

## 2.2 Agricultural Resources

<i>Issues (and Supporting Information Sources):</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
<b>2. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES</b>				
In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland.				
<b>Would the project:</b>				
a) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

This section provides a description of local agricultural resources on parcels in and adjacent to the Proposed Project site. A general overview of applicable State and County regulations is also provided. The impact analysis evaluates the Proposed Project’s potential to adversely affect existing agricultural resources.

### Setting

The Proposed Project would be located on private property that is not currently, nor historically, used for agriculture. The closest agricultural land to the study area is located to the south and southwest of the proposed Morrison Creek Substation site, on the west side of U.S. Highway 101 (U.S. 101).

### Important Farmland

To characterize the environmental baseline for agricultural resources, Important Farmland Maps produced by the Department of Conservation’s Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) are reviewed. Important Farmland maps show categories of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance (if adopted by a county), Grazing Land, Urban and Built-up Land, Other Land, and Water. Thus far, the FMMP has not created an Important Farmland map for Del Norte County (CDC, 2007).

### Williamson Act Contracts

Williamson Act contracts are a tool often used by local governments to preserve agricultural and open space lands by discouraging premature and unnecessary conversion to urban uses. Under the provisions of the Williamson Act (Section 51200 of the California Land Conservation Act of 1965), landowners contract with the county to maintain agricultural or open space use of their

lands in return for a reduced property tax assessment. In 1994, the Williamson Act was amended to include specific language regarding “conditional compatibility” (Government Code Section 51238.1), mining compatibility (Section 51238.2), and grandfather provisions (Section 51238.3). Del Norte County is one of the five California counties that does not offer Williamson Act contracts (CSAC, 2007).

## Regulatory Context

### Del Norte County General Plan

The existing Simonson Substation and proposed Morrison Creek Substation sites are located on parcels that are designated by the Del Norte County General Plan as *General Industrial* (GI), *Light Industrial* (LI), and *Riparian Corridor* (RC) uses (Del Norte County, 2007). Agricultural related uses are generally not appropriate within these land use designations, as the *General Industrial* and *Light Industrial* designations are primarily intended to provide for commercial, industrial, and manufacturing industries in both rural and urban areas of Del Norte County and the *Riparian Corridor* designation applies to areas containing riparian vegetation immediately adjacent and contiguous to a natural water course (e.g., Rowdy Creek) (Del Norte County, 2003).

### Del Norte County Code

The existing Simonson Substation and proposed Morrison Creek Substation sites are located on parcels that are currently zoned *Manufacturing and Industrial* (M) (Del Norte County, 2007). Agricultural uses are not a permitted use on land with this zoning (Del Norte County, 1967).

## Agriculture Resources Impacts and Mitigation Measures

- a) **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: *No Impact*. See discussion under c).**
  
- c) **Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use: *No Impact*.**

The Proposed Project site is located on private property that is neither currently, nor historically, used for agriculture. The Proposed Project would not result, directly or indirectly, in any conversion of land designated by the Department of Conservation FMMP as *Prime Farmland*, *Farmland of Statewide Importance*, or *Unique Farmland*. As stated above in the Setting, the parcels through which the Proposed Project would traverse are not mapped by the FMMP (CDC, 2007). Thus, the Proposed Project would not result in the conversion of land designated as *Prime Farmland*, *Farmland of Statewide Importance*, or *Unique Farmland*.

b) **Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract: *No Impact.***

As previously noted, the Proposed Project site is located on parcels that are currently zoned *Manufacturing and Industrial* (M). The Proposed Project site is not located on parcels that are under a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in any conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract.

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## References – Agricultural Resources

California Department of Conservation (CDC), 2007. Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). Geographic Information System data obtained from [http://www.consrv.ca.gov/DLRP/fmmp/map\\_products/download\\_gis\\_data.htm](http://www.consrv.ca.gov/DLRP/fmmp/map_products/download_gis_data.htm) on October 11, 2007.

California State Association of Counties (CSAC), 2007. *Percentage of County Acreage in Williamson Act*, [http://www.csac.counties.org/legislation/williamson\\_act/williamson\\_act\\_county\\_acreage.pdf](http://www.csac.counties.org/legislation/williamson_act/williamson_act_county_acreage.pdf), accessed October 11, 2007.

Del Norte County, 1967. *Del Norte County Code: Chapter 20.30: M District – Manufacturing and Industrial (Ord. 67-10 §3.1301)*, 1967.

Del Norte County, 2003. *Del Norte County General Plan*, January 28, 2003.

Del Norte County, 2007. Email communication with Randy Hooper, Planner II, Del Norte County, on October 11, 2007.