B.3.11 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.

B.3.11.1 Setting

According to *Mines and Mineral Resources of Kern County, CA* (DOC, 1962), Kern County contains, but is not limited to, the following mineral resources: petroleum resources (petroleum, natural gas, and natural-gas liquids), boron, clay, gold, gypsum, limestone for cement, roofing-granule material, silver, and tungsten. Most of the gold and silver deposits have been mined from the southeastern portion of Kern County. The proposed substation expansion site is a sparsely vegetated open space where no mineral resources have been identified (Kern County, 2004; City of Ridgecrest, 2008b). The nearest resource extraction activity would be approximately 3.5 miles west of the proposed site at the Bertrand Sand Pit (Kern County, 2011; USGS, 2010). According to the California Department of Conservation Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources, no oil and gas exploration has been conducted within or in the vicinity of the proposed substation expansion site (DOC, 2011). While the city of Ridgecrest includes plan designations and zoning for open space, which includes resource management, this does not include mining or resource extraction (City of Ridgecrest, 2008a).

The existing 115-kV subtransmission line on which the fiber optic telecommunications line would be installed runs adjacent to the Searles Lake evaporate deposits, which are actively mined for potash and other natural resources east of the Searles and McGen Substations within Searles Valley (BLM, 2007).

B.3.11.2 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. While construction and operation of the proposed substation expansion would preclude surface extraction of mineral resources at the proposed site, no known mineral resources of any value have been identified on or in the immediate vicinity of the site. Modification of the 115-kV subtransmission line and installation of the fiber optic telecommunication lines would occur on existing or replacement poles and would not prevent access to any mineral resources. No stringing or laydown activities would occur on lands required for access to mineral resources. No impact would occur.

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. As described above, no mineral resources have been identified by the City of Ridgecrest General Plan at the proposed substation expansion site or in its immediate vicinity. While the 115-kV subtransmission line and fiber optic telecommunication lines would run adjacent to mineral resource extraction areas, modification, installation, and operation of these systems would not prevent access to

any mineral resource extraction areas specified in a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. No impact would occur.