Act lands shown are contract lands unless otherwise noted. All three contracts were renewed in 2003. Williamson Act land size is measured in acres.

² APN = Assessor's Parcel Number

E.2.6.2 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section presents a discussion of impacts and mitigation measures for the BCD Alternative as a result of construction, operation, and maintenance of the project. The BCD Alternative would permanently impact approximately 117.7 acres of Agricultural Resources (9.9 acres of Active Agricultural Operations and 112.2 acres of Williamson Act lands). Table E.2.6-2 summarizes the impacts of The BCD Alternative on agriculture. The full text of mitigation measures is provided in Appendix 12.

Table E.2.6-2. Impacts Identified – Alternatives – Agriculture

Impact No.	Description	Impact Significance
BCD Alternative		
AG-1	Construction activities would temporarily interfere with Active Agricultural Operations	Class II, III
AG-2	Operation would permanently convert DOC Farmlands to non-agricultural use	Class I
AG-3	Operation would permanently interfere with Active Agricultural Operations	Class I, II
AG-4	Operation would permanently convert Williamson Act lands to non-agricultural use	Class I

Construction Impacts

Impact AG-1: Construction activities would temporarily interfere with Active Agricultural Operations (Class II, III)

Active Agricultural Operations would be temporarily impacted by construction activities associated with the alternative, including construction or expansion of temporary or permanent access roads, use of conductor pulling sites; equipment and vehicle staging areas; and material storage and assembly sites. Construction activities could temporarily interfere with agricultural operations by damaging or removing crops or precluding planting; impeding access to certain fields or plots of land and obstructing farm vehicles and equipment; or disrupting drainage and irrigation systems (including self-propelled irrigation rigs), all of which could result in the temporary withdrawal of land from production, thereby reducing agricultural productivity on the affected land.

The BCD Alternative would incorporate APMs to minimize direct impacts to Active Agricultural Operations. APM LU-1 requires that advance notification be provided to all residents, property owners, and tenants within 300 feet of proposed construction activities. APM LU-3 would compensate farmers for lost crops and would schedule construction activities so as to avoid planting, growing, and harvesting seasons, when feasible. APM LU-4 would require that property owners and tenants whose land may be obstructed by construction activities be notified in advance and alternative access be provided, if feasible. APM LU-6 would require that limits of construction be predetermined and that construction activities remain within the predetermined limits. Refer to Table D.6-6 for details of applicable agriculture APMs.

As a result of incorporating these APMs, construction of the Proposed Project would result in damage or loss of crops, obstruction of access to properties, and conflicts with irrigation canals would be less than significant level (Class III). However, impacts related to the disruption of agricultural operations during construction activities, which would include disruptions relating to the use of farm vehicles and equipment, and grazing activities, would not be reduced to a less than significant level. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-1a would be necessary in order to mitigate impacts of the BCD Alternative to agricultural operations to a less than significant level (Class II).

During construction, soils would become compacted as a result of vehicles and construction equipment traversing them. Compaction of agricultural soils, left unaddressed, would impact subsequent agricultural operations. This would be a significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-1b would ensure that impacts to agricultural operations resulting from construction-related soil compaction would be less than significant by requiring that compacted soils within DOC Farmland be restored. Implementation of Mitigation Measures AG-1a and AG-1b would mitigate impacts of the BCD Alternative to agricultural operations as a result of soil compaction to a less than significant level (Class II).

Mitigation Measures for Impact AG-1: Construction activities would temporarily interfere with Active Agricultural Operations

- AG-1a Avoid interference with agricultural operations.**
- AG-1b Restore compacted soil.**

Operational Impacts

Impact AG-2: Operation would permanently convert DOC Farmlands to non-agricultural use (Class I)

No DOC Farmlands would be converted by the BCD Alternative. However, impacts to DOC Farmlands would still be considered significant because greater than 10 acres of DOC Farmlands would be impacted for the overall route (Interstate 8 Alternative plus any combination of alternatives). This would exceed the threshold of significance. Thus, although the BCD Alternative would not convert DOC Farmlands, it would be a part of a longer route that would significantly impact DOC Farmlands. No feasible mitigation exists to mitigate this impact to a less than significant level.

Impact AG-3: Operation would permanently interfere with Active Agricultural Operations (Class I, II)

The BCD Alternative would permanently remove 9.9 acres of grazing operations, which is less than the 10-acre significance threshold. However, impacts to Active Agricultural Operations would still be considered significant because greater than 10 acres of Active Agricultural Operations would be impacted for the overall route (Interstate 8 Alternative plus any combination of alternatives). Thus, although the BCD Alternative would not remove land under Active Agricultural Operation, it would be a part of a longer route that would significantly impact Active Agricultural Operations (Class I). No feasible mitigation exists to reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

In addition to the permanent loss of land under Active Agricultural Operations, the BCD Alternative may result in other adverse agricultural impacts in the vicinity of the project. These impacts include (1) disrupting farming facilities or operations and (2) disrupting livestock grazing operations.

Under certain circumstances, the presence of new project components would permanently disrupt active farming operations in nearby areas, by dividing or fragmenting agricultural fields, obstructing access, impeding the delivery and use of water for livestock and irrigation, reducing the efficacy of windbreaks, and/or disrupting the operation of farm equipment.

Incorporation of APM LU-7 would ensure that the location of proposed facilities are matched to existing facilities (where feasible and appropriate), and incorporation of APM LU-10 would ensure that facilities are installed along the edges of private property (also where feasible and appropriate). If facilities cannot be located along property or field boundaries, APM LU-7 would ensure that SDG&E would consult with affected property owners to identify facility locations that would create the least potential for impact. Incorporation of these APMs would minimize impacts to farming operations through avoidance of areas to the greatest extent feasible, but such impacts would not be reduced to a less than significant level. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-1a would mitigate impacts of the BCD Alternative relating to the disruption of Active Agricultural Operations to a less than significant level (Class II).

Activities associated with grazing livestock, such as cattle movement, access to water, feeding, and shipping of livestock, would be permanently impeded by new access roads and towers, as well as associated routine maintenance activities. As such, presence of the Proposed Project would disrupt livestock grazing operations, a significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-1c would ensure that impacts of the BCD Alternative to livestock grazing operations would be mitigated to a less than significant level (Class II).

Mitigation Measure for Impact AG-3: Operation would permanently interfere with Active Agricultural Operations (Disruption of Farming Facilities or Operations)

AG-1a Avoid interference with agricultural operations.

AG-1c Coordinate with grazing operators. SDG&E shall coordinate with grazing operators to ensure that agricultural productivity and animal welfare are maintained both during and after construction to the maximum extent feasible. Coordination efforts will address issues including, but not necessarily limited to:

- Interference with access to water (e.g., provide alternate methods for livestock access to water)
- Impairment of cattle movements (e.g., provide alternate routes; reconfigure fencing/gates)
- Removal and replacement of fencing (e.g., during construction install temporary fencing/barriers, as appropriate, and following construction restore equal or better fencing to that which was removed or damaged)
- Impacts to facilities such as corrals and watering structures, as well as related effects such as ingress/egress, and management activities (e.g., replacement of damaged/removed facilities in kind; provide alternate access)

Impact AG-4: Operation would permanently convert Williamson Act lands to non-agricultural use (Class I)

Operation of the BCD Alternative would permanently convert 112.2 acres of Williamson Act lands. The BCD Alternative itself, and in conjunction with the Interstate 8 Alternative, would convert more than 10 acres of Williamson Act lands. This would exceed the 10-acre threshold of significance established for the conversion of Williamson Act lands. Thus, impacts to Williamson Act lands as a result of the BCD Alternative would be significant (Class I), and no feasible mitigation exists to reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

E.2.6.3 BCD South Option

Environmental Setting

As shown in Table E.2.6-3, the BCD South Option would traverse or be adjacent to Active Agricultural Operations and Williamson Act lands. No DOC Farmlands would be traversed by or be adjacent to the alternative. Figures Ap.AG E.2-3 in the Agricultural Resources map appendix at the end of Section E.2.6 provide an illustration of Agricultural Resources traversed by or adjacent to the BCD South Option.

Table E.2.6-3. BCD South Option – Agricultural Resources

Milepost	DOC Farmlands	Active Agricultural Operations	Williamson Act Lands
BCDS 0-5.4	None	Grazing Operations	No Info Available*

* No Info Available = these are contract lands, but no information was available regarding their size or assessor property number.

The BCD South Option would traverse or be adjacent to grazing operations between MPs BCDS-3 and BCDS-5. Grazing operations apply to calves and cattle that graze in unirrigated pastures. The route of the alternative would traverse or be adjacent to Williamson Act lands between MPs BCDS-0 and BCDS-4.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The BCD South Option would permanently impact approximately 16.6 acres of Agricultural Resources (4.7 acres of Active Agricultural Operations and 11.9 acres of Williamson Act lands; no DOC Farmland would be impacted). Table E.2.6-4 summarizes the impacts of The BCD South Option on agriculture. The full text of mitigation measures is provided in Appendix 12.

Table E.2.6-4. Impacts Identified – Alternatives – Agriculture

Impact No.	Description	Impact Significance
Route BCD South Option		
AG-1	Construction activities would temporarily interfere with Active Agricultural Operations	Class II, III
AG-2	Operation would permanently convert DOC Farmlands to non-agricultural use	Class I
AG-3	Operation would permanently interfere with Active Agricultural Operations	Class I, II
AG-4	Operation would permanently convert Williamson Act lands to non-agricultural use	Class I

Construction Impacts

Impact AG-1: Construction activities would temporarily interfere with Active Agricultural Operations (Class II, III)

Active Agricultural Operations would be temporarily impacted by construction activities associated with the alternative, including construction or expansion of temporary or permanent access roads, use of conductor pulling sites; equipment and vehicle staging areas; and material storage and assembly sites. Construction activities could temporarily interfere with agricultural operations by damaging or removing crops or precluding planting; impeding access to certain fields or plots of land and obstructing farm vehicles and equipment; or disrupting drainage and irrigation systems (including self-propelled irrigation rigs), all of which could result in the temporary withdrawal of land from production, thereby reducing agricultural productivity on the affected land.

The BCD South Option would incorporate APMs to minimize direct impacts to Active Agricultural Operations. APM LU-1 requires that advance notification be provided to all residents, property owners, and tenants within 300 feet of proposed construction activities. APM LU-3 would compensate farmers for lost crops and would schedule construction activities so as to avoid planting, growing, and harvesting seasons, when feasible. APM LU-4 would require that property owners and tenants whose land may be obstructed by construction activities be notified in advance and alternative access be provided, if feasible. APM LU-6 would require that limits of construction be predetermined and that construction activities remain within the predetermined limits. Refer to Table D.6-6 for details of applicable agriculture APMs.

As a result of incorporating these APMs, construction of the Proposed Project would result in damage or loss of crops, obstruction of access to properties, and conflicts with irrigation canals would be less than significant level (Class III). However, impacts related to the disruption of agricultural operations during construction activities, which would include disruptions relating to the use of farm vehicles and equipment, and grazing activities, would not be reduced to a less than significant level. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-1a would be necessary in order to mitigate impacts of the BCD Alternative to agricultural operations to a less than significant level (Class II).

During construction, soils would become compacted as a result of vehicles and construction equipment traversing them. Compaction of agricultural soils, left unaddressed, would impact subsequent agricultural operations. This would be a significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-1b would ensure that impacts to agricultural operations resulting from construction-related soil compaction would be less than significant by requiring that compacted soils within DOC Farmlands be restored. Implementation of Mitigation Measures AG-1a and AG-1b would mitigate impacts of the BCD Alternative to agricultural operations as a result of soil compaction to a less than significant level (Class II).

Mitigation Measures for Impact AG-1: Construction activities would temporarily interfere with Active Agricultural Operations

AG-1a **Avoid interference with agricultural operations.**

AG-1b **Restore compacted soil.**

Operational Impacts

Impact AG-2: Operation would permanently convert DOC Farmlands to non-agricultural use (Class I)

No DOC Farmlands would be converted by the BCD Alternative. However, impacts to DOC Farmlands would still be considered significant because greater than 10 acres of DOC Farmlands would be impacted for the overall route (Interstate 8 Alternative plus any combination of alternatives). This would exceed the threshold of significance. Thus, although the BCD Alternative would not convert DOC Farmlands, it would be a part of a longer route that would significantly impact DOC Farmlands. No feasible mitigation exists to mitigate this impact to a less than significant level.

Impact AG-3: Operation would permanently interfere with Active Agricultural Operations (Class I, II)

The BCD Alternative would permanently remove 4.7 acres of grazing operations, which is less than the 10-acre significance threshold. However, impacts to Active Agricultural Operations would still be considered significant because greater than 10 acres of Active Agricultural Operations would be impacted for the overall route (Interstate 8 Alternative plus any combination of alternatives). Thus, although the BCD South Option would not remove land under Active Agricultural Operation, it would be a part of a longer route that would significantly impact Active Agricultural Operations (Class I). No feasible mitigation exists to reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

In addition to the permanent loss of land under Active Agricultural Operations, the BCD South Option may result in other adverse agricultural impacts in the vicinity of the project. These impacts include (1) disrupting farming facilities or operations and (2) disrupting livestock grazing operations.

Under certain circumstances, the presence of new project components would permanently disrupt active farming operations in nearby areas, by dividing or fragmenting agricultural fields, obstructing access, impeding the delivery and use of water for livestock and irrigation, reducing the efficacy of windbreaks, and/or disrupting the operation of farm equipment.

Incorporation of APM LU-7 would ensure that the location of proposed facilities are matched to existing facilities (where feasible and appropriate), and incorporation of APM LU-10 would ensure that facilities are installed along the edges of private property (also where feasible and appropriate). If facilities cannot be located along property or field boundaries, APM LU-7 would ensure that SDG&E would

consult with affected property owners to identify facility locations that would create the least potential for impact. Incorporation of these APMs would minimize impacts to farming operations through avoidance of areas to the greatest extent feasible, but such impacts would not be reduced to a less than significant level. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-1a would mitigate impacts of the BCD Alternative relating to the disruption of Active Agricultural Operations to a less than significant level (Class II).

Activities associated with grazing livestock, such as cattle movement, access to water, feeding, and shipping of livestock, would be permanently impeded by new access roads and towers, as well as associated routine maintenance activities. As such, presence of the Proposed Project would disrupt livestock grazing operations, a significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-1c would ensure that impacts of the BCD Alternative to livestock grazing operations would be mitigated to a less than significant level (Class II).

Mitigation Measure for Impact AG-3: Operation would permanently interfere with Active Agricultural Operations (Disruption of Farming Facilities or Operations)

AG-1a Avoid interference with agricultural operations.

AG-1c Coordinate with grazing operators.

Impact AG-4: Operation would permanently convert Williamson Act lands to non-agricultural use (Class I)

Operation of the BCD South Option would permanently convert 11.9 acres of Williamson Act lands. The BCD South Option itself, and in conjunction with the Interstate 8 Alternative, would convert more than 10 acres of Williamson Act lands. This would exceed the 10-acre threshold of significance established for the conversion of Williamson Act lands. Thus, impacts to Williamson Act lands as a result of the BCD South Option would be significant (Class I), and no feasible mitigation exists to reduce this impact to a less than significant level.