

CHAPTER 4 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The following sections (4.1 through 4.16) evaluate the potential environmental impacts from construction, operation, and maintenance of the Sierra Pacific Power Company 625 and 650 Line Upgrade Project (project). In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, the environmental impacts associated with these components are evaluated for the following resource areas:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

Sections 4.1 through 4.16 include discussions of the existing conditions as they pertain to each resource area, as well as the project's potential impacts to these resources. Additionally, at the beginning of each section, a checklist summarizing the level of impact (i.e., No Impact, Less-Than-Significant Impact, Less-Than-Significant Impact with Mitigation, and Potentially Significant Impact) to these resource areas, according to the significance criteria used for analysis, has been included.

The project will result in no impacts or less-than-significant impacts to seven resource areas: These resource areas include:

- Agricultural Resources
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

The project will result in potentially significant impacts to eight resource areas; however, with the implementation of applicant-proposed measures (APMs), these impacts will be reduced to the less-than-significant level. The following provides a brief summary of these resource areas and the primary impacts resulting from the project:

- Aesthetics – Temporary visual impacts from construction of the project and permanent visual impacts from the substation modifications, new 625 Line, and new, taller poles that will be installed along the existing 650 Line, 132 Line, and Northstar Fold
- Biological Resources – Temporary and permanent impacts to biological resources, including sensitive species and habitats
- Cultural Resources – Temporary and permanent impacts to cultural resources, including paleontological and archaeological resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity – Temporary and permanent impacts associated with landslides, liquefaction, slope failure, and soil erosion during construction and post-construction
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials – Temporary impacts associated with the transport and use of hazardous materials, the potential release of hazardous materials resulting from the demolition of the existing Brockway Substation, and the potential to start a wildfire during construction
- Hydrology and Water Quality – Temporary and permanent impacts to aquatic resources such as waters of the United States (including wetlands), groundwater, streams, and riparian areas
- Noise – Temporary generation of excessive noise and vibration during construction activities near sensitive noise receptors, such as schools, churches, and residences
- Recreation – Temporary impacts to recreationists as a result of trail closures and access restrictions during construction

The project will result in potentially significant impacts to air quality, as discussed in Section 4.3 Air Quality. The air quality in the project area will be temporarily impacted during construction, operation, and maintenance activities. Implementation of the minimization measures described in APM-AIR-01 through APM-AIR-15 will reduce some of these air quality impacts to a less-than-significant level. However, construction-related emissions of NO_x will still exceed established daily significance thresholds and will be considered potentially significant even after implementation of the APMs.