E.3.6 Agriculture

The Route D Alternative would diverge from the Interstate 8 Alternative at MP 70.3, traversing north through Cleveland National Forest land near the Viejas and Capitan Grande Reservations. At its MP 11, the Route D Alternative would turn northwest through Cleveland National Forest and private land, and would join the Proposed Project at MP 114.

E.3.6.1 Environmental Setting

Active Agricultural Operations and Williamson Act lands would be traversed by or adjacent to the Route D Alternative, as shown in Table E.3.6-1. The Route D Alternative would traverse or be adjacent to grazing operations between MP D-15 and D-17.3. Grazing operations apply to calves and cattle that graze in unirrigated pastures. The route would traverse or be adjacent to Williamson Act lands between MP D-6 and D-17.3. No DOC Farmlands would be traversed by or adjacent to this alternative. However, off-site project elements such as access roads and work areas may be impacted. These are included in Table E.3.6-2.

Figures Ap.AG E.3-1 through -3 in the Agricultural Resources map appendix at the end of Section E.3.6 show Agricultural Resources traversed by or adjacent to the Route D Alternative.

Table E.3.6-1. Route D Alternative – Agricultural Resources

Milepost	DOC Farmlands	Active Agricultural Operations	Williamson Act Lands[1,2]
D 0-6	None	None	None
D 6-15	None	None	APN[3]: Pine Hills–Bould (AG PRES) Size (Acres): 37,978.0
			APN: Ramona (AG PRES) Size (Acres): 28,612.0
D 15-17.3	None	Grazing Operations	APN: Ramona (AG PRES) Size (Acres): 28,612.0
			APN: 2871102000 Size (Acres): 80.0
			APN: 2871102100 Size (Acres): 80.0
			APN: 2871101900 Size (Acres): 80.0
			APN: 2871101800 Size (Acres): 120.0
			APN: 2870503200 Size (Acres): 120.3
			APN: 2870503100 Size (Acres): 80.2
			APN: 2870503000 Size (Acres): 100.3
			APN: 2870502900 Size (Acres): 80.2
			APN: 2870502700 Size (Acres): 80.1
			APN: 2861122400 Size (Acres): 125.0

1 Williamson Act lands shown are contract lands unless otherwise noted. All contracts were renewed in 2003.
2 Williamson Act land size is measured in acres.
3 APN = Assessor's Parcel Number

E.3.6.2 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Table E.3.3-2 summarizes the impacts of the Route D Alternative for agriculture.

The Route D Alternative would permanently impact approximately ~~185.7~~161.3 acres of Agricultural Resources (~~2.0~~1.9 acres of DOC Farmlands, ~~2.8~~2.7 acres of Active Agricultural Operations, and ~~184.7~~160.0 acres of Williamson Act lands). The complete text of mitigation measures is provided in Appendix 12.

Table E.3.6-2. Impacts Identified – Alternatives – Agriculture

Impact No.	Description	Impact Significance
Route D 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 II, III
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
Central South Substation Alternative		
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 construction of the project, 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 Route D 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 theses 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 (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 less than significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-1a would be necessary in order to mitigate impacts of the Route D 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 Route D 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 for overall route, Class III for alternative segment)

The Route D Alternative would permanently convert approximately ~~2.0~~1.9 acres of DOC Farmlands (1.3 acres of Farmland of Local Importance and ~~0.7~~0.6 acres of Grazing Land), which would be less than significant in this segment (Class III).

Although a 10-acre conversion of DOC Farmlands is the significance threshold, impacts to DOC Farmlands would still be considered significant because greater than 10 acres of DOC Farmlands would be impacted overall by the project, which would include the Route D Alternative in combination with the first part of the Interstate 8 Alternative and the last part of the Proposed Project alignment. Thus, the Route D Alternative would significantly impact DOC Farmlands (Class I) and no feasible mitigation measure 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 Route D Alternative would permanently remove ~~2.8~~2.7 acres of land under Active Agricultural Operation (grazing operations). Although a 10-acre conversion of land under Active Agricultural Operation is below the significance threshold, impacts to land under Active Agricultural Operation would still be considered significant because greater than 10 acres of land under Active Agricultural Operation would be impacted overall by the project, which would include the Route D Alternative in combination with the first part of the Interstate 8 Alternative and the last part of the Proposed Project alignment. Thus, impacts of the Route D Alternative relating to the loss of land under Active Agricultural Operation would be significant (Class I), and no feasible mitigation exists to reduce this impact to less than significant level.

In addition to the permanent loss of land under Active Agricultural Operation, the Route D Alternative may result in other adverse impacts to agricultural activities. 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 con-

sult 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 Route D 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 Route D 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

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 Route D Alternative would permanently convert ~~184.7~~160.0 acres of Williamson Act lands. Overall, the Route D Alternative, in conjunction with the Interstate 8 Overhead/Underground Alternative, would permanently convert more than 10 acres of Williamson Act lands. Both the Route D Alternative, and the Route D Alternative in conjunction with the first part of the Interstate 8 Alternative and last part of the Proposed Project, 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 Route D Alternative would be significant (Class I), and no feasible mitigation exists to reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

E.3.6.3 Central South Substation Alternative

The Route D Alternative would require the Central South Substation Alternative in order to convert from 500 kV to 230 kV. This substation would be located on private land at the north end of the Route D transmission line segment, and along the proposed route's 230 kV segment, west of the crossing of the San Diego River gorge. Figure E.3.1-2 illustrates the location of the substation.

The region of the Central South Substation Alternative falls under Williamson Act Land and is entirely grazing operations. Impacts AG-1 through AG-4 as detailed in Table E.3.6-2 and all applicable Mitigation Measures would apply to the Central South Substation Alternative.

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

The Route D Alternative with the Central South Substation Alternative would permanently remove over 10 acres of Active Agricultural Operation (grazing operations). This to the loss of land under Active Agricultural Operation would be significant (Class I), and no feasible mitigation exists to reduce this impact to less than significant level.

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 Route D 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

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 Route D Alternative with the Central South Substation Alternative would permanently convert over 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 substation location would be significant (Class I), and no feasible mitigation exists to reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

E.3.6.4 Future Transmission System Expansion

For the Proposed Project and route alternatives along the Proposed Project route, Section B.2.7 identifies Future Transmission System Expansion routes for both 230 kV and 500 kV future transmission lines. These routes are identified, and impacts are analyzed in Section D of this EIR/EIS, because SDG&E has indicated that transmission system expansion is foreseeable, possibly within the next 10 years. For the SWPL alternatives, 500 kV and 230 kV expansions would also be possible. The potential expansion routes for the Route D Alternative are described in the following paragraphs.

230 and 500 kV Future Transmission System Expansion

The Route D Alternative would begin at approximately MP I8-70 and would head northward until it reached the Central South Substation Alternative at approximately MP 114.5 of the Proposed Project. The Route D Alternative would convert to 230 kV at the Central South Substation and a double-circuit 230 kV line would be constructed southwest from that substation to the Sycamore Canyon Substation. The Central South Substation would accommodate up to six 230 kV circuits and an additional 500 kV circuit. Only two 230 kV circuits are proposed at this time, but construction of additional 230 kV circuits and a 500 kV circuit out of the Central South Substation may be required in the future. There are two routes that are most likely for these future lines; each is addressed below. Figure E.1.1-6 illustrates the potential routes of the future transmission lines.

Additional 230 and 500 kV circuits could follow the Proposed Project corridor starting at MP 114.5. The routes could either: (1) follow the Proposed Project corridor southwest to the Chicarita Substation and then follow the Proposed Project's 230 kV Future Transmission Expansion System (see description in Section B.2.7) from Chicarita to the Escondido Substation; or (2) the Proposed Project northeast to the Proposed Central East Substation and then follow the Proposed Project's 500 kV Future Transmission Expansion route shown in Figure B-12b (see description in Section B.2.7). See Section D.6.2, D.6.7, D.6.8, and D.6.9 for the setting, impacts, and mitigation measures for the Central, Inland Valley, and Coastal Links of the Proposed Project. See Section D.6.11 for the setting, impacts, and mitigation measures for the Future Transmission System Expansion of the Proposed Project.

Figure Ap.AG.E.3-1. Route D Alternative: Agricultural Resources
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Figure Ap.AG.E.3-2. Route D Alternative: Agricultural Resources
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Figure Ap.AG.E.3-3. Route D Alternative: Agricultural Resources
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