5.18 Mandatory Findings of Significance

5.18.1 Environmental Impacts and Assessment

This section discusses mandatory findings of significance as well as potential cumulative and growth-inducing impacts, related to the Cressey-Gallo 115 kV Power Line Project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15065 requires that the lead agency determine whether the Proposed Project would have a significant effect on the environment.

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
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.)	☐	☒	☐	☐
c. Does the project have environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Significance criteria established by CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G.

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?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. Project construction would largely use existing access roads and laydown areas and be located along existing power line routes and within existing substation footprints. The project would not substantially increase the existing permanent footprint of projects in the area. As the Proposed Project is located in disturbed roadside or active agricultural areas, the potential to degrade environmental quality is very low. Habitat in the project area is generally marginal for special-status wildlife. Riparian habitat or sensitive natural community types are not present in the project area.

Project-related work would require mitigation to provide environmental awareness training, protect seasonal ponded areas and other water features, minimize the introduction and spread of noxious weeds, and reduce impacts to Sanford's arrowhead habitat, the only special-status plant species with potential to occur in the project corridor (APM BIO-1 and Mitigation Measures B-1, B-2 and B-3). Sanford's arrowhead is moderately likely to occur in irrigation ditches in the project area. However, the channels and banks of most of the canals and ditches in the project area are unvegetated. Consequently, adverse effects to this special status plant species would be less than significant. Habitat for ten special-status wildlife species occurs within the study area. However, project work will avoid most habitat areas

and minimize potential impacts to other habitat areas through pre-construction surveys to establish buffers and mark the limits of work areas when proximate to sensitive resources (APM-BIO-1, and Mitigation Measures B-4, B-5, and B-6). Impacts to aquatic habitat for special-status invertebrates would be reduced to less than significant by APM BIO 1, APM HM 1, APM WQ 1, APM WQ 2 and Mitigation Measures B-1, B-2 and B-3. Potential for direct take of species, population, or community through habitat loss or modification is unlikely, though direct impacts may occur if species encounter equipment and construction personnel. However, given the low likelihood of such occurrences, marginal habitat quality for special-status wildlife, lack of riparian and sensitive natural community types, and efforts to avoid sensitive species, impacts will be less than significant.

Project construction would include ground-disturbing activities that could adversely affect the integrity of cultural deposits, resulting in the loss of cultural and/or historical information and the alteration of the site setting of a historical resource. Cultural resources surveys and records searches identified 14 potential historic-period resources in the project area; however, no project construction, operation, and maintenance impacts would occur at these sites. Documented cultural resources and newly discovered resources identified during the cultural resources survey would be avoided to the greatest extent feasible (Mitigation Measure C-1); however, if avoidance of the resource is not possible, then the resource would be evaluated for CRHR or National Register of Historic Places eligibility, pursuant to the APMs described in Section 5.5. Impacts to cultural resources would be less than significant with Mitigation Measure C-1 and APM CU-1 and APM CU-2.

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, effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)

Related Projects

A list of cumulative projects used for this analysis is provided in Table 5.18-1. The list includes projects within a 5-mile radius of the Proposed Project, including projects in the City of Atwater, the City of Livingston, and census-designated places of Winton, Ballico, Delhi, and Hillmar-Irwin in Merced County. The projects were reviewed to identify whether the Proposed Project could contribute to cumulatively significant impacts when evaluated in combination with these other projects. The majority of the projects are at least 1 mile or more from the Proposed Project.

Table 5.18-1. Cumulative Projects in the Project Vicinity

Project Name	Project Location	Proximity to Project	Type of Development	Project Description	Project Status
City of Livingston					
Parkside (Vieira/Tashima)	Between F St. and Peach Ave. at Hilltop Ave.	0.55 mile	Residential	179 lots on 43 acres.	Under Construction, built out.
Country Lane 1 (Liberty Square)	N of Walnut, E of Almond Glen & Hammatt	1.80 miles	Residential	55 residential lots on 11 acres.	Under Construction. Finished lots – ready to build. Under new ownership.
Country Lane 2 (Kishi)	Dwight & Hammatt Ave.	1.85 miles	Residential	159 residential lots on 39 acres.	Under Construction. Finished lots – ready to build. Under new ownership.
Mansionettes at Davante Villas	South of F Street, East of Bridgeport Village	1.05 mil	Residential	61 residential lots on 20.7 acres.	Under Construction. 12 vacant lots sold.
Somerset 1 (Sunvalley)	13311 W. Peach, at Prusso	0.55 mile	Residential	30 gross acres. 134 lots.	Under Construction. Well not completed – needs treatments by developer; Peach Ave. bridge requires contribution.
Calandev, LLC	Robin & Peach Avenue	0.55 mile	Residential	66 residential lots on 20.96 acres.	Annex/Prezone/ Env. Review. On Hold.
Country Villas IV (Sundance)	Dwight & Walnut Ave.	1.55 mile	Residential	97 residential lots on 22.1 acres	Approved. In escrow
La Tierra (Rancho Estrada)	F Street and Robin Avenue	1.05 mile	Residential	77 residential lots on 17 acres	Under Construction. Finished lots sold.
Magnolia Concept	S of Independence Valley	<0.55 mile	Concept Plan	Residential development on 29 acres.	Isolated by bankruptcy.
Gallo Concept (River Ranch)	W of Robin, N of Vinewood	1.30 miles	Concept Plan	Residential development on 347 acres.	Application pending MEIR. Concept plan – waiting for Sphere of Influence expansion
B Street Shopping Center and Subdivision	Between B and F Streets, by Shopping Ctr.	1.30 miles	Commercial	28 commercial units on 22.4 acres.	New Application. On hold per developer
Blueberry Crossing commercial	Dwight Way & SR-99	1.05 mile	Commercial	Commercial center on 33 acres.	On hold per developer. EIR in process.

Table 5.18-1. Cumulative Projects in the Project Vicinity

Project Name	Project Location	Proximity to Project	Type of Development	Project Description	Project Status
Fairfield Marriott Hotel	SR-99 and Winton Parkway	1.30 miles	Commercial	Hotel, 55, 450 sq ft., with 87 rooms on 2 acres.	Site Plan/Design Review. On hold per developer
Livingston Commons commercial	NE Corner of B & Winton-Parkway	1.05 miles	Commercial	Commercial building on 10 acres.	Building Permit. Pending lot split
Singh Dental Office	1222 B Street	1.12 miles	Commercial/residential	Lower dental office, upper apartment; 2,000 sq ft.	Site Plan/Design Review. Approved by Council 1/5/10; approvals good for 2 yrs. Next step building permit.
Livingston Estates Subdivision	N of Peach & E of Dwight	0.30 mile	Residential	45 residential lots on 7.8 acres	New Application. Waiting for Sphere of Influence expansion
Horisons Unlimited Health Care	164 B Street (S of SR-99 between Winton Parkway & Robin on S side of B St.)	1 mile	Senior Housing	Improvements to health care facility improvements on 3 acres	Site Plan/Design Review. On hold per developer
Merced County					
County of Merced 2030 General Plan Update	Entire County	NA	NA	A comprehensive review and update of the 2000 General Plan background information and goals, policies, and programs.	Ongoing. A Draft EIR is under preparation and scoping meetings are ongoing.
County of Merced Housing Element Update	Entire county	NA	NA	A comprehensive review and update of the 2003 Housing Element background information and goals, policies, and programs.	Ongoing. The 7½-year planning period for the 2009 Housing Element covers the period January 1, 2007, to June 30, 2014.
Merced County Enterprise Zone	Entire county	NA	Commercial	Request for establishment of a California Enterprise Zone on approximately 42,730 acres. A long-term partnership with local governments and private companies to generate new private sector investment and growth.	Ongoing.
Mid Valley Agricultural Services	SE of Eucalyptus & Sultana	0.30 mile	Commercial	Relocate and construct a new 19,300 square feet office, warehouse, and operations facilities. Replace existing operation located 800 feet west.	Construction completed, facility operational.

Table 5.18-1. Cumulative Projects in the Project Vicinity

Project Name	Project Location	Proximity to Project	Type of Development	Project Description	Project Status
Michael Brasil Dairy Expansion	S of Gallo Substation	2.30 miles	Agricultural	Dairy expansion to house including construction of a new barn. Construction would be north of existing facilities and would convert approximately 7 acres of existing cropland to active dairy facilities. With the proposed expansion, the dairy operator would crop adjacent fields.	EIR issued 11/10, approved 1/11. Construction expected to commence late 2011.
E. & J. Gallo Livingston Winery Eastward Expansion	E of Gallo Substation	0.30 mile	Agricultural	Development of 33-acre project site location adjacent to the existing production facility. The project is proposed to be constructed in three phases and would install new storage and processing facility, and a 15,000 square foot administration building.	MND for CUP issued 11/11. Phase 1 of construction would be January through October 2012. Phase 2 would be November 2012 through September 2013. Phase 3 would be November 2013 through September 2014.
Delhi Sand Mine and Reclamation Project	E of Delhi	4.30 miles	Industrial	57 acres on 4 parcels is planned for a sand extraction project will export approximately 500,000 cubic yards of sand. The project will be completed in 2 phases over a 5-year period.	Reclamation Plan issued 5/09 for CUP issuance. Surface mining expected to continue through to July 2014.
Hilmar Cheese Company Facility Expansion	N of Hilmar	3.30 miles	Agricultural	Expansion of the Hilmar Cheese Company existing facility on parcels totaling approximately 123 acres. Construction of up to approximately 600,000 square feet of new buildings, structures, and dirt mounding in two phases for a five-year construction period.	Draft IS/MND for CUP issued 2/12. If approved construction to commence as early as June 2012.
Cressey-North Merced 115 kV Power Line	N of Cressey	<0.30 mile	Transmission	6-mile 115 kV line from North Merced to Cressey Substation.	The project has been approved for study by the California Independent System Operator and is in the preliminary planning stage. It not anticipated to be constructed until 2017 at the earliest. PG&E has stated that current Cressey Substation plans would not change to accommodate the newly-identified potential line (PG&E, 2012).

Source: City of Livingston, 2008a, 2008b, 2011; Merced County, 2008 and 2011a; PG&E, 2011; PG&E, 2012.

Cumulative Impacts

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. The intent of a power line looping project is to improve service and reliability for existing users, not to expand service or facilities, and long-term effects would be minor. Implementation of APMs and mitigation measures would further minimize the less-than-significant short-term construction-related impacts related to noise, dust, traffic, agricultural, land use, air quality, geology, hazards, hydrological, and biological resources. A discussion regarding each resource area is provided below.

Aesthetics

As described in Section 5.1, the viewshed of the Proposed Project is a predominately agricultural area, and electric distribution and power lines are integral elements of the existing landscape. The project vicinity is likely to remain predominately agricultural for the foreseeable future with little change in its overall visual character. The impacts from the construction of structures would be minimal because the new poles and towers would be similar in color and texture to the existing structures. Construction and operation of the power lines would not require lighting. New lighting would be added to the Cressey and Gallo Substations, but impacts would be less than significant with implementation of APM AE-3, which requires design and layout for new lighting at the two existing substations to incorporate measures such as use of non-glare fixtures and directional lighting to reduce spillover into areas outside the substation site and minimize the visibility of lighting from off-site locations.

Other projects in the region are contributing to increased development and urbanization; however, the Proposed Project would not contribute significant visual changes associated with such land use changes with incorporation of Mitigation Measures V-1 and V-2. Given the distance of the Proposed Project from the projects in Table 5.18-1, the presence of existing, similar pole lines, the presence of intervening vegetation which screens views, and because only a small portion of the Cressey-Gallo power line would be visible from any single viewing location in common with the development projects, the Proposed Project would have a minimal visual impact and would not make a significant contribution to an overall cumulatively significant visual impact. The Cressey-North Merced 115 kV line has been approved for study by the California Independent System Operator and is early in the planning stages. The 6-mile 115 kV line could potentially contribute to visual impacts, but like the Proposed Project, would undergo CEQA review and would incorporate mitigation to reduce impacts such that it would not be out of character with the surrounding landscape and existing transmission lines.

Agricultural Resources

As described in Section 5.2, the Proposed Project is located in a primarily agricultural area with intermittent rural residences. The majority of the power poles would be placed in such a way as to accommodate pre-existing agricultural operations, but construction of the project would result in conversion of agricultural land. Partial or complete removal of one row of almond trees in an orchard that is designated as Prime Farmland between Eucalyptus Avenue and Mercedes Avenue is expected as part of project implementation, resulting in the permanent removal of approximately 0.43 acre of Prime Farmland from active cultivation. The approximately 0.43 acre of Prime Farmland affected by the project represents a negligible percentage of the total Prime Farmland acreage in Merced County (270,641 acres) and would not contribute to a significant loss of farmland. Mitigation Measure AG-1 would require the PG&E to coordinate with landowners, farmers, and ranchers and would further reduce this impact. The impacted property would remain zoned for agricultural use, and project operation and maintenance would not conflict with agricultural use on the remainder of the property or on adjacent properties.

Work at Cressey Substation would occur within the existing substation fence line. Work at Gallo Substation, which would have an expanded substation footprint, would occur on existing industrial property. Construction at both substations would therefore not impact agricultural facilities. Work and staging areas along the new power line route would be accessed primarily from the adjacent roads so as to not disturb agricultural land.

Temporary construction activities may affect agricultural land; with the exception of 0.43 acre removed, following construction, the lands would be returned to their former use.

The other projects identified in Table 5.18-1 would not impact the same agricultural lands as the Proposed Project. The amount of permanent loss of agricultural land for the Proposed Project would not contribute to a significant loss of farmland, even when considering other projects; therefore, no cumulative impacts to agricultural land would occur.

Air Quality

Implementation of the APMs and mitigation measures discussed in Section 5.3 would reduce air emissions during construction of the Proposed Project to a less than significant level based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the significance thresholds defined by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD).

Regarding other projects, the Merced County Enterprise Zone EIR identified development within the Enterprise Zone as resulting in significant and unavoidable air quality impacts in an area that is already designated as non-attainment by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the California Air Resources Board (Merced County, 2008). Impacts to ozone, particulate matter, and greenhouse gases were also considered by the Enterprise Zone EIR as cumulatively significant and unavoidable. While the Proposed Project would temporarily contribute further emissions, any potential adverse cumulative air quality impacts would be short-term (lasting only the duration of construction). Furthermore these emissions are not significant individually when compared to SJVAPCD significance thresholds (see Table 5.3-4). These emissions would be further reduced through the implementation of APMs and mitigation measures and would cease after the nine-month construction period. They would not contribute significantly to the emissions associated with the construction of other projects planned in the area and are not cumulatively considerable.

Impacts to air quality during operation and maintenance would be the same as those during current operation and maintenance practices; therefore, no contribution to cumulative impacts would occur.

Biological Resources

As discussed in Section 5.4, potential impacts to biological resources would occur from construction, including possible impacts to special-status plant and wildlife species. Impacts from the Proposed Project would be less than significant with the implementation of APMs and mitigation measures discussed in Section 5.4. Construction of other projects in the area during the same construction timeframe may contribute to temporary cumulative impacts to biological resources in the project area, mainly through ground disturbing activities. However, the Proposed Project's contribution to cumulative impacts would be reduced through implementation of APMs and mitigation measures to less than cumulatively considerable.

Impacts to biological resources during operation and maintenance would be the same as those during current operation and maintenance practices, and would be consistent with the PG&E San Joaquin Val-

ley Operations & Maintenance HCP (Jones and Stokes, 2006), which is applicable in the project area; therefore, impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable.

Cultural Resources

There are 14 documented historic-period resources in the project area; these resources would be avoided by PG&E. No prehistoric archaeological sites were identified during the cultural resources study, and no historic properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources within the project area. Neither short-term construction activities nor operation and maintenance activities would affect any known cultural resources with the implementation of the APMs and mitigation measures discussed in Section 5.5. Mitigation Measure C-1 would require that Proposed Project to avoid known resources and project APMs would require that work stop and be redirected in the event any unknown cultural resources are discovered. No cultural resources would be affected during project construction or during operation of the project, and no contribution to cumulative impacts would occur.

The project would avoid impacts to sensitive paleontological locations in the project area. If paleontological resources are found during construction, industry standard practices would be implemented as identified in the project APMs to minimize potential impacts and reduce the contribution of the Proposed Project to cumulative impacts. No other projects that may similarly impact these fossil localities were found within five miles of the project site; no cumulative impacts to paleontological resources would occur.

Geology and Soils

Anticipated impacts to geologic features would be less than significant. The project would not increase potential risks associated with a seismic event or impacts from collapsible or expansive soils. A potential for increased erosion exists because of surface-disturbing activities associated with project construction; however, the project site is relatively flat and potential impacts would be less than significant. Short-term construction impacts to soils have the potential to occur; however, implementation of the APMs described in Section 5.6 would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level.

Several projects listed in Table 5.18-1 could be constructed during the same time period as the Proposed Project. The Michael Brasil Dairy Expansion (Dairy Expansion) and the Hilmar Cheese Facility expansion could both increase erosion. The environmental review documents for both projects concluded that impacts to erosion would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated, and these impacts would only occur during project construction (Merced County 2010, 2012). The Dairy Expansion project was approved by Merced County on January 12, 2011 but construction has yet to commence on the property. The cheese facility expansion is still in the environmental review process. The E. & J. Gallo Livingston Winery Eastside Expansion Project (Gallo Winery Expansion Project) was approved under a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) in November 2011 with insignificant impacts to geology, soils, mineral resources and paelontological resources (Merced County, 2011b). The proposed Cressey-North Merced 115 kV line is early in the planning stages and could potentially contribute geology and soils impacts. The project would undergo CEQA review and would likely require measures to reduce any potential soil erosion impacts. It is unlikely that these cumulative projects would undergo construction at the same time as the Proposed Project and result in cumulative erosion impacts. However, even if the projects were constructed at the same time, the contribution of the Proposed Project to cumulative impacts would be reduced to less than significant with implementation of APMs, including a SWPPP and BMPs (see Section 5.6).

Greenhouse Gases

As discussed in Section 5.7, construction of the Proposed Project would result in emissions of GHGs from on-site construction equipment and off-site worker trips. The most common GHGs associated with fuel combustion are CO2, CH4, and N2O. Impacts from the Proposed Project would be less than significant because GHG emissions for the project would be well below existing numerical significance thresholds. The project does not include the types of sources for which SJVAPCD has established best performance standards to assess the significance of project-specific GHG emissions on global climate change. Any potential adverse cumulative GHG impacts would be short-term and not cumulatively considerable; therefore, GHG emissions would have a less than significant cumulative impact.

Operation of the project would be a continuation of existing activities. Small quantities of SF_6 emissions could potentially contribute to cumulative GHG impacts and would be mitigated to a level that is less than significant with implementation of APM AQ-3 and would not be considered cumulatively considerable in the context of other projects planned for the area.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The use of hazardous materials for the project would be minimal during construction and operation. Hazardous materials would be stored and used in compliance with applicable regulations. The project would not result in an increase in usage of hazardous materials. Impacts from routine use, transportation, disposal, and accidental spillage of hazardous materials would be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of APMs and mitigation measures discussed in Section 5.8.

The Gallo Winery Expansion Project was approved under an MND in November 2011 with insignificant impacts to hazards and hazardous materials (Merced County, 2011b). The Hilmar Cheese Facility expansion also has potential impacts with regard to hazardous materials, but these impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels with mitigation incorporated (Merced County, 2012). The proposed Cressey-North Merced 115 kV line is early in the planning stages and could potentially contribute to hazardous materials impacts during project operation. No other projects near the site are expected to contribute impacts to hazards and hazardous materials. Merced County's California Enterprise Zone would incentivize more development near the project, but as no specific projects have been identified, no impacts from hazards and hazardous materials derived from the Enterprise Zone establishment itself are expected (Merced County, 2008).

The project would not introduce new permanent hazardous materials or new permanent hazards. Other than substances associated with motor vehicles that would be used for annual line inspection and SF_6 for breaker insulation, no hazardous materials are associated with maintenance and operation of the project. The impacts of the Proposed Project and the Gallo Winery Expansion Project on hazards or hazardous materials are not individually significant and are not cumulatively considerable when considered in the context of each other and other projects have been identified for development in the area. Hazards or hazardous materials from the Proposed Project would be contained and impacts would be mitigated to less than significant and would not contribute to a cumulatively significant impact.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The Proposed Project has the potential to cause temporary impacts to nearby waterways and water quality during construction. These impacts could include accelerated soil erosion, downstream sedimentation, and reduced surface water quality. Construction activities conducted when the ground is wet also create the potential for increased sediment runoff. These temporary impacts would be reduced to less than significant with the implementation of APMs discussed in Section 5.9.

The Dairy Expansion, Hilmar Cheese facility expansion, Gallo Winery Expansion, and Cressey-North Merced 115 kV line are the only known projects in the vicinity that may produce impacts to hydrology and water quality. The proposed Cressey-North Merced 115 kV line is early in the planning stages and could potentially contribute to hydrology and water quality impacts, but construction would not overlap with the Proposed Project. The EIR for the Dairy and Cheese Expansion Project concluded that impacts to soil erosion are less than significant with mitigation (Merced County, 2010), and the draft MND for the Cheese facility expansion concluded that impacts to hydrology and water quality would be less-than-significant with the incorporation of mitigation (Merced County, 2012). The MND for the Gallo Winery Expansion Project concluded that there would be no significant impact to hydrology and water quality (Merced County, 2011b). Because the impacts to soil erosion from the Cressey-Gallo 115 kV Power Line Project are short-term and minor, APMs would reduce any contribution of the project to cumulative impacts to less than significant.

The primary concern for the Dairy Expansion Project is not degradation of surface water quality but groundwater contamination. The Cressey–Gallo project is expected to have minimal to no impact on groundwater quality. Therefore, no cumulative impact to hydrology and water quality would occur.

Approximately two-thirds of the project site, which includes Gallo Substation and the western two-thirds of the power line corridor, is located within a potential dam failure inundation area. The project would not increase the risk of dam failure; therefore no cumulative impact would occur.

Impacts to hydrology and water quality during operation and maintenance would be the same as those during current operation and maintenance; therefore, no contribution to cumulative impacts would occur.

Land Use

The majority of the project would be located within an existing utility corridor. As discussed in Section 5.10, the project is compatible with applicable land use policies and regulations, including the PG&E San Joaquin Valley Operations and Maintenance Habitat Conservation Plan (see also Section 5.4, Biological Resources). Therefore, the project would not contribute to potential cumulative impacts to land use.

Mineral Resources

As discussed in Section 5.11, no commercial mineral resources are known to exist within the project area and the Proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource; therefore, the project would not contribute to potential cumulative impacts that may result in the loss of mineral resources.

Noise

The Proposed Project is not expected to contribute to a long-term cumulative impact on ambient noise levels in the project area. Noise from construction activities would be limited to daytime hours and would be short-term. Unplanned nighttime work would be infrequent, occur in limited locations and be short-term. Impacts from noise to nearby sensitive receptors would be less than significant. Mitigation measures and APMs identified in Section 5.12 would reduce any impacts of the project to less than significant.

Other projects proposed in the vicinity may be constructed at the same time as the Proposed Project, including the possible simultaneous construction of the Gallo Winery Expansion Project and Hilmar Cheese facility expansion. However, noise from the Proposed Project would attenuate and would not

combine with noise from other projects, should construction schedules coincide. Potential cumulative noise impacts during construction would be less than significant based on the location of the Proposed Project in relation to other cumulative project and the location of sensitive receptors.

Because of the remote location of the project site, minor operational noise impacts would not be expected to contribute to cumulative noise impacts; therefore, the project would not constitute a considerable contribution to cumulative impacts.

Population and Housing

As discussed in Section 5.13, the Proposed Project would not result in impacts to population and housing. Construction workers would be drawn from existing local PG&E staff, which is anticipated to be sufficient to complete the project. The project would not displace any existing housing or people. The Proposed Project would not contribute to significant cumulative impacts because it would have no impacts on population and housing.

Public Services

As discussed in Section 5.14, the Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to public services. The Proposed Project would not require the cessation or interruption of fire or police protection services, schools, or other public facilities. There would be no impacts to public services and the project would not contribute to a cumulatively significant impact on the parks in the project area.

Recreation

As discussed in Section 5.15, the Proposed Project would not cause a substantial increase in the use of or physical deterioration of parks or recreational facilities. The project would have no effects on recreation and would not contribute to cumulative effects associated with other projects.

Transportation and Traffic

As discussed in Section 5.16, construction of the Proposed Project would have the potential for temporary impacts to traffic volumes, LOS standards, road hazards, and emergency access. These impacts would be temporary and less than significant. No bikeways exist near the project area in the unincorporated areas of the County. Potential access roads would not receive a significant increase in their traffic volumes because only two six-person crews are anticipated at a pole location at any given time. On a typical day, a crew of 5 to 6 persons may be working at a substation. Given the location of the project area in relation to other development projects in the region, the transportation network is sufficient to accommodate construction traffic to avoid significant impacts to any one area.

The Gallo Winery Expansion Project is located to the east of the project line at Gallo Substation. The project access road to Gallo Substation is the third and least-direct access road identified for the Gallo Winery Expansion Project. PG&E would coordinate construction access road use with the Gallo Winery and would implementation APM TT-1 to minimize impacts to traffic volumes, traffic flow, LOS ratings, and v/c ratios. This would reduce the contribution of the Proposed Project to less than cumulatively considerable. Projects located more than 1 mile from the Proposed Project area (including the proposed Hilmar Cheese facility expansion) would be less than significant because the distance between the projects would be great enough to dissipate traffic and prevent accumulation of impacts.

Traffic related to the current routine operation and maintenance activities for the existing distribution lines along approximately 80 percent of the project route is minimal. Once the new Cressey-Gallo circuit is built and energized, PG&E's existing local maintenance and operations group would assume inspec-

tion, patrol, and maintenance duties as needed. Existing operation and maintenance crews would operate and maintain the new substation equipment as part of their current substation operation and maintenance activities. As such the traffic associated with the power line would not be a noticeable increase as the operation and maintenance would continue on the same planned level of effort as currently implemented. The project would not constitute a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative traffic impacts.

Utilities and Service Systems

Implementation of other development projects could result in potential cumulative impacts to utilities, particularly local water supplies and wastewater facilities. In contrast, construction of the Proposed Project would temporarily require a minimal water supply and generate minimal amounts of wastewater. As discussed in Section 5.17, construction would require the disposal of a less than significant amount of all types of waste. No expanded facilities or services would be needed for the project, and use and disposal of all water and waste products would comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

Impacts to utilities and service systems during operation and maintenance would be the similar as those during current operation and maintenance practices of nearby lines, which is minimal; therefore, no contribution to cumulative impacts would occur

Corona and Induced Current Effects

As discussed in Section 5.19, induced current effects would be less than significant because of the relatively low voltage (115 kV). In addition, project construction and operation would meet or exceed CPUC General Order 95 standards and work would be done in accordance with PG&E's Code of Safe Practices. The proposed Cressey-North Merced 115 kV line is early in the planning stages and could potentially contribute to corona and induced current effects. However, it would be low voltage and would be subject to similar standards and practices. None of the other proposed projects in the area would generate corona noise; therefore, no cumulative effects would occur.

c. Does the project have environmental effects, which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. The preceding sections of this Initial Study discuss various types of impacts that could have adverse effects on human beings, including:

- Changes to air quality during project construction resulting from fugitive particulate matter emissions, diesel particulate matter emissions, and exhaust emissions (see Section 5.3, Air Quality);
- Potential release of hazardous materials associated with construction during transport, use, and disposal (see Section 5.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials); and
- Noise generated by project construction and operation (see Section 5.12, Noise).

These are primarily temporary impacts associated with project construction activities. Each type of impact with the potential to cause substantial adverse effects on human beings has been evaluated, and this Initial Study concludes that all of these potential impacts are either less than significant or can be mitigated to a less than significant level with the implementation of measures presented herein (see also Section 6, Mitigation Monitoring Plan, for a complete listing of the mitigation measures including Applicant Proposed Measures). Therefore, the Proposed Project does not involve any activities, either during con-struction or operation, which would cause significant adverse effects on human beings that cannot be readily miti-gated to a less than significant level. The proposed operation and maintenance

activities would be the same as current operation and maintenance practices of similar lines in the area which have minimal impacts on human beings. The project would have a beneficial effect on residents in the area by providing more efficient and reliable transmission line services.

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