

### 3.17 Mandatory Findings of Significance

<i>Issues (and Supporting Information Sources):</i>		<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
<b>17. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE</b>					
a)	Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 3.17.1 Mandatory Findings of Significance Discussion

- a) **Have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory: *LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION.***

The Proposed Project has the potential to degrade the quality of the environment or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. The Proposed Project does not have the potential to substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels or threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community. As discussed in the *Aesthetics, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, and Transportation and Traffic* sections of this IS/MND, the Proposed Project would result in potentially significant impacts (predominantly temporary impacts as a result of construction of the Proposed Project) that would have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment. However, adoption and implementation of mitigation measures would reduce these individual impacts to levels that would be less than significant.

As described in *Aesthetics*, the Proposed Project could adversely affect nighttime views. Implementation of mitigation measures would reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

As described in *Biological Resources*, the Proposed Project would have the potential to adversely affect: species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species; sensitive habitats, including federally protected wetlands; and could conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. Implementation of mitigation measures would reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

As described in *Cultural Resources*, the Proposed Project could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource or disturb human remains and, thereby, would have the potential to eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or pre-history. However, implementation of mitigation measures would reduce such impacts to less than significant levels. Additionally, there would be no direct impacts to known cultural resources during construction of the Proposed Project.

As described in *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, the Proposed Project has the potential to create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials or through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment; could emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing school; and could result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area. Implementation of mitigation measures would reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

As described in *Hydrology and Water Quality*, the Proposed Project could violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements and could substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of a site or area in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site or a substantial increase in the rate or amount of surface runoff. Implementation of mitigation measures would reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

As described in *Noise*, the Proposed Project could result in exposure of persons to, or generation of, noise levels in excess of standards established in an applicable general plan or noise ordinance and in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels. Implementation of mitigation measures would reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

As described in *Transportation and Traffic*, the Proposed Project could conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance, or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, result in inadequate emergency access, or conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities. Implementation of mitigation measures would reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

**b) Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable: *LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.***

The Proposed Project does not have impacts that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable. CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 requires a discussion of the cumulative impacts of

a project when the project's incremental contribution to a significant cumulative effect is "cumulatively considerable," meaning that the project's incremental effects are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects. An incremental, project-specific contribution to a cumulative impact is less than cumulatively considerable, and thus is not significant, if, for example, the project is required to implement or fund its fair share of a mitigation measure or measures designed to alleviate the cumulative impact. The cumulative impacts discussion does not need to provide as much detail as is provided in the analysis of project-only impacts and should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) identifies the following three elements as necessary for an adequate cumulative analysis:

- A list of past, present, and reasonably anticipated future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including those projects outside the control of the Lead Agency; or a summary of projections contained in an adopted General Plan or related planning document designed to evaluate regional or area-wide conditions.
- A summary of expected environmental effects to be produced by those projects. The summary shall include specific reference to additional information stating where that information is available.
- A reasonable analysis of the cumulative impacts of the relevant projects, and an examination of reasonable options for mitigating or avoiding any significant cumulative effects of a proposed project.

San Benito County, Monterey County, City of Hollister, and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) were contacted for information on projects within their respective jurisdictions. **Table 3.17-1** and **Figure 3.17-1** provide details and geographic locations of these projects that comprise the cumulative project scenario.

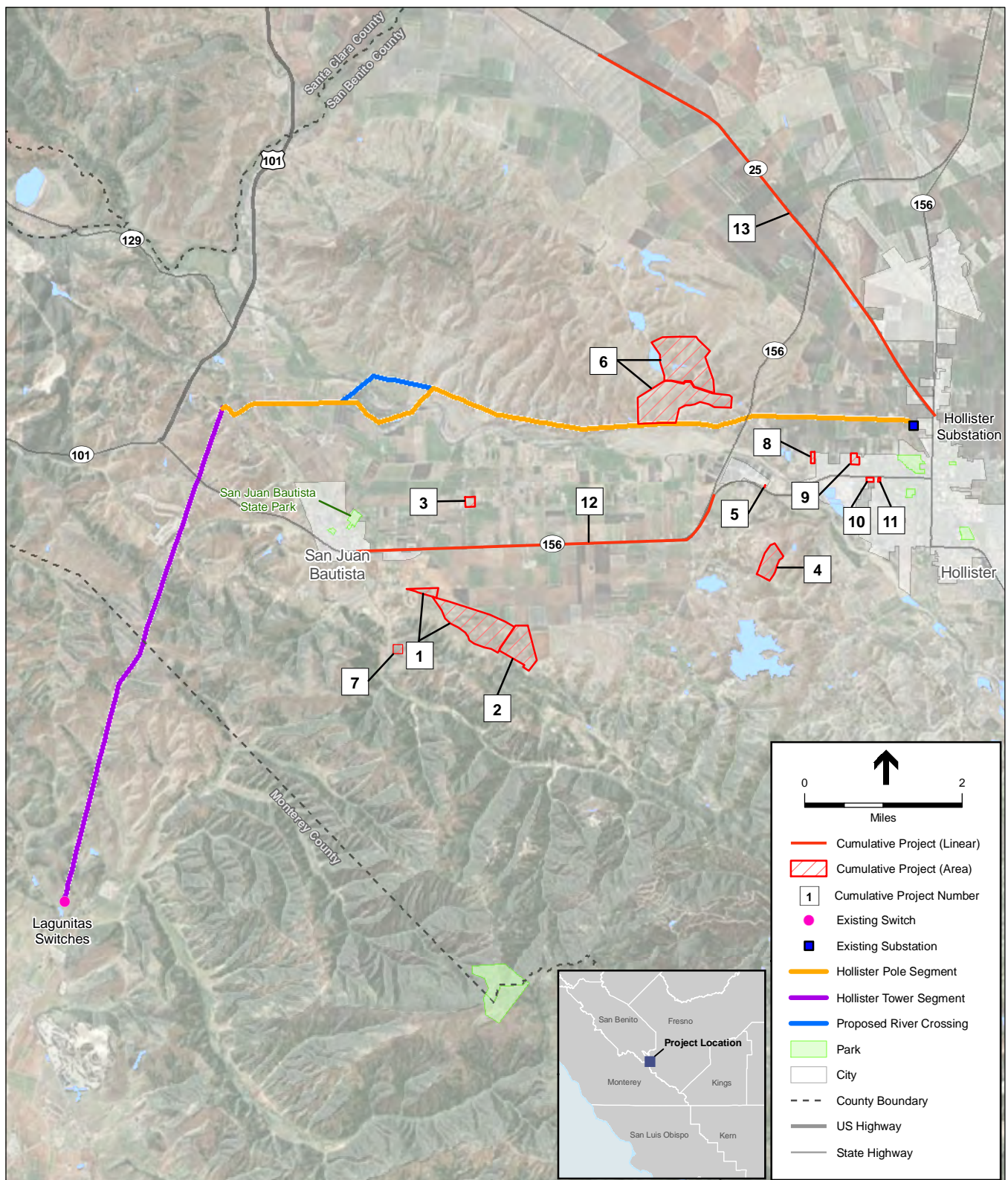
The projects identified above are considered reasonably likely to be constructed and/or operated during a similar timeframe as the Proposed Project. Since the impacts related to construction of the Proposed Project would be temporary and localized, the potential to combine with similar impacts of other projects would only occur if construction activities were occurring at the same time and in close proximity to the Proposed Project. In the event that the cumulative projects are constructed at the same time and in close proximity to the Proposed Project, there would be a potential for short-term construction-related cumulative impacts to occur. However, either there is no existing significant cumulative impact to which the Proposed Project's incremental, temporary, construction-related impacts could contribute, or such incremental impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. Resource-specific analysis of possible construction-related cumulative impacts is included below by resource area.

Operation of the Proposed Project would not result in the potential for any individually significant impact, and any less than significant operational impacts of the Proposed Project would not be cumulatively considerable.

**TABLE 3.17-1  
CUMULATIVE SCENARIO FOR THE HOLLISTER 115 KV POWER LINE RECONDUCTORING PROJECT**

Map ID	APN(s) or Project Name	Description	Address / Location	Agency / Organization	Details	Status / Timeline	Distance from Proposed Project
1	018-200-026 018-200-045	Major Subdivision	555 Mission Vineyard Road	San Benito County	Subdivide parcels into five lots.	Under review; likely to be approved or denied by the end of 2010.	~2.75 miles south of the Existing River Crossing
2	Windhaven Ranch (018-200-036)	Use Permit	547 Mission Vineyard Road	San Benito County	Use permit for multi-use event center (parties, weddings, etc.)	Under review; likely to be approved or denied by the end of 2010.	~3.25 miles south of Hollister Pole Segment
3	018-130-016	Use Permit	525 Lucy Brown Lane	San Benito County	Use permit for greenhouse and grading.	Under review; likely to be approved or denied by the end of 2010.	~1.5 miles south of the Hollister Pole Segment
4	021-070-001	Major Subdivision and Zone Change	2324 Union Road	San Benito County	Major subdivision of parcel into nine lots and zone change.	Under review; likely to be approved or denied by the end of 2010.	~2 miles south of the Hollister Pole Segment
5	021-010-010	Manufacturing District Review	2490 San Juan Hollister Road	San Benito County	Manufacturing district review for a truck parking and maintenance facility.	Approved	~1 mile south of the Hollister Pole Segment
6	Lario Oil and Gas (018-040-003)	Use Permit	Buena Vista Road	San Benito County	Use permit for gas well exploration.	Approved.	Immediately adjacent to the Hollister Pole Segment
7	MS 1217-08	Minor Subdivision	1000 San Juan Canyon Road	San Benito County	Minor subdivision, four lots	Application submitted	~3.0 miles south of Hollister Pole Segment
8	Hillview Subdivision	Subdivision	Buena Vista Road near Ranchito Drive	City of Hollister	Subdivide parcel into 25 lots for affordable single family homes.	Final map approved but construction has not commenced.	~0.5 mile south of Hollister Pole Segment
9	KT Orchard Park	Subdivision	Buena Vista Road near Miller Road	City of Hollister	Subdivide parcel into 91 small lots for residential development.	Allocation granted but tentative map has not been submitted.	~0.5 mile south of Hollister Pole Segment
10	Thorning	Subdivision	San Juan Hollister Road	City of Hollister	Subdivide parcel to allow for development of 74 units including row houses and mixed use apartments.	Applied for allocation.	~1 mile south of Hollister Pole Segment
11	Westside Apartments	Subdivision	San Juan Hollister Road	City of Hollister	Subdivide parcel into 11 lots for affordable rentals.	Final map approved but construction has not commenced.	~1 mile south of Hollister Pole Segment
12	San Benito Route 156 Improvement Project	Road Improvement	State Route 156 (San Benito County)	Caltrans	Widen State Route 156 in San Benito County from two to four lanes from The Alameda in San Juan Bautista to the Hollister Bypass.	Construction anticipated in 2014.	~1 mile south of Hollister Pole Segment at its closest point
13	Hollister to Gilroy State Route 25 Widening	Road Widening	State Route 25 (San Benito County)	Caltrans	Widen 11.2 miles of Route 25 from a two-lane highway to a four-lane expressway, starting at San Felipe Road in Hollister and ending at Highway 101 in Santa Clara County.	Under environmental review with publication of final environmental document anticipated in fall 2010. A portion of the project near Hollister may be constructed within the next few years.	~0.5 miles north of the Hollister Substation and Hollister Pole Segment

Sources: Caltrans, 2008 and 2010; San Benito County, 2010; Monterey County, 2010; and City of Hollister, 2010



PG&E, 2010; ESRI, 2010; Microsoft Virtual Earth, 2010  
 City of Hollister, 2010; San Benito County, 2010; Caltrans, 2010

Hollister 115 kV Power Line Reconductoring Project . 207584.03

**Figure 3.17-1**  
 Cumulative Projects

### **Aesthetics**

The geographic scope of the cumulative impacts to visual quality is the viewsheds that could be affected by the Proposed Project from public roadways, trails, and open space areas. As discussed in Section 3.1, *Aesthetics*, Mitigation Measure 3.1-1 would ensure that the Proposed Project would not result in significant individual effects on visual resources. The projects described in Table 3.17-1 include numerous development projects in eastern Monterey County that could alter the visual character of areas within the project vicinity. Many of these projects would have the potential to create new visual impacts within the viewsheds that could be affected by the Proposed Project from public roadways, trails, open space, and residential areas. However, the projects would generally be located in urbanized, developed areas and would therefore not be likely to affect the area's visual character. Additionally, future development within the project vicinity is guided by the applicable city and county General Plans, and associated planning and environmental documents. Furthermore, new development would be subject to the applicable city and county design review process.

As discussed Section 2, *Project Description*, the Proposed Project would replace existing electrical infrastructure along the majority of the alignment. It would add new electrical infrastructure only along the 1.3-mile Proposed River Crossing. At the river crossing, the new infrastructure would influence the overall visual setting of the project area. The Proposed Project would contribute to cumulative adverse influences where aboveground facilities or evidence of underground facilities (e.g., cleared ROWs) occupy the same field of view as other built facilities or impacted landscapes that are currently in the viewsheds of sensitive viewers in the project area. Existing utility infrastructure (described in the impact analysis above), including transmission lines and substations, have compromised the existing visual setting in the project vicinity. The Proposed Project, along with the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, would not create a cumulatively significant effect because it would not dominate the landscape setting.

When considered with the existing visual setting and the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects in the project area, the Proposed Project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable because it would not significantly alter existing scenic quality or viewsheds.

### **Agriculture and Forestry Resources**

The geographical context of cumulative impacts to agricultural resources includes important Farmland within San Benito County and Monterey County. Both of these counties have experienced reductions in important Farmland since 2004. In 2006, the total acreage of Farmland in San Benito County was 68,600 acres, which equates to a 2,963 acre reduction in Farmland between 2004 and 2006 (see Table 3.2-1). Monterey County had 236,142 acres of important Farmland in 2006, down from 240,394 acres in 2004.

The Proposed Project would temporarily disturb approximately 106 acres of agricultural land, approximately 21 of which is classified as Farmland. Less than 0.01 acre of Farmland would be disturbed permanently. As a number of the projects included in Table 3.17-1 are not yet in the environmental planning stage, the acreage of Farmland that could be converted by these projects is not known. However, in general, the acreage of Farmland in San Benito County and Monterey

County is expected to decline. Since the Proposed Project's incremental impact to Farmland would be less than 0.01 acre, it can be assumed that it would not have a cumulatively considerable contribution to the decline in Farmland throughout San Benito County and/or Monterey County and impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable.

### **Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

The geographic scope of cumulative air quality impacts would be generally limited to the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB), which is designated as non-attainment for the State one- and eight-hour ozone standards as well as the State PM10 standard. As described in Section 3.3, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, Pursuant to Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD) policy, projects that would be inconsistent with the applicable Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) or induce population growth beyond that estimated in current population projections would be considered to have a significant cumulative impact with regards to criteria air pollutant emissions. The Proposed Project would not induce population growth; it would allow PG&E to serve current and projected demand in the area. Construction activities under the Proposed Project could contribute to increases in ozone and particulate matter levels through emissions of ozone precursors, specifically NOx, and fugitive dust.

When considered in combination with other construction projects including those described in Table 3.17-1, the cumulative emissions could impede the NCCAB's ability to achieve attainment of State ozone and PM10 standards. However, the Proposed Project's incremental contribution to daily ozone and PM10 levels would be less than significant and implementation of APMs AIR-1 and AIR-2 would ensure that the Project's contribution to PM10 levels from fugitive dust and NOx levels from tailpipe emissions would be less than significant (see Section 3.3, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions*). Therefore, the incremental impact of the Proposed Project relating to criteria air pollutant emissions would not be cumulatively considerable.

As discussed under items f) and g) in Section 3.3, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, the significance of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is determined based on whether such emissions would have a cumulatively considerable impact on global climate change. The Proposed Project's amortized construction emissions would be considerably less than 1,100 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e per year and would not conflict with the State's GHG reduction goals. Therefore, Project-specific incremental impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

### **Biological Resources**

Biological impacts resulting from Proposed Project implementation are localized around individual utility towers and poles, and are comprised primarily of ground-disturbance during construction and maintenance activities. These project-level impacts are less than significant following mitigation. Nonetheless, the Proposed Project would make incremental, less-than-significant project-specific contributions to cumulative impacts, if any, on the following biological resources: The Proposed Project would result in a project-wide loss of 1 to 3 acres of upland habitat, 0.001 acre of wetland habitat, some native trees, and the potential loss of special-status individuals.



Cumulative projects in the area include seven housing subdivisions, two road-widening projects, a potential truck parking and maintenance facility, and several use permit project, including a gas well exploration project in the hills north of the project area (see Table 3.17-1). Impacts on biological resources related to potential road widening from two lanes to four lanes over a distance of about 16 miles would result in an estimated loss of 49 acres of land, mostly in agricultural areas. Subdivision requests ranging from four to 91 lots (a total of 219 lots) would require more than 100 acres of land, assuming a conservative average lot size of 0.5 acre; some of these subdivisions are proposed in undeveloped foothill grasslands and could result in a large area of habitat conversion, depending on the number of lots constructed and the nature and extent of roadway and other infrastructure necessary to serve them. Indirect impacts on habitats and species also could result from the attraction of additional people and domestic pets to the area. Gas well exploration would result in the establishment of access roads and ground disturbance over an area approximately 640 acres in size among foothill grasslands. The cumulative impact of these projects on upland habitat, wetland habitat, native trees and special-status species is not significant in percentage terms relative to remaining resources, to the extent that such resources can be assessed using publicly available digital and satellite imagery (e.g., Google Earth). However, even if there were an existing cumulative impact, the incremental contribution of the Proposed Project would not be cumulatively considerable.

### **Cultural Resources**

There is no significant cumulative impact to which the Proposed Project could contribute. Cumulative projects within five miles of the project area include seven housing subdivisions, two road-widening projects, a potential truck parking and maintenance facility, and several Use Permits projects, including a permit for gas well exploration in the hills north of the project area. While these other projects may have impacts to cultural resources, these projects would be required to go through the CEQA process, including an assessment of impacts to cultural resources. Mitigation measures similar to the ones for the Proposed Project presented in Section 3.5, *Cultural Resources*, would also be implemented. Potential impacts to cultural resources resulting from the Proposed Project would be localized around individual utility towers and poles, and limited primarily to ground-disturbance during construction. These project-level impacts are less than significant with mitigation incorporated and would not be cumulatively considerable.

### **Geology, Soils, and Seismicity**

Impacts on geology and soils are generally localized and do not result in regionally cumulative impacts. Geologic conditions can vary significantly over short distances creating entirely different effects elsewhere. Other future development would be constructed to the then-current standards, which could potentially exceed those of existing improvements within the region, which reduces the potential impacts to the public.

The impact of the Proposed Project on geology, soils, and seismicity would be localized (i.e., would not affect the immediate vicinity surrounding the project area) and incrementally less than significant. The projects identified in Table 3.17-1 are not adjacent to the Proposed Project, with the exception of a use permit for gas and well exploration adjacent to the Hollister Pole Segment in the Flint Hills. The possible well exploration project and the Proposed Project both would be



constructed in accordance with the most recent version of the California Building Code seismic safety requirements and recommendations contained in the respective project specific geotechnical reports. Therefore, the potential for a cumulative impact is unlikely. In sum, the less-than-significant incremental Proposed Project-specific impacts on geology, soils and seismicity would not be cumulatively considerable.

### **Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

As indicated in the Environmental Setting discussion (see Section 3.7, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*), there is no existing contamination or other inherently cumulative hazards in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Project area; therefore, there is no existing significant cumulative impact on hazards or hazardous materials to which the Proposed Project could contribute. Further, construction activities associated with the Proposed Project would increase the hazard potential in the study area by a less than significant amount, and operation of the Proposed Project would have no impact. This incremental, Proposed Project-specific impact would not be cumulatively considerable when analyzed together with the impacts of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, which would presumably be similar to those of the Proposed Project.

### **Hydrology and Water Quality**

The geographic context for the cumulative impacts associated with hydrology and water quality is the Salinas and Pajaro River watersheds downstream of the projects identified in Table 3.17-1, as well as the Gilroy-Hollister Valley and Salinas Valley groundwater basins.

The Proposed Project, along with the projects identified in Table 3.17-1, would be required to comply with applicable federal, State, and local water quality regulations. The Proposed Project, along with other projects involving similar general construction activities, would be required to obtain coverage under the General Permit, Section 401 (of the Clean Water Act) water quality certification, and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs). Storm water management measures would be required to be identified and implemented that would effectively control erosion and sedimentation and other construction related pollutants during construction. Other management measures, such as construction of infiltration/detention basins, would be required to be identified and implemented that would effectively treat pollutants that would be expected for the post-construction land use for certain projects. Construction and operational related stormwater runoff from the Proposed Project would be controlled by the requirements of a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit (e.g., General Permit), WDR measures, and mitigation measures required as part of this IS/MND. Other new development in the area would also be required to control construction and operational stormwater by implementing federal, State, and local requirements regarding hydrology and water quality, as well as by requirements introduced through CEQA review where applicable. The imposition of such requirements would minimize any potential cumulative impact. In any event, the incremental impact of the Proposed Project, in combination with the projects identified in Table 3.17-1, would not be cumulatively considerable.

### **Land Use and Planning**

The geographic scope for cumulative impacts associated with land use issues would include the cities and unincorporated areas of northwestern San Benito County and northeastern Monterey County. However, given that the Proposed Project would have no impacts with respect to land use, there would be no cumulative impact associated with land use and planning.

### **Mineral Resources**

The geographic scope for cumulative impacts associated with the availability of mineral resources is the Monterey Bay Production-Consumption Region, a study area designated by the California Geological Survey to establish and quantify aggregate supply and demand. The Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on the availability of mineral resources in the project area because it would not result in the loss of or otherwise permanently hinder access to mineral resources. The other projects identified in Table 3.17-1 would have no impact on mineral or aggregate resources, because they are not located on land zoned as an important mineral resource. Thus, the Proposed Project's impact on mineral resource availability would not be cumulatively considerable.

### **Noise**

Noise levels tend to lessen quickly with distance from a source; therefore, the geographic scope for cumulative impacts associated with noise would be limited to projects within one mile of the Proposed Project. Construction of the Proposed Project would result in a potentially significant impact associated with construction equipment; however, this impact would be reduced to less than significant with mitigation. Operation and maintenance activities would not result in permanent increases to existing noise levels in the study area and impacts would be less than significant.

As identified in Table 3.17-1, there are a number of projects located within one mile of the Proposed Project that are reasonably foreseeable and would have the potential to be constructed simultaneously with the Proposed Project. If construction of these projects were to occur simultaneously with construction of the Proposed Project, the potential for impacts to nearby sensitive receptors from construction noise would increase. However, as discussed in Section 3.11, *Noise*, with implementation of APM NOI-1 and NOI-2 as well as Mitigation Measures 3.11-1, 3.11-2, and 3.11-3, the Proposed Project's incremental contribution to noise levels in the study area from construction activities would be less than significant. Other projects constructed simultaneously with the Proposed Project would be subject to applicable noise standards as well, thereby reducing their own incremental contribution during construction. Therefore, when considered in combination with cumulative development, the Proposed Project's incremental contribution to temporary noise impacts from construction, with proposed mitigation, would not be cumulatively considerable.

The main noise source from operation of the Proposed Project would be corona discharge. Given that all but 1.3 miles of the Proposed Project would be located within existing PG&E ROW where a power line currently exists, and the 1.3 miles of new ROW would not be located near any sensitive receptors, it can be assumed that the Proposed Project would not substantially increase noise levels near sensitive receptors. Furthermore, maintenance activities would include

infrequent inspection of the lines, which currently takes place and therefore would not constitute a new noise source. Overall, operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project would result in little to no incremental change in noise levels in the study area and would have a less than significant contribution to increases in ambient noise levels.

### **Population and Housing**

The geographic context for the cumulative impacts associated with population and housing issues are the cities and unincorporated communities of San Benito and Monterey Counties, which assumes full build-out of the Proposed Project, in combination with build-out of the projects listed in Table 3.17-1.

Both San Benito County and Monterey County are expected to undergo population growth over the next few decades. As described in Section 3.12, *Population and Housing*, by 2030, the population of San Benito County is expected increase over 56 percent from 2005 levels to 89,431 persons while the population of Monterey County is expected to increase nearly 22 percent from 2005 levels to 515,549 persons. The projects listed in Table 3.17-1 include numerous subdivisions for single- and multi-family residences, which would have a direct impact on population growth in the study area, and other projects, which could have an indirect impact. The Proposed Project would have no direct impact on population growth and would result in a less than significant indirect impact. Because the Proposed Project's construction crews would not be expected to relocate into the study area to construct the Proposed Project, any incremental indirect impacts on population growth associated with the Proposed Project's labor force would not be cumulatively considerable. Additionally, the cumulative projects, as well as other future development, would be subject to the applicable city and/or county planning process, as well as environmental review on a project-by-project basis. As such, build-out of the projects listed in Table 3.17-1 would not be likely to result in the inducement of substantial direct or indirect population growth in the area beyond what is planned. Accordingly, the Proposed Project's less than significant incremental impact on indirect population growth associated with the extension of infrastructure would not be cumulatively considerable.

### **Public Services**

The geographic scope of this impact is the service area of affected public services, generally limited to the area within northeastern Monterey County and northwestern San Benito County. During construction, the Proposed Project would have an individually less than significant effect on public services including police and fire protection as well as schools and other public facilities. The projects identified in Table 3.17-1 include a number of residential projects that may increase demand for public services in the study area. Furthermore, construction activities associated with reasonably foreseeable projects may overlap with construction activities associated with the Proposed Project, which could result in substantial temporary increases in demand for public services. However, given that the Proposed Project's less-than-significant incremental impacts to public services would be limited to the 15-month construction period, the Proposed Project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to any cumulative effect on public services that would require the construction of new or physical alteration of existing government facilities to

maintain acceptable service ratios. The Proposed Project's contribution to cumulative impacts on public services would not be cumulatively considerable.

### **Recreation**

The geographic scope of this impact is the regional recreation facilities in the study area, generally located within northwestern San Benito County and northeastern Monterey County. As described in Section 3.14, *Recreation*, the Proposed Project would have no impact on the environment from construction or expansion of additional recreational facilities, and so would not contribute to cumulative impacts there from.

With regard to potential increased use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities, such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated, impacts from the Proposed Project, if any, would be limited to the 15-month construction period and would not be significant. The projects identified in Table 3.17-1 include several development projects in San Benito County and the City of Hollister that could increase the demand on existing park and recreation facilities and/or result in the need for new facilities within the project vicinity by increasing the population in the study area. The Proposed Project would have no incremental demand on existing recreational facilities once construction is complete. During the construction phase, the Proposed Project's less than significant impact on park and recreation facilities would not be cumulatively considerable.

### **Transportation and Traffic**

Proposed Project construction activities, as described in Section 1, *Project Description*, could have a temporary construction-related impact on local traffic flow in the Proposed Project area as street and lane closures may be required. The geographic context for the cumulative impacts associated with transportation and traffic issues is limited to the areas where transportation facilities (e.g., roads, railroads, etc.) would be crossed during conductor stringing activities. In conjunction with other construction projects identified in Table 3.17-1, potential cumulative impacts could occur. For example, two Caltrans widening projects (i.e., State Route 156 Widening Project and the Highway 25 Widening Project) are proposed in the study area. These projects are in the general geographic area of the Proposed Project, but the Proposed Project would not cross these roads in the immediate vicinity of the road widening projects.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.15-1 (see Section 3.15, *Transportation and Traffic*) would ensure that the Proposed Project's contribution to any transportation and traffic-related cumulative impacts during construction would not be cumulatively considerable.

### **Utilities and Service Systems**

The geographic scope of utilities and service system-related impacts is the service area of affected utilities and service systems, which generally is limited to the area within northeastern Monterey County and northwestern San Benito County. Construction of the Proposed Project would generate solid waste; however, the Proposed Project would be served by a landfill(s) with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs and impacts would be less than significant. Operation of the residential projects identified in

Table 3.17-1 would result in long-term increases in solid waste generation. However, given that the Proposed Project's demand for landfill services would be limited to the construction period which would be completed prior to implementation of most of the planned residential projects, the Proposed Project would have a less than cumulatively considerable contribution related to any landfill-related cumulative impact.

The Proposed Project would have a temporary less-than-significant impact with regard to contacting or disturbing underground utility lines during construction activities. Construction of many of the projects identified in Table 3.17-1 appears likely to involve subsurface work that could result in contact with or disturbance of underground utility lines or facilities. Additionally, the Lario Oil and Gas Project would likely involve subsurface drilling for gas well exploration, and would have the potential to contact underground utility lines. However, other projects involving ground-disturbing activities also would be required to notify the Underground Service Alert, thereby reducing their individual chances of contacting underground utility lines. Therefore, there is no existing significant cumulative impact relating to contact with or disturbance of underground utility lines during construction and, in any event, the Proposed Project's incremental less-than-significant impact on such lines or facilities would not be cumulatively considerable.

**c) Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly: *LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION.***

The Proposed Project has the potential to have environmental effects that could cause substantial direct or indirect adverse effects on human beings; however, the implementation of mitigation measures would reduce such impacts to less-than-significant levels. As analyzed in the context of criterion a), the Proposed Project's impacts relating to *Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Noise, and Transportation and Traffic* could cause adverse effects on human beings. However, implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the respective sections of this IS/MND would reduce or avoid such impacts on human beings to a less than significant level.

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## References

- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), 2008. *San Benito Route 156 Improvement Project, Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact*, October 2010.
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