

4. Environmental Impact Assessment

4.17 Utilities and Service Systems

This section describes the utilities and service systems in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. The regulatory setting and potential impacts to these systems are also discussed.

The majority of the activities related to the Proposed Project would be conducted in the City of Ridgecrest or Kern County; activities in San Bernardino County would be limited to the replacement of six subtransmission line poles and the stringing of fiber optic telecommunication cable on existing infrastructure. These activities would not generate wastewater or solid waste necessitating disposal within San Bernardino County, require water, or generate storm water; therefore, San Bernardino County facilities and services are not discussed in this section.

4.17.1 Environmental Setting

Utility providers in the area include SCE (electricity), Southern California Gas Company (natural gas), and Verizon, AT&T, TimeWarner Cable, Ridgenet, IWV, and Mediacom (telecommunications). Ridgecrest Sanitation provides refuse and recycling services for the City of Ridgecrest.

4.17.1.1 Solid Waste Facilities/Landfills

The County of Kern Waste Management Department operates the Ridgecrest-Inyokern Sanitary Landfill, which is located approximately 3.5 miles from the existing Downs Substation. This facility has a maximum permitted capacity of 5,992,700 cubic yards, and a remaining capacity of 5,000,898 cubic yards.

4.17.1.2 Water and Wastewater Treatment

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (LRWQCB) is the applicable jurisdictional entity for the City of Ridgecrest and the entirety of the Proposed Project area. The Indian Wells Valley Water District provides water service to residences and businesses in Inyokern and the City of Ridgecrest. The Searles Domestic Water Company provides water service to Trona and Argus. Residences outside of these service areas do not have access to centralized water or wastewater infrastructure.

The City of Ridgecrest's Wastewater Division operates and maintains the city's sewage collection and treatment system. In 2008, the wastewater treatment plan treated 942 million gallons, with the facility operating at a monthly average of 69% of capacity. The Division is currently completing

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the design phase for new wastewater treatment facilities, and has put in place a Sanitary Sewer Management Plan (SSMP) to ascertain current and future capacity issues.

4.17.2 Regulatory Setting

4.17.2.1 Federal

Federal Clean Water Act—The Clean Water Act is the primary federal law in the United States governing the protection of water quality through the goals of eliminating water pollution and providing for standards of water quality necessary for human sports and recreation. The construction phase of the Proposed Project would disturb a surface area greater than one acre; therefore, SCE would be required to obtain coverage under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity, Water Quality Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002 (“2009 Construction General Permit” or “CGP”).

4.17.2.2 State

California Health and Safety Code—If treated wood is developed as a waste product, the California health and safety code requires treated wood to be disposed of in either a Class I hazardous waste landfill or in a composite-lined portion of a solid waste landfill that meets RWQCB-specified requirements.

4.17.2.3 Local

Local regulations that may be applicable to the Proposed Project include those addressing water use for landscaping and disposal and handling of solid waste. Due to the limited range of activities to be conducted in San Bernardino County, there are no applicable regulations. Local regulations for Kern County and the City of Ridgecrest include:

Kern County Code of Ordinances, Title 8, Health and Safety—Section 28.070, Transportation-Loads must be covered notes that it is “unlawful for any person to transport in or upon any vehicle, over any public thoroughfare within the unincorporated area of the county, any solid waste, unless the solid waste is completely covered or secured in a manner preventing it from falling or blowing away from the transporting vehicle.” Section 28.090, Dumping at county waste facilities, notes that it is “unlawful for any person to place, deposit or dump or cause to be placed, deposited or dumped any material at any waste facility...In violation of the rules and regulations prescribed by the board of supervisors for the operation of the waste facility. “

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City of Ridgecrest Ordinance 09.05, Water Efficient Landscape—Codified in Section 12.-9 of the City's municipal code, the purpose and intent of the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance is to:

- a) Promote the values and benefits of landscaping while recognizing the need to utilize water and other resources as efficiently as possible;
- b) Establish a water conservation plan to reduce water consumption in the residential and commercial landscape environment by encouraging single-family residential water conservation, and in multi-family, commercial and manufacturing zone districts limiting the use of turf and requiring the utilization of low water use plant materials in new projects;
- c) Establish provisions for water management practices and water waste prevention for new development;
- d) Establish a plan for designing, installing, and maintaining water efficient landscape in new projects;
- e) Implement a more efficient use of water through swimming pool and water body design by the use of efficient water body management and proper recirculation of water; and
- f) Implement water conservation policies contained in the general plan.

City of Ridgecrest Municipal Code, Section 13-5, Transportation of Solid Waste and Other Disposals—Section 13-5.1, Transportation, details the measures that must be followed to prevent dust, debris, or other matter being transported from falling upon the street.

4.17.3 Significance Criteria

The significance criteria for assessing the impacts to utilities and service systems are drawn from the CEQA Environmental Checklist as follows. A project would have a significant impact if it would:

- Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable RWQCB;
- Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects;

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- Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects;
- Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed;
- Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments;
- Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs;
- Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

4.17.4 Impact Assessment

Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would result in no impacts for the following CEQA criteria:

Would the Proposed Project exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?

No Impact. The Proposed Project would not exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. No wastewater would be generated by the Proposed Project. Portable toilets would be provided on-site for workers during the construction phase according to California Occupational Safety and Health Act requirements; the portable toilets would be serviced by a licensed contractor who would dispose of the waste off-site and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Because no wastewater would be generated during the construction or operation of the Proposed Project, no exceedances of wastewater treatment requirements would be realized, and the Proposed Project would not require or result in the construction of new, or expansion of existing, wastewater treatment facilities. Therefore, no impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

Would the Proposed Project require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

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No Impact. The Proposed Project would not require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects. This is due to the fact that no wastewater would be generated by the Proposed Project, and because only small volumes of water would be required for dust control and landscape irrigation. Therefore, no impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

Would the Proposed Project require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

No Impact. The Proposed Project would not require or result in the construction of new off-site storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities. During construction, the Proposed Project would disturb a surface area greater than one acre. Therefore, SCE would be required to obtain coverage under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity, Water Quality Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002 (“2009 Construction General Permit” or “CGP”). As part of compliance with the CGP, SCE would prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs). Commonly used BMPs include stormwater runoff quality control measures (boundary protection), dewatering procedures, spill reporting, and concrete waste management. The SWPPP would be based on final engineering design and would include all project components.

Would the Proposed Project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?

No Impact. Sufficient water supplies are available to serve the Proposed Project from existing entitlements and resources; no new or expanded entitlements would be needed.

SCE would utilize water to support construction activities and to minimize emissions of fugitive dust per the Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District Rule 402—Fugitive Dust. The water used during the construction phase would be sourced from the Indian Wells Valley Water District; due to the small volume of water that would be used, and the short duration over which water would be consumed, the construction phase of the project would not require new or expanded entitlements.

SCE, in consultation with the City of Ridgecrest, would develop a landscaping plan for the proposed Downs Substation expansion location. This plan, which would be submitted to the City for review and comment prior to construction, would detail the types and quantities of plants and other landscaping that would be installed at the expanded substation. The landscaping would be selected in accordance with City of Ridgecrest’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (Ordinance

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Number 09-05). The volume of water that would be consumed by this new landscaping would be small and the incremental volume would not present a service or supply issue to the Indian Wells Valley Water District.

Due to the small volumes of water that would be used, and the sufficient water supplies available to serve the Proposed Project, no impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

Would the Proposed Project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

No Impact. The Proposed Project would not generate any wastewater during construction or operation. Therefore, no impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

Would the Proposed Project be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?

No Impact. The Proposed Project would be served by the Ridgecrest-Inyokern Sanitary Landfill, which has sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the Proposed Project's solid waste disposal needs.

Small volumes of construction-related debris and removed infrastructure components may require disposal during development of the Downs Substation expansion, construction of the 115 kV subtransmission line, and installation of the fiber optic telecommunication cable. This debris may include wood power poles replaced during construction, excavated materials, and miscellaneous construction materials (pallets, strapping, packaging, etc.). SCE would recycle all materials as appropriate; materials that cannot be recycled would be disposed of in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. The existing capacity available at the Ridgecrest-Inyokern Sanitary Landfill is more than adequate to accommodate the small volume of debris expected to be generated during the construction phase.

During operations, small volumes of waste (e.g., material packaging) may be generated during routine maintenance activities. SCE would recycle all materials as appropriate; materials that cannot be recycled would be disposed of in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. The existing capacity available at the Ridgecrest-Inyokern Sanitary Landfill is more than adequate to accommodate the very small volume of debris expected to be generated during the operation of the facility.

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Due to the small volumes of construction- and operation-related waste that may be generated, and the available capacity at the Ridgecrest-Inyokern Sanitary Landfill, no impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

Would the Proposed Project comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

No Impact. All solid waste generated by the Proposed Project would be handled in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. Therefore, no impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

4.17.5 Applicant Proposed Measures

Because the Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to utilities and service systems, no Applicant Proposed Measures are offered.

REFERENCES

City of Ridgecrest. 2009. 2009-2010 Adopted Budget, Public Works report. Accessed at: <http://ci.ridgecrest.ca.us/uploadedFiles/Departments/Finance/FY%202010%20Budget%281%29.pdf>.

Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District. 2010. Rules and Regulations website. Accessed at <http://www.kernair.org/rulesandregs.htm>

State of California, Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery. 2010. Solid Waste Information System: Facility/Site Summary Details: Ridgecrest-Inyokern Sanitary Landfill (15-AA-0059). Accessed at: <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/SWFacilities/Directory/15-AA-0059/Detail/>.