

B.3.13 Population and Housing

POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Displace substantial numbers of people necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Significance criteria established by CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G.

B.3.13.1 Setting

The proposed expansion of the Downs Substation and the modifications to the Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 2 115-kV subtransmission line are located in the city of Ridgecrest in Kern County. The modifications to the Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 115-kV subtransmission line includes the replacement of six subtransmission line poles in the Searles Valley of San Bernardino County, which includes the

unincorporated communities of Trona and Argus. The Proposed Project also includes the installation of approximately 58 miles of new fiber optic telecommunication cable, which would traverse the city of Ridgecrest and the unincorporated communities of Inyokern, China Lake Acres, Argus, and Trona. Therefore, the population and housing study area for the Proposed Project includes the city of Ridgecrest and the unincorporated areas of Inyokern, China Lake Acres, and Searles Valley. U.S. Census estimate data for population, housing, and employment are presented in Table B.3.13-1.

Location	Population	Housing Units		Employment	
		Total Units	Vacancy Rate	Total Employed ¹	In Construction Trades
City of Ridgecrest	25,895	10,476	9.5%	12,114	985
Inyokern	1,891	766	8.2%	865	133
China Lake Acres	1,488	736	17.3	1,181	96
Searles Valley	2,073	1,047	22.3%	783	173

¹ Accounts for population greater than 16 years of age and in Labor Force
Source: U.S. Census, 2009a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i.

B.3.13.2 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a. Would the project induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

NO IMPACT. Construction activities resulting from project implementation would be considered short-term and temporary. The Proposed Project would require 15 to 25 construction personnel working on any given day and crews would work concurrently whenever possible; however, the estimated deployment and number of crew members would be dependent upon local jurisdiction permitting, material availability, and construction scheduling. Construction would be performed by either SCE construction crews or contractors. It is assumed that these construction personnel would come from

within Kern County, San Bernardino County, or adjacent areas, and therefore, would not generate a permanent increase in population levels or a decrease in available housing. No impacts to existing or future population growth levels would occur as a result of construction of the Proposed Project.

During the operation period, the proposed expansion of the Downs Substation would be unattended and electrical equipment within the substation would be remotely monitored and controlled by an automated system from SCE's Lugo Switching Center. The existing substation is currently unattended and controlled by an automated system; therefore, the proposed expansion would be a continuation of the existing operation procedure. SCE personnel would visit the Downs Substation for electrical switching and routine maintenance purposes, where routine maintenance would include equipment testing, monitoring, and repair. SCE personnel would generally visit the Downs Substation three to four times per month. The new 115-kV subtransmission line segments would be maintained in a manner consistent with CPUC General Order No. 165. Normal operation of the 115-kV subtransmission lines would be controlled remotely through SCE control systems. SCE maintains an inspection frequency of the energized 115-kV subtransmission overhead facilities a minimum of once per year via ground and/or aerial observation. The frequency of inspection and maintenance activities would depend upon weather effects and any unique problems that may arise due to such variables as substantial storm damage or vandalism. Maintenance activities include repairing conductors, replacing insulators, replacing poles, and access road maintenance. The Proposed Project would not result in the creation of new jobs and there would not be a need for new housing. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would not generate a direct or indirect increase in the permanent population of the area.

The purpose of the Proposed Project is to improve reliability and meet projected electrical load requirements in the city of Ridgecrest and surrounding area. Therefore, the Proposed Project is accommodating the projected growth, but would not induce population growth either directly or indirectly. Thus, no impacts associated with induced population growth would occur.

b. Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

NO IMPACT. No housing developments are located within the sites or corridors for the Proposed Project. The site for the proposed expansion of the Downs Substation is currently vacant land, and the corridors of the subtransmission lines and fiber optic cable route are existing rights-of-way or SCE-owned property. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in the displacement of housing, nor would it necessitate the construction of replacement housing. No impacts would occur.

c. Would the project displace substantial numbers of people necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

NO IMPACT. As stated in Section B.3.12.2(b) above, there is no existing housing within the proposed substation expansion site or subtransmission corridor. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in the displacement of people, nor would it necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. No impacts would occur.