CHAPTER 5
Environmental Analysis

Introduction to Environmental Analysis

This chapter provides discussion and full public disclosure of the significant environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives as they relate to the following 18 areas of environmental analysis:

5.1 Aesthetics
5.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources
5.3 Air Quality
5.4 Biological Resources
5.5 Cultural Resources
5.6 Energy Conservation
5.7 Geology and Soils
5.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions
5.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
5.10 Hydrology and Water Quality
5.11 Land Use and Planning
5.12 Mineral Resources
5.13 Noise
5.14 Population and Housing
5.15 Public Services
5.16 Recreation
5.17 Transportation and Traffic
5.18 Utilities and Service Systems

Analysis within each issue area includes consideration of the components of the Proposed Project as described in Chapter 3, *Project Description*.

Within each of the environmental areas listed above, the discussion of Proposed Project impacts is provided in the following format:

- Setting
- Regulatory Setting (i.e., applicable regulations, plans, and standards)
- Significance Criteria
- Applicant Proposed Measures
- Impacts and Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Project
- Impacts and Mitigation Measures for the Alternatives

The following alternatives are fully analyzed in this EIR (refer to Chapter 4 for a description of each of the alternatives):

- No Project Alternative 1
- No Project Alternative 2

Each environmental issue area analyzed in this document provides background information and describes the environmental setting (baseline conditions) to help the reader understand the conditions that would cause an impact to occur. In addition, each section describes how an impact is determined to be "significant" or "less than significant." Finally, the individual sections recommend mitigation measures, where appropriate, to reduce significant impacts. Throughout Chapter 5, *Environmental Analysis*, both impacts and the corresponding mitigation measures are identified by a bold letter-number designation (e.g., **Impact 5.1-1** and **Mitigation Measure 5.1-1**).

In performing the analysis for this EIR, the EIR preparers relied on available published studies and reports and conducted independent investigations as needed. Information provided by Southern California Edison (SCE) in its application and accompanying environmental documentation was also considered in the EIR analysis after independent review and assessment by the EIR preparers. The specific documents considered and relied upon are cited for each issue area in Sections 5.1, through 5.18.

Environmental Assessment Methodology

Environmental Baseline

The analysis of each issue area begins with an examination of the existing physical setting (baseline conditions as determined pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15125[a]) that may be affected by the Proposed Project and alternatives. The effects of the Proposed Project and alternatives are defined as changes to the environmental setting that are attributable to project components or operation. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(a), the environmental setting used to determine the impacts associated with the Proposed Project and alternatives is based on the environmental conditions that existed in the study area in March 2014, at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) was published. As discussed in Chapter 2, *Background*, infrastructure installed during SCE's past project-related activities is considered part of the environmental baseline conditions for the Proposed Project described in the environmental settings provided in Sections 5.1 through 5.18 of this chapter.

Impact Significance Criteria

Significance criteria are identified for each environmental issue area. The significance criteria serve as benchmarks for determining if the Proposed Project or alternatives would result in a significant adverse environmental impact when evaluated against the baseline. According to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15382, a significant effect on the environment means "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project."

Applicant Proposed Measures

In the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (SCE, 2013), SCE identified a number of project features that were implemented to avoid or minimize environmental impacts during past construction activities associated with the project. SCE has committed to implementing the same

project features to avoid or reduce potential impacts of the Proposed Project (which they refer to as "future construction activities"). SCE's project features are identified and numbered in this EIR as Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs) because they would be implemented as part of SCE's Proposed Project, and are not considered CPUC "mitigation measures." The consolidated list of APMs are identified in Chapter 3, *Project Description*.

Moreover, the Project Description incorporates procedures or protocols which directly relate to how the Proposed Project would be constructed, and which were considered as part of the Proposed Project during preparation of this EIR. The Project Description, therefore, upon adoption of the Final EIR, becomes part of the Mitigation Monitoring, Reporting and Compliance Program, and the construction components and methods therein would be monitored by the CPUC.

Environmental Consequences

The EIR evaluates the environmental consequences and potential impacts that the Proposed Project and the alternatives would create. The impacts identified were compared with predetermined, specific significance criteria, and were classified according to significance categories listed in each issue area. The same methodology was applied systematically to each alternative. A comparative analysis of the Proposed Project and the alternatives is provided in Chapter 6 of this document.

Impact Analysis

The EIR evaluates the potential environmental impacts that the Proposed Project and alternatives would create. Impacts are classified as:

Class I: Significant; cannot be mitigated to a level that is less than significant;
Class II: Significant; can be mitigated to a level that is less than significant;
Class III: Less than significant, no mitigation required; and
Class IV: Beneficial impact.

When significant impacts are identified, feasible mitigation measures are formulated to eliminate or reduce the intensity of the impacts and focus on the protection of sensitive resources. The effectiveness of a mitigation measure is subsequently determined by evaluating the impact remaining after its application. Those impacts meeting or exceeding the impact significance criteria after mitigation are considered residual impacts that remain significant (Class I). Implementation of more than one mitigation measure may be needed to reduce an impact below a level of significance. The mitigation measures recommended in this document are identified within each issue area section (Sections 5.1 through 5.18) and are presented in the Mitigation Monitoring, Reporting, and Compliance Program in Chapter 10 of this document.

Impacts of Alternatives

Chapter 4 provides a list and description of alternatives to the Proposed Project. Each issue area section (Sections 5.1 through 5.18) presents the impact analysis for each alternative, while

Chapter 6 provides a summary of the collective impacts of each alternative in comparison with the impacts of the Proposed Project.

Cumulative Projects Impact Analysis

The cumulative impacts of the Proposed Project taken together with the related cumulative projects are assessed in Chapter 7, *Cumulative Effects*. Section 7.1 identifies projects considered in the cumulative analysis, and Section 7.2 presents the cumulative effects analysis. The focus in the cumulative impact analysis was to identify those Proposed Project impacts that may or may not be significant when considered alone, but may contribute to a significant impact when viewed in conjunction with past, current, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

References – Introduction to Environmental Analysis

Southern California Edison (SCE), 2013. Proponent's Environmental Assessment, Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line Project, October 28, 2013.