5.11 Mineral Resources

MINERAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State?	☐	☐	☐	☑
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☑

Significance criteria established by CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G.

5.11.1 Setting

Mineral resources in Kern County include petroleum, natural gas, borax, cement production, and construction aggregates (Kern County, 2009; USGS, 2014). Petroleum is the primary mineral resource in Kern County. Land uses surrounding the Proposed Project Study Area are largely designated as agricultural, residential, industrial, or commercial. Kern County has not designated any land surrounding the Project Study Area as critical to mineral or petroleum resources (Kern County, 2009). Field observations and site exploration data confirm that the Substation Study Area is underlain by deposits consisting mainly of silty sand (SCE, 2014). A review of U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) data indicate that the majority of the remaining portions of the Proposed Project along the telecommunications components are also underlain by Quaternary alluvium, which consists of sand and silt. In addition, short portions of the telecommunications routes are underlain by Mesozoic granite rocks and pre-Cenozoic metasedimentary and metavolcanic rocks undivided (SCE, 2014).

Mines. A review of the USGS Mineral Resources Data System indicated that one mine, Barrett Pit Mine, is located within the Substation Study Area. However, Barrett Pit Mine is located approximately 0.7 miles northwest of the proposed Banducci Substation site and would not be impacted by the Proposed Project. Barrett Pit Mine is designated by USGS Mineral Resources Data System as a past producer of construction material (specifically, sand and gravel). Site observations indicated that the mine is not currently active. The Lehigh Southwest Cement Company operates the nearest active mine (and cement plant) to the proposed telecommunication routes. The Lehigh mine and plant are located approximately 0.4 miles slightly north and east of the intersection of the proposed Telecommunications Routes 1 and 2. In addition the Lee Deposit prospect mine is located approximately 0.25 miles south of the Proposed Telecommunications Route 1.

Oil and Gas. A review of the California Department of Conservation (DOC) Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) online mapping system indicated that four oil/gas wells are located in the Substation Study Area; however, none of the oil/gas wells are within the Proposed Project site. In addition, the DOGGR data indicate that all four wells within the Project Study Area are dry wells. The nearest oil/gas well is located approximately 0.3 miles north of the proposed Banducci Substation site. The remaining oil/gas wells are located more than 0.5 miles from the proposed Banducci Substation site. None of the oil/gas wells would be affected by the Proposed Project (DOGGR, 2014).

There are no oil/gas wells directly within the proposed telecommunications routes. The nearest well is a dry well located approximately 350 feet east of the Proposed Telecommunications Route 1.

Regulatory Background

State

California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975. The California SMARA requires that the State Geologist classify land into mineral resource zones (MRZ) according to the known or inferred mineral potential of the land. Project components are not in a classified MRZ, and there are no known important mineral resources or active mining operations in the immediate vicinity of the substation site that would be affected.

SMARA also requires city and county regulatory agencies to adopt ordinances for land use permitting and reclamation procedures. These provide the regulatory framework under which local mining and reclamation activities are conducted. The State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) reviews these ordinances to determine whether an ordinance meets or exceeds the California surface mining and reclamation procedures established pursuant to SMARA. The SMGB has the authority to further regulate the authority of the local agencies if it finds that the agencies are not in compliance with the provisions of SMARA.

Local

Kern County General Plan. The Kern County General Plan (Kern County, 2009) has developed policies to protect the current and future extraction of mineral resources that are important to Kern County's economy, while minimizing impact of this use to the public and the environment. Kern County emphasizes that lands classified as MRZ-2, as designated by the State of California, should be protected from encroachment of incompatible land uses. Kern County also emphasizes conservation and development of identified mineral deposits and discourages incompatible land use adjacent to map code 8.4 (Mineral and Petroleum) areas.

Greater Tehachapi Area Specific and Community Plan. The Greater Tehachapi Area (GTA) is a term used to describe the collection of unincorporated communities located in eastern Kern County along State Route (SR) 58 between the San Joaquin Valley and the Mojave Desert. Consistent with State and County requirements, the GTA Specific and Community Plan (GTASCP) sets forth a land use plan, as well as goals, policies, and implementation measures designed to ensure that future development in the GTA is consistent with the goals and policies of Kern County's General Plan while recognizing the uniqueness of the region.

Applicant Proposed Measures

There are no applicant proposed measures related to mineral resources.

5.11.2 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a. Would the project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State?

NO IMPACT. There are no known important mineral resources that would be impacted by the project. There are no designated Mineral Resource Zones in the project vicinity.

Mining has and does occur in the general area. The Barrett Pit Mine is located approximately 1 mile northwest of the Banducci Substation Site and would not be affected by the Proposed Project. Furthermore, site observations suggest that this mine is not currently active. The Lehigh mine is located slightly north and east of the intersection of the Proposed Telecommunications Routes 1 and 2 on Williamson Road at the existing Monolith Substation and would not be affected by the Proposed Project. In addi-

tion, the Lee Deposit prospect mine is located approximately 0.25 miles south of the proposed Telecommunications Route 1, near Highline Road and Water Canyon Road. At these distances from the proposed telecommunications routes, the active mines would not be expected to be impacted by the Proposed Project.

Four dry oil/gas wells are located in the Project Study Area. None of these wells is within the proposed Banducci Substation site; all are located 0.5 miles or more from the proposed Banducci Substation site. No oil/gas wells are located directly within the proposed telecommunication routes (DOGGR, 2014). None of these oil/gas wells would be affected by the Proposed Project.

Therefore, the project would have no impact on either rock or oil/gas mineral resources.

b. Would the project result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?

NO IMPACT. There are no known important mineral resources that would be impacted by the project. There are no designated Mineral Resource Zones in the project vicinity. Therefore, the project would have no impact on any locally important mineral resource recovery sites.

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