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CHAPTER 4 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.10 MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-Than-Significant Impact with Mitigation	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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4.10.0 Introduction

This section describes the existing mineral resources located within the Sierra Pacific Power Company (SPPCo) 625 and 650 Line Upgrade Project (project) area. Construction, operation, and maintenance of the project will have no impact on mineral resources in the area.

4.10.1 Methodology

Existing conditions for the project location were established through an online review of published literature and data from the United States (U.S) Geological Survey (USGS) Mineral Resources Data System. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) Regional Plan, Placer County General Plan, and Town of Truckee General Plan were reviewed for mapping of resource locations and relevant policies. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) Tahoe National Forest and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) were also reviewed for applicable standards and guidelines relating to mineral resources.

4.10.2 Existing Conditions

Potential Mineral Resources

The California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) has established the classification system shown in Table 4.10-1: CDMG Mineral Land Classification System for Placer County to note the location and significance of mineral resources in Placer County. Placer County is located in Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ)-4, as described in the following table.

Table 4.10-1: CDMG Mineral Land Classification System for Placer County

Classification	Description
MRZ-1	Areas where available geologic information indicates that there is little likelihood for the presence of significant mineral resources.
MRZ-2a	Areas underlain by mineral deposits where geologic data indicates that significant measured or indicated resources are present. Land included in the MRZ-2a classification is of prime importance because it contains known economic mineral deposits.
MRZ-2b	Areas underlain by mineral deposits where geologic data indicates that significant inferred resources are present. Further exploration or changes in technology or economics could result in upgrading areas classified as MRZ-2b to MRZ-2a.
MRZ-3a	Areas containing known mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral resource significance. Further exploration within these areas could result in the reclassification of specific localities to MRZ-2a or MRZ-2b.
MRZ-3b	Areas containing inferred mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral resource significance. Land classified as MRZ-3b represents areas of geologic settings that appear to be favorable environments for the occurrence of specific mineral deposits.
MRZ-4	Areas of no known mineral occurrences where geologic information does not rule out either the absence or the presence of significant mineral resources. ¹

Source: EDAW, 2008

Aggregates

The project area is underlain by volcanic intrusive rocks and fine-grained Holocene lacustrine deposits. The Town of Truckee General Plan has designated an area along the Truckee River as containing important mineral resources, including alluvial aggregates consisting of sand, gravel, and broken stone. The 132/650 Line Double-Circuit crosses this designated important mineral resource area from approximate milepost (MP) 1.1 to MP 1.3.

Two aggregate facilities—the Martis Valley Pit and an aggregate plant—are located within the project area in Truckee and are operated by Teichert Aggregates. The aggregate plant is located approximately 100 feet north of the 132/650 Line Double-Circuit. Although the plant is an existing facility, it has not been in operation for 2 years. The Martis Valley Pit is located approximately 0.45 mile northeast of the Joerger Road staging area. The pit is currently in operation and is used to mine sand and gravel. In addition, a prospective sand and gravel mining area is located approximately 630 feet east of the Squaw Valley Substation according to a review of the data from the USGS Mineral Resource Data System. This area was recorded in 1984, but no activity has occurred in this area.

¹ The MRZ-4 classification does not imply that there is little likelihood for the presence of mineral resources, but rather that there is a lack of knowledge on mineral occurrence (EDAW 2008).

Asbestos

Asbestos is a mineral resource as well as a mined mineral; however, the use of asbestos in commercial and industrial processes has diminished in recent years because of the carcinogenic nature of asbestos fibers. There are no known asbestos mines within the project area.

A review of a 2006 California Department of Conservation Geological Survey report was conducted for the documented presence of naturally occurring asbestos. Naturally occurring asbestos includes a group of six fibrous or asbestiform silicate minerals—crysotile, crocidolite, amosite, tremolite, actinolite, and anthrophyllite. Naturally occurring asbestos is known to exist in Placer County; however, the project area is located in a region that has been designated as least likely to contain naturally occurring asbestos, primarily because the types of rocks found in the area. These rock types include Cenozoic volcanic rocks, gravels and sedimentary rocks, basaltic rocks, granitic rocks, limestone, metamorphosed felsic volcanic rocks, and metamorphosed sedimentary rocks (Department of Conservation 2006).

Petroleum

The project area is underlain by geologic formations that are not conducive to petroleum deposits.

Metallic Mineral Resources

The presence of vein-type metallic mineral resources associated with hydrothermally altered volcanic and intrusive rocks is possible in the project area, but unlikely. Based on the review of data from the USGS Mineral Resource Data System, a prospective gold mining area is located approximately 150 feet east of the 650 Line at approximate MP 3.9. This area was recorded in 1983, but no activity has ever occurred in this area. Unknown placer gold associated with glacial and fluvial deposits is also potentially present, but unlikely within the project area.

4.10.3 Impacts**Significance Criteria**

Impacts to mineral resources are considered potentially significant if the project will:

- 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
- 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 map

Question 4.10a – Loss of Regional- or State-Valued Mineral Resources – *No Impact*

The 132/650 Line Double-Circuit will cross an important mineral resource area, as designated by the Town of Truckee General Plan, from approximate MP 1.1 to MP 1.3. However, because the 132/650 Line Double-Circuit is existing and the new line will be constructed within SPPCo's existing right-of-way (ROW), impacts to mineral resources in the area will not occur. The project does not cross additional known mineral resources of any significance. The potential area containing gold is of sufficient distance (150 feet) away to not be impacted by construction activities. The nearest active mining operation is located approximately 0.45 mile from the

Joerger Road staging area and will not be affected by construction due to its distance from the project. As a result, the project will have no impact on mineral resources.

Question 4.10b – Loss of Locally Important Mineral Resources – *No Impact*

As discussed previously, the Town of Truckee General Plan identifies important mineral resources that will be crossed by the 132/650 Line Double-Circuit for approximately 0.2 mile; however, because the project will be in existing ROW, these resources will not be impacted. There are no additional known mineral resources of local importance within the vicinity of the project. Therefore, no impact will occur.

4.10.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures

No impacts to mineral resources in the project area will occur as a result of the project; therefore, no avoidance or minimization measures are proposed.

4.10.5 References

California Public Utilities Commission. Memorandum. Applicants Filing Proponent’s Environmental Assessment. November 24, 2008.

California Resources Agency. 2007. Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3 Guidelines for Implementation of the CEQA. CEQA Guidelines.

Department of Conservation – California Geological Survey. 2006. *Relative Likelihood for the Presence of Naturally Occurring Asbestos in Placer County, California*. Online. <http://www.capcoa.org/noa/%5B7%5D%20Placer%20County%20NOA%20-%20CGS%20Report%20190.pdf>. Site visited November 21, 2008.

EDAW. 2008. Tahoe Vista Partners, LLC, Affordable Housing and Interval Ownership Development Project EA/EIR. June. Online. <http://www.trpa.org/default.aspx?tabid=329>. Site visited December 1, 2008.

Placer County. 1994. *Placer County General Plan Update, Countywide General Plan Policy Document*. Online. <http://www.placer.ca.gov/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/Planning/CommPlans/~media/cdr/Planning/CommPlans/PCGP/PCGPIntro.ashx>. Site visited September 24, 2009.

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