

**Q. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

<u>Issues (and Supporting Information Sources):</u>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
<b>MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE</b>				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulative considerable? (“Cumulative considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

***a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?***

The proposed project would not create long-term adverse impacts on the quality of the environment; wildlife or plant species, including special-status plant and wildlife species, including special-status plant and wildlife species; or prehistoric or cultural resources, because of mitigation measures proposed as part of the project. As identified in appropriate sections of this environmental review, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact, conditional upon the incorporation of mitigation, on aesthetics, biological and cultural resources, water quality, planning, noise, traffic, public health and safety, and gas service capacity. Mitigation measures described in this analysis, which SCG/SDG&E has adopted as part of the mitigation strategy for the proposed project, as well as the proposed project design elements would reduce impacts below a level of significance.

***b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?***

Section 15064 of *CEQA Guidelines* provides that when assessing whether a cumulative effect requires preparation of an environmental impact report, the lead agency must consider both whether the cumulative impact is significant and whether the incremental effects of the proposed project are cumulatively considerable. No environmental impact report is required if the proposed project's effects are not cumulatively considerable. The lead agency may determine that a proposed project's contribution would be less than cumulatively considerable when either: the contribution would be rendered less than considerable through mitigation measures, the proposed project would comply with the requirements of a previously approved mitigation program or plan that provides specific requirements that would avoid or substantially lessen the proposed project's effects, or the proposed project's incremental impacts would be *de minimus*, i.e., so small that the environmental conditions would be essentially the same regardless of the implementation of the proposed project.

As discussed in the previous section, the potentially significant impacts that could be caused by the proposed project would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by approaches included in the project design or by mitigation that would be included as part of the project. The resources most likely to be cumulatively affected by the proposed project would be biology, noise, traffic, public health and safety, and gas service capacity.

**Biological Resources**

Biological resources, particularly threatened, endangered, candidate, and other listed species, would not be cumulatively affected by development. The state and federal governments, through DFG, the Corps, USFWS, and National Marine Fisheries Service, have promulgated a regulatory scheme that limits impacts on these species. The effects of the proposed project are rendered less than cumulatively considerable due to mitigation requiring compliance with all applicable regulations that protect plant, fish, and animal species. The mitigation measures imposed and the provisions included in the project description (e.g., pre-construction surveys and resource staking, presence of an environmental resource coordinator, contractor training) and SCG/SDG&E's commitment to avoid sensitive resources by design would render the proposed project's contribution less than cumulatively considerable.

Additionally, cumulative impacts of the proposed project on biological resources are considered less than significant because (1) activities related to the proposed project would be temporary and vegetation is expected to recover quickly, particularly within disturbed rights-of-way such as roadsides and maintained utility corridors, and (2) proposed project rights-of-way are already disturbed from original construction and on-going maintenance activities of other utilities or roads.

## **Noise**

At the local level, noise caused by a project could exceed established standards due to the cumulative contributions of activities within the community. As discussed in Section K, Noise, in this chapter, the proposed project's contributions to noise would not be cumulatively considerable because either (1) the project would not cause cumulative impacts, or (2) adoption of mitigation measures identified in this document would ensure compliance with state and local noise standards and ordinances. These mitigation measures would ensure that noise due to the proposed project would be below established standards.

## **Traffic**

Temporary traffic-related impacts could occur at the local level during access to the pipeline located within a roadway for FIG installation. The temporary traffic disruption resulting from FIG installation would not be cumulatively considerable as the traffic control plans would be implemented as part of the proposed project and the standard traffic control requirements of the state and local encroachment permits must be obtained prior to installing cable conduit in or adjacent to roads. In the long-term, there would be no project impacts because, upon completion, environmental conditions on the overlying roads would be essentially the same as if the proposed project had not been implemented.

## **Public Health and Safety**

Installation of conduit in existing natural gas pipelines could result in damage to gas lines potentially creating a public health hazard if a pipeline rupture were to occur during FIG installation and / or operation that could lead to an explosion.

Based on the results of the demonstrations and tests conducted to date, the FIG Technology presents risk levels comparable to those associated with current natural gas operations. The FIG fittings and technology have been designed and would be implemented to conform to all applicable regulations, including those in 49 C.F.R. Title 192, "Transportation of Natural and Other Gas by Pipeline: Minimum Federal Safety Standards." The regulations are written as minimum performance standards, setting the level of safety to be attained and allowing the pipeline operators discretion in achieving that level. In addition, pipeline companies, including SCG/SDG&E, perform discretionary activities over and above the regulations to achieve these goals. Emergency repairs and procedures, including actions to mitigate potential impacts, would be included in the terms and conditions of the contracts between SCG/SDG&E and the Communications Companies. Several policy issues are overriding, however: (1) public safety is always the first priority; (2) employee safety is always the second priority; and (3) other subordinate priorities related to repair would be worked out in the contracts.

No significant impacts to public health and safety are anticipated to occur that cannot be mitigated by project design and conformance to federal and state pipeline safety regulations; therefore, the proposed project would not constitute a considerable contribution to any cumulative effect regarding public health and safety.

### **Gas Service Capacity**

The proposed new form of service has service implications including potential impacts on operations, existing capacity and future expansion of active gas pipelines. Further issues exist in response to when capacity of the distribution system must be expanded due to future gas load demands. To resolve this issue, SCG/SDG&E would not allow installation of conduit or fiber optic cable in any pipeline if it estimates that installation would result in insufficient gas capacity in the line in the next 60 months. Installation would be allowed if arrangements were made for the carrier to pay the increase in the gas capacity, avoiding that situation. Thus, in the case of capacity constraints more than 60 months in the future, the Carrier may elect to terminate service or relocate its route, such that no additional pipeline construction or trenching would occur.

These conditions protect against the potential for significant cumulative impact that might occur if more than one cable were to be installed in a pipeline, or if the capacity of gas service were to be reduced by the cumulative use of several pipelines by FIG technology.

***c. Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?***

The proposed project would not directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. The impact analysis included in this environmental assessment indicates that for all resource areas, the proposed project would either have no significant impacts, or, for impacts that would not affect human beings, less than significant impacts with mitigation incorporation.