

4.0 Environmental Analysis

Introduction

This chapter evaluates environmental impacts that would result from construction and operation of the proposed Alberhill System Project (proposed Alberhill Project), proposed Valley-Ivyglen 115-kilovolt (kV) Subtransmission Line Project (proposed Valley-Ivyglen Project), and alternatives to the proposed projects. The California Public Utilities Commission determined it would be in the public's best interest to consolidate the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analyses for the proposed Alberhill Project and the proposed Valley-Ivyglen Project into a single CEQA document because components of the proposed Valley-Ivyglen Project are required for construction of the proposed Alberhill Project,¹ and the construction periods for the two projects would overlap. The chapter includes sections for each of the following resource areas:

4.1	Aesthetics	4.9	Hydrology and Water Quality
4.2	Agriculture and Forestry Resources	4.10	Land Use
4.3	Air Quality	4.11	Noise and Vibration
4.4	Biological Resources	4.12	Population and Housing
4.5	Cultural Resources	4.13	Public Services and Utilities
4.6	Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources	4.14	Recreation
4.7	Greenhouse Gases	4.15	Transportation and Traffic
4.8	Hazards and Hazardous Materials		

Resource Area Format

Each resource area section is organized under the following headings:

- Environmental Setting;
- Regulatory Setting;
- Methodology and Significance Criteria;
- Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures (Valley-Ivyglen Project);
- Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures (Alberhill Project) ; and
- References.

Cumulative impacts of the proposed projects are presented in Chapter 6, "Cumulative Impacts." Information contained under each heading is described below.

¹ 115-kV components of the proposed Alberhill and Valley-Ivyglen projects would be constructed within the same right-of-way (ROW) for approximately 6.5 miles. This segment consists of the Alberhill Project 115-kV Segment ASP2 and the Valley-Ivyglen Project Segments VIG4 and VIG5, as identified in Chapter 2, "Project Description," and shown in Figures 2.2a through 2.2i. Within this ROW, 115-kV conductor required for the proposed Alberhill Project would be installed on the 115-kV poles constructed as part of the proposed Valley-Ivyglen Project.

1 Environmental Setting

2 Each resource area section contains a discussion of the environmental setting (the existing environmental
3 conditions in the vicinity of the entire proposed Alberhill and Valley-Ivyglen projects [project areas]) and
4 identifies the baseline physical conditions by which the significance of the projects' environmental
5 impacts will be assessed. The baseline physical conditions are as follows:
6

- 7 • **Valley-Ivyglen Project:** The baseline physical conditions for the proposed Valley-Ivyglen
8 Project are the existing environmental conditions in the project area at the time of the publication
9 of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) (May 2015).
- 10 • **Alberhill Project 500-kV Transmission Lines, Alberhill Substation, 115-kV Segments ASP1,
11 ASP1.5, and ASP3 through ASP8:** The baseline physical conditions for these components of the
12 Alberhill Project are the existing environmental conditions in the project area at the time of the
13 publication of the NOP (May 2015).
- 14 • **Alberhill Project 115-kV Segment ASP2:** The baseline physical conditions for analysis of
15 115-kV Segment ASP2 are the existing environmental conditions in the project area at the time of
16 the publication of the NOP plus 115-kV Segments VIG4 and VIG5 of the Valley-Ivyglen Project.
17 As described in Section 2.3.2.3, 115-kV conductor required for the proposed Alberhill Project
18 115-kV Segment ASP2 would be installed on poles constructed as part of Valley-Ivyglen 115-kV
19 Segments VIG4 and VIG5. Because Segment ASP2 can only be constructed after completion of
20 the Valley-Ivyglen 115-kV Segments VIG4 and VIG5, the infrastructure of 115-kV Segments
21 VIG4 and VIG5 would be in place at the time that 115-kV Segment ASP2 is constructed and are
22 appropriately included in the baseline for this segment. (See *Neighbors for Smart Rail v.*
23 *Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority* (2013) 57 Cal.4th 439 453-457.)
24

25 The discussion of the environmental setting in each resource area section contains information necessary
26 to understand the potential impacts of the proposed projects and the alternatives to the proposed projects
27 (CEQA Guidelines §15125(a)).
28

29 Regulatory Setting

30 Laws, ordinances, regulations, standards, and policies applicable to the proposed projects and resource
31 areas are discussed in the regulatory setting sections for each resource area. Laws and regulations may
32 also specify permits and approvals necessary for authorization or evaluation and require agency
33 consultation. Table 2-13 in Chapter 2, "Project Description," identifies the permits, approvals, and
34 consultations for these projects.
35

36 Methodology and Significance Criteria

37 The impacts analyses presented in this chapter are based on methodologies used to determine whether and
38 how each of the proposed projects affects a resource area. Methodologies for impact assessment are
39 presented under this heading for each resource area section. Significance criteria serve as a benchmark for
40 determining if the proposed projects would result in significant impacts when evaluated against the
41 baseline conditions established in the environmental setting and regulatory setting sections for each
42 resource area. The significance criteria used are from the checklist presented in the CEQA Guidelines
43 (Appendix G).
44

1 **Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

2 A discussion of environmental impacts and mitigation measures for each proposed project is presented for
3 each environmental resource area. The discussion for the proposed Valley-Ivyglen Project is presented
4 separately from the discussion for the proposed Alberhill Project.
5

6 **Project Commitments**

7 Specific statements or sections from the Proponent’s Environmental Assessment and Petitions for
8 Modification related to actions the applicant would take to reduce impacts to environmental resource
9 areas are incorporated into this Environmental Impact Report as Project Commitments. This discussion in
10 each resource area lists which Project Commitments, when implemented, would reduce impacts for that
11 resource area. A list of Project Commitments is provided in Section 2.6, “Project Commitments.”
12 Implementation of Project Commitments would be tracked through the Mitigation Monitoring
13 Compliance and Reporting Program in the same manner as mitigation measures.
14

15 **Impact Analysis**

16 The impacts analyses presented in this chapter evaluate impacts that may occur from construction and
17 operation of the proposed projects. The discussion evaluates the significance of impacts prior to and after
18 implementation of Project Commitments, identifies mitigation measure(s) for significant impacts, and
19 provides a determination of significance after mitigation.

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