

4. Environmental Impact Assessment

4.8 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

This section describes the potential hazards associated with construction and operation of the Proposed Project, excluding the geological hazards discussed in Section 4.6, Geology and Soils. This section addresses the use of hazardous materials during construction, the likelihood of encountering historical contamination during grading, and fire hazards.

4.8.1 Environmental Setting

4.8.1.1 Hazardous Waste

A review of state and federal databases was conducted addressing the proposed Downs Substation expansion, Inyokern Substation, the Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 and No. 2 115 kV subtransmission lines and the surrounding two mile area. This review was conducted to identify hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action, land designated as hazardous waste property or border zone, hazardous waste disposed of on public land, and sites included in the Abandoned Site Assessment Program.

According to a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment conducted on July 1, 2010 by Ninyo & Moore, the location of the proposed Downs Substation expansion and the proposed new 115 kV subtransmission line segment has been vacant undeveloped land since at least 1952. The location was owned by chemical corporations between 1955 and 1986; however, the location of the proposed Downs Substation expansion and the proposed new 115 kV subtransmission line segment, and properties in the vicinity, were not known to be used by the chemical corporations for chemical manufacture or storage. Based on the historical use and current use of the location (i.e., vacant land), there are no indications that hazardous waste has been generated or stored at the proposed Downs Substation expansion location.

A review of state databases conducted by Ninyo & Moore identified a Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)-permitted facility for generation of hazardous waste approximately 400 feet to the east of the location of the proposed Downs Substation expansion and the proposed new 115 kV subtransmission line segment. Mather Bros Inc. was identified as the permit holder for generation of hazardous waste at their facility from 1993 until 2008. Although Mather Bros Inc. was permitted to generate hazardous waste, additional database information indicated that hazardous waste was not generated at the facility.

The Phase I Environmental Site Assessment did not indicate hazardous material or waste at the location of the proposed Downs Substation expansion and the proposed new 115 kV

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subtransmission line segment adjacent to the proposed Downs Substation expansion. No recognized environmental concerns (RECs) or historical RECs were identified at this location.

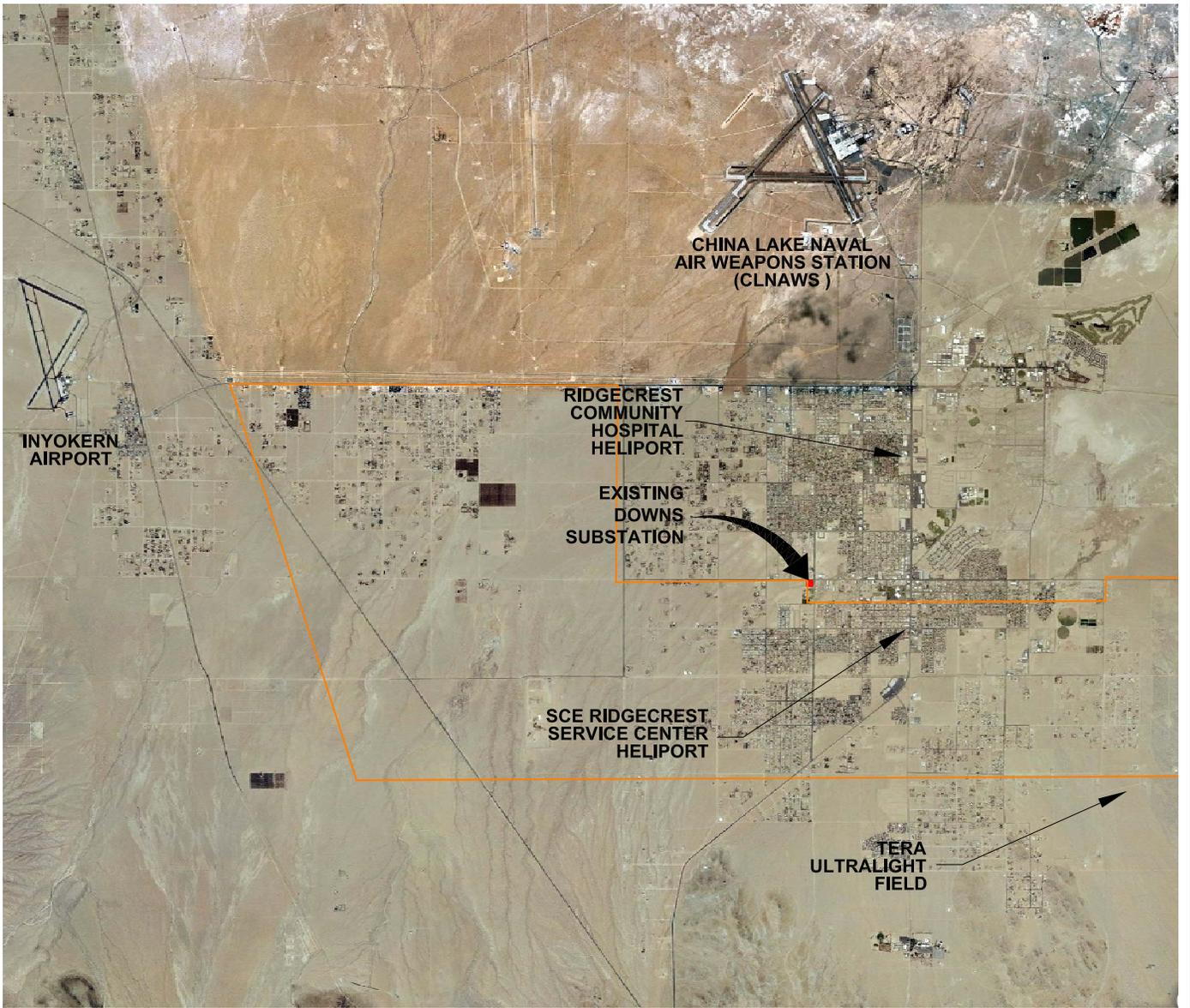
4.8.1.2 Airports, Airstrips, and Heliports

There are three airports or airstrips within the vicinity of the Proposed Project area. Inyokern Airport, a public airport, is located approximately 1.70 miles from Inyokern Substation and the Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 and No. 2 115 kV subtransmission lines. Inyokern Airport is also approximately 8 miles northwest of the existing Downs Substation. A small, privately owned airstrip utilized by ultralights and gliders is located approximately 0.10 mile north of the Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 115 kV subtransmission line and 1.60 miles south of the No. 2 115 kV subtransmission line. CLNAWS runways are located approximately 3.5 miles north of the existing Downs Substation. See [Figure 4.8-1](#) for the location of these airports and airstrips.

There are two heliports located within the vicinity of the Proposed Project area. One is located at the Ridgecrest Community Hospital, approximately 1.4 miles northeast of the existing Downs Substation. The second is a SCE-owned heliport located approximately one mile east-southeast of the existing Downs Substation.

4.8.1.3 Emergency Response

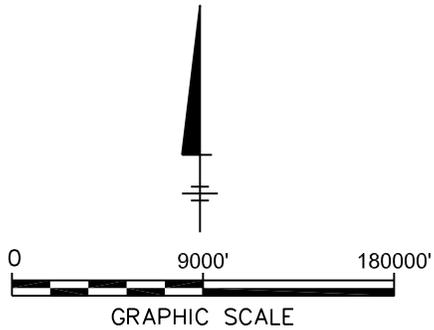
The City of Ridgecrest, Kern County, and San Bernardino County have developed and implemented Emergency Response Plans to prepare for and organize the response to a disaster. The City's emergency response priorities are mirrored in the goals of the General Plan, which call for the integration and coordination of activities to maintain or improve fire response times and effectiveness; maintain or improve public safety services; and to ensure that emergency response infrastructure (i.e., hospitals, fire and police stations, etc.) are appropriately sited (City of Ridgecrest 2008). The City of Ridgecrest Police Department facilitates the development and implementation of the City's emergency response plan (City of Ridgecrest 2010b).



MAP SOURCE: Google Earth Pro™ 2009, 35°38'36.37"N, 117°42'58.98"W

LEGEND

— SUBTRANSMISSION/TELECOM LINE LOOP



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON
 DOWNS SUBSTATION EXPANSION PROJECT
 KERN AND SAN BERNARDINO COUNTIES, CALIFORNIA
 PROPONENT'S ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**AIRPORTS AND AIRSTRIPS IN VICINITY
 OF PROPOSED PROJECT**



FIGURE
4.8-1

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The Kern County Fire Department is responsible for the development and execution of the County's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The EOP provides for the integration and coordination of planning efforts of the County with those of its cities, special districts, and the state. The intent of the EOP is to facilitate emergency response and short-term recovery by providing a framework for response to all significant emergencies, regardless of the nature of the event (Kern County Fire Department 2010).

The Office of Emergency Services (OES), a division of the San Bernardino Fire Department, is responsible for disaster planning and emergency management coordination throughout San Bernardino County. The intent of the OES is to help prepare the communities and residents of San Bernardino County for the impacts of emergencies and disasters. This is accomplished by coordination and communication of essential information to the public, proactive customer service, and effective planning measures for disaster preparedness, response recovery, and mitigation (San Bernardino County Fire Department 2010).

4.8.1.4 *Wildland Fires*

Fire protection in the Proposed Project area is provided by the Kern County Fire Department and San Bernardino County Fire Department. Naturally occurring wildfires and grassfires are rare due to the sparse vegetation in the area (City of Ridgecrest 2008). According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention, the City of Ridgecrest is surrounded by areas defined as "Moderate Fire Hazard." According to the Kern County Natural Hazard Disclosure (Fire) map and the San Bernardino County Natural Hazard Disclosure (Fire) map, there are no areas near the Proposed Project that are defined as a "wildland area that may contain substantial forest fire risks and hazards."

4.8.1.5 *Schools*

There is one school located within 0.25 mile of the proposed Downs Substation expansion location (see Figure 4.14-1 in Section 4.14).

4.8.2 *Regulatory Setting*

The Proposed Project would comply with all applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards related to hazards and hazardous materials during and following construction. The current regulatory setting that applies to the Proposed Project is outlined below.

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4.8.2.1 Federal

Clean Water Act (CWA)—The Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) plan was developed as one of the many requirements of the CWA. Requirements of SPCCs are provided in Title 40, CFR, Part 112. SPCCs are intended to reduce the threat of spills of hydrocarbons to navigable waters of the United States.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976—The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), or Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 USC 6901 et seq.), established a framework for the proper management of hazardous and non-hazardous solid waste. This act, along with the TSCA, enacted a program administered by the USEPA for the regulation of the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. The RCRA was amended in 1984 by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Act (HSWA), which affirmed and extended the “cradle to grave” system of regulating hazardous wastes from their creation to disposal. The use of certain techniques for the disposal of some hazardous wastes was specifically prohibited by the HSWA. The RCRA focuses on active and future facilities; it does not address abandoned or historical sites, which are managed under CERCLA (42 USC 9601 et seq.).

Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA)—The Act established a nationwide emergency planning and response program and imposed reporting requirements for businesses which store, handle, or produce significant quantities of extremely hazardous materials. SARA requires the states to implement a comprehensive system to inform local agencies and the public when a significant quantity of such materials is stored or handled at a facility. Additionally, SARA identifies requirements for planning, reporting, and notification concerning hazardous materials.

Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 (TSCA)—The Act (15 United States Code [USC] 2601 et seq.) was enacted by Congress to give the USEPA the ability to track the thousands of industrial chemicals being produced or imported to the United States. According to the USEPA, industrial chemicals are routinely screened by the USEPA and those found to pose a potential health hazard to the environment and/or to human health are reported and tested. Through the TSCA, the USEPA has the ability to ban the manufacture and import of those chemicals that pose an immediate risk. The USEPA also has the ability to track and control new industry developed chemicals in order to protect the environment and human health from potential risks.

4.8.2.2 State

Health and Safety Code Section 25500 (Waters Bill)—The California Health and Safety Code, Section 25500, et seq., and the regulations to the law found in Title 19 of the CCR, Section 2620,

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et seq., requires that local governments be responsible for regulating local facilities that store, handle, or use hazardous materials above threshold quantities. The threshold quantities (TQ) for identified hazardous materials are 55 gallons for liquids, 500 pounds for solids, and 200 cubic feet for compressed gases measured at standard temperature and pressure. Additionally, the law mandates that facilities that store these hazardous materials prepare a Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP). The HMBP is required to identify the facility's internal response to emergencies and the associated employee training necessary for that response. The law also requires that the HMBP be submitted to the local administering agency.

Health and Safety Code Section 25531 (La Follette Bill)—The La Follette Bill requires the registration of, and regulates the handling of, acutely hazardous materials. This bill is found in the California Health and Safety Code, Section 25531, et seq. With some exceptions, California's identified acutely hazardous materials are listed by the USEPA as extremely hazardous substances. A listing of the federal extremely hazardous substances is provided in Title III of SARA. Therefore, this state law overlaps or duplicates some of the requirements of SARA and the CWA. The California law requires that facilities which handle, store, or use acutely hazardous materials above total planning quantities (TPQs) register the material with their local administering agency.

Safe Drinking Water and Toxics Enforcement Act (Proposition 65)—Proposition 65 or the Safe Drinking Water and Toxics Enforcement Act regulates chemicals that cause cancer and/or affect reproduction. Users of regulated chemicals identified under this law are responsible for informing the public that could be exposed to releases of these materials from their facility. Additionally, the law is intended to prevent discharges of specified hazardous materials into drinking water sources. The law provides a listing of chemicals of concern, which is updated periodically. Proposition 65 is administered through California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment.

4.8.2.3 Local

The Uniform Fire Code (UFC), Article 80—This article deals with hazardous materials issues of the UFC. The article provides local fire departments with the responsibility of enforcement requirements of the development of HMBP and submittal of a Hazardous Material Inventory Statement. The City of Ridgecrest has adopted the UFC Article 80, which is incorporated into the City of Ridgecrest Municipal Code Chapter XV11 17-2.1 Title 8 Chapter 8.32.

4.8.3 Significance Criteria

The significance criteria for assessing the impacts to hazards and hazardous materials come from the CEQA Environmental Checklist. A project causes a potentially significant impact if it would:

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- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials;
- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment;
- Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school;
- Be located on a site, which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment;
- For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area;
- For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area;
- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; or
- Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.

4.8.4 Impact Analysis

Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would result in less than significant impacts for the following CEQA criteria:

Would the Proposed Project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less than Significant Impact. No acutely hazardous materials would be used or stored on location during construction and operation of the proposed Downs Substation expansion, the

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proposed new 115 kV subtransmission line segment, the replacement of six subtransmission poles or installation of fiber optic telecommunication cable. Hazardous materials to be used during the construction and operation of the Proposed Project would include gasoline, diesel fuel, oil, and lubricants associated with construction equipment and other vehicles. These hazardous materials would be transported, used, and disposed of in accordance with applicable rules, regulations, and SCE standard protocols designed to protect the environment, workers, and the public.

In the event that contaminated soil is encountered during excavation activities at the proposed Downs Substation expansion, the proposed new 115 kV subtransmission line segment or the six subtransmission pole line replacement areas, the soil would be segregated, sampled, and tested to determine appropriate treatment and disposal options. If the soil is classified as hazardous, it would be properly managed on-location and transported in accordance with U.S. Department of Transportation regulations utilizing a Uniform Hazardous Waste Manifest to a Class I Landfill or other appropriate soil treatment or recycling facility.

No acutely hazardous materials would be used during the construction and operation of the Proposed Project, and all hazardous materials would be transported, used, and disposed of in accordance with applicable rules, regulations, and SCE standard protocols designed to protect the environment, workers, and the public. Therefore, less than significant impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

Would the Proposed Project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. Hazardous materials used during the Proposed Project would include gasoline, diesel fuel, oil, and lubricants associated with the construction equipment and vehicles.

Reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions during the construction phase would include minor spills or drips. BMPs would be implemented during construction to reduce the potential for or exposure to accidental spills or fires involving the use of hazardous materials. Environmental impacts from such incidents would be minimized by thoroughly cleaning up minor spills as soon as they occur. A location-specific Construction SWPPP would be developed (see Section 4.9, Hydrology and Water Quality for more detail) and implemented to ensure quick response to minor spills and to ensure less than significant hazards to the public or the environment.

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Operation of the Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts. The proposed transformer banks, at the proposed Downs Substation expansion location, would contain mineral oil (a non-hazardous material) that could leak or spill if the transformers were damaged from a seismic event, fire or other unforeseen incident. To minimize potential impacts from spills, the design of the proposed Downs Substation expansion would provide containment and/or diversionary structures or equipment to prevent discharge of an oil spill as described in the Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures requirements (40 CFR Part 112.1—Part 112.7). The SPCC Plan for the existing Downs Substation (SCE Environmental Engineering 2009) would be updated by SCE before any oil containing equipment is brought to the Downs Substation location. The SPCC Plan for the existing Downs Substation (SCE Environmental Engineering 2009) would be updated for the proposed Downs Substation expansion, describing how hazardous materials released from electrical equipment would be diverted and directed toward containment structures, and how containerized hazardous materials would be stored within a temporary containment area with sufficient containment capacity. Any mineral oil-impacted soils would be excavated, and liquids in containment structures retrieved by vacuum trucks; liquids and soils would be transported off-location to a regulated facility.

As required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), personnel handling any hazardous materials would be trained to understand the hazards associated with these materials and would be instructed in the proper methods for storing, handling, and using these hazardous materials. The on-site foreman would ensure that all on-site health and safety guidelines and regulations involving hazardous materials handling are followed during the construction and operations phases of the Proposed Project.

Due to the low volume and proper management of the hazardous materials that would be used during construction and operation of the Proposed Project, the potential for creating a significant hazard to the public or environment from hazardous material incidents is less than significant. Therefore, less than significant impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

Would the Proposed Project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

Less than Significant Impact. Hazardous materials to be used during the construction and operation of the Proposed Project would consist of low toxicity materials including gasoline, diesel fuel, oil, and lubricants associated with the construction equipment and vehicles. The low toxicity materials would be used throughout the Proposed Project area. Although there is a school located within 0.25 mile of the Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 2 115 kV subtransmission line, the low toxicity of materials associated with the Proposed Project would result in a less than significant

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impact. Therefore, less than significant impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

Would the project be located on a site, which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. No component of the Proposed Project is located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Therefore, less than significant impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

Less than Significant Impact. Some components of the Proposed Project are located within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport. The Inyokern Substation and the west end of Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 and No. 2 115 kV subtransmission lines are located 1.70 miles east of the public Inyokern Airport. A small, privately owned airstrip utilized by ultralights and gliders is located approximately 0.10 mile north of the Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 115 kV subtransmission line and 1.60 miles south of the No. 2 115 kV subtransmission line. The proposed construction activities in the vicinity of the Inyokern Airport and the privately owned airstrip would be limited to the installation of fiber optic telecommunication cable on existing 115 kV subtransmission line poles. Based on the minimal, non-invasive construction activities proposed in the vicinity of the Inyokern Airport and privately owned airstrip, the Proposed Project does not present a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area. Therefore, less than significant impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the Proposed Project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

Less than Significant Impact. A small privately-owned airstrip utilized by ultralights and gliders is located approximately 0.10 mile north of the Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 115 kV subtransmission line and 1.60 miles south of the No. 2 115 kV subtransmission line. The proposed construction activities in the vicinity of the privately-owned airstrip would be limited to expansion of existing structures and would be limited to the installation of fiber optic telecommunication cable on existing 115 kV subtransmission line poles. Based on the minimal,

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non-invasive construction activities proposed in the vicinity of the airstrip the Proposed Project does not present a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area. Therefore, less than significant impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

Would the Proposed Project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project would not impact traffic circulation or increase demands on existing emergency response services. The Proposed Project would utilize a traffic control service, and all lane closures would be conducted consistent with local ordinances. No roads would be closed to emergency vehicles during the construction phase, and thus the Proposed Project would not physically interfere with emergency response or evacuation activities. The Proposed Project would include remotely-controlled operations, with SCE personnel visiting only for maintenance or repair activities. The remote operation of the Proposed Project and its infrequent maintenance would neither result in disruptions to traffic circulation nor an increase in the demand for existing emergency response services. In addition, electrical facilities are typically considered critical facilities in emergency response plans. The Proposed Project is intended to increase the reliability of the facility and would potentially have a beneficial impact in maintaining electrical service during emergencies. Therefore, less than significant impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project

Would the Proposed Project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

Less than Significant Impact. The area surrounding the Proposed Project area is sparsely vegetated, minimizing the potential for a construction vehicle or activity to start a fire. Vegetation (both natural and ornamental) at the proposed Downs Substation expansion would also be maintained to eliminate contact with equipment, which could result in a fire. In addition, SCE has standard fire-prevention protocols that would be implemented when the National Weather Service issues a Red Flag Warning. These protocols include measures to address smoking and fire rules, storage and parking areas, use of gasoline-powered tools, use of spark arresters on construction equipment, road closures, use of a fire guard, fire suppression tools, fire suppression equipment, and training requirements. As a result of these measures, construction and operation of the Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact to risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires. Therefore, less than significant impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

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4.8.5 Applicant Proposed Measures

Because the Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts due to hazards or the use of hazardous materials, no APMs are offered.

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