

4.16 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

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This section describes existing agricultural and forestry resources in the vicinity of the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project (MPWSP or proposed project) and analyzes the potential for project implementation to adversely affect such resources through displacement or conversion of these uses, or through other changes to the physical environment.

4.16.1 Setting

This section provides an overview of agricultural and forestry resources in the Monterey region and identifies the resources within and adjacent to the project area.

4.16.1.1 Agricultural Resources

Monterey County is California’s third largest agricultural producer. Agricultural crop production and livestock grazing is the largest industry in the county, with approximately 56 percent of the land (or approximately 1.3 million acres) used for agricultural purposes. Of the total land in the county dedicated to agriculture, approximately 80 percent is used for grazing. The county’s predominant crops are cool-season vegetables, strawberries, wine grapes, and nursery plants. Most of the agricultural lands are in the northern portion of the county and in the Salinas Valley (Monterey County, 2010).

All of the agricultural lands in the project area are concentrated north of Reservation Road in unincorporated Monterey County. This area contains a mosaic of agricultural fields bordered by coastal dunes and beaches to the west. Project components proposed in this area include the Seawater Intake System, the Source Water Pipeline, the MPWSP Desalination Plant, the Brine Discharge Pipeline, the Salinas Valley Return Pipeline, and the Desalinated Water Pipeline.

Farmland Classifications

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection (CDC) maps important farmlands throughout California through the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). Farmland is classified into the following categories based on soil conditions (i.e., their suitability for agriculture) and current land use.

- **Prime Farmland** is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for long-term crop production. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to sustain high crop yields when appropriately treated and managed. In addition, the land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production in the last four years to qualify under this category.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance** is similar to Prime Farmland in that it has a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics for crop production, but with minor shortcomings such as greater slopes and less ability to store moisture.
- **Unique Farmland** is land that does not meet the criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance but has been used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include the types of non-irrigated orchards or vineyards that are found in some climatic zones of California. Unique Farmland must have been in agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- **Farmland of Local Importance** applies to land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by the county. This land is either currently producing crops or has the capability of production, but does not meet the criteria of the preceding categories.
- **Grazing Land** is land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock.

The FMMP updates its Important Farmland Series Maps every two years and produces a biannual report on the amount of land converted from agricultural to non-agricultural use. The *2006–2008 Land Use Conversion Report* (CDC, 2011)—the most recent report—summarizes Monterey County's total land use and land use changes by FMMP category. **Table 4.16-1** shows the total acreage and recent conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance within the county.

Farmland Designations in the Project Area

As shown in **Figure 4.16-1**, portions of the project area north of Reservation Road traverse land that is currently in agricultural use. Farmland mapping designations in this area include Unique Farmland, Prime Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance. Approximately 1.7 acres of the northern edge of the 46-acre MPWSP Desalination Plant site is mapped as Prime Farmland. In addition, the segment of the Source Water Pipeline located west of Lapis Road would be aligned near Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance. Both the Source Water Pipeline and Desalinated Water Pipeline run along the southern boundary of Farmland of Statewide Importance along Charles Benson Road, immediately west of the MPWSP Desalination Plant site. From MPWSP Desalination Plant site, the Brine Discharge Pipeline and Salinas Valley Return Pipeline would generally be routed along the west side of the access road within the Monterey County Water Pollution Control Agency (MRWPCA) Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant site and could also traverse Farmland of Statewide Importance.

Site Option 1 for the proposed Valley Greens Pump Station is located within an area designated and zoned for commercial land uses, just north of Prime Farmland. Implementation of the Valley Greens Pump Station at this site would not result in ground disturbance in the designated Prime Farmland areas.

**TABLE 4.16-1
 MONTEREY COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LAND SUMMARY
 AND CONVERSION BY FMMP LAND USE CATEGORY (2006–2008)**

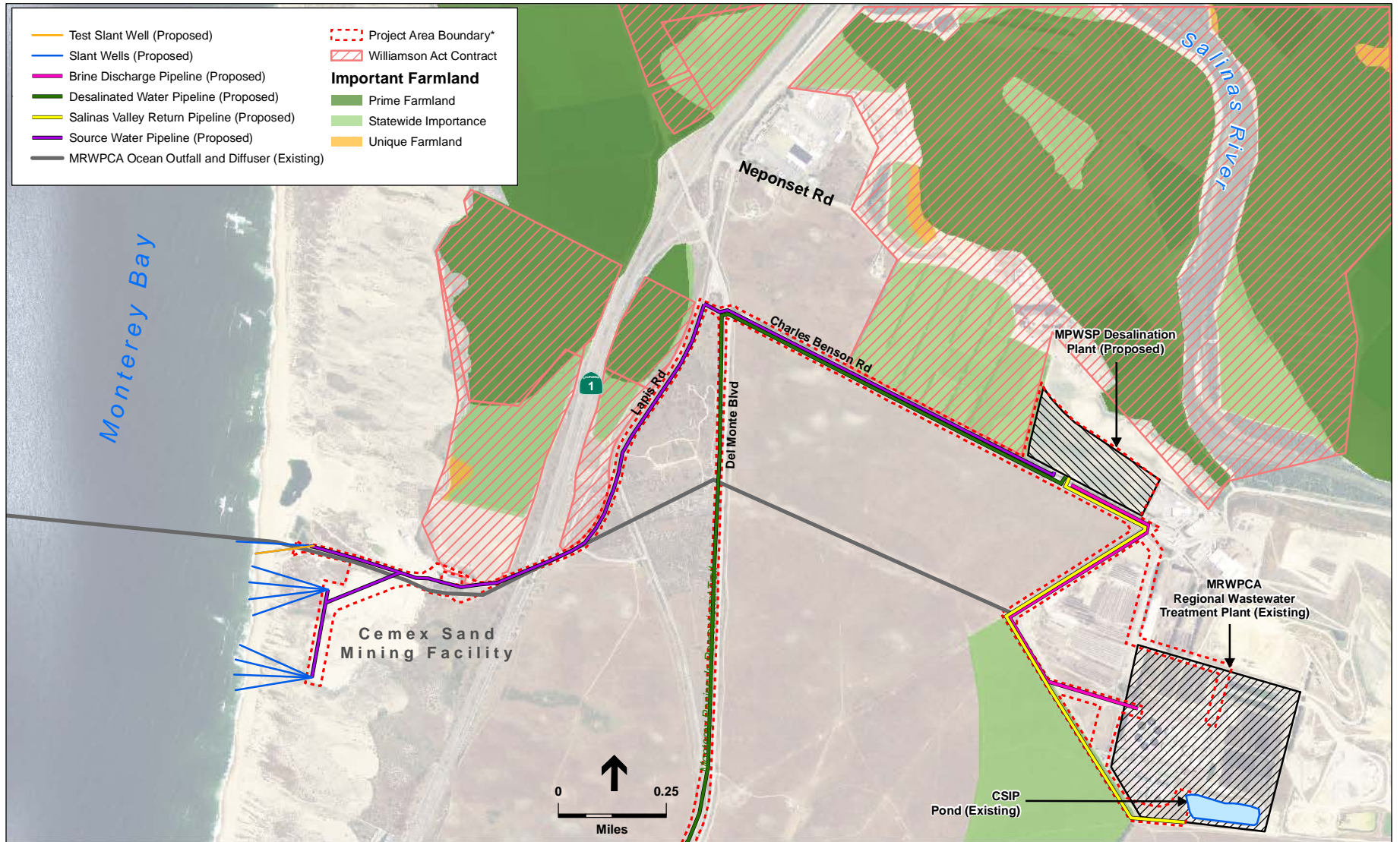
Land Use Category	Total Acreage Inventoried		2006–2008 Acreage Changes				Land Committed to Non-Agricultural Use
	2006	2008	Acres Lost (-)	Acres Gained (+)	Total Acreage Changed	Net Acreage Changed	
Prime Farmland	167,638	166,813	1,355	530	1,885	-825	453
Farmland of Statewide Importance	43,401	43,089	587	275	862	-312	0
Unique Farmland	25,104	24,767	572	235	807	-337	32
Important Farmland Subtotal	236,143	234,669	2,514	1,040	3,554	-1,474	485
Grazing Land	1,065,575	1,066,494	784	1,703	2,487	919	7
Agricultural Land Subtotal	1,301,718	1,301,163	3,298	2,743	6,041	-555	492
Urban and Built-up Land	55,950	56,534	20	604	624	585	0
Other Land	757,209	757,180	647	618	1,265	-29	377
Water Area	6,246	6,246	0	0	0	0	0
Total Area Inventoried	2,121,123	2,121,123	3,965	3,965	7,930	0	869

SOURCE: CDC, 2011.

Land uses in the vicinity of all other proposed project facilities located south of Reservation Road are predominantly urban and are not in agricultural use. The proposed improvements and facilities south of Reservation Road would not traverse any designated Important Farmland (CDC, 2010b).

Williamson Act Program

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, also known as the Williamson Act, is the state’s primary program aimed at conserving private land for agricultural and open space uses. The Williamson Act provides a mechanism through which private landowners can contract with counties and cities to voluntarily restrict their land to agricultural and compatible open space uses. In return, Williamson Act contracts offer tax incentives by ensuring that land is assessed for its agricultural productivity rather than its highest and best use. Contracts typically restrict land use for a period of 10 years; however, some jurisdictions exercise the option to extend the term for up to 20 years. Contracts are automatically renewed unless the landowner files for non-renewal or petitions for cancellation. The CDC prepares countywide maps of lands enrolled in Williamson Act contracts.



NOTE:
 *Project area boundary refers to the area within which all construction-related disturbance would occur.

SOURCE: ESA, 2014; CDOC, 2010/2012

205335.01 Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project

Figure 4.16-1

Farmland Mapping Designations and Williamson Act Contracts

Williamson Act Contracts in the Project Area

As of 2012, Monterey County had a total of 789,616 acres of prime and non-prime agricultural land protected under Williamson Act contracts. In 2009, Monterey County was ranked fifth in an assessment of the top ten California counties with the greatest number of new Williamson Act enrollments (CDC, 2010a). The segment of the Source Water Pipeline alignment located between the CEMEX access road and Lapis Road borders lands enrolled in the Williamson Act program. In addition, on the east side of Del Monte Boulevard and along Charles Benson Road, lands under Williamson Act contract are located immediately north of the Source Water Pipeline and Desalinated Water Pipeline alignments, and immediately west of the proposed MPWSP Desalination Plant site (CDC, 2012).

4.16.1.2 Forest Resources

The California Public Resources Code, Section 12220(g) defines forest land as “land that can support 10 percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits.” Section 4526 of the California Public Resources Code defines timberland as “land (other than land owned by the federal government and land designated by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection as experimental forest land) that is available for, and capable of, growing a crop of trees of a commercial species used to produce lumber and other forest products, including Christmas trees.” There are no timber harvesting activities or land specifically designated as forest land within the project area. The proposed project is located predominantly in areas characterized by urban, agricultural, and open space land uses.

4.16.2 Regulatory Framework

4.16.2.1 Federal Regulations

Farmland Protection Policy Act

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) is intended to minimize the impact of Federal programs (including financing programs such as the State Revolving Fund) on the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. The act seeks to protect Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and land under Williamson Act contracts. Projects are subject to FPPA requirements if they may irreversibly convert farmland (directly or indirectly) to nonagricultural use and are completed by a Federal agency or with assistance from a Federal agency. The FPPA does not apply to the proposed project because the project is not a federal government action or program. If State Revolving Funds are applied for to implement the proposed project, a CEQA-Plus compliant document will be prepared with the application for funding.

4.16.2.2 State Regulations

California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act)

As described above, the California Land Conservation Act, or Williamson Act, is the state's primary program for conserving private land for agricultural and open space use. It is a voluntary, locally administered program that offers reduced property taxes on lands whose owners place enforceable restrictions on land use through contracts between the individual landowners and local governments.

4.16.2.3 Applicable State, Regional, and Local Land Use Plans and Policies Relevant to Agricultural and Forestry Resources

Table 4.16-2 describes the state, regional, and local land use plans, policies, and regulations pertaining to agricultural and forestry resources that are relevant to the MPWSP and that were adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Also included in **Table 4.16-2** is an analysis of project consistency with such plans, policies, and regulations. Where the analysis concludes the proposed project would not conflict with the applicable plan, policy, or regulation, the finding is noted and no further discussion is provided. Where the analysis concludes the proposed project may conflict with the applicable plan, policy, or regulation, the reader is referred to Section 4.16.3, Impacts and Mitigation Measures, for additional discussion.

**TABLE 4.16-2
APPLICABLE STATE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL PLANS AND POLICIES RELEVANT TO AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES**

Project Planning Region	Applicable Planning Document	Plan Element/Section	Project Component(s)	Specific Plan, Policy, or Ordinance	Relationship to Avoiding or Mitigating a Significant Environmental Impact	Project Consistency with Plan, Policy, or Ordinance
City of Marina (coastal zone and inland areas)	City of Marina General Plan	Community Land Use - Primary Policies	Subsurface Slant Wells, Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, Transmission Main	Policy 2.4.4: Wherever possible, lands with significant agricultural, natural habitat, or scenic value shall be retained and protected from degradation.	This policy is intended to preserve and protect significant landscape values.	<u>Consistent:</u> The subsurface slant wells, Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, and Transmission Main would not result in the permanent conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses.
City of Marina (coastal zone and inland areas)	City of Marina General Plan	Community Design and Development	Subsurface Slant Wells, Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, Transmission Main	Policy 4.124: To conserve soil and mineral resources within the Marina Planning Area, the following policies and conditions shall be established: 2. The City shall support continued agricultural uses on prime agricultural soils and other agricultural lands outside the City's designated Urban Growth Boundary, i.e., lands designated as "Agriculture" by this plan. The City should oppose any proposed subdivision or use of land which might result in conversion of such lands. 3. The City shall encourage continued agricultural production on lands within the City's existing and proposed Sphere of Influence as an interim use until such time that annexation and development is approved consistent with this plan.	This policy is intended to conserve soil and mineral resources for agricultural use.	<u>Consistent:</u> The subsurface slant wells, Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, and Transmission Main would not affect the continued use of existing agricultural lands.
City of Marina (coastal zone)	City of Marina Local Coastal Land Use Plan	Policies	Subsurface Slant Wells, Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, Transmission Main	Policy 28: To support continuation of agricultural uses in the Coastal Zone.	This policy is intended to promote agricultural uses in the coastal zone.	<u>Consistent:</u> The subsurface slant wells, Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, and Transmission Main would not result in the permanent conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses.
City of Marina (coastal zone)	City of Marina Local Coastal Land Use Plan	Policies	Subsurface Slant Wells, Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, Transmission Main	Policy 29: To provide incentives to retain agricultural activities within the Coastal Zone.	This policy is intended to preserve agricultural uses in the coastal zone.	<u>Consistent:</u> The subsurface slant wells, Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, and Transmission Main would not result in the permanent conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses.
City of Marina (coastal zone)	City of Marina Local Coastal Land Use Plan	Policies	Subsurface Slant Wells, Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, Transmission Main	Policy 30: To allow conversion from agricultural use to more intensive land uses in an orderly way, progressing sequentially within and from already urbanized areas of the city.	This policy is intended to protect agricultural land from being segmented and to keep similar land uses together.	<u>Consistent:</u> The subsurface slant wells, Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, and Transmission Main would not result in the permanent conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses.
County of Monterey (coastal zone & inland area)	Monterey County General Plan	Agriculture	MPWSP Desalination Plant, Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, Salinas Valley Return Pipeline, Brine Discharge Pipeline, Ryan Ranch-Bishop Interconnection Improvements, Main System-Hidden Hills Interconnection Improvements, and Valley Greens Pump Station (site Options 1 & 2)	Policy AG-1.1: Land uses that would interfere with routine and ongoing agricultural operations on viable farmlands designated as Prime, of Statewide Importance, Unique, or of Local Importance shall be prohibited.	This policy is intended to protect agricultural operations on designated important farmlands from the loss of productivity as a result incompatible land uses nearby.	<u>Consistent:</u> The land uses proposed by the proposed project would not interfere with routine and ongoing agricultural operations on viable farmlands.
County of Monterey (coastal zone & inland area)	Monterey County General Plan	Agriculture	MPWSP Desalination Plant, Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, Salinas Valley Return Pipeline, Brine Discharge Pipeline, Ryan Ranch-Bishop Interconnection Improvements, Main System-Hidden Hills Interconnection Improvements, and Valley Greens Pump Station (site Options 1 & 2)	Policy AG-1.2: The County shall require that well-defined buffer areas be provided as partial mitigation for new non-agricultural development proposals that are located adjacent to agricultural land uses on farmlands designated as Prime, of Statewide Importance, Unique, or Local Importance.	This policy is intended to ensure that non-agricultural uses do not encroach on the agricultural lands.	<u>Consistent:</u> The proposed MPWSP Desalination Plant and associated facilities would be located adjacent to agricultural land designated as Statewide Importance. However, the proposed MPWSP Desalination Plant would be constructed on the upper terrace (approximately 25 acres) of the site and would be set back from the adjacent agricultural parcel (see Figure 3-5). Additionally, pipelines would be buried below ground and would not preclude the future cultivation of lands designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance.
County of Monterey (coastal zone & inland area)	Monterey County General Plan	Agriculture	MPWSP Desalination Plant, Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, Salinas Valley Return Pipeline, Brine Discharge Pipeline, Ryan Ranch-Bishop Interconnection Improvements, Main System-Hidden Hills Interconnection Improvements, and Valley Greens Pump Station (site Options 1 & 2)	Policy AG-1.4: Viable agricultural land uses, including ancillary and support uses and facilities on farmland designated as Prime, of Statewide Importance, Unique, or of Local Importance shall be conserved, enhanced, and expanded through agricultural land use designations and encouragement of large lot agricultural zoning, except as provided in a Community Plan. Agriculture shall be established as the top land use priority for guiding further economic development on agricultural lands.	This policy is intended to preserve agricultural resources, protect prime agricultural soil, and deter conversion of farmland.	<u>Consistent:</u> The proposed project would not result in the permanent conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. Approximately 1.7 acres along the northern edge of the 46-acre MPWSP Desalination Plant site is designated as Prime Farmland. However, the proposed MPWSP Desalination Plant would be constructed on the upper terrace (approximately 25 acres) of the site, outside of the area designated as Prime Farmland.

**TABLE 4.16-2 (Continued)
 APPLICABLE STATE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL PLANS AND POLICIES RELEVANT TO AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES**

Project Planning Region	Applicable Planning Document	Plan Element/Section	Project Component(s)	Specific Plan, Policy, or Ordinance	Relationship to Avoiding or Mitigating a Significant Environmental Impact	Project Consistency with Plan, Policy, or Ordinance
County of Monterey (coastal zone)	North County Land Use Plan	Agriculture	Source Water Pipeline and Desalinated Water Pipeline	Key Policy 2.6.1: The County shall support the permanent preservation of prime agricultural soils exclusively for agricultural use. The County shall also protect productive farmland not on prime soils if it meets State productivity criteria and does not contribute to degradation of water quality. Development adjacent to prime and productive farmland shall be planned to be compatible with agriculture.	This policy is intended to preserve agricultural resources, protect prime agricultural soils, and deter conversion of farmland.	<u>Consistent:</u> The Source Water Pipeline and Desalinated Water Pipeline would not result in the permanent conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.
County of Monterey (coastal zone)	North County Land Use Plan	Agriculture	Source Water Pipeline and Desalinated Water Pipeline	Policy 2.6.2.1: Prime and productive farmland designated for Agricultural Preservation and Agricultural Conservation land use shall be preserved for agricultural use to the fullest extent possible as consistent with the protection of environmentally sensitive habitats and the concentration of development.	This policy is intended to preserve farmland designated for Agricultural Preservation and Agricultural Conservation land use.	<u>Consistent:</u> The Source Water Pipeline and Desalinated Water Pipeline would not result in the permanent conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.
County of Monterey (coastal zone & inland area)	North County Land Use Plan	Agriculture	Source Water Pipeline and Desalinated Water Pipeline	Policy 2.6.2.3: Conversion of uncultivated lands on steep and erodible soils to croplands shall be regulated by the County on a permit basis. Conversion shall be preceded by a detailed management plan.	This policy is intended to ensure that land on steep slopes are managed and farm in a way that will not erode the soil.	<u>Consistent:</u> The proposed project would not result in the conversion of uncultivated lands to croplands.

SOURCE: City of Marina, 1982; City of Marina, 2000; FORA, 1997; Monterey County, 2010.

4.16.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

4.16.3.1 Significance Criteria

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines recommends the following significance criteria for the evaluation of agricultural and forestry resources. Implementation of the proposed project would have a significant impact related to agricultural and forestry resources if it would:

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use;
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract;
- Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104[g]).
- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest lands to non-forest uses; or
- Involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use or the conversion of forest land to non-forest uses.

Based on the nature of the proposed project, there would be no impacts related to the following significance criteria for the reasons described below:

Conflict with existing zoning for forest land or timberland or result in the loss of forest land or the conversion of forest land to non-forest uses. There is no forest land or timberland in the project area; thus, construction and operation of the proposed project would not conflict with zoning regulations for forest land or timberland, result in the loss of forest land, or result in the conversion of forest land to non-forest uses. Therefore, the third and fourth CEQA significance criteria and the second part of the fifth significance criterion listed above are not applicable to the proposed project and are not discussed further in this EIR.

4.16.3.2 Approach to Analysis

To determine the potential for the proposed project to result in adverse effects on agriculture, this evaluation compares the anticipated disturbance areas associated with project construction to the CDC's FMMP Important Farmland Series Maps, maps of Williamson Act contracts, and zoning maps for the project area. Unless covered by a Williamson Act contract and/or zoned for agricultural uses, areas designated in the FMMP maps as Farmland of Local Importance or Grazing Land are not considered in this analysis because the CEQA Guidelines do not require an analysis of land use changes associated with these designations.

All potential impacts on agricultural resources would result from project construction and/or facility siting; no impacts would result from project operations. Therefore, the evaluation presented below only considers impacts related to facility siting and construction.

4.16.3.3 Summary of Impacts

Table 4.16-3 summarizes the proposed project’s impacts and significance determinations related to agriculture and forestry resources.

**TABLE 4.16-3
 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS – AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES**

Impacts	Significance Determinations
Impact 4.16-1: Permanently or temporarily convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use.	LSM
Impact 4.16-2: Conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural uses or with Williamson Act contracts.	LSM
Impact 4.16-3: Otherwise change the existing environment such that farmland is converted to non-agricultural use.	LSM

LSM = Less than Significant impact with Mitigation

4.16.3.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact 4.16-1: Permanently or temporarily convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use. (*Less than Significant with Mitigation*)

As discussed above in Section 4.16.1, Setting, the CDC’s FMMP Important Farmland Series Maps for Monterey County indicate that certain project components would be located within or adjacent to lands designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland. Implementation of the proposed project could result in temporary impacts on important farmland.

Project construction activities have the potential to temporarily disrupt agricultural land uses as a result of trenching and excavations, construction staging, and construction vehicle access. While the installation of underground project facilities such as pipelines could temporarily disrupt or displace important farmland during the construction period, agricultural production on land used for the cultivation of row crops could resume after construction has been completed. The proposed underground facilities could limit future agricultural uses involving large woody plants and trees, since such plant types can damage pipelines by causing corrosion of the outer casements, thus making repairs and maintenance difficult, hazardous, and expensive; however, since such plant types are not currently or typically grown in the potentially affected agricultural areas, this limitation would not be significant. The siting of aboveground project facilities adjacent to designated important farmland could result in the temporary displacement of agricultural land uses during construction.

Subsurface Slant Wells

The proposed slant wells are not located in areas mapped as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Therefore, the subsurface slant wells would not result in the permanent displacement or conversion of important farmland to non-agricultural uses. No impact would result.

MPWSP Desalination Plant

As indicated in Section 4.16.1.1, above, approximately 1.7 acres along the northern edge of the 46-acre MPWSP Desalination Plant site are designated as Prime Farmland. However, the proposed desalination facilities would be constructed on the upper terrace (approximately 25 acres) of the site and outside of the area designated as Prime Farmland. The parcel located immediately west of the MPWSP Desalination Plant site is designated as Farmland of Statewide Importance. However, project construction activities and associated ground disturbance would not extend into this parcel. None of the desalination facilities would be sited within the areas mapped as Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance, and construction of the MPWSP Desalination Plant is not expected to cause any temporary or permanent disturbance to these areas. Therefore, no impact would result.

Pipelines North of Reservation Road

Construction activities associated with the Source Water Pipeline along Lapis Road has the potential to temporarily disrupt and displace Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance. Installation of the Desalinated Water Pipeline and Source Water Pipeline along Charles Benson Road could temporarily disrupt agricultural production on Farmland of Statewide Importance bordering the road to the north. Installation of the Brine Discharge Pipeline and the Salinas Valley Return Pipeline between the MPWSP Desalination Plant site and the MRWPCA Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant could temporarily disrupt and displace Farmland of Statewide Importance. Where feasible, these pipelines would be installed in existing utility easements within roadways in an effort to minimize disturbance to nearby agricultural uses. Construction-related disturbance and disruption of agricultural uses in areas designated as important farmland, albeit temporary, is considered a potentially significant impact. However, with implementation of **Mitigation Measure 4.16-1 (Minimize Disturbance to Farmland)**, which requires that construction contractors minimize ground disturbance in designated important farmland areas, the impact would be reduced to less-than-significant. Agricultural production (of the same or similar crops) could resume following construction.

Valley Greens Pump Station (Site Option 1)

The Valley Greens Pump Station site Option 1 located approximately 400 feet southeast of the intersection of Carmel Valley Road and Valley Greens Drive is adjacent to Prime Farmland. However, if this site is selected, construction of a pump station at this site would not result in disturbance to the adjacent farmland because the proposed facilities would not abut this farmland. Therefore, implementation of the Valley Greens Pump Station at site Option 1 would not temporarily displace agricultural land uses during construction, and the siting of this facility would not result in the permanent conversion of Prime Farmland to non-agricultural uses. No impact would result.

All Other Facilities and Improvements South of Reservation Road

Land uses in the vicinity of all other proposed facilities located south of Reservation Road, including site Option 2 for the Valley Greens Pump Station, are predominantly urban and are not associated with agricultural uses. No impact to important farmland would result from implementation of the proposed facilities and improvements located south of Reservation Road.

Impact Conclusion

Construction of the Source Water Pipeline, Brine Discharge Pipeline, Salinas Valley Return Pipeline, and Desalinated Water Pipeline could temporarily disrupt agricultural uses in designated important farmland areas, a potentially significant impact. However, implementation of **Mitigation Measure 4.16-1 (Minimize Disturbance to Farmland)** would reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 4.16-1 applies to the Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, Brine Discharge Pipeline, and Salinas Valley Return Pipeline.

Mitigation Measure 4.16-1: Minimize Disturbance to Farmland.

To support the continued productivity of designated important farmland in the project area, CalAm shall ensure that the following provisions are included in construction contract specifications:

- Construction contractor(s) shall minimize the extent of the construction disturbance, including construction access and staging areas, in designated important farmland areas, lands under Williamson Act contracts, and lands zoned for agricultural uses, as much as feasible.
- Prior to the start of construction, the construction contractor(s) shall mark the limits of the construction area and ensure that no construction activities, parking, or staging occur beyond the construction limits.

Impact 4.16-2: Conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural uses or with Williamson Act contracts. (*Less than Significant with Mitigation*)

As previously discussed, some of the proposed project facilities located north of Reservation Road are adjacent to lands under Williamson Act contract and lands zoned for agricultural uses. The proposed project could result in zoning conflicts if it were to result in the temporary disruption or displacement of agricultural uses during construction, or introduce incompatible land uses into these areas.

Subsurface Slant Wells

The proposed slant wells are not located within or immediately adjacent to areas zoned for agricultural use or on lands under Williamson Act contract. Therefore, no impact related to conflicts with agricultural zoning or Williamson Act contracts would result.

MPWSP Desalination Plant

The MPWSP Desalination Plant would be located on a parcel zoned and designated for permanent grazing. Use of this site for the MPWSP Desalination Plant would be allowed with a conditional use permit from Monterey County. The site is not located on land under a Williamson Act contract. Although the site is bordered to the north and west by lands that are under Williamson Act contract, construction of the MPWSP Desalination Plant would not affect agricultural activities on these adjacent parcels. No impact would result.

Pipelines North of Reservation Road

Lands under Williamson Act contract are present on the west side of Lapis Road, along the segment of the proposed Source Water Pipeline alignment located between the CEMEX access road and Charles Benson Road. Lands under Williamson Act contract are also present along the north side of Charles Benson Road, north of the Source Water Pipeline and Desalinated Water Pipeline and west of the MPWSP Desalination Plant site. The parcels that border the west side of Lapis Road are zoned by Monterey County as Coastal Agriculture Preserve or “CAP (CZ)”. The purpose of the CAP (CZ) zoning designation is to “provide a district to preserve and enhance the use of prime, productive, and unique farmlands in the County of Monterey while also providing the opportunity to establish necessary support facilities for those agricultural uses” (Monterey County, 2013). East of Del Monte Boulevard, the lands on either side of the Source Water Pipeline and Desalinated Water Pipeline alignments, and the lands on the south side of the Brine Discharge Pipeline and Salinas Valley Return Pipeline are zoned for Permanent Grazing or “PG” (Monterey County, 2014).

Construction of the Source Water Pipeline and the Desalinated Water Pipeline could result in temporary conflicts with Williamson Act contracts. Construction of Source Water Pipeline, the Desalinated Water Pipeline, the Brine Discharge Pipeline, and the Salinas Valley Return Pipeline could result in temporarily conflicts with agricultural lands zoned for grazing. These conflicts would constitute a potentially significant impact. However, this impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of **Mitigation Measure 4.16-1 (Minimize Disturbance to Farmland)**.

Depending on the final pipeline alignment, the Source Water Pipeline could require easements on land zoned for agricultural use. Use of agricultural lands for public utility purposes would be allowed with a conditional use permit from Monterey County. Further, as stated under Impact 4.16-1, above, agricultural production can typically resume after underground utilities have been installed. Because public utilities are generally considered compatible with agricultural land uses, impacts related to conflicts with agricultural zoning would be less than significant.

Facilities and Improvements South of Reservation Road

The project facilities located south of Reservation Road are not located on lands that are zoned for agricultural uses. In addition, no lands that are under Williamson Act contracts exist in the vicinity of the proposed project facilities located south of Reservation Road. Therefore, no impact related to conflicts with agricultural zoning or Williamson Act contracts would result.

Impact Conclusion

Construction of the Source Water Pipeline and Desalinated Water Pipeline could result in temporary conflicts with Williamson Act contracts and land zoned for agricultural uses. Construction of the Brine Discharge Pipeline and the Salinas Valley Return Pipeline could result in temporarily conflicts with agricultural lands zoned for grazing. The potential for project implementation to result in temporary conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural uses or with Williamson Act contracts is considered a potentially significant impact. However, this impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of **Mitigation Measure 4.16-1 (Minimize Disturbance to Farmland)**. None of the other proposed facilities would result in conflicts Williamson Act contracts or land zoned for agricultural uses.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 4.16-1 applies to the Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, Brine Discharge Pipeline, and Salinas Valley Return Pipeline.

Mitigation Measure 4.16-1: Minimize Disturbance to Farmland.

(See Impact 4.16-1, above, for description.)

Impact 4.16-3: Otherwise change the existing environment such that farmland is converted to non-agricultural use. (*Less than Significant with Mitigation*)

In addition to the issues addressed above under Impacts 4.16-1 and 4.16-2, project implementation could cause other changes in the existing environment that could result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. For example, project construction activities could cause soil compaction from the movement of heavy construction vehicles and equipment, thereby adversely affecting the suitability of soil for agricultural production. Excavation and earthmoving activities during project construction could also result in the loss of fertile topsoil. In addition, inadvertent damage to existing water pumps and irrigation pipelines during project construction could interfere with a landowner's ability to irrigate crops and could effectively render previously productive agricultural land unusable.

Subsurface Slant Wells

The proposed slant wells would not be located on or in the immediate vicinity of land used for agriculture. Therefore, construction of these facilities would not affect soil conditions in farmland areas or result in inadvertent damage to agricultural irrigation systems. No impact would result.

MPWSP Desalination Plant

Construction activities associated with the MPWSP Desalination Plant would occur on the upper terrace (approximately 25 acres) of the 46-acre parcel and would not disturb land designated as Prime Farmland or Unique Farmland. Implementation of the MPWSP Desalination Plant would not result in indirect changes to the physical environment that could adversely affect farmland for the following reasons: site soils are not prime agricultural soils; the site is currently idle; and

construction access would be provided via Charles Benson Road, which runs in front of the site. No impact would result.

Pipelines North of Reservation Road

As described in Impact 4.16-1, construction of the Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, Brine Discharge Pipeline, and Salinas Valley Return Pipeline could result in surface disturbance and earthmoving activities in agricultural lands, which could in turn adversely affect soil conditions or inadvertently damage to agricultural irrigation systems. This impact is considered potentially significant but would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of **Mitigation Measure 4.16-3 (Measures to Minimize Indirect Effects on Agricultural Land)**.

Improvements to ASR System

The proposed improvements to the Seaside Groundwater Basin ASR System are not located or within the immediate vicinity of agricultural uses. Therefore, construction of these facility would not affect agricultural soils or result in inadvertent damage to agricultural irrigation systems. No impact would result.

Valley Greens Pump Station (Site Option 1)

Valley Greens Pump Station site Option 1, the only project site south of Reservation Road located in close proximity to farmland, is also surrounded by industrial and urban land uses and would not affect soil conditions in farmland areas or result in inadvertent damage to agricultural irrigation systems. No impact would result.

All Other Pipelines and Conveyance Facilities South of Reservation Road

None of the other proposed facilities located south of Reservation Road (including Valley Greens Pump Station site Option 2), are located in close proximity to agricultural land. No impact would result.

Impact Conclusion

Construction of Source Water Pipeline, Brine Discharge Pipeline, Salinas Valley Return Pipeline, and Desalinated Water Pipeline could result in inadvertent changes to the existing environment that could cause the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses, a potentially significant impact. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure 4.16-3 (Measures to Minimize Indirect Effects on Agricultural Land)** would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. None of the other proposed facilities would result in secondary impacts to agricultural lands.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 4.16-3 applies to the Source Water Pipeline, Desalinated Water Pipeline, Brine Discharge Pipeline, and Salinas Valley Return Pipeline.

Mitigation Measure 4.16-3: Measures to Minimize Indirect Effects on Agricultural Land.

CalAm and its construction contractor(s) shall incorporate the following measures into construction plans and specifications for all construction activities located in farmland areas.

- Excavations and other earthmoving activities in designated important farmland areas shall be conducted in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts on crop productivity. The surface and subsurface soil layers shall be stockpiled separately when trenches are excavated; these soils shall subsequently be used to backfill excavations and will be returned to its appropriate location in the soil profile.
- To avoid over-compaction of the top layers of soil, soil densities shall be measured prior to the start of construction activities, and surface soil (roughly the upper 3 feet of soil) shall be backfilled to within 5 percent of the original density.
- If necessary, the uppermost 3 feet of soil shall be ripped to achieve the appropriate soil density. Ripping may also be used in areas where vehicle and equipment traffic has compacted the topsoil layers, such as along construction access roads and staging areas.
- Existing agricultural drainage systems shall be inspected to ensure they function as necessary throughout the construction period so that agricultural uses are not disrupted.
- Coordination with landowners shall be conducted to ensure that construction does not affect irrigation and/or other ancillary farming systems to a degree that farming practices cannot be maintained.
- Existing levels of irrigation water to farmers shall be maintained by temporarily rerouting irrigation systems during construction or by installing new temporary irrigation systems for use during construction.

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