

1 **4.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources**
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3 This section describes the environmental and regulatory setting and discusses impacts associated
4 with the construction and operation of the Santa Barbara County Reliability Project (proposed
5 project) with respect to agricultural resources. The work associated with the Getty, Goleta, Ortega,
6 Ventura, and Santa Barbara Substations would occur within existing structures and would have no
7 impact on agriculture and forestry resources; therefore, these components are not discussed
8 further in this section. Agricultural uses are addressed in this section and in Section 4.10, “Land
9 Use.”
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11 **4.2.1 Environmental Setting**
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13 The proposed transmission and telecommunications line segments would extend from the existing
14 Santa Clara Substation in northwest Ventura County to the Carpinteria Substation, located in the
15 City of Carpinteria in southeast Santa Barbara County, crossing portions of unincorporated Santa
16 Barbara and Ventura Counties, and the city of Carpinteria. The proposed project would cross land
17 with a variety of uses, including rural, agricultural, open space, urban, residential, and forest land.
18 Modifications and upgrades to the existing Santa Barbara and Ortega Substations (located within
19 the City of Santa Barbara), as well as the Ventura Substation (located within the City of Ventura)
20 would occur within the existing substation boundaries. A portion of Segment 4 of the proposed
21 project would be located within existing Southern California Edison (SCE) right-of-way (ROW) in
22 the Los Padres National Forest (LPNF). Figure 4.10-2 in Section 4.10, “Land Use,” depicts the land
23 uses and planning areas for each component of the proposed project, including the boundaries of
24 the LPNF.
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26 **4.2.1.1 Agricultural Land**
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28 **Santa Barbara County**

29 In Santa Barbara County, agriculture accounted for a gross value of approximately
30 \$1,291,008,000 in 2012 (Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commission 2013). The county
31 primarily produces vegetable crops, fruits and nuts, and nursery products such as cut flowers,
32 with strawberries being the number one crop. According to the California Department of
33 Conservation, an estimated 581,642 acres in the county are suitable for grazing lands (CDC
34 2010a). According to the California Farm Bureau Federation, the county’s agricultural value
35 ranked 14th in California in 2011 (CFBF 2013a).
36

37 Approximately 12 percent of the total acreage of Santa Barbara County is classified as Prime
38 Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance
39 (Important Farmland) (Table 4.2-1).
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Table 4.2-1 Summary of Important Farmland in Santa Barbara County

	Inventoried Acreage in Santa Barbara County	Percent of Total Acreage in Santa Barbara County
Prime Farmland	66,568	6.4%
Farmland of Statewide Importance	12,475	1.2%
Unique Farmland	35,606	3.4%
Farmland of Local Importance	10,643	1%
Important Farmland Total	125,112	12%

Source: CDC 2010a

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Ventura County

In Ventura County, agriculture accounted for a gross value of approximately \$1,844,260,000 in 2011 (Ventura County Agricultural Commission 2012). According to the County Agricultural Commission’s 2011 Crop Report, released in 2012, the county primarily produces fruit and nut crops, vegetable crops, livestock and poultry products, apiary products (e.g., honey), and nursery products. Fruit and nut crops represent over 50% of all agricultural production within the county, with strawberries being the number one crop. Approximately 197,278 acres within the county are considered suitable for grazing lands (CDC 2010b). According to the California Farm Bureau Federation, Ventura County’s agricultural value ranked 10th in California in 2011 (CFBF 2013b).

Approximately 20 percent of the total acreage of Ventura County is classified as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance (Important Farmland) (Table 4.2-2). Figure 4.2-1 shows farmland classifications within the project area for components in both Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.

Table 4.2-2 Summary of Important Farmland in Ventura County

	Inventoried Acreage in Ventura County	Percent of Total Acreage in Ventura County
Prime Farmland	42,420	7.1%
Farmland of Statewide Importance	33,482	5.6%
Unique Farmland	28,793	4.8%
Farmland of Local Importance	14,988	2.5%
Important Farmland Total	119,683	20%

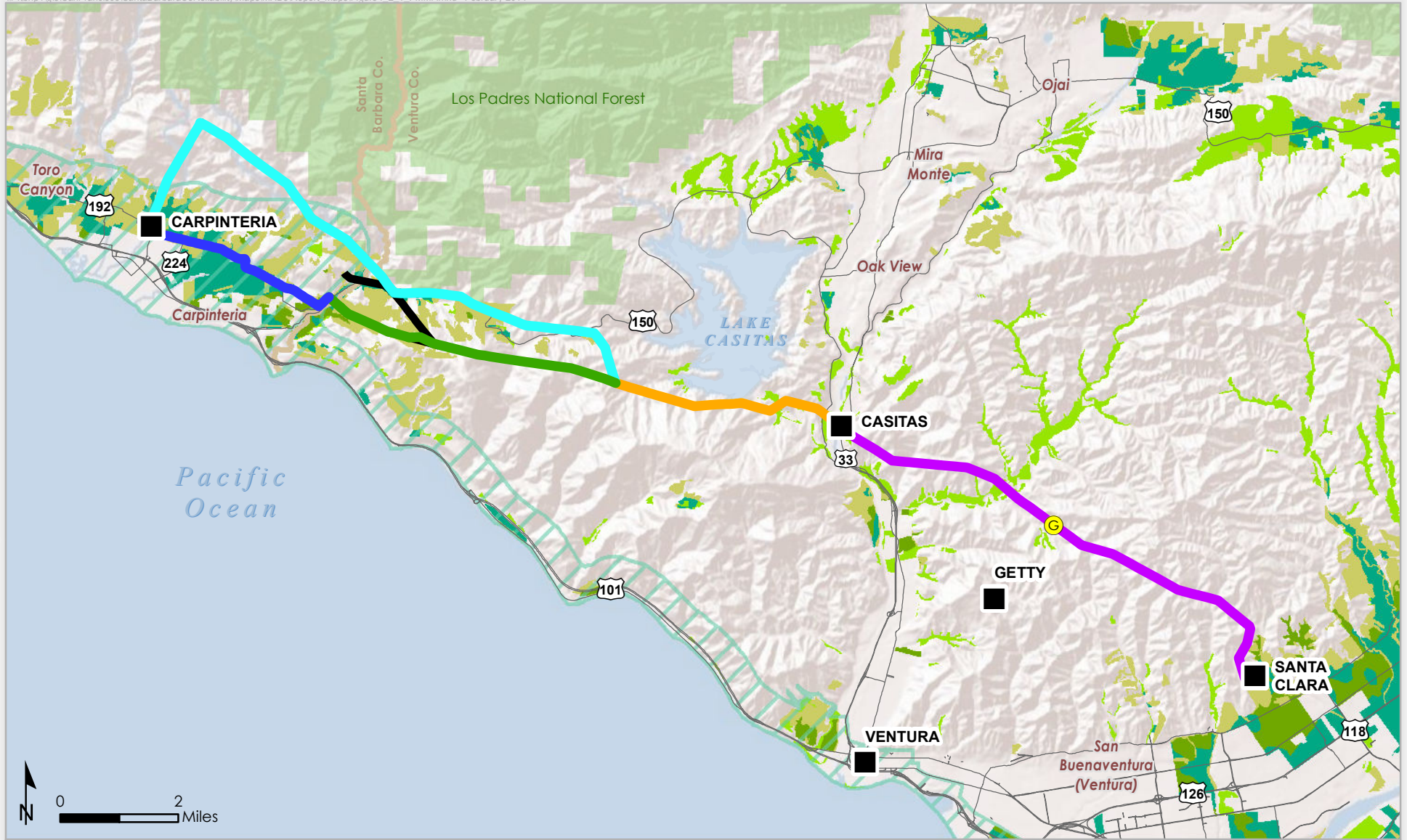
Source: CDC 2010b

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4.2.1.2 Forest Land

Los Padres National Forest

The LPNF encompasses almost 2 million acres, extending from the west boundary of Los Angeles County to mid-Monterey County (USFS 2007). The forest is divided by land use zone, and further subdivided into places, which are geographical units within similar landscapes. Segment 4 would cross 3,375 feet of the LPNF area designated as a Back Country (Motorized Use Restricted) land use zone, which allows major utility corridors in designated areas (USFS 2005). Segment 4 would cross the place known as the Santa Barbara Front Area (see also Section 4.10, “Land Use”).



Existing Electrical Subtransmission Lines

- Segment 1
- Segment 2
- Segment 3A
- Segment 3B
- Segment 4
- Segment 5

- Existing Substation Locations
- Getty Tap
- Los Padres National Forest (USFS)
- Major Roads
- Local road
- County Boundary

- Bio Preserve Areas
- Coastal Commission Zone
- Important Farmland
- Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Statewide Importance
- Farmland of Local Importance
- Unique Farmland

**Figure 4.2-1
Important Farmland in
the Vicinity of the
Proposed Project**

Santa Barbara County
Reliability Project
Santa Barbara and
Ventura Counties California

1
2 **4.2.2 Regulatory Setting**
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4 This subsection summarizes federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and standards that govern
5 agriculture and forestry resources in the project area.
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7 **4.2.2.1 Federal**
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9 **Los Padres National Forest Land Management Plan**

10 The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act, as amended by the National Forest
11 Management Act (NFMA), establishes a process for developing, amending, and revising land
12 management plans (LMPs) for National Forests. In September 2005, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
13 certified the Final Environmental Impact Statement, prepared in accordance with the NFMA and
14 National Environmental Policy Act, to address revisions to the LPNF LMP. The revised LMP
15 describes the strategic direction at the broad program-level for managing the land and its
16 resources over the next 10 to 15 years (USFS 2013). The management of the LPNF's resources is
17 divided into seven programs: wildlife, fish, and rare plants; vegetation; watershed, air, and geologic
18 resources; heritage resources; specially designated areas (including wilderness); lands ownership;
19 and managing the data of these resources. In addition, the LMP identifies allowed uses within eight
20 land use zones. The portions of Segment 4 proposed within the LPNF would cross the Back Country
21 (Motorized Use Restricted) land use zone.
22

23 **4.2.2.2 State**
24

25 **California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program**

26 The California Department of Conservation maintains the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring
27 Program (FMMP), which monitors the conversion of farmland to and from agricultural use.
28 Farmlands are divided into the following categories, based on their suitability for agriculture:
29

- 30 • *Prime Farmland*, which has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics
31 for crop production. When treated and managed, its soil quality, growing season, and
32 irrigation supply produce sustained high crop yields.
- 33 • *Farmland of Statewide Importance*, which is land, other than Prime Farmland, that has a
34 good combination of physical and chemical characteristics (including irrigation) for crop
35 production.
- 36 • *Unique Farmland*, which does not meet the criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of
37 Statewide Importance, but has produced specific crops with high economic value.
- 38 • *Farmland of Local Importance*, which is either currently producing crops or has the
39 capability to produce, but does not meet the criteria of the categories above.
- 40 • *Grazing Land*, which has vegetation that is suitable for grazing livestock.
- 41 • *Other Lands*, which are lands that do not meet the criteria of any of the other categories.
42

43 Additional categories used in the FMMP mapping system include “urban and built-up lands” and
44 “lands committed to non-agricultural use.” FMMP classifications are based on soil quality and
45 irrigation status and are used as part of its neutral reporting program that classifies land based on
46 its suitability for agriculture (CDC 2007). The classifications differ from General Plan and zoning

1 designations in that they are used to evaluate farmland by type and acreage, rather than to
2 designate appropriate sites for particular land uses and regulate use and development. The
3 proposed project would primarily cross Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Grazing Land.
4

5 **Williamson Act**

6 The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, also known as the Williamson Act, is the State’s
7 principal agricultural land protection program. It enables local governments to enter into ongoing
8 minimum-10-year contracts with private landowners to restrict specific parcels of land to
9 agricultural or compatible uses. In return, restricted parcels are assessed for property tax purposes
10 at a rate consistent with their actual, farming, and open space uses, as opposed to potential market
11 value. Portions of Segments 1, 3A, 3B, and 4 would cross land covered by Williamson Act Contracts
12 within the existing SCE ROW.
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14 **Public Resource Codes Section 12220(g)**

15 “Forest land” is land that can support 10 percent native tree cover of any species, including
16 hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest
17 resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and
18 other public benefits. A portion of Segment 4 would occur within “Forest Land” maintained by the
19 Los Padres National Forest (California State Legislature 1982a).
20

21 **Public Resource Codes Section 4526**

22 “Timberland” means land—other than land owned by the federal government and land designated
23 by the board as experimental forest land—that is available for, and capable of, growing a crop of
24 trees of any commercial species used to produce lumber and other forest products, including
25 Christmas trees. The proposed project would not occur within land used for “timberland”
26 production (California State Legislature 1982b).
27

28 **Government Code Section 51104(g)**

29 A “timberland production zone” is an area that has been zoned pursuant to Section 51112 or 51113
30 and that is devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber, or for growing and harvesting
31 timber as well as compatible uses, as defined in subdivision (h). The proposed project would not
32 occur within a “timberland production zone” (California State Legislature 1982c).
33

34 **4.2.2.3 Regional and Local**

35 **Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan**

36
37 The Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in
38 1991 and updated in May 2009, expresses the community’s development goals and embodies
39 public policy relative to the distribution of future public and private land uses. The Agricultural
40 Element of the Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for addressing the future use of agricultural
41 lands and resources and includes goals and policies that encourage preservation and enhancement
42 of agriculture within the county. In accordance with the Agricultural Element of the Comprehensive
43 Plan, public works, public service, public utility, and oil drilling uses that are found to be
44 compatible with agriculture may be permitted (County of Santa Barbara 2009).
45

1 **Santa Barbara County Land Use and Development Code**

2 Adopted in May 2008, the Santa Barbara County Land Use and Development Code carries out the
3 policies of the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan and Local Coastal Program by classifying
4 and regulating the uses of land and structures within the County, consistent with the
5 Comprehensive Plan and the Local Coastal Program (County of Santa Barbara 2008). Table 2-1,
6 Allowed Land Uses and Permit Requirements, in the Land Use and Development Code identifies
7 transmission as an allowed use on agricultural land.
8

9 **Santa Barbara County Coastal Land Use Plan**

10 Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 30500 of the California Coastal Act of 1976, Santa
11 Barbara County prepared a local coastal program for unincorporated areas of the County within
12 the Coastal Zone.
13

14 To enforce the local coastal program, the County prepared a Land Use Plan, also referred to as the
15 local coastal element of the County's General Plan, and a Coastal Zoning Ordinance (Santa Barbara
16 County 2014). Combined, these implement the California Coastal Act within Santa Barbara County.
17 Under the Santa Barbara County Coastal Land Use Plan, all electric transmission lines proposed for
18 the Santa Barbara County Coastal Zone are subject to permitting under the terms of the California
19 Coastal Act.
20

21 The Coastal Land Use Plan includes the following Coastal Act policies relating to agriculture and
22 timberland:
23

24 **30241.** *The maximum amount of prime agricultural land shall be maintained in agricultural*
25 *production to assure the protection of the areas' agricultural economy, and conflicts shall be*
26 *minimized between agricultural and urban land uses...by assuring that public service and*
27 *facility expansions and non-agricultural development do not impair agricultural viability,*
28 *either through increased assessment costs or degraded air and water quality.*
29

30 **30242.** *All other lands suitable for agricultural use shall not be converted to nonagricultural uses*
31 *unless: 1. continued or renewed agricultural use is not feasible, or*
32 *2. such conversion would preserve prime agricultural land or concentrate development*
33 *consistent with Section 30250. Any such permitted conversion shall be compatible with*
34 *continued agricultural use on surrounding lands.*
35

36 **30243.** *The long-term productivity of soils and timberlands shall be protected and conversions of*
37 *coastal commercial timberlands in units of commercial size to other uses or their division into*
38 *units of noncommercial size shall be limited to providing for necessary timber, processing and*
39 *related facilities.*
40

41 **Santa Barbara County Coastal Zoning Ordinance**

42 The Coastal Zoning Ordinance Chapter 35.21 identifies two agricultural zones, AG-I and AG-II. AG-I
43 is applied to areas appropriate for agricultural use within Urban, Inner Rural, Rural (Coastal Zone
44 only), and Existing Developed Rural Neighborhood areas. The AG-II zone is applied to areas
45 appropriate for agricultural land uses on prime and non-prime agricultural lands located within the
46 Rural Area as shown on the Comprehensive Plan maps.
47

1 Sections 35-68 and 35-69 of the Santa Barbara County Coastal Zoning Ordinance define the
2 purpose and intent for two agricultural districts within the coastal zone as follows:

3
4 AG-I – Agricultural I: *The purpose of the Agriculture I district is to designate and protect lands*
5 *appropriate for long-term agricultural use within or adjacent to urbanized areas, and*
6 *to preserve prime agricultural soils.*

7 AG-II – Agricultural II: *The purpose of the Agriculture II district is to establish agricultural*
8 *land use for large prime and non-prime agricultural lands in the rural areas of the*
9 *County (minimum 40 to 320 acre lots) and to preserve prime and non-prime soils for*
10 *long-term agricultural use.*

11 12 **Ventura County General Plan**

13 Adopted by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors in 1988, and last amended in June 2001, the
14 Ventura County General Plan sets forth the goals, policies, and programs the County will implement
15 to manage future growth and land uses. The plan establishes multiple land use designations for
16 agriculture, including the Coastal Agriculture and non-coastal Agricultural Exclusive and Rural
17 Agriculture zones. The non-coastal Open Space Zone is also managed, in part, for agricultural
18 production (Ventura County 2001). The Agricultural Exclusive Zone protects commercial
19 agricultural lands from the encroachment of nonagricultural uses.

20
21 Policy 4.5.2 of the General Plan addresses transmission infrastructure on agricultural land, stating
22 that “[a]ll transmission lines should be located and constructed in a manner which minimizes
23 disruption of ... agricultural activities ... when not in conflict with the rules and regulations of the
24 California Public Utilities Commission” and that “discretionary development shall be conditioned to
25 place utility service lines underground wherever feasible.”

26
27 Portions of the Project located within Ventura County are primarily located in areas designated as
28 Open Space or Rural in the Ventura County General Plan. Although the Project would impact areas
29 identified as Prime or Unique Farmland in the FMMP, the Project would not be located on or cross
30 any areas designated as agricultural under the Ventura County General Plan.

31 32 **City of Carpinteria General Plan and Local Coastal Program**

33 The City of Carpinteria General Plan and Local Coastal Program was adopted in 2003 by the City of
34 Carpinteria. It designates areas appropriate for continued agricultural production as AG –
35 Agriculture. Proposed work within the city of Carpinteria would not impact land zoned as AG.

36 37 **4.2.3 Impact Analysis**

38 39 **4.2.3.1 Methodology and Significance Criteria**

40
41 Potential impacts on agriculture and forest resources were evaluated according to the following
42 significance criteria. The significance criteria were defined based on the checklist items in
43 Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines. An impact is considered
44 significant if the project would:

- 1 a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as
- 2 shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
- 3 of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use;
- 4 b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract;
- 5 c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public
- 6 Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code
- 7 section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government
- 8 Code section 51104(g));
- 9 d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or
- 10 e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature,
- 11 could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land
- 12 to non-forest use.

13
14 **4.2.3.2 Applicant Proposed Measures**

15
16 Because the Project would not result in significant impacts to agricultural and forestry resources,

17 no Applicant Proposed Measures are proposed for this resource.

18
19 **4.2.3.3 Environmental Impacts**

20
21 **IMPACT AG-1: Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide**

22 **Importance to Non-Agricultural Use**

23 LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

24
25 The proposed project would cross Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide

26 Importance. Table 4.2-3 summarized the acreage impacts to Prime and Unique Farmland. The

27 proposed project would not impact Farmland of Statewide Importance.

28

Table 4.2-3 Temporary and Permanent Impacts to Prime and Unique Farmlands in Acres

	Prime Farmland		Unique Farmland	
	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent
<i>Ventura County</i>				
Segment 1	0	0	0.09	0.13
Segment 2	0	0	0	0
Segment 3B	0.06	0.09	8.0	4.57
Segment 4	0.97	0.22	6.05	4.20
Segment 5	0.65	0.16	3.11	1.08
Staging Yards (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11a-d)	0.87	0	0.04	0
Ventura County Total Impact	2.55	0.47	17.29	9.98
<i>Santa Barbara County</i>				
Segment 3A	4.65	0	1.99	0
Segment 4	0	0	5.20	3.11

Segment 5	0	0	0.14	0.21
Staging Yards (7, 9, 10)	2.05	0	2.87	0
Santa Barbara County Total Impact	6.7	0	10.20	3.32

Ventura County thresholds of significance for the conversion of Important Farmland to non-agricultural use is 5 acres for Prime Farmland and 10 acres for Unique Farmland. As shown in Table 4.2-3, the proposed project would convert 0.47 acres of Prime Farmland and 9.98 acres of Unique Farmland in Ventura County. These amounts would not exceed Ventura County thresholds of significance, which are 10 acres and 15 acres respectively for loss of Prime Farmland and Unique Farmland on land designated as Open Space or Rural under the County’s General Plan Land Use Designation (Ventura County 2011).

The County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Threshold uses land values of physical environmental resources to determine the significance of the conversion of Important Farmland to a non-agricultural use (Santa Barbara County 2008). The land values that are considered include parcel size, soil classification, water availability, agricultural suitability, existing and historic land use, comprehensive plan designation, adjacent land uses, agricultural preserve potential, and combined farming operation. Due to the linear nature of the proposed project and the multiple landowners and properties located along the project route, the Santa Barbara County threshold methodology is not suitable for the proposed project. Unlike a commercial or residential development where a project would be developed on a single parcel or a group of contiguous parcels, the portion of Segment 4 located in Santa Barbara County is 5.6 miles in length from the County border to the Carpinteria Substation, and Segment 3A is less than 3.5 miles. Agricultural impacts would be dispersed over these distances throughout multiple parcels. The majority of the project’s permanent disturbance is due to access road improvements, such as retaining walls, road widening, and drainage features. These improvements are needed due to the topography of the area so that structure locations can be accessed by heavy construction equipment. Regardless of some of these areas being classified as Unique Farmland, the locations of retaining walls and other improvements are not necessarily located on areas under active agricultural development due to the existence of steep slopes. The proposed project would permanently convert ~~approximately up to 3.3 acres of Unique Farmland in Santa Barbara County,~~ which represents 0.009 percent of the County’s 35,606 acres of Unique Farmland ~~identified in Santa Barbara County~~ (CDC 2011). Considering that the parcels predominantly consist of large avocado groves, the removal of a small amount of trees near structure laydown areas and existing roadways would not affect the agricultural viability of these parcels.

Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact ~~to the conversion of Important Farmland to a non-agricultural use~~ under this criterion in both Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties.

IMPACT AG-2: Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act Contract
LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

In both Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, the proposed project would primarily be routed within existing ROWs across lands zoned for agricultural use and traverse land preserved under Williamson Act Contract.

Section 8105-4 of the Ventura County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance states that overhead transmission lines are a permitted use, subject to receipt of a “Planning Director-approved

1 Conditional Use Permit.” The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has preemptive
2 jurisdiction over the construction, maintenance, and operation of public utilities in the State of
3 California under the CPUC General Order 131(d). In addition, the proposed project includes the
4 reconductoring of an existing subtransmission line within an existing ROW. Therefore, a
5 Conditional Use Permit would not be required from Ventura County prior to construction or
6 operation of the project (CPUC 1995).

7
8 Section 35.21.030 of the Santa Barbara Land Use and Development Code defines electrical
9 transmission lines and telecommunications facilities as an allowable use (Santa Barbara County
10 2008). However, a portion of the proposed project would be located within Santa Barbara County’s
11 Coastal Zone. Construction within the coastal zone is regulated by the California Coastal
12 Commission and compliance is enforced by local municipalities. Because local coastal programs are
13 certified by the California Coastal Commission, compliance with the Santa Barbara Coastal Land
14 Use Plan and Coastal zoning ordinance permit would not be exempt under General Order 131(d). A
15 Coastal Development Permit would need to be obtained prior to construction within Santa
16 Barbara’s Coastal Zone.

17
18 The Project would not cross parcels zoned as “AG – Agriculture” in the City of Carpinteria (City of
19 Carpinteria 2003). Work conducted at the existing substations would be completed within the
20 existing substation boundaries; therefore, these activities would not conflict with existing zoning
21 for agricultural use within the City of Carpinteria.

22
23 Portions of Segments 1, 3A, 3B, and 4 and Staging yards 3,9,10,11a-d would be constructed on land
24 designated as Williamson Act land. Section 2-9 of Santa Barbara County’s Uniform Rules for
25 Agricultural Preserves and Farmland Security Zones states that “[t]he erection, construction,
26 alteration or maintenance of gas, electric, water or communication utility facilities are compatible
27 uses” (County of Santa Barbara 2007). The Ventura County Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act)
28 Guidelines identify compatible uses as those that are permitted, or conditionally permitted by the
29 Ventura County Zoning Ordinance in the AE-40 ac or CA zones.” In addition, SCE would be required
30 to comply with the minimum agricultural production acreage requirements for land under
31 Williamson Act Contracts through the remaining terms of the contracts. The exact footprint of the
32 staging yards would be determined prior to construction and would be designed to comply with
33 these requirements. Therefore, the construction, including staging yards, and operation of a
34 transmission line is a compatible use on Williamson Act contracted land in Ventura and Santa
35 Barbara County.

36
37 Under this criterion, the impacts of the proposed project on the conversion of land zoned as
38 agricultural or Williamson Act during construction and operation would be less than significant.

39
40 **IMPACT AG-3: Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of forest land, timberland,**
41 **or timberland zoned Timberland Production**
42 **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT**
43

44 The proposed project includes upgrades to an existing 3,375-foot portion of Segment 4 located
45 within the LPNF. Construction activities on USFS-administered lands include improving existing
46 access roads; constructing new spur roads; grading pads around existing structures; installing
47 permanent retaining walls; removing existing single-circuit, 66- kV, lattice steel structures;
48 installing new double-circuit, 66-kV, tubular steel poles; and installing fiber optic cable atop the
49 new poles. All work would be done within the existing 50-foot-wide SCE ROW and adjacent to

1 existing transmission lines. However, this project would not cause this land to be rezoned as non-
2 forest land because operations would be similar to operations of the existing line.

3
4 Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of
5 forest land, as defined by Public Resource Codes Section 12220(g); timberland, as defined by Public
6 Resources Code section 4526, or timberland zoned Timberland Production, as defined by
7 Government Code section 51104(g). The construction and operation of the proposed project would
8 have a less than significant impact on forest land.

9
10 The proposed project is not located on land zoned for timberland or Timberland Production;
11 therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on timberland or timberland production
12 zones.

13
14 **IMPACT AG-4: Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use**
15 **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT**

16
17 As described in Section 4.2.2, California Public Resources Code section 12220(g) defines forest land
18 as “land that can support 10-percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under
19 natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including
20 timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public
21 benefits.” All forest lands where surface disturbances would occur have tree densities between 40
22 and 100 percent. Due to the abundance of forest land surrounding the proposed project, the
23 amount of proposed disturbance would not cause tree densities to fall below 10 percent, and thus
24 no forest lands would be reclassified as non-forest lands. Under this criterion, construction and
25 operation of the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on the loss or
26 conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

27
28 **IMPACT AG-5: Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their**
29 **location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or**
30 **conversion of forest land to non-forest use**
31 **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT**

32
33 The rehabilitation of existing agricultural roads and access roads, and the construction of new
34 access or spur roads, may require the temporary removal of irrigation equipment to allow
35 construction equipment to pass. The irrigation equipment would be replaced following
36 construction, and may be re-established temporarily during construction, if feasible. Farmland
37 would continue to be irrigated; therefore, no temporary or long-term conversion of agricultural
38 land would occur.

39
40 Construction vehicle traffic along private roads, agricultural roads, and access and spur roads
41 would result in temporary increase in traffic that may result in short-term disruptions of
42 surrounding farming and grazing activities. Although surrounding agricultural activities may be
43 temporarily impacted, the proposed project would not create an indirect impact that would result
44 in the conversion of additional farmland to a non-agricultural use. No other activities would involve
45 changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural
46 use or forest land to non-forest use. Construction and operation of the proposed project would
47 have a less than significant impact under this criterion.

48
49 **4.2.4 Mitigation Measures**

50 There are no mitigation measures applicable to agriculture and forestry resources.

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