

SECTION 2

Environmental Checklist and Discussion

2.1 Aesthetics

<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>
1. AESTHETICS—Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Visual or aesthetic resources are generally defined as both the natural and built features of the landscape that contribute to the public’s experience and appreciation of the environment. Depending on the extent to which a project’s presence would alter the perceived visual character and quality of the environment, a visual or aesthetic impact may occur. This analysis of potential visual effects is based on a review Proposed Project maps, aerial and ground level photographs of the Proposed Project area, planning documents, and visual simulations showing the Proposed Project with existing conditions.

Local Visual Setting

The Proposed Project site is located in a rural setting within a sage scrub, manzanita, and pine forest ecological zone typical of the western Sierra Nevada at this elevation (approximately 5,600 feet above sea level). Scattered man-made features in the landscape include rural roads, fences, residences, and existing electrical transmission and distribution lines, which provide a human dimension to the landscape. The topography is dominated by relatively flat land to steep rocky outcroppings that drain northeast toward the Truckee River. Toward the central portion of the route, the alignment enters a small residential community. At the south end of the residential area

the alignment ascends a steep hillside through an approximately 30-foot wide cleared area bounded by pine woodland. The Truckee River, approximately 600 feet east of the Proposed Project alignment, is the closest and most dominant watercourse.

Scenic Highways and Corridors

The closest officially designated State Scenic Highway is a segment of State Route 20 from Skillman Flat Campground to 1/2 mile east of Lowell Hill Road located approximately 35 miles to the west of the project site; this segment is also part of the Yuba-Donner Scenic Byway, which weaves through the Tahoe National Forest and is sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service. This segment of State Route 20 traverses pine forests and offers views of the dramatic results of hydraulic mining. In addition, a segment of Interstate 80 that is approximately 2,500 feet from the Proposed Project is listed as an eligible State Scenic Highway (Caltrans, 2006); Interstate 80 through the Town of Truckee is also identified as a scenic corridor by the Town of Truckee (Town of Truckee, 2006).

Scenic Resources

The Truckee River, a scenic resource identified by the Truckee General Plan, is located to the north and east of the Proposed Project route. There are also prominent slopes and hillsides to the east and west of the Proposed Project route that are considered to be scenic resources in the project area (Town of Truckee, 2006) (see Figure 2.1-1).

Regulatory Context

State

California Public Utilities Commission

California Public Utilities Code Section 320 requires that all new or relocated electric and communication distribution facilities within 1,000 feet of an officially-designated scenic highway and visible from that highway be buried underground where feasible. As discussed above, the Proposed Project route is located over 2,500 feet from an officially designated or eligible State scenic highway, and therefore, is not required to be underground.

California Department of Transportation

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) administers the State Scenic Highway Program to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways (California Streets and Highways Code Sections 260 et seq). The State Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been so designated. These highways are identified in Streets and Highways Code Section 263. The program entails the regulation of land use and density of development, attention to the design of sites and structures, attention to and control of signage, landscaping, and grading, and the undergrounding of utility lines within the view corridor of designated scenic roadways. The local jurisdiction is responsible for adopting and



SOURCE: Sierra Pacific (2007)

Sierra Pacific Hirschdale Power Line Project . 206056

Figure 2.1-1
View from Glenshire Road Looking Southeast

implementing such regulation. As stated above, the Proposed Project is located approximately 2,500 feet to the south of an eligible state scenic highway (Interstate 80). If a highway is listed as eligible for official designation, it is also part of the Scenic Highway System and care must still be taken to preserve its eligible status.

Local

Nevada County

The Aesthetics Chapter of the Nevada County General Plan cites California State Scenic Highways Program, administered by the California Department of Transportation, as an important scenic program for Nevada County. In addition, the following Nevada County General Plan goals and objectives would be relevant to the Proposed Project:

Goal 18.2: Protect and preserve important scenic resources.

Objective 18.2: Develop standards to protect scenic resources and viewsheds.

Objective 18.3: Promote the conservation of scenic roads and highways.

(Nevada County, 1996).

Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan

The Truckee General Plan identifies the Truckee River, which is located to the east and north of the Proposed Project route, as a scenic resource and Interstate 80 as a scenic corridor (Town of Truckee, 2006).¹ The General Plan also identifies prominent slopes and hillsides to the east and west of the Proposed Project route and contains the following goals and objectives that are relevant to the Proposed Project:

Goal CC-2: Preserve the natural beauty of Truckee, including the Town's scenic resources, views and vistas, and the visual quality of the town's steep slopes, ridge and bluff lines and hillsides.

Goal CC-3: Protect and enhance public views within and from Truckee's designated scenic corridors.

Goal CC-4: Protect views of the night sky and minimize the effects of light pollution.

Policy P2.7: Require electric, telecommunications and cable television facilities serving new development to be installed underground wherever possible. Where undergrounding is impractical, above ground antennae and telephone and high voltage transmission lines shall be located out of significant scenic vistas.

(Town of Truckee, 2006).

¹ The Proposed Project area is within the designated Sphere of Influence for the Town of Truckee.

Aesthetics Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) **Substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista: *Less than significant.***

As stated above, the Town of Truckee General Plan identifies the Truckee River and the slopes to the east and west of the Proposed Project route as scenic resources. Therefore, any impacts that would have a substantial adverse affect on views of these scenic resources would be potentially significant. However, the Proposed Project consists of the replacement of existing poles with poles that would be approximately 1 inch larger in diameter at the base and approximately 9 feet taller; as well as the installation of three new, heavier conductors. As shown in Figure 2.1-2a, existing long range views of the Truckee River are limited or non-existent from nearby streets (Hirschdale Road). From the Town of Hirschdale, view of the Truckee River are intermittent as they are screened by residences and existing vegetation. As shown in Figure 2.1-2b, the Proposed Project would not significantly impact existing long range views of the Truckee River from Hirschdale Road. Moreover, the Proposed Project would not significantly impact existing views from the Town of Hirschdale, as the Proposed Project consist of the replacement of existing poles with poles that would be 9 feet taller and the addition of three heavier conductors. Additionally, as shown in Figure 2.1-1, the Proposed Project would not be visible from Glenshire Road looking southeasterly toward the Truckee River and the slopes in the background. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in a substantial adverse affect on a scenic vista and therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

b) **Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway: *Less than significant.***

There are no officially designated State Scenic Highways within the vicinity of the Proposed Project. However, Interstate 80 is an eligible scenic route; therefore, it is considered a scenic route by Nevada County. Nevertheless, power lines and poles are seldom seen by observers driving along Interstate 80 at freeway speeds. The closest distance from Interstate 80 to the power line route is approximately 2,500 feet, and the tops of the new poles would be at a lower elevation than the roadway at its closest location. Given the distance and minor effect the proposed changes would pose to the viewshed, impacts to scenic resources within the view of a State Scenic Highway would be less than significant. In addition, California Public Utilities Code Section 320, which would require undergrounding of transmission facilities, is not applicable to the Proposed Project, because it is not located within 1,000 feet of an officially designated scenic route nor is it within 1,000 feet of an eligible scenic route.

c) **Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings: *Less than significant.***

The standards expressed in the Nevada County General Plan for establishing high visual quality uses both visual resources and architectural character as guidelines for determining whether a project would have a substantial negative aesthetic effect. Given the mountainous setting, the visual character of the Proposed Project area is of high quality. However, as shown in Figures 2.1-2a, 2.1-3a, and 2.1-4a, an existing power line already intersects the landscape. The project applicant has produced visual simulations that show what the Proposed Project area would look like with the addition of the new power line. As shown in Figures 2.1-2b, 2.1-3b, and 2.1-4b, the replacement of existing poles with poles that would be 9 feet taller and additional three new, heavier conductors would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the project area and therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

d) **Creation of a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area: *Less than significant.***

The Proposed Project would not include any new light fixtures that would result in a new source of light. Sierra Pacific proposes to use non-specular conductor for the new power line, which would reduce potential glare effects and reduce the level of visual contrast between the power line and its landscape setting. Therefore, impacts related to new sources of light or glare would be less than significant.

References – Aesthetics

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), 2006. Scenic Highway Program, http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm, accessed December 20, 2006.

Nevada County, 1996. *Nevada County General Plan*, 1996.

Town of Truckee, 2006. *Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan*, adopted November 16, 2006.



Figure 2.1-2a: Existing Long-Range View from Hirschdale Road Looking Northwest



Figure 2.1-2b: Proposed Long-Range View from Hirschdale Road Looking Northwest



Figure 2.1-3a: Existing View from Hirschdale and Floriston Roads Looking Southwest



Figure 2.1-3b: Proposed Project View from Hirschdale and Floriston Roads Looking Southwest



Figure 2.1-4a: Existing View from Hirschdale and Floriston Roads Looking Northwest



Figure 2.1-4b: Proposed Project View from Hirschdale and Floriston Roads Looking Northwest

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>
2. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES				
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.				
Would the project:				
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 through which the Proposed Project would traverse and within the Proposed Project vicinity. 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

Important Farmland

To characterize the environmental baseline for agricultural resources, Important Farmland Maps produced by the California Department of Conservation's (CDC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) were reviewed. Important Farmland maps show categories of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance (if adopted by the county), Grazing Land, Urban and Built-up Land, Other Land, and Water. Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance map categories are based on qualifying soil types, as determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), as well as current land use. Table 2.2-1 shows the acres of farmland in Nevada County, as well as the amount of recent farmland conversions. The 2002 farmland map for Nevada County indicates that the parcels through which the Proposed Project traverses have not been mapped (FMMP, 2003).

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

**TABLE 2.2-1
FARMLAND CONVERSION FROM 1990–2002 IN NEVADA COUNTY**

Land Use Category	Total Acres Inventoried		1990–2002 Acreage Changes		
	1990	2002	Acres Lost	Acres Gained	Net Change
Prime Farmland	395	435	170	210	+40
Farmland of Statewide Importance	948	1,789	226	1,067	+841
Unique Farmland	198	547	68	417	+485
Farmland of Local Importance	33,186	18,423	18,930	4,167	-14,763
Grazing Land	125,400	130,425	4,639	9,664	+5,025
Agricultural Land Subtotal	160,127	151,619	24,033	15,525	-8,508

SOURCE: CDC, 2005)

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). Nevada County currently participates in the Williamson Act; however, none of the parcels through which the Proposed Project would traverse are under a Williamson Act contract (CDC, 2004).

Regulatory Context

Local

Nevada County General Plan

The Nevada County General Plan designates the parcels through which the Proposed Project would traverse for *Neighborhood Commercial* (NC); *Urban High Density Residential* (UHD); *Estate* (EST) and *Planned Development* (PD) uses (Nevada County, 2004). While the *Estate* land use designation is intended for low density residential development; in keeping with the rural character, agricultural operations and natural resource related uses, including the production of timber, are also appropriate within this designation (Nevada County, 1996).

Nevada County Zoning Ordinance

Parcels through which the Proposed Project would traverse are currently zoned *Residential Agricultural* (RA-3), *Neighborhood Commercial* (C1), *High Density Residential Mobilehome Parks Combining District* (R3-MH), and *Interim Development Preserve* (IDR). Agricultural uses

are permitted on lands zoned as *Residential Agricultural* and *Interim Development Preserve* (Nevada County, 2005).

Agricultural Resources Impacts and Mitigation Measures

- a, c) **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.***

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 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 (FMMP, 2003). 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: *Less than Significant.***

The Proposed Project would traverse parcels that are zoned *Residential Agricultural*, which allow for agricultural uses; however, within *Residential Agricultural* zones the single-family dwelling is of primary importance. Agricultural uses are also secondary in importance within *Residential* and *Estate* general plan land use designations (Nevada County, 2005). Additionally, the Proposed Project would also traverse parcels zoned *Interim Development Preserve*, which would allow for agricultural uses; however, the primary purpose of this zoning district is to provide for planned development. Regardless, under the Proposed Project, a power line would be constructed within an existing utility right-of-way. Thus, the Proposed Project would not change the existing use of the land in the area and would therefore not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use. In addition, while Nevada County does have a Williamson Act Contract program, the Proposed Project would not traverse any parcels that are under a Williamson Act Contract.

References – Agricultural Resources

California Department of Conservation (CDC), Division of Land Resource Protection, 2004. *Nevada County Williamson Act Lands 2003*, available online at ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/WA/Map%20and%20PDF/Nevada/nev%20wa%2003_04.pdf, January 21, 2004.

California Department of Conservation (CDC), 2005. *Table A-19, Nevada County, 1990-2002 Land Use Conversion*, April 14, 2005.

California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), 2003. *Nevada County Important Farmland 2002*, map published October 2003.

Nevada County, 2004. *Nevada County, CA General Plan Sheet K*, September 29, 2004.

Nevada County, 1996. *Nevada County General Plan*, 1996.

Nevada County, 1997. *Nevada County Boca Reservoir South Zoning District Map*, revised February 6, 1997.

Nevada County, 2004. *Nevada County, CA General Plan Sheet K*, September 29, 2004.

Nevada County, 2005. *Nevada County Zoning Ordinance*, May 10, 2005.

2.3 Air Quality

<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>
3. AIR QUALITY				
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Air quality is a function of both the rate and location of pollutant emissions as well as meteorological conditions and topographic features that influence pollutant movement and dispersal. Atmospheric conditions such as wind speed, wind direction, atmospheric stability, and air temperature gradients interact with the physical features of the landscape to determine the movement and dispersal of air pollutants, which affects air quality.

Regional Topography, Meteorology, and Climate

The potential for high pollutant concentrations developing at a given location depends upon the quantity of pollutants emitted into the atmosphere in the surrounding area or upwind, and the ability of the atmosphere to disperse the air pollutants. The atmospheric pollution potential, as the term is used in this IS/MND, is independent of the location of emission sources and is instead a function of factors such as topography and meteorology.

The Proposed Project is located in the jurisdiction of the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD), which is comprised of three contiguous, mountainous, and rural counties in northeastern California (Nevada, Sierra, and Plumas counties). The Proposed Project site is in the northern Sierra Nevada Mountains, approximately six miles northeast of the Town of Truckee in eastern Nevada County. The elevation of the Proposed Project area ranges between 5,500 and 5,700 feet above mean sea level and the region has steep mountain topography. The area has pronounced summer and winter seasonal variation in temperature and

precipitation. Most precipitation occurs from late October through early May with winter precipitation falling as rain or snow.

Temperature variation is relatively high seasonally, as well as daily. The average maximum and minimum winter (i.e., January) temperatures in the region are 40 and 15 ° F, respectively, while average summer (i.e., July) maximum and minimum temperatures are 82 and 42 ° F, respectively (WRCC, 2006). Wind direction tends to be southwesterly (i.e., from the southwest). Surface and elevated temperature inversions are common in the late summer and fall. These inversion layers can cause stagnation of airflow, allowing air pollutants to become concentrated. Westerly winds can transport pollutants into the area from the Sacramento, San Joaquin Valley, and San Francisco Bay areas (NSAQMD, 2006a).

Existing Air Quality

The NSAQMD maintains ambient air quality monitoring stations in Nevada County. The closest monitoring station to the Proposed Project site is in the Town of Truckee (at the Fire Station), approximately six miles to the southwest. Ozone, particulate matter equal to or less than 10 microns (PM₁₀), and particulate matter less than 2.5 microns (PM_{2.5}) are currently monitored at the Truckee monitoring station. In the most recent five-year period (2001 – 2005), there were numerous recorded instances of exceeding the national or State standards for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. There were no recorded exceedances of the ozone standards. Table 2.3-1 includes a comparison of monitored air pollutant concentrations with California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) and National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

**TABLE 2.3-1
AIR QUALITY DATA SUMMARY (2001-2005) FOR THE PROJECT AREA**

Pollutant	Standard	Monitoring Data by Year				
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Ozone						
Highest 1 Hour Average (ppm)		0.09	0.09	0.07	0.09	0.08
Days over State Standard	0.09	0	0	0	0	0
Highest 8 Hour Average (ppm)		0.08	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.07
Days over National Standard	0.08	0	0	0	0	0
Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5})						
Highest 24 Hour Average (µg/m ³)		120	19.0	21.0	34.0	35.0
Days over National Standard	65*	1	0	0	0	0
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀):						
Highest 24 Hour Average (µg/m ³)	50	66.2	53.3	34.3	107.2	127.3
Estimated Days over State Standard		-	-	-	-	-
Annual Average (µg/m ³)	20	16.8	17.8	10.3	32.3	29.9

NOTES: *This standard was strengthened to 35 µg/m³ in September 2006; Values in **bold** are in excess of applicable standard. ppm = parts per million; µg/m³ = micrograms per cubic meter. - = There was insufficient (or no) data available to determine the value.

SOURCE: CARB, 2006a

Sensitive Receptors

For the purposes of air quality and public health and safety, sensitive receptors are generally defined as land uses with population concentrations that would be particularly susceptible to disturbance from dust and air pollutant concentrations, or other disruptions associated with project construction and/or operation. Sensitive receptor land uses generally include schools, day care centers, libraries, hospitals, residential area, and parks. Some sensitive receptors are considered to be more sensitive than others to air pollutants. The reasons for greater than average sensitivity include pre-existing health problems, proximity to emissions sources, or duration of exposure to air pollutants. Schools, hospitals, and convalescent homes are considered to be relatively sensitive to poor air quality because children, elderly people, and the infirmed are more susceptible to respiratory distress and other air quality-related health problems than the general public.

Residential areas are considered sensitive to poor air quality because people usually stay home for extended periods of time, with associated greater exposure to ambient air quality. Recreational uses are also considered sensitive due to the greater exposure to ambient air quality conditions because vigorous exercise associated with recreation places a high demand on the human respiratory system. Sensitive receptors in the Proposed Project area are limited to residences in the community of Hirschdale.

Regulatory Context

Air quality is addressed through the efforts of various federal, State, and local government agencies. These agencies work jointly, as well as individually, to improve air quality through legislation, regulations, planning, policy-making, education, and a variety of programs. The air pollutants of concern and agencies primarily responsible for improving the air quality within the Proposed Project area and the pertinent regulations are discussed below.

Criteria Air Pollutants

Regulation of air pollution is achieved through both national and State ambient air quality standards and emission limits for individual sources of air pollutants. As required by the federal Clean Air Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has identified criteria pollutants and has established NAAQS to protect public health and welfare. NAAQS have been established for ozone, CO, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, and lead (Pb). These pollutants are called “criteria” air pollutants because standards have been established for each of them to meet specific public health and welfare criteria.

To protect human health and the environment, the USEPA has set “primary” and “secondary” maximum ambient thresholds for the criteria pollutants. Primary thresholds were set to protect human health, particularly sensitive receptors such as children, the elderly, and individuals suffering from chronic lung conditions such as asthma and emphysema. Secondary standards were set to protect the natural environment and prevent further deterioration of animals, crops, vegetation, and buildings.

The NAAQS are defined as the maximum acceptable concentration that may be reached, but not exceeded more than once per year. California has adopted more stringent ambient air quality standards for most of the criteria air pollutants. Table 2.3-2 presents both sets of ambient air quality standards (i.e., national and State) and provides a brief discussion of the related health effects and principal sources for each pollutant. California has also established State ambient air quality standards for sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, and vinyl chloride; however, air emissions of these pollutants are not expected under the Proposed Project and thus, there is no further mention of these pollutants in this Initial Study. Brief descriptions of the criteria pollutants are provided below.

Ozone

Ozone is a respiratory irritant and an oxidant that increases susceptibility to respiratory infections and that can cause substantial damage to vegetation and other materials. Ozone is not emitted directly into the atmosphere, but is a secondary air pollutant produced in the atmosphere through a complex series of photochemical reactions involving reactive organic gases (ROG) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x). ROG and NO_x are known as precursor compounds for ozone. Significant ozone production generally requires ozone precursors to be present in a stable atmosphere with strong sunlight for approximately three hours.

Ozone is a regional air pollutant because it is not emitted directly by sources, but is formed downwind of sources of ROG and NO_x under the influence of wind and sunlight. Ozone concentrations tend to be higher in the late spring, summer, and early fall, when the long sunny days combine with regional subsidence inversions to create conditions conducive to the formation and accumulation of secondary photochemical compounds, like ozone.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide is a non-reactive pollutant that is a product of incomplete combustion and is mostly associated with motor vehicle traffic. High CO concentrations develop primarily during winter when periods of light winds combine with the formation of ground level temperature inversions (typically from the evening through early morning). These conditions result in reduced dispersion of vehicle emissions. Motor vehicles also exhibit increased CO emission rates at low air temperatures. When inhaled at high concentrations, CO combines with hemoglobin in the blood and reduces the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood. This results in reduced oxygen reaching the brain, heart, and other body tissues. This condition is especially critical for people with cardiovascular diseases, chronic lung disease, or anemia.

Particulate Matter

Particulate matter, including PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, represent fractions of particulate matter that can be inhaled into air passages and the lungs and can cause adverse health effects. Particulate matter in the atmosphere results from many kinds of dust- and fume-producing industrial and agricultural operations, fuel combustion, and atmospheric photochemical reactions. Some sources of particulate matter, such as demolition and construction activities, are more local in nature, while

**TABLE 2.3-2
STATE AND NATIONAL CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANT STANDARDS, EFFECTS, AND SOURCES**

Pollutant	Averaging Time	State Standard	National Standard	Pollutant Health and Atmospheric Effects	Major Pollutant Sources
Ozone	1 Hour 8 Hour	0.09 ppm 0.07 ppm	— 0.08 ppm	High concentrations can directly affect lungs, causing irritation. Long-term exposure may cause damage to lung tissue.	Formed when reactive organic gases and NO _x react in the presence of sunlight. Major sources include on-road motor vehicles, solvent evaporation, and commercial / industrial mobile equipment.
Carbon Monoxide	1 Hour 8 Hour	20 ppm 9.0 ppm	35 ppm 9 ppm	Classified as a chemical asphyxiant, CO interferes with the transfer of fresh oxygen to the blood and deprives sensitive tissues of oxygen.	Internal combustion engines, primarily gasoline-powered motor vehicles.
Nitrogen Dioxide	1 Hour Annual	0.25 ppm —	— 0.053 ppm	Irritating to eyes and respiratory tract. Colors atmosphere reddish-brown.	Motor vehicles, petroleum-refining operations, industrial sources, aircraft, ships, and railroads.
Sulfur Dioxide	1 Hour 3 Hour 24 Hour Annual	0.25 ppm — 0.04 ppm —	— 0.5 ppm 0.14 ppm 0.03 ppm	Irritates upper respiratory tract; injurious to lung tissue. Can yellow the leaves of plants, destructive to marble, iron, and steel. Limits visibility and reduces sunlight.	Fuel combustion, chemical plants, sulfur recovery plants, and metal processing.
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	24 Hour Annual	50 µg/m ³ 20 µg/m ³	150 µg/m ³ 50 µg/m ³	May irritate eyes and respiratory tract, decreases in lung capacity, cancer and increased mortality. Produces haze and limits visibility.	Dust and fume-producing industrial and agricultural operations, combustion, atmospheric photochemical reactions, and natural activities (e.g., wind-raised dust and ocean sprays).
Fine Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5})	24 Hour Annual	— 12 µg/m ³	35 µg/m ³ 15 µg/m ³	Increases respiratory disease, lung damage, cancer, and premature death. Reduces visibility and results in surface soiling.	Fuel combustion in motor vehicles, equipment, and industrial sources; residential and agricultural burning; Also, formed from photochemical reactions of other pollutants, including NO _x , SO ₂ , and organics.
Lead	Monthly Quarterly	1.5 µg/m ³ —	— 1.5 µg/m ³	Disturbs gastrointestinal system, and causes anemia, kidney disease, and neuromuscular and neurological dysfunction.	Present source: lead smelters, battery manufacturing & recycling facilities. Past source: combustion of leaded gasoline.

ppm = parts per million
µg/m³ = micrograms per cubic meter

SOURCE: CARB, 2006b and USEPA, 2006

others, such as vehicular traffic, have a more regional effect. Very small particles of certain substances (e.g., sulfates and nitrates) can cause lung damage directly, or can contain absorbed gases (e.g., chlorides or ammonium) that may be injurious to health. Particulates can also damage materials and reduce visibility.

Other Criteria Pollutants

Sulfur dioxide is a combustion product of sulfur or sulfur-containing fuels such as coal. SO₂ is also a precursor to the formation of atmospheric sulfate and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) and contributes to potential atmospheric sulfuric acid formation that could precipitate downwind as acid rain. Lead has a range of adverse neurotoxin health effects, and was formerly released into the atmosphere primarily via leaded gasoline. The phase-out of leaded gasoline in California resulted in decreasing levels of atmospheric lead.

Federal

USEPA is responsible for implementing the myriad programs established under the federal Clean Air Act, such as establishing and reviewing the NAAQS and judging the adequacy of State Implementation Plans (SIPs), but has delegated the authority to implement many of the federal programs to the states while retaining an oversight role to ensure that the programs continue to be implemented.

State

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is responsible for establishing and reviewing the State standards, compiling the California SIP, securing approval of that plan from USEPA, and identifying toxic air contaminants. CARB also regulates mobile sources of emissions in California, such as construction equipment, trucks, and automobiles, and oversees the activities of California's air quality management districts, which are organized at the county or regional level. County or regional air quality management districts are primarily responsible for regulating stationary sources at industrial and commercial facilities within their geographic areas and for preparing the air quality plans that are required under the federal Clean Air Act and California Clean Air Act.

The regional air quality plans prepared by air districts throughout the State are compiled by CARB to form the SIP. The local air districts also have the responsibility and authority to adopt transportation control and emission reduction programs for indirect and area-wide emission sources.

Local

Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District

The Proposed Project is under the jurisdiction of the NSAQMD, which regulates air quality according to the standards established in the clean air acts and amendments to those acts. The

NSAQMD regulates air quality through permitting authority and through air quality related planning and review activities over most types of stationary emission sources.

The NSAQMD implements a smoke management program, which includes review and comment on burn plans; field review/inspections of complex burn projects or projects that may impact sensitive, populated areas; permitting; tracking “pile and burn” type timber harvests; investigating complaints; and reporting burn acreage and fuel loading to CARB.

The NSAQMD reviews development proposals to ensure that air quality impacts are adequately assessed and mitigated in accordance with attainment planning efforts. Planning efforts are focused on preventing air quality degradation and violations of the California and national ambient air quality standards.

The NSAQMD’s Grass Valley area is nonattainment of the NAAQS for ozone (8-hour) and nonattainment of the CAAQS for PM₁₀ (24-hour) and ozone (1-hour). However, the Proposed Project area is nonattainment of the CAAQS only for PM₁₀ (NSAQMD, 2006b; CARB, 2006c). It is recognized that the nonattainment status of the Grass Valley area with respect to the State ozone standard is primarily a result of pollutant transport from the Sacramento Valley, San Joaquin Valley, and the Bay Area and not locally generated (NSAQMD, 2006a). The NSAQMD currently does not have an air quality attainment plan; however, it is currently developing a plan to address the regions ozone status of non-attainment. The plan is expected to be submitted to CARB by June 15, 2007.

Nevada County General Plan

The Nevada County General Plan includes an air quality element which contains a number of guiding goals and objectives that would apply to the Proposed Project. Additional applicable policies related to air quality can be found in the General Plan’s circulation (Policies 4.7, 4.16, 4.25, 4.28, and 4.30) and land use (Policy 1.17) sections. The County has adopted the following applicable goals, objectives, and policies:

Goal 14.1: Attain, maintain and ensure high air quality.

Objective 14.1: Establish land use patterns that minimize impacts on air quality.

Policy 14.1: Cooperate with NSAQMD, during review of development proposals. As part of the site plan review process, require applicants of all subdivisions, multi-family, commercial and industrial development projects to address cumulative and long-term air quality impacts, and request the District enforce appropriate land use regulations to reduce air pollution.

Objective 14.2: Implement standards that minimize impacts on and/or restore air quality.

Policy 14.2: Include the following as part of the Comprehensive Site Development Standards:

- b. Require all installations of solid fuel-burning devices comply with the current USEPA emission standards;

Policy 14.3: Where it is determined necessary to reduce short-term and long-term cumulative impact, the County shall require all new discretionary projects to offset any pollutant increases. Wherever possible, such offsets shall benefit lower-income housing.

Policy 14.4: Encourage and cooperate with the NSAQMD, or any successor agency, to:

- c. Adopt control measures to reduce pollutant emissions from open burning;
- d. Develop a program to regulate and control fugitive dust emissions from construction projects; and
- e. Identify and establish visibility standards for air quality in the County.

Policy 14.6: For new construction, the County shall prohibit the installation of non-EPA certified and non-EPA exempt solid fuel burning devices.

Policy 14.7A: The County shall, as part of its development review process, ensure that proposed discretionary developments address the requirements of NSAQMD Rule 226 (Dust Control).

Objective 14.3: Identify regional impacts and coordinate with other agencies to achieve attainment.

(Nevada County, 1996)

Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan

The Proposed Project is within the Town of Truckee's Sphere of Influence; therefore the Town's policies and plans are addressed in this IS/MND. The Town has policies and guidelines related to particulate matter emissions. The Truckee Particulate Matter Air Quality Management Plan identifies control strategies and implementation guidelines to control fugitive dust from large construction projects and projects that require grading and other subsurface soil disruption; however, none of the strategies or guidelines in the Plan would directly apply to the Proposed Project (Town of Truckee, 1999). The Town's General Plan also contains the following goals, policies, and actions related to improving air quality:

Goal COS-13: Reduce particulate matter pollution in Truckee to meet State and federal ambient air quality standards.

Policy P13.1: Require multi-family residential, commercial, industrial, subdivisions and other discretionary development to maintain consistency with the goals, policies and control strategies of the Town's Particulate Matter Air Quality Management Plan.

Policy P13.3: Require all construction projects to implement dust control measures to reduce particulate matter emissions due to disturbance of exposed top-soils. Such measures would include watering of active areas where disturbance occurs, covering haul loads, maintaining clean access roads, and cleaning the wheels of construction vehicles accessing disturbed areas of the site.

Action A13.1: Periodically review and update the Particulate Matter Air Quality Management Plan to ensure that it adequately reflects existing conditions and applicable standards for pollutants.

Action A13.2: Implement the policies and control strategies of the Particulate Matter Air Quality Management Plan.

Goal COS-14: Reduce emissions of air contaminants and minimize public exposure to toxic, hazardous and odoriferous air pollutants.

Policy P14.1: Minimize potential impacts created by unpleasant odors, as well as other airborne pollutants from industrial and commercial developments.

Policy P14.9: Require new development with the potential to generate significant quantities of ozone precursor air pollutants to be analyzed in accordance with guidelines provided by the NSAQMD and appropriate mitigation be applied to the project to minimize these emissions.

(Town of Truckee, 2006)

Air Quality Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section presents an analysis of the potential air quality impacts associated with Proposed Project construction and operation. Emissions from construction equipment exhaust and generation of particulate matter (fugitive dust) are the primary concerns in evaluating short-term air quality impacts. Long-term impacts, however, would be negligible since emission-related activities associated with Proposed Project operations and maintenance would be limited to periodic maintenance and inspection trips similar to what is occurring now on the existing line.

Proposed Project construction would employ a variety of construction equipment. Exhaust pollutants would be emitted during construction activities from motor-driven construction equipment, construction vehicles, workers' vehicles, and helicopters. Fugitive dust generation would result during vegetation clearing activities. Unmitigated exhaust emissions associated with the pole installation phase of construction were found to be potentially significant. However, Sierra Pacific has agreed to implement mitigation that requires phasing of certain activities to ensure that daily emissions would not result in significant impacts (see discussion under b., below). The mitigated maximum daily scenario for total emissions during construction is estimated to generate the following emissions:

- NO_x: 133 pounds per day;
- PM₁₀: 27 pounds per day; and
- ROG: 7 pounds per day.

Projected construction emissions for both unmitigated and mitigated scenarios are presented in Table 2.3-4, broken down by equipment exhaust and fugitive dust. Because NSAQMD does not maintain construction equipment emission factors, South Coast Air Quality Management District

(SCAQMD) emission factors for off road construction equipment were used to estimate onsite emissions from sources such as tractors (hydroaxe), off-road trucks (line truck), augers, etc. CARB’s EMFAC2007 model was used to develop emission factors for on-road vehicles such as pickup and diesel semi-trucks. Helicopter emission factors were derived from the Federal Aviation Administration’s Emissions and Dispersion Modeling System (EDMS). Fugitive dust emissions were estimated based on guidance from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) that uses an approximate emission factor developed by the USEPA for construction emissions. Uncontrolled construction-related PM₁₀ emissions are 0.77 tons per acre per month or 51 pounds per acre per day (BAAQMD, 1999).

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan: *No Impact.*

There is no air quality plan that is applicable to the Proposed Project or the Proposed Project area. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct an applicable air quality plan. No impact would occur.

b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.*

For project-level impact analysis (construction and operational), NSAQMD recommends that lead agencies use various thresholds and tests of significance to determine whether a project would violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation or expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

Thresholds of significance illustrate the extent of an impact and are a basis from which to apply mitigation measures. The NSAQMD has developed a tiered approach to significance levels; a project with emissions qualifying it for Level A thresholds will require the most basic mitigations. Projects which qualify for Level B will require more extensive mitigations, and subsequently, those projects which qualify for Level C will require the most extensive application of mitigations. The tiered thresholds for Level A, B and C are given in Table 2.3-3 for a projects’ estimated emissions of criteria pollutants in pounds per day. These tiered thresholds are compared to project construction and operational emissions per NSAQMD guidelines.

**TABLE 2.3-3
NSAQMD EMISSION SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLDS**

NO_x	ROG	PM₁₀
Level A Thresholds ≤ 24 lbs/day	≤ 24 lbs/day	≤ 79 lbs/day
Level B Thresholds 25-136 lbs/day	25-136 lbs/day	80-136 lbs/day
Level C Thresholds ≥137 lbs/day	≥137 lbs/day	≥137 lbs/day

SOURCE: NSAQMD, 2006a

NO_x, ROG and PM₁₀ emissions must be mitigated to a level below significant. If emissions for NO_x, ROG and/or PM₁₀ exceed 136 pounds per day (Level C), then there would be a *significant* impact.

Construction

Impact 2.3-1: Construction activities would generate emissions of criteria pollutants, including suspended and inhalable particulate matter and equipment exhaust emissions. This would be a potentially significant impact; however, Mitigation Measure 2.3-1 would reduce the potentially significant impact to a level that is less than significant.

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project would generate emissions of criteria pollutants from equipment exhaust and suspended and inhalable particulate matter. Onsite equipment exhaust emissions would result from activity sources, including vegetation clearing, hole drilling, structure assembly, and conductor assembly. Onsite fugitive dust emissions would result from vegetation clearing (assumed to be up to a total of one half of an acre per day occurring on only one or two days) that would occur at the various Proposed Project locations. Offsite emissions are those that would be generated by workers that would commute to and from the Proposed Project staging area and by diesel semi-trucks hauling materials and debris in the Proposed Project area.

For the purposes of this air quality analysis, construction of the Proposed Project has been divided into three separate phases, including site preparation, pole installation, and conductor installation. The construction phases would not be conducted concurrently (i.e., none of the three phases would occur on the same day as one of the other phases). Worst-case daily emissions associated with each of the three phases were calculated to determine the maximum daily emissions that would be generated by the construction of the Proposed Project. The pole installation phase represents the worst-case daily emission scenario for NO_x because the Proposed Project would include the use of a skycrane helicopter to install the majority of the new power line poles. Worst case daily emissions of PM₁₀ would be generated during the site preparation phase and worst-case daily emissions of ROG would be generated during the conductor installation phase.

Refer to Appendix B for detailed assumptions and emission factors used to estimate emissions that would be associated with each of the three construction phases. Estimated maximum daily emissions associated with the construction of the Proposed Project are presented in Table 2.3-4.

Based on the description of the Proposed Project (see Section 1), it is assumed that the pole installation phase would call for a maximum daily use of a skycrane helicopter for four hours, a line truck for 10 hours, and an auger/generator for 10 hours. In addition, this phase would likely result in up to five daily semi-truck haul trips and approximately two dozen pick-up truck trips. As shown in Table 2.3-4, estimated unmitigated maximum daily construction emissions that would be associated with the Proposed Project would

**TABLE 2.3-4
ESTIMATED PROPOSED PROJECT CONSTRUCTION EMISSIONS (pounds/day)**

Emission Type	ROG	NO_x	PM₁₀
Exhaust Emissions	7	169	1
Fugitive Dust	---	---	26
Mitigated Emissions	7	133	27
Significance Thresholds	137	137	137
Residual Significant Impact?	No	No	No

exceed the NSAQMD recommended significance threshold for NO_x. However, to reduce this potentially significant impact to a level that would be less than significant, Sierra Pacific has agreed to implement Mitigation Measure 2.3-1, which limits the amount of activities that would be allowed to occur on the same days that the skycrane would be operated. Therefore, construction emissions associated with the Proposed Project would be less than significant, and would not violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to a projected or existing violation.

Mitigation Measure 2.3-1: Sierra Pacific shall ensure that the skycrane helicopter (or any other heavy-duty helicopter designed to lift heavy loads) is not operated for more than four hours per day. In addition, only one other piece of heavy equipment (e.g., line truck) shall be permitted to operate for no more than four hours per day on the same days that the skycrane or other heavy-duty helicopter is operated, and no heavy-truck haul trips associated with the Proposed Project shall be permitted to occur on skycrane helicopter operation days.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

Operations

Air emissions that would be generated by the Proposed Project, once operational, are those that would be associated with maintenance and inspection of the power line. Normal maintenance and inspection would not involve grading, excavation, or the use of any motor-driven construction equipment, but would require the use of an all terrain vehicle or helicopter to access the Proposed Project power line a minimum of once a year. Emissions that would be associated with maintenance and inspection activities associated with the Proposed Project would be negligible and would be substantially less than those presented in Table 2.3-4, estimated for construction of the Proposed Project. Therefore, potential operational impacts to air quality would be less than significant.

- c) **Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state**

ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors): *Less than Significant.*

The Proposed Project area is in non-attainment status of the CAAQS for PM₁₀. However, construction of the Proposed Project would only result in PM₁₀ emissions of up to 27 pounds per day, well under the NSAQMD's threshold of 137 pounds per day. In addition, only one of the cumulative projects (the Line 621 Relocation Project) in the area of the Proposed Project is proposed to be constructed concurrently or prior to construction of the Proposed Project (see Section 2.17). The Line 621 Relocation Project would likely result in PM₁₀ emissions similar to the Proposed Project. If the two projects are constructed simultaneously, combined emissions would be approximately 60 pounds per day, still well under NSAQMD's threshold of 137 pounds per day. Therefore, there would be no cumulatively considerable net increase of a criteria pollutant that is non-attainment in the Proposed Project area and impacts would be less than significant.

d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.*

Impact 2.3-2: Construction activities would generate emissions of criteria pollutants, including suspended and inhalable particulate matter and equipment exhaust emissions. These activities could expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. However, Mitigation Measure 2.3-1 would reduce this impact to a level that is less than significant.

Approximately 30 homes are located along the Proposed Project corridor in the community of Hirschdale. Construction activities would generate emissions of criteria pollutants, including suspended and inhalable particulate matter and equipment exhaust emissions. These emissions could expose sensitive receptors to pollutant concentrations. However, the most polluting construction activity (i.e., operation of the skycrane helicopter) would not occur within the community of Hirschdale and Mitigation Measure 2.3-1 would reduce daily skycrane exhaust emissions to a level that is considered to be less than significant. Because impacts related to construction emissions would be less than significant (see discussion under b, above), and because emissions would tend to be dispersed throughout the Proposed Project area, impacts to sensitive receptors would also be less than significant.

Mitigation: Implement of Mitigation Measure 2.3-1.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people: *Less than Significant.*

The operation of the Proposed Project would not create odorous emissions. However, Proposed Project construction would include sources, such as diesel equipment operation,

which could result in the creation of objectionable odors. Since the construction activities would be temporary, spatially dispersed, and generally take place in rural areas, these activities would not affect a substantial number of people. The Proposed Project would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people. Impacts would be less than significant.

References – Air Quality

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2.4 Biological 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>
4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES— Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Setting information in this document was compiled from: the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) (Sierra Pacific, 2006); field reconnaissance of the Proposed Project area; peer-reviewed scientific literature; and resource agency (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)) websites and databases.

Local Setting

The Proposed Project is located near Hirschdale, Nevada County, California just west of the Truckee River, in Section 34, Township 18 North, Range 17 East, MDB&M (Figure 1-1).

Regional natural plant communities in the study area include those that are common to the northeastern side of the Sierra Nevada (Tahoe-Truckee Ecological Unit), such as Ponderosa pine series, Mixed conifer series, White fir series, Red fir series, and Big sagebrush series (U.S. Forest

Service, 1997). Jeffery pine series is common in drier areas with shallow, rocky soils. Sedge meadow complexes are common but not extensive. The climate is typically temperate to cold and humid to semi-arid. Elevation for the site is approximately 5,600 feet above mean sea level (msl). Topography is dominated by relatively flat land to steep rocky outcroppings that drain northeast toward the Truckee River. Mean annual precipitation is approximately 20 to 40 inches (most of this being snow), while the mean annual temperature ranges from 35 to 45 degrees Fahrenheit. The mean freeze-free period is about 25 to 75 days (U.S. Forest Service, 1997).

Adjacent land along the northern portion of the Proposed Project corridor is characterized by dense shrub and pine trees. The central portion of the corridor runs through a small residential community and at the south end of the residential area the corridor ascends a steep hillside through an approximately 30-foot wide cleared area bounded by pine woodland. The dominant hydrological features in the study area are ephemeral channels. All project site watersheds eventually flow into the Truckee River, approximately 300 to 1,000 feet east of the Proposed Project corridor. The corridor intersects three small ephemeral channels. The southern most channel supports riparian vegetation consisting of willow and alder while the northern channel banks consist of sagebrush pine vegetation.

Study Methods and Data Sources

Biological resources within the study area were identified by Environmental Science Associates (ESA) biologists through field reconnaissance, a review of pertinent literature, and database queries. The primary sources of data referenced for this report include the following:

- Federal Endangered and Threatened Species that may be Affected by Projects in the Martis Peak, California 7.5-Minute Topographic Quadrangle (USFWS, 2006);
- California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), Rarefind 3 computer program (CDFG, 2006a);
- Threatened and Endangered Plants List (CDFG, 2006b);
- Threatened and Endangered Animals List (CDFG, 2006c);
- Ecological Subregions of California (Miles and Goudey, 1997).

Plant Communities and Wildlife Habitats

Biological resources are largely determined by vegetation communities, by the related, but not identical wildlife habitats, and the presence of wetlands for aquatic fauna. Vegetation communities are assemblages of plant species that occur together in the same area and are defined by species composition and relative abundance. Plant communities are assemblages of plant species that occur together in the same area. The plant community descriptions and nomenclature used in this section generally follows the classification system of *A Guide to Wildlife Habitats of California* or California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) (CDFG, 1988) and the classification provided in *A Manual of California Vegetation* (CNPS, 1995). The CWHR habitat classification scheme has been developed to support the CWHR System, a wildlife information

system and predictive model for California's regularly occurring birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. The plant communities described below generally correlate with wildlife habitat types.

Eastside Pine/Ponderosa Pine Series

Ponderosa pine habitat is found on suitable mountain and foothill sites, at elevations between 800 and 7,000 feet above msl. The structure and composition of the ponderosa pine forest varies widely according to the amount of soil moisture available during the summer. Black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*) and incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*) are common associates of ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) throughout most of the Sierra, while sugar pine (*Pinus lambertiana*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *menziesii*), and white fir (*Abies concolor*) are associated with ponderosa pines on moister sites and black oaks dominate on the driest sites with only a few pine and incense cedar trees. A variety of understory shrub species occur throughout the ponderosa pine forest, either migrating upslope from foothill communities or downslope from montane forest communities. Among the more common understory shrubs are greenleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos patula*), buckbrush (*Ceanothus cuneatus* var. *cuneatus*), deer brush (*Ceanothus integerrimus*), birch-leaf mountain-mahogany (*Cercocarpus betuloides* var. *betuloides*), bitter cherry (*Prunus emarginata*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier utahensis*), mountain misery (*Chamaebatia foliolosa*), and common rabbit brush (*Ericameria bloomeri*). These form dense thickets in sunnier areas, on rocky slopes, and in recently disturbed areas. Dense thickets of young incense cedars commonly dominate the understory on shadier, undisturbed sites, often to the exclusion of shrubs. Few young pines and oaks are present in such stands.

Sagebrush/Big Sagebrush Series

Big sagebrush stands are typically large, open, and discontinuous and can vary from densely closed canopies to very open, widely spaced plants. This habitat occurs from 1,600 feet to 10,500 feet above sea level. Big sagebrush series contains big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) as the sole or dominant species in the canopy. Common associated species in the canopy include bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), green ephedra (*Ephedra viridis*), horsebrush (*Tetradymia canescens*), plateau gooseberry (*Ribes velutium*), rubber rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*), and mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*). The understory is commonly grassy or sparse and consists of Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), medusahead (*Taeniatherum caput medusae*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), and needlegrass (*Achnatherum occidentale*). Ponderosa pine and juniper trees may also be present

Montane Riparian/Montane Wetland Shrub Habitat

The vegetation of montane riparian habitats is quite variable and often structurally diverse. Usually, montane riparian occurs as a narrow, often dense grove of broad-leaved, winter deciduous trees with a sparse understory. In the Sierra Nevada, characteristic species include Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii* ssp. *fremontii*), white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), thinleaf alder (*A. viridis* ssp. *sinuata*), aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), dogwood (*Cornus* sp.), wild azalea (*Rhododendron occidentale*), and willows (*Salix* spp.).

A structurally diverse and variable mixture of species, including the dominant species from the neighboring habitat types, typically dominates riparian habitats in the study area. In general, pines are less frequent, while cottonwood, aspen, and willows are greater in number.

Riverine

Riverine habitats are distinguished by intermittent or continually running water, and often occur in association with a variety of terrestrial habitats. Streams begin as outflows of lakes or ponds (lacustrine), or arise from seeps or springs. The temperature of small, shallow streams tend to reflect the air temperature while the temperature of larger, deeper streams remain more constant. The majority of species found in riverine habitats are associated with riffles and reside behind or under rocks and cobble where they are sheltered from the current. Water moss and filamentous algae attach to rocks and align with the current while beds of smooth, gelatinous algae form spherical, cushion-like colonies in slower moving water. The various creeks with intermittent running water within the study area are considered riverine habitat.

Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife

Habitats described above provide food, water, migration and dispersal corridors, nesting, and thermal cover for many invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and mammals. Riparian habitats are highly suitable for many wildlife species and mature coniferous forest provide nesting habitat for several species of protected birds.

Wildlife expected or known to occur in the vicinity of the study area include western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), Pacific tree frog (*Hyla regilla*), gopher snakes (*Pituophis melanoleucus*), skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*), black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*), California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*), Allen's chipmunk (*Tamias senex*), raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and coyote (*Canis latrans*). Bird species known to occur or observed in the vicinity of the study area include northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), Mountain quail (*Oreortyx pictus*), brown creeper (*Certhia americana*), black-capped chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*), American robin (*Turdus migratorius*), red-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*), red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), and red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*).

The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) of records of occurrences of listed and sensitive species for the Martis Peak quad identified the following species (JBR, 2006):

Special-Status Species

Species known to occur on or in the vicinity of the Proposed Project are accorded "special-status" because of their recognized rarity or vulnerability to various causes of habitat loss or population decline. Some of these receive specific protection defined in federal or State endangered species legislation. Others have been designated as "sensitive" on the basis of adopted policies and expertise of State resource agencies or organizations with acknowledged expertise, or policies adopted by local governmental agencies such as counties, cities, and special districts to meet local

conservation objectives. These species are referred to collectively as “special-status species” in this IS/MND, following a convention that has developed in practice but has no official sanction. The various categories encompassed by the term, and the legal status of each, are discussed in the *Regulatory Context* section of this chapter.

A list of special-status plant and animal species reported or expected to occur within the vicinity of the Proposed Project was compiled on the basis of data in the PEA (JBR, 2006), the California Natural Diversity Database (CDFG, 2006a), consultation with the CDFG, California Native Plant Society (CNPS) literature (Skinner and Pavlik, 2006) and biological literature of the region. The list is intended to be comprehensive and the “Potential for Occurrence” designations (Table 2.4-1) apply to species and their habitats in the vicinity of the Proposed Project, but not necessarily impacted by the Proposed Project.

Special-status species with the potential for occurrence within the Proposed Project area and anticipated to be exposed to Proposed Project-related impacts are described below. Figure 2.4-1 displays known occurrences of special-status species within the Proposed Project area. Descriptions of species are taken from various CNPS or CDFG sources unless otherwise cited.

Special-Status Plants

Plumas Ivesia

Plumas Ivesia is endemic to California. Plants grow in meadows, seeps, and vernal pools of lower montane coniferous forests and Great Basin scrub habitats at elevations ranging from 4,806 feet to 6,742 feet above msl. Flowering occurs from July to September. Four records of occurrence for this species have been documented within two miles of the Proposed Project area (including one on the Boca USGS quad to the north), the nearest of which was approximately 0.5 mile to the west. Suitable habitat for this species occurs on Proposed Project site.

Special-Status Wildlife

Northern Goshawk

The northern goshawk is a medium-sized raptor that occurs in dense, old growth, middle and high elevation coniferous forests. Old growth trees and large snags are important for perching, hunting, and prey-plucking. North facing slopes near water are important components for nesting. Prey items include small to medium sized mammals and birds and rarely carrion and insects. Home ranges are between 0.6 square mile to 15 square miles, and often include a water source.

The northern goshawk breeds in the Northern Coast region, and the Sierra Nevada, Klamath, Cascade, and Warner ranges. After breeding season there is a slight migration downslope as far as valley foothill hardwood habitat in the Sierras. During winter months birds regularly occupy foothills and northern deserts where they inhabit pinyon-juniper and low elevation riparian habitats. Nesting season is generally March 1 through August 15 (U.S. Forest Service, 2006). Nesting habitat for this species on the Proposed Project site is suboptimal due to nearby residential development and year-round human disturbance. However, goshawks may use the

**TABLE 2.4-1
 SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES REPORTED IN OR CONSIDERED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT AREA**

Common Name Scientific Name	Listing Status ESA	Listing Status CESA	CNPS/ CDFG Status	Localities of Occurrence Reported in the Proposed Project Area/Potential for Occurrence
Plants				
Carson Range rockcress <i>Arabis rigidissima</i> var. <i>demota</i>	None	None	1B/--	Unlikely – Proposed Project site is outside of species preferred elevation.
Plumas ivesia <i>Ivesia sericoleuca</i>	None	None	1B/--	Moderate – Four known occurrences within two miles of Proposed Project site. Suitable habitat occurs on site.
Fish				
Lahontan cutthroat trout <i>Oncorhynchus clarki henshawi</i>	T	None	--/None	Low – Drainages on the Proposed Project site are only seasonally filled with water. Site drains to the Truckee River.
Amphibians				
Mountain yellow-legged frog <i>Rana muscosa</i>	E*	None	--/CSC	Unlikely – Drainages on site are only seasonally filled with water.
Birds				
Bald eagle <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Proposed for Delisting	E	--/FP	Low – One known nest has been documented within four miles of the Proposed Project boundary (CDFG, 2006a). The Proposed Project area does not contain high quality nesting or roosting habitat.
Northern goshawk <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	None	None	--/CSC	Moderate – Two known nest sites within four miles of the Proposed Project boundary were recorded in 1996 (CDFG, 2006a). Suitable foraging habitat in southern portion of Proposed Project site, with potential nesting habitat adjacent to the area.
Willow flycatcher <i>Epidonax trailii</i>	None	E	--/None	Low – Riparian habitat on site considered low quality for nesting. Known population documented in 1992 located less than one mile east of the Proposed Project site (CDFG, 2006a).
Mammals				
Sierra Nevada mountain beaver <i>Aplodontia rufa californica</i>	None	None	--/CSC	Low – Riparian habitat on site is of low quality for this species.

* Endangered status only in San Gabriel, San Jacinto, and San Bernardino mountains.

California Native Plant Society (CNPS) codes:

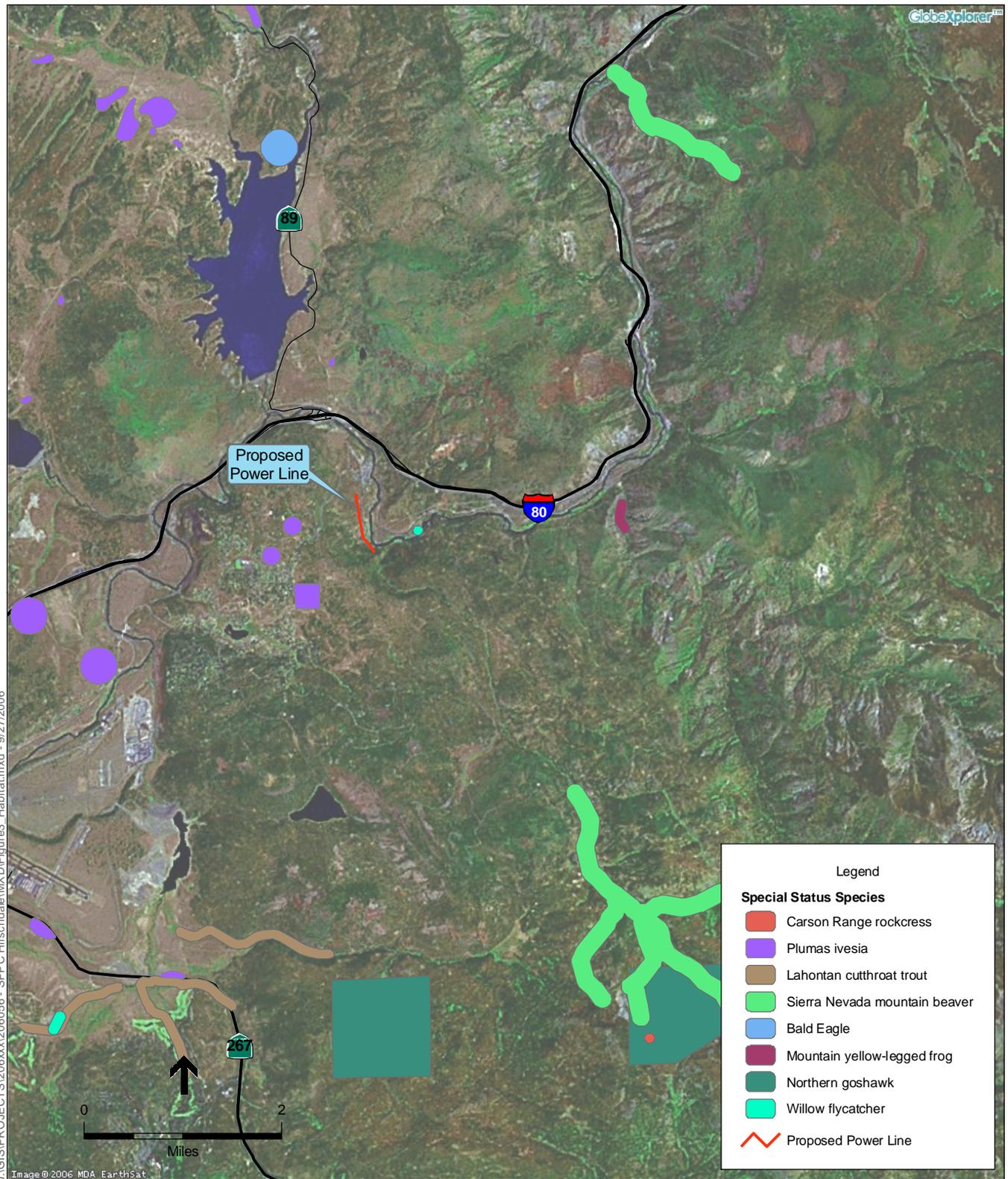
- List 1A = Plants presumed extinct in California
- List 1B = Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere
- List 2 = Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California but more common elsewhere
- List 3 = Plants about which more information is needed
- List 4 = Plants of limited distribution

Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) codes:

- CSC = California Special Concern
- FP = Fully Protected

Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) /California Endangered Species Act (CESA) codes:

- T = Threatened
- E = Endangered



SOURCES: CDFG (2006), ESA (2007), GlobeExplorer (2006), Sierra Pacific (2005), ESRI (2006)

Sierra Pacific Hirschdale Power Line Project . 206056

Figure 2.4-1
Special Status Species

sight for foraging as it is close to a perennial water source (Truckee River) and the forested habitat to the south and east of the Proposed Project site provides north-facing slopes. This species is known to occur in the Proposed Project vicinity, with two nest locations approximately four miles from the Proposed Project site reported in 1996 (CDFG, 2006a).

Bald Eagle

The bald eagle is resident throughout much of California, with breeding limited to Butte, Lake, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, and Trinity Counties. The species is a relatively common local winter migrant at several inland waters, and approximately half of the wintering population is in the Klamath Basin. Habitat generally consists of large trees and snags, especially ponderosa pine, within one mile of large water bodies where they can forage.

A nest of this species has been documented approximately four miles north of the project site. The Proposed Project area does not contain any high quality nesting or roosting habitat, though the Truckee River provides suitable foraging habitat less than one mile from the project site.

Willow Flycatcher

The willow flycatcher is a rare to uncommon local resident songbird of wet meadow and montane riparian habitats from 2,000 to 8,000 feet above sea level. It most often occurs in dense thickets of willow and alder of open meadow systems. Their diet consists primarily of insects gleaned from the air and occasionally berries and seeds. Low growing branches of willow and alder are important perching sites; birds are often absent from suitable habitats in the Sierra Nevada where low lying branches have been browsed by deer or cattle.

Historically the willow flycatcher was abundant in habitats containing dense willow thickets in wet meadow and riparian communities. The current distribution of the willow flycatcher in California consists of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade ranges though birds have been observed nesting in lowland areas of the Santa Ynez River in Santa Barbara County and the Santa Clara River in Ventura County. During the past five or six decades, breeding pairs have been lost from lower elevation riparian habitats in the State.

This species is known from a 1992 CNDDDB report on an island in the Truckee River less than 0.5 mile from Hirschdale. The scattered willow patches found in the Proposed Project area are too small, dry, and open to be considered suitable nesting habitat for this species.

Regulatory Context

Federal

Federal Regulation of Waters of the U.S., including Wetlands (Clean Water Act Sections 404 and 401);

Wetlands and non-wetland water resources (e.g., rivers, streams, and natural ponds) are a subset of “waters of the United States”¹ and receive protection under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is the major regulatory agency involved in wetland regulation under Section 404 of the CWA and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act. As noted above, additional agencies that have jurisdiction over on-site wetlands include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), USFWS, CDFG, and SWRCB.

The federal government also supports a policy of minimizing “the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands.” Executive Order 11990 (May 24, 1977) requires that each federal agency take action to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands.

Riparian Communities in California

Riparian communities have a variety of functions, including providing high-quality habitat for resident and migrant wildlife, streambank stabilization, and runoff water filtration. Throughout the United States, riparian habitats have declined substantially in extent and quality compared with their historical distribution and condition. These declines have increased concerns about dependent plant and wildlife species, leading federal agencies to adopt policies to arrest further loss. USFWS mitigation policy identifies California’s riparian habitats as belonging to resource Category 2, for which no net loss of existing habitat value is recommended (46 FR 7644, January 23, 1981).

Federal Endangered Species Act

Under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA), the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce have joint authority to list a species as threatened or endangered (16 USC 1533(c)). Two federal agencies oversee the FESA: the USFWS has jurisdiction over plants, wildlife, and resident fish, while National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries/National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has jurisdiction over anadromous fish and marine fish and mammals. Section 7 of the FESA mandates that all federal agencies consult with the USFWS and NOAA Fisheries/NMFS to ensure that federal agency actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or destroy or adversely modify critical habitat for listed species. The FESA prohibits the “take”² of any fish or wildlife species listed as threatened or endangered, including the destruction of habitat that could hinder species recovery.

¹ The regulatory term “waters of the United States,” as used by Corps, has broad meaning and incorporates both deep-water aquatic habitats and special aquatic sites, including wetlands.

² Take is defined as harassing, harming, pursuing, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing, collecting, or attempting to engage in any such conduct.

Section 10 of the FESA requires the issuance of an “incidental take” permit before any public or private action may be taken that would potentially harm, harass, injure, kill, capture, collect, or otherwise hurt (i.e., take) any individual of an endangered or threatened species. The permit requires preparation and implementation of a habitat conservation plan that would offset the take of individuals that may occur, incidental to implementation of the project, by providing for the overall preservation of the affected species through specific mitigation measures.

Pursuant to the requirements of the FESA, an agency reviewing a proposed project within its jurisdiction must determine whether any federally listed threatened or endangered species may be present in the project area and whether the proposed action will have a potentially significant impact on such species. In addition, the agency is required to determine whether the proposed action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any species proposed to be listed under FESA or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat proposed to be designated for such species (16 USC 1536(3), (4)). Therefore, project-related impacts to these species or their habitats would be considered significant in this IS/MND. The USFWS also publishes a list of candidate species which receive “special attention” from federal agencies during environmental review, although they are not protected otherwise under the FESA. The candidate species are those for which the USFWS has sufficient biological information to support a proposal to list as endangered or threatened. Project impacts to such species would be considered significant in this IS/MND. Similarly, the permitting responsibilities of the Corps includes consultation with the USFWS and NMFS when federally listed species (i.e., listed under the FESA) are at risk. As noted above, a Biological Assessment (BA) is prepared when there are potential adverse effects on listed species.

Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 United States Code § 703 Supp. I, 1989) prohibits the killing, possessing, or trading migratory birds, bird parts, eggs, and nests, except in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior. Birds of prey are protected in California under California Fish and Game Code Section 3505.5 which states that it is “unlawful to take possess, or destroy the nests or eggs of any such bird except otherwise provided by this code or any other regulation adopted hereto.” Construction disturbance during the breeding season could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment and/or reproductive failure. Disturbance that causes nest abandonment or reproductive failure is considered “taking” by CDFG. Any loss of eggs, nests, or young or any activities resulting in nest abandonment would constitute a significant impact. Impacts to these species would not be considered significant unless they are known or have high potential to nest in the Proposed Project area or to rely on it for its primary foraging.

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, enforced by the USFWS, makes it illegal to import, export, take (which includes molest or disturb), sell, purchase, or barter any bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) or golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) or part thereof.

State

Porter Cologne Water Quality Act

The SWRCB, through its nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB), regulates waters of the State through the California CWA (i.e., Porter-Cologne Act). If the Corps determines wetlands or other waters to be isolated waters and not subject to regulation under the federal CWA, the RWQCB may choose to exert jurisdiction over these waters under the Porter-Cologne Act as waters of the State.

Fish and Game Code Section 1600–1616

The CDFG regulates activities that would interfere with the natural flow of, or substantially alter, the channel, bed, or bank of a lake, river, or stream. Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code requires notification of the CDFG for lake or stream alteration activities. If, after notification is complete, the CDFG determines that the activity may substantially adversely affect an existing fish and wildlife resource, the CDFG has authority to issue a streambed alteration agreement under Section 1603 of the California Fish and Game Code. Requirements to protect the integrity of biological resources and water quality are often conditions of streambed alteration agreements. These may include avoidance or minimization of heavy equipment use within stream zones, limitations on work periods to avoid impacts to wildlife and fisheries resources, and measures to restore degraded sites or compensate for permanent habitat losses.

California Endangered Species Act

In 1984, California implemented its own Endangered Species Act (CESA) which prohibits the take of State-listed endangered and threatened species; although, habitat destruction is not included in the State's definition of take. Section 2090 requires State agencies to comply with endangered species protection and recovery and to promote conservation of these species. The CDFG administers the act and authorizes take through California Fish and Game Code Section 2081 agreements (except for designated "fully protected species," see below).

Regarding listed rare and endangered plant species, CESA defers to the California Native Plant Protection Act (see below).

California Fully Protected Species – Fish and Game Code Sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515

Fully Protected species may not be taken or possessed at any time and no licenses or permits may be issued for their take except for collecting these species for necessary scientific research and relocation of the bird species for the protection of livestock. The classification of Fully Protected was the State's initial effort in the 1960s to identify and provide additional protection to those animals that were rare or faced possible extinction. Its "no take" provision is still applicable.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15380

Although threatened and endangered species are protected by specific federal and State statutes, CEQA Guidelines Section 15380(b) provides that a species not listed on the federal or State list

of protected species may be considered rare or endangered if the species can be shown to meet certain specific criteria. These criteria have been modeled after the definition of FESA and the Section of California Fish and Game Code discussing rare or endangered plants or animals. This section was included in the guidelines primarily for situations in which a public agency is reviewing a project that may have a significant effect on a candidate species that has not yet been listed by CDFG or USFWS. CEQA provides the ability to protect species from potential project impacts until the respective agencies have the opportunity to designate the species protection.

CEQA also specifies the protection of other locally or regionally significant resources, including natural communities or habitats. Although natural communities do not presently have legal protection, CEQA requires an assessment of such communities and potential project impacts. Natural communities listed by CNDDDB as sensitive are considered by CDFG to be significant resources and fall under the CEQA Guidelines for addressing impacts. Local planning documents such as general and area plans often identify natural communities.

California Department of Fish and Game Code Bird Protections

Section 3503 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits destruction of the nests or eggs of most native resident and migratory bird species. Section 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code specifically prohibits the taking of raptors or destruction of their nests or eggs.

The legal framework and authority for the State's program to conserve plants is derived from various legislative sources, including CESA, the California Native Plant Protection Act (Fish and Game Code Section 1900–1913), the CEQA Guidelines, and the Natural Communities Conservation Planning Act.

Native Plant Protection Act

California Fish and Game Code Section 1900–1913, also known as the Native Plant Protection Act is intended to preserve, protect, and enhance endangered or rare native plants in California. The act directs CDFG to establish criteria for determining what native plants are rare or endangered. Under Section 1901, a species is endangered when its prospects for survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more cause. A species is rare when, although not threatened with immediate extinction, it is in such small numbers throughout its range that it may become endangered if its present environment worsens. The act also directs the California Fish and Game Commission to adopt regulations governing the taking, possessing, propagation, or sale of any endangered or rare native plant.

Vascular plants listed as rare or endangered by the CNPS (Skinner and Pavlik, 2006) but which may have no designated status or protection under federal or State endangered species legislation, are defined as follows:

List 1A: Plants Presumed Extinct.

List 1B: Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and elsewhere.

List 2: Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, but more numerous elsewhere.

List 3: Plants about Which More Information is Needed – A Review List.

List 4: Plants of Limited Distribution – A Watch List.

In general, plants appearing on CNPS List 1A, 1B, or 2 are considered to meet the criteria of CEQA Guidelines Section 15380 and effects to these species are considered “significant” in this IS/MND. Additionally, plants listed on CNPS List 1A, 1B or 2 meet the definition of Section 1901, Chapter 10 (Native Plant Protection Act), and Sections 2062 and 2067 (CESA) of the California Fish and Game Code.

Local

Nevada County General Plan

The Wildlife element of the Nevada County General Plan includes a general goal to “identify and manage significant areas to achieve sustainable habitat” by: 1) discouraging intrusion and encroachment through incompatible land use in sensitive and significant habitats; 2) minimizing impacts to corridors to ensure movement of wildlife; 3) supporting the acquisition, development, maintenance, and restoration where feasible, of habitat lands for wildlife enhancement; 4) discourage significant, adverse environmental impacts of land development, agricultural, forest and mining activities on important and sensitive habitats; and 5) identifying and preserving heritage and landmark trees and groves where appropriate.

Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan

The conservation and open space element of the Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan addresses the preservation of natural resources including: plant and animal habitat areas, rivers, streams, lakes and their banks, watershed lands, areas required for ecological and other scientific study purposes, Truckee River and its river banks, and deer migration areas. The following goals apply to the Proposed Project:

COS-2: Preserve and enhance the Truckee River and Donner Lake, and the exceptional scenic, economic, and recreational values they provide.

COS-3: Protect and increase the amount of pristine open space in and around Truckee.

COS-4: Protect areas of significant wildlife habitat and sensitive biological resources.

COS-5: Maintain biodiversity among plant and animal species in the town of Truckee and surrounding area, with special consideration of species designated as sensitive, rare, declining, unique, or representing rare biological resources.

COS-7: Protect and conserve managed resource open space for its productive resource values, including timber harvesting and grazing uses, and for its recreational, scenic, and biological values.

COS-9: Link open space corridors in Truckee through a well-connected network of open space corridors and trails.

COS-11: Protect water quality and quantity in creeks, lakes, natural drainages and groundwater basins.

(Town of Truckee, 2006)

Biological Resources Impacts and Mitigation Measures

- a) **Effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.***

Construction

Construction activity associated with the Proposed Project would result in temporary impacts to habitats and could result in temporary impacts to wildlife and plant species. The physical extent of habitat disturbance due to excavation for 19 poles is estimated to be approximately 100 square feet per pole. For vegetation clearing, approximately 13,000 square feet (0.3 acre) of the project site is proposed to be cleared with chainsaws to clear larger trees and a hydroaxe to clear the staging area/helicopter yard, pull and tension sites, and Access Road 2 (Figure 1-3).

Although no occurrences have been documented within the Proposed Project site for any candidate, sensitive, or special-status species, the Proposed Project site does provide suitable habitat for CNPS List 1B, *Plumas ivesia*, as well as suitable foraging habitat for raptors, mainly the goshawk which is listed as a California Special Concern by CDFG.

Impact 2.4-1: Construction activities could affect populations of *Plumas ivesia* should it be present within the Proposed Project corridor. This is a potentially significant impact that would be reduced to less than significant with implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.4-1.

Mitigation Measure 2.4-1: Plant surveys shall be completed by a qualified botanist during the flowering season (May-July) prior to the beginning of any construction activities. If *Plumas ivesia* or any other sensitive species is found, the applicant shall avoid direct impacts where possible. If avoidance is not feasible, the project applicant shall work with the CDFG to transplant affected populations to a protected location off site.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

Nesting birds and raptors are protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the California Fish and Game Code. Within the Proposed Project vicinity, the forested habitat to the south and east of the site could provide nesting habitat, while the more open habitat to the north of the site could provide foraging habitat. However, as discussed above, although goshawks may use the Proposed Project site for foraging; the site provides suboptimal nesting habitat due to the proximity to nearby residential development and year-round human disturbance.

The use of helicopters, especially takeoff and landing, to remove and install poles and to span the new conductor within forested habitat areas has the potential to cause nesting birds to flush from their nests, resulting in loss of eggs or nest abandonment. Mortality to juvenile or naïve birds or raptors could result from flushing from nest prior to fledging or, abandonment by parents.

Additionally, other construction activities including tree removal and trimming, hydroaxing, operation of heavy equipment, blasting, and removal and installation of poles and conductor could potentially impact nesting and foraging birds and raptors as well as due to noise disturbance.

Impact 2.4-2: Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project could disturb nesting raptors, including the northern goshawk, which is known to occur in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. This would be a significant impact, which would be reduced to less than significant with implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.4-2a and Mitigation Measure 2.4-2b.

Mitigation Measure 2.4-2a: To the extent feasible, vegetation removal shall occur outside the nesting and breeding season of March 1 through August 15 to avoid impacts to nesting birds and raptors.

Mitigation Measure 2.4-2b: For any potential nest-disturbing activities that are to occur during the period from March 1 through August 15, Sierra Pacific shall contract with a qualified biologist who shall conduct a pre-construction survey for nesting birds. The survey shall be conducted no more than one week prior to the start of work activities and would cover all affected areas including the power line route, staging area, pull and tension sites, and access roads areas where substantial ground disturbance or vegetation clearing is required.

If any active nests are found, an appropriate nest protection zone shall be established by the qualified biologist. The guidelines for protection zones for active nest shall be as follows: for passerine birds, a 50 - 100-foot zone; for raptors, a 300-foot zone and for golden eagles a 500-foot zone. Once these zones are established, they may be modified on a site-specific basis as determined by the qualified biologist or in coordination with CDFG.

During construction, active nests within the project area shall be monitored for signs of disturbance. If the biological monitor determines that a disturbance is occurring, construction shall be halted, and the appropriate regulatory agencies

shall be contacted as to the measures that shall be implemented to reduce further disturbance.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

New noxious or invasive weed populations could become established in sites disturbed during construction, especially along roads, in the staging area, and other temporary use areas; as well as in locations where poles would be removed and replaced. Additionally, new noxious or invasive weed species could be transported into the Proposed Project area if seeds or plant material are carried on vehicles and construction equipment, with the potential to affect both habitat examined within the project area as well as unknown habitats or populations outside of the project area. Introduction of new noxious or invasive weed populations could adversely affect special-status native plant species through increased interspecific competition. This could be a potentially significant impact.

Impact 2.4-3: Construction activities could potentially spread noxious or invasive weeds within the Proposed Project area where weeds do not currently exist. This would be a less than significant impact with implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.4-3.

Mitigation Measure 2.4-3: Sierra Pacific shall develop and implement a Noxious Weed and Invasive Plant Control Plan, consistent with standard Best Management Practices (see for example: Department of Transportation, State of California (2003); Storm Water Quality Handbooks; and Project Planning and Design Guide Construction Site Best Management Practices Manual). The plan shall be reviewed and approved by the CPUC and shall at a minimum address any required cleaning of construction vehicles to minimize spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

Operations

The Proposed Project would include an upgrade of an existing 12.5 kV single-circuit wood pole distribution line with a new 60 kV single-circuit wood pole line for approximately 3,500 feet. The new poles would be approximately 9 feet higher than the existing poles and would span approximately 200 feet. While there would be potential for birds, including eagles, to collide with the upgraded line, the risk is relatively low because the entirety of the Proposed Project involves the replacement of the existing line with a similar one and, as such, would not increase the potential for avian collision; therefore, this would be a less than significant impact.

b) Effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: *Less than Significant.*

There are three small ephemeral drainages in the Proposed Project area but no perennial waters (JBR, 2006). Typical riparian species such as willows, aspen, and alders are found in the south portion of the Proposed Project corridor. Direct impacts to riparian species would likely occur as a result of installation of power line poles. Some of the vegetation within the corridor would be cleared at the southern end of the project corridor to land a compressor to dig the pole holes; however, these species that could be impacted are resilient and would be expected to recover naturally. Vegetation within power line easements are regularly cut during routine utility corridor maintenance. For the reasons expressed above, implementation of the Proposed Project would have a less than significant effect on riparian or sensitive natural communities.

c) Effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means: *No Impact.*

A jurisdictional delineation of the Proposed Project corridor (JBR, 2006) identified a 70-foot long segment, between Pole P4 and P5, within the power line right-of-way as meeting the criteria of a wetland (Figure 1-3). Tree clearing would be done by hand, using a chain saw and vegetation clearing by using a hydroaxe. Neither of these activities, nor any other project activity, would cause the discharge of fill materials to waters of the U.S.; therefore, there would be no impact to jurisdictional waters of the U.S.

d) Interference with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites: *Less than Significant.*

The majority of the proposed construction activities would take place within the existing utility corridor and would not be expected to impede the movement of any native resident or migratory fish species; however, the Proposed Project may temporarily impact the movement of terrestrial wildlife species such as deer which require relatively undisturbed forested areas for migration and cover from predators. Although these corridors may be temporarily affected as a direct or indirect result of human presence within the study area, impact would be brief and disturbance minimal; therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would cause a less than significant impact to wildlife corridors.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance: *No Impact.*

The Proposed Project would comply with the objectives of the Nevada County General Plan because it would: 1) utilizing the existing right of way; 2) completely avoiding construction in forest lands and near lakes; and 3) spanning sensitive areas such as

wetlands, riparian zones, and streams. Additionally, the Proposed Project would not conflict with any plans or policies under the Town of Truckee General Plan as the project would be replacing existing poles with new poles that are slightly taller. Therefore, no conflict with any local policies or ordinances would result from approval and implementation of the Proposed Project.

- f) **Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan: *No Impact.***

There are no Habitat Conservation Plans or other approved governmental habitat plans that involve lands within the Proposed Project area; therefore, there would be no impact.

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2.5 Cultural 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>
5. CULTURAL RESOURCES— Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Prehistoric Context

Much of the research conducted in the Lake Tahoe-Truckee region have recognized the Martis Complex as the dominate prehistoric pattern for the region (PAR, 2006). However, as with many other regions of California, a temporal chronology of archaeological patterns have been posited for the Lake Tahoe-Truckee region, which is as follows: the Tahoe Reach Phase (8,000 Before Present (B.P.), the Spooner Complex (7,000 – 4,000 B.P.), the Martis Complex (4,000 – 1,500 B.P.), and the Kings Beach (1,500 – 500 B.P.). These patterns reflect changes in material culture, technology, and socioeconomic practices over time, which are evident in the archaeological record (Moratto, 1984).

Ethnographic Context

The Proposed Project area is within the ethnographic territory of the Washoe of California and Nevada. The Washoe were characterized as a highly mobile, band-level society, that exploited a wide array of resources based on seasonal patterns. Washoe families moved from winter quarters in lower elevations and warmer, more sheltered locations in the Truckee Meadows, to more remote, high-elevation areas during the summer months seeking a wide variety of resources. Like many other California tribes, the acorn was an important dietary staple during the peak levels of tribal populations, or relatively late in the prehistoric period (the acorn appears to have been underexploited before 1,100 B.P. in the Sierra Nevada). The Washoe's greater reliance on millingslab-handstone technology to process acorns versus mortar-pestle may be related to the elevation and environment of the Washoe's territory (mostly 4,000 feet above sea level). Portable mortars are scarce in the central and southern Sierra Nevada, and the primary technology focus varied between slabs and handstones to bedrock mortars (Basgall, 2004).

Historical Context

The earliest Anglo-American settlers (Gold Rush emigrants) may have followed the Truckee River through the area of present-day Hirschdale on the way to Truckee, given its favorable location for access to water and pasture. “Hirschdale on the Truckee” may have been established by 1936 when the “Hirschdale on the Truckee” subdivision was mentioned in an easement contract between the Whitney Estate and the Sierra Pacific Power Company (Sierra Pacific). At present, Hirschdale remains a small, bucolic community of roughly 50 residences.

In 1929, the Truckee River Power Company began construction of a 60 kV power line between Nevada and Truckee following the Truckee River canyon. The company gradually acquired a number of smaller power concerns and eventually was incorporated as Sierra Pacific. Upon its construction, the 60 kV power line delivered power from Pacific Gas & Electric Company lines at Donner Summit to various locations in Nevada. Since that time, Sierra Pacific has constructed a distribution line (7600 distribution circuit) through Hirschdale. The route of the 7600 distribution circuit follows the same route as that proposed for the Proposed Project. Sierra Pacific has maintained the distribution and power lines, replacing wooden poles and conductor as snow loads and fires have destroyed or damaged existing equipment.

Regulatory Context

Federal

Section 106 (36 CFR Part 800) of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) does not apply to the Proposed Project, as there is no federal agency involved, nor is there federal funding or a federal permit required.

State

California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that public or private projects financed or approved by public agencies must assess the effects of the project on historical resources. CEQA also applies to effects on archaeological sites, which may be included among “historical resources” as defined by Guidelines Section 15064.5, subdivision (a), or, in the alternative, may be subject to the provisions of Public Resources Code Section 21083.2, which governs review of “unique archaeological resources.” Historical resources may generally include buildings, sites, structures, objects or districts, each of which may have historical, architectural, archaeological, cultural, or scientific significance.

Under CEQA, “historical resources” include the following:

- (1) A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission, for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code, §5024.1.)

- (2) A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code, shall be presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Public agencies must treat any such resources as significant, unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.
- (3) Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered to be an historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code, §5024.1) if it:
 - (A) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
 - (B) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
 - (C) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
 - (D) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
- (4) The fact that a resource is not listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, is not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code), or is not identified in an historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be an historical resource as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(j) or 5024.1.

Archaeological resources that are not "historical resources" according to the above definitions may be "unique archaeological resources" as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21083.2, which also generally provides that "non-unique archaeological resources" do not receive any protection under CEQA. If an archaeological resource is neither a "unique archaeological" nor an "historical resource," the effects of the project on those resources shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. It shall be sufficient that both the resource and the effect on it are noted in the EIR (or Initial Study), but they need not be considered further in the CEQA process.

In summary, CEQA requires that if a project results in an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource, or would cause significant effects on a unique archaeological resource, then alternative plans or mitigation measures must be considered.

Local

County of Nevada General Plan

The following objective, contained in the Nevada County General Plan, would be applicable to the Proposed Project (Nevada County, 1996):

Objective 19.1: Encourage the inventory, protection and interpretation of the cultural heritage of Nevada County, including historical and archaeological landscapes, sites, buildings, features, artifacts.

Methods and Findings

Research Methods

PAR Environmental Services (2006) conducted a cultural resources records search of pertinent survey and site data at the North Central Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System, on October 23, 2005. The records search included a review of the Directory of Properties in the Historic Property Data File for Nevada County for information on sites of recognized historical significance in the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, California Inventory of Historic Resources, California Historical Landmarks, California Points of Historical Interest, and regional and local listings. PAR also conducted a review of the 1865 General Land Office plat of Township 18 North, Range 17 East (PAR, 2006). In addition, PAR contacted Sierra Pacific personnel regarding the history of the pole line.

No cultural resources have been previously recorded within the Proposed Project area. The records search identified three studies that included area within a quarter-mile of the Proposed Project area (PAR, 2006). None of the surveys included the Proposed Project area.

The Native American Heritage Commission was contacted by PAR in December, 2005. No sacred lands were identified within the Proposed Project area. The contacts for Nevada County did not have any specific concerns regarding the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project alignment was surveyed by two archaeologists along 10 to 15-meter transects (PAR, 2006). The surface visibility was poor due to heavy vegetation cover and snow.

Findings

The field and documentary research identified four resources, as follows (PAR, 2006):

R1: Isolated Metate (grinding stone) Fragment. No other artifacts were identified in the vicinity of the find. Given the lack of context and additional associated material, this isolate is not considered a significant resource under CEQA criteria.

R2: Small historic refuse scatter. This possible site consists of a scatter of historic materials and an associated concrete box, possibly an abandoned spring box. The site contains several glass bottle fragments, white improved earthenware, metal, and a host of modern

materials. The site has undergone considerable disturbance and the addition of more modern materials that have compromised the integrity of the deposit (it would not likely have qualified as an historical resource with the loss of integrity). This site is not considered an historical resource under CEQA.

R3: Concrete Springbox. A springbox was identified and recorded that is apparently still in use. This springbox does not qualify as an historical resource under CEQA.

R4: The Sierra Pacific 12.5 kV #7600 Distribution Line. The existing distribution line (the subject of this IS/MND) appears to be part of the original 60 kV system constructed to bring power from northern Nevada to Truckee, California. The line was originally constructed in the 1930s and the right-of-way was acquired in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The #7600 distribution line evidently was built to service Hirschdale and possibly other interests. While the line may have been a local source for electricity, the line's integrity has been altered. The line does not appear to retain components that are from the time of the original construction. Over the years, Sierra Pacific has maintained the line, replacing wooden poles and conductor as snow and fire has damaged equipment. At least three generations of poles are present in the Proposed Project area alone. Given the general degradation of the pole alignment and the years of modification, it does not appear that the pole alignment retains sufficient integrity to be considered a historical resource. In addition, the history of the line does not suggest that it was a significant example of electrical distribution lines in California or an exemplar of construction or engineering to qualify it as an historical resource; nor does it appear to be associated with the work of a master. Therefore, the Sierra Pacific 12.5 kV #7600 Distribution Line line is not considered eligible as an historical resource under CEQA.

Cultural Resources Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts on cultural resources could result from ground-disturbing activities and/or damage, destruction, or alteration of historic structures. Ground-disturbing activities include project-related excavation, grading, auguring, or any other sub-surface disturbance that could damage or destroy buried archaeological resources including prehistoric and historic remains or human burials. Mechanisms that would cause damage, destruction, or alteration of historic structures includes project-related demolition, damage, or alteration of historic structures or their immediate surroundings that could impair the significance of an historic resource or adversely alter those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance.

a) Change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5: *Less than Significant.*

As mentioned above, no significant historical resources (i.e., architectural or structural) were identified within the Proposed Project area. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not cause a substantial adverse change to the significance of an historical resource and impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation is necessary.

b) Change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.*

As described in the *Methods and Findings* section above, archival research at the North Central Information Center was conducted to determine whether any archaeological resources have been identified along the Proposed Project corridor, access roads, or staging area/helicopter yard. There are no recorded prehistoric or historic-period archaeological resources listed within the Proposed Project corridor. The survey conducted did not identify any significant cultural resources within the immediate area of the Proposed Project. However, the presence of a metate isolate in the area and the area's proximity to a large watercourse suggests that the Proposed Project area was an attractive locale for early inhabitants. Buried archaeological remains such as prehistoric midden deposits, flaked and ground stone artifacts, bone, shell, building foundations and walls, and other buried cultural resource materials could be damaged during excavation, grading, auguring, or any other sub-surface disturbance related to the construction of the Proposed Project.

Impact 2.5-1: Construction activities may result in an adverse impact to an unknown archaeological resource. This would be a less than significant impact with implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.5-1.

Damage to significant buried archaeological deposits would be a significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.5-1 would reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measure 2.5-1: In the event that any prehistoric or historic subsurface cultural resources are discovered during ground disturbing activities, all work within 50 feet of the resources shall be halted and Sierra Pacific and/or the CPUC shall consult with a qualified archaeologist to assess the significance of the find. If any find is determined to be significant, representatives of Sierra Pacific and/or the CPUC and a Specialist shall meet to determine the appropriate avoidance measures or other appropriate mitigation, with the ultimate determination to be made by the CPUC. All significant cultural materials recovered shall be, as necessary, subject to scientific analysis, professional museum curation, and a report prepared by a Specialist according to current professional standards. A Specialist for purposes of this mitigation measure is defined as one who meets the Secretary of the Interior's 1983 Historic Preservation Qualification Standards listed in the Federal Register (48 FR 44716-01) and the Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR 61.3). In considering any suggested mitigation proposed by the consulting archaeologist in order to mitigate impacts to historical resources or unique archaeological resources, the CPUC shall determine whether avoidance is necessary and feasible in light of factors such as the nature of the find, project design, costs, and other considerations. If avoidance is infeasible, other appropriate measures (e.g., data recovery) shall be instituted. Work may proceed on other parts of the project site while mitigation for historical resources or unique archaeological resources is carried out.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

c) **Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.***

Paleontologic resources are the fossilized evidence of past life found in the geologic record. Despite the tremendous volume of sedimentary rock deposits preserved worldwide, and the enormous number of organisms that have lived through time, preservation of plant or animal remains as fossils is an extremely rare occurrence. Because of the infrequency of fossil preservation, fossils – particularly vertebrate fossils – are considered to be nonrenewable resources. Because of their rarity, and the scientific information they can provide, fossils are highly significant records of ancient life.

Impact 2.5-2: Construction activities may result in an adverse impact to an unknown paleontological resource. This would be a less than significant impact with implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.5-2.

Given the minor level of subsurface excavation activities related to the Proposed Project, there is a low probability for the Proposed Project to impact significant paleontologic resources. While not anticipated to result from the Proposed Project, significant fossil discoveries can be made even in areas of supposed low sensitivity, and could result from the excavation activities related to the Proposed Project, which could have a deleterious effect on such resources. Damage to paleontological resources would be a significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.5-2 would reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measure 2.5-2: In the event a fossil is discovered during construction, excavations within 50 feet of the find shall be temporarily halted or diverted until the discovery is examined by a qualified paleontologist, in accordance with Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards (SVP, 1995). The discovery shall be documented as needed, the potential resource evaluated, and the significance of the find shall be assessed under the criteria set forth in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines. The paleontologist shall notify the CPUC to determine procedures to be followed before construction is allowed to resume at the location of the find. If the CPUC determines that avoidance is not feasible, the paleontologist shall prepare an excavation plan for mitigating the effect of the project on the qualities that make the resource important, and the plan shall be implemented. The plan shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

d) **Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.***

There is no indication that a particular site has been used for burial purposes in the recent or distant past along the Proposed Project corridor or any of the other Proposed Project

construction areas (e.g., access roads, staging area/helicopter yard, etc.). Thus, it is unlikely that human remains would be encountered during project construction. However, in the event of the discovery of any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries, during Proposed Project construction, the following mitigation measure would be required.

Impact 2.5-3: Project construction could result in damage to previously unidentified human remains. This would be a less than significant impact with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.5-3.

Damage to human remains would be a significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.5-3 would reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measure 2.5-3: In the event that human skeletal remains are uncovered during construction activities for the Proposed Project, Sierra Pacific shall immediately halt work, contact the Nevada County Coroner to evaluate the remains, and follow the procedures and protocols pursuant to Section 15064.5 (e)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines. If the County Coroner determines that the remains are Native American, Sierra Pacific shall contact the California Native American Heritage Commission, pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, and all excavation and site preparation activities shall cease until appropriate arrangements are made.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

References – Cultural Resources

- Basgall, M.E., *Resource Intensification Among Hunter-Gatherers: Acorn Economies in Prehistoric California*, In *Prehistoric California: Archaeology and the Myth of Paradise*, ed by L.M. Raab and T.L. Jones, The University of Utah Press: Salt Lake City, UT, 2004.
- PAR Environmental Services, *Cultural Resources Inventory Report, on a Segment of the SPPC 12.5kV Line Near Hirschdale, Nevada County, CA*, Prepared for JBR Environmental Consultants, Reno, NV, 2006.
- Moratto, M.J., *California Archaeology*. Smithsonian Press: San Diego, CA, 1984.
- Nevada County, 1996. *Nevada County General Plan*, adopted 1996.
- Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, *Assessment and Mitigation of Adverse Impacts to Nonrenewable Paleontologic Resources – Standard Guidelines*, Society of Vertebrate Paleontology News Bulletin, Vol. 163, p. 22-27, 1995.

2.6 Geology, Soils, and Seismicity

<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>
6. GEOLOGY, SOILS, AND SEISMICITY— Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting

The Proposed Project site lies within the geologically complex region of California referred to as the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province (CGS, 2002a).¹ The Sierra Nevada province consists of a tilted mass of the earth's crust, which is nearly 400 miles long and primarily made up of massive granites, modified by glacial sculpturing, altered sedimentary rock from former shallow seas, and volcanic flows. Two active faults on the east and west side of what is now Lake Tahoe created a valley floor that dropped thousands of feet below the mountain ranges. Earthquakes along this fault system split the Sierra Nevada into the Carson Range on the east and Crystal Range on the west of Lake Tahoe. Mount Pluto, an extinct volcano north of Lake Tahoe, produced a lava flow that connected the Carson and Crystal ranges and blocked a previous northern outlet of the river. Over time, the valley filled and the Truckee River found an outlet located at the northwest corner

¹ A geomorphic province is an area that possesses similar bedrock, structure, history, and age. California has 11 geomorphic provinces.

of Lake Tahoe in Tahoe City. The Proposed Project site is located along the Truckee River about eight miles north of Lake Tahoe at the base of Buck Ridge and to the east of Juniper Flat. The Proposed Project corridor is located in an area that is underlain by glacial deposits, volcanic rocks, landslide deposits, and alluvium. The volcanic rocks are typically either andesite or basalt.

Topography

The northern end of the Proposed Project corridor is at an elevation of approximately 5,560 feet above mean sea level (msl). The corridor gently descends to the south into the residential area of Hirschdale (approximately 5,520 feet above msl) before rising steeply up a rocky hillside to the southern most end of the Proposed Project corridor at an elevation of approximately 5,800 feet above msl.

Seismicity and Groundshaking

The Proposed Project lies within a region of California that contains many active and potentially active faults and is considered an area of high seismic activity.² The 2001 California Building Code locates the entire region within Seismic Risk Zone 3. Areas within Zone 3 are susceptible to the effects of seismicity but are generally not expected to experience maximum magnitudes and damage in the event of an earthquake. Richter magnitude is a measure of the size of an earthquake as recorded by a seismograph, a standard instrument that records ground shaking at the location of the instrument. The reported Richter magnitude for an earthquake represents the highest amplitude measured by the seismograph at a distance of 100 kilometers from the epicenter. Richter magnitudes vary logarithmically with each whole number step representing a ten fold increase in the amplitude of the recorded seismic waves.

Ground movement during an earthquake can vary depending on the overall magnitude, distance to the fault, focus of earthquake energy, and type of geologic material. Bedrock can attenuate ground shaking while the composition of underlying soils, even those relatively distant from faults, can intensify ground shaking. For this reason, earthquake intensities are also measured in terms of their observed effects at a given locality. The Modified Mercalli (MM) intensity scale is commonly used to measure earthquake damage due to ground shaking. The MM values for intensity range from I (earthquake not felt) to XII (damage nearly total), and intensities ranging from IV to X could cause moderate to significant structural damage.³ The intensities of an earthquake will vary over the region of a fault and generally decrease with distance from the epicenter of the earthquake.

² An “active” fault is defined by the State of California as a fault that has had surface displacement within Holocene time (approximately the last 11,000 years). A “potentially active” fault is defined as a fault that has shown evidence of surface displacement during the Quaternary (last 1.6 million years), unless direct geologic evidence demonstrates inactivity for all of the Holocene or longer. This definition does not, of course, mean that faults lacking evidence of surface displacement are necessarily inactive. “Sufficiently active” is also used to describe a fault if there is some evidence that Holocene displacement occurred on one or more of its segments or branches (Hart, 1997).

³ The damage level represents the estimated overall level of damage that will occur for various MM intensity levels. The damage, however, will not be uniform. Not all buildings perform identically in an earthquake. The age, material, type, method of construction, size, and shape of a building all affect its performance

Regional Faults

There are three active faults located within 50 miles of the Proposed Project corridor: the Dog Valley Fault, located approximately 3.5 miles to the northwest; the North Tahoe Fault, located approximately 11 miles to the south; and the Genoa Fault, located approximately 35 miles to the southeast. The Dog Valley Fault has had a seismic event during historic time (1966) while the other two have last exhibited displacement sometime within the last 10,000 years (Jennings, 1994). There are no active faults that cross the Proposed Project corridor. Inactive faults are located throughout the region. If a fault has been inactive for a long period of time it does not necessarily mean a seismic event will not occur; but it is considered much less likely. Occasionally, faults classified as inactive can be triggered during a major event on a tectonically connected or nearby active fault (also known as sympathetic fault displacement).

Geologic Hazards

Settlement

Settlement can occur from immediate settlement, consolidation, shrinkage of expansive soil, and liquefaction (discussed below). Immediate settlement occurs when a load from a structure or placement of new fill material is applied, causing distortion in the underlying materials. This settlement occurs quickly and is typically complete after placement of the final load. Settlement of the ground surface can also be accelerated and accentuated by earthquakes. During an earthquake, settlement can occur as a result of the relatively rapid compaction and settling of subsurface materials (particularly loose, uncompacted, and variable sandy sediments above the water table) due to the rearrangement of soil particles during prolonged ground shaking. Settlement can occur both uniformly and differentially (i.e., where adjoining areas settle at different amounts). Given the geologic setting of the area and the nature of the Proposed Project, the Proposed Project is not likely to be affected by settlement.

Landslides

Ground failure is dependent on the slope and geology as well as the amount of rainfall, excavation, and/or seismic activities that occur in an area. A slope failure is a mass of rock, soil, and/or debris displaced down slope by sliding, flowing, or falling. Steep slopes and down slope creep of surface materials characterize landslide-susceptible areas. Debris flows consist of a loose mass of rocks and other granular material that, if present on a steep slope and saturated, can move down slope.

The rate of rock and soil movements can vary from a slow creep over many years to sudden mass movements. Landslides occur throughout California, but the density of incidents increases in zones of active faulting.

Volcanic Eruptions

Volcanic eruptions have occurred throughout California geologic history, particularly in the last 1.6 million years. Volcanic eruptions are associated with earthquakes and eruptions are usually preceded by earthquake swarms. The most recent eruption in California was the violent eruption

at Lassen Peak in 1917. Several volcanic eruptions have occurred over geologic time in the area of the Proposed Project corridor as close as two miles away (Jennings, 1994). These eruptions have been determined to have occurred between 1.2 and 2.0 million years ago. Future volcanic eruptions within California are likely; however, location and timing of future eruptions are uncertain. It is generally considered that future eruptions would likely take place in large central vent volcanoes such as Mount Shasta and Lassen Peak where more recent activity has been recorded.

Seismic Hazards

Surface Fault Rupture

Seismically induced ground rupture is defined as the physical displacement of surface deposits in response to an earthquake's seismic waves. The magnitude, sense, and nature of fault rupture can vary for different faults or even along different strands of the same fault. Ground rupture is considered more likely along active faults, which are not located anywhere immediately close to the Proposed Project corridor. Therefore, the risk of ground rupture at the site is low.

Liquefaction

Liquefaction is a transformation of soil from a solid to a liquefied state during which saturated soil temporarily loses strength resulting from the buildup of excess pore water pressure, especially during earthquake-induced cyclic loading. Soil susceptible to liquefaction includes loose to medium dense sand and gravel, low-plasticity silt, and some low-plasticity clay deposits. Liquefaction and associated failures could damage foundations, roads, underground cables and pipelines, and disrupt utility service.

Regulatory Context

California Building Code

The California Building Code (CBC) is another name for the body of regulations found in the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 24, Part 2, which is a portion of the California Building Standards Code. Title 24 is assigned to the California Building Standards Commission, which, by law, is responsible for coordinating all building standards. Under State law, all building standards must be centralized in Title 24 or they are not enforceable. The purpose of the CBC is to provide minimum standards to safeguard life or limb, health, property and public welfare by regulating and controlling the design, construction, quality of materials, use and occupancy, location, and maintenance of all buildings and structures within its jurisdiction. Published by the International Conference of Building Officials, the Uniform Building Code (UBC) is a widely adopted model building code in the United States. The CBC incorporates by reference the UBC with necessary California amendments. These amendments include significant building design criteria that have been tailored for California earthquake conditions.

Local

Nevada County General Plan

The following objective and policies would be applicable to the Proposed Project:

Objective 10.6: Land use patterns and development standards shall minimize hazards resulting from flooding, earthquake, slope failure, avalanche, and other natural occurrences.

Policy 10.13: Continue to cooperate with the State Division of Mines and Geology, the State Office of Emergency Services and other appropriate Federal, State and local agencies and incorporate the most current data concerning the following as the basis for the County's Site Development Standards, and project site plan review:

- a. geologic hazards; and
- b. seismic hazard data for sensitive land uses such as schools, medical facilities, high-density residential uses, and intensive commercial uses.

The project review shall consider the need to mitigate development in such areas in accordance with Federal, State and local standards.

As part of the project site review process, require sufficient soils and geologic investigations to identify and evaluate the various geologic and seismic hazards that may exist for all proposed development, including subdivisions. Such investigations shall be required within an area determined to be seismically active by the State Division of Mines and Geology or within an area having potential geologic hazards, including slope instability and excessive erosion.

Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan

The following goal would be applicable to the Proposed Project:

Goal SAF-1: Reduce the risk of injury, loss of life and property damage from earthquakes, landslides and other geologic hazards.⁴

(Town of Truckee, 2006)

Geology, Soils, and Seismicity Impacts and Mitigation Measures

- a.i) **Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault: *Less than Significant.***

⁴ The three policies included to support this goal do not apply to the Proposed Project because there is no construction of residences or other building structures proposed.

No active faults or potentially active faults are located within the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Project. Although surface fault rupture is not necessarily limited to areas along a fault trace, the nearest active fault is more than three miles away and very unlikely to cause any damage as a result of fault rupture. Therefore, the potential impact of fault rupture to the Proposed Project would be less than significant.

a.ii) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground shaking: *Less than Significant.*

It is possible that the Proposed Project area will experience an earthquake that would produce strong ground shaking sometime in the future. The greatest potential source for seismic ground shaking in the general area is the active Dog Valley Fault, which produced a magnitude 6.0 earthquake in 1966 (Jennings, 1994). The California Geological Survey (CGS) probabilistic seismic hazard assessment for California determined that the Proposed Project area could experience peak ground acceleration of approximately $0.3g^5$ (1 chance in 475 of being exceeded each year) (CGS, 2002b). This magnitude of ground shaking would be considered very strong and capable of moderate to considerable damage to structures depending on age and construction. However, the Proposed Project includes the installation of wooden poles and placement of wires and does not include construction of habitable structures. Wooden poles may be shaken during an earthquake but the pole design and placement allows the alignment to withstand a significant amount of ground shaking. Therefore, potential impacts associated with ground shaking would be less than significant.

a.iii) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction: *Less than Significant.*

The Proposed Project does not include the construction of any habitable structures that would expose the public to potential injury. The base of the poles would be placed at depths of approximately 7.5 feet below the ground surface in either shallow alluvial soils or volcanic rock and would unlikely be significantly affected by any seismic-related ground failure. Therefore, the potential impact is considered less than significant.

a.iv) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides: *Less than Significant.*

The southern portion of the Proposed Project corridor includes a moderate to steep incline. Based on a reconnaissance survey of the site, the existing poles constructed in

⁵ The common way to describe ground motion during an earthquake is with the motion parameter of acceleration measured as peak ground acceleration (PGA), which is the largest value of horizontal acceleration obtained from a seismograph. PGA is expressed as the percentage of the acceleration due to gravity (g), which is approximately 980 centimeters per second squared. To illustrate this, one “g” of acceleration is a rate of increase in speed equivalent to a car traveling 328 feet from rest in 4.5 seconds.

this area have not shown evidence of significant movement or damage that would indicate an active landslide area (ESA, 2006). Although it is possible that some future event may occur in the vicinity of one or more poles, the poles and wires would be installed to withstand potential geologic and seismic hazards inherent to this region. Therefore, there would be a low risk of damage as a result of slope failure and potential impacts are considered less than significant.

b) Soil erosion or the loss of topsoil: *Less than Significant.*

The Proposed Project would not require significant earthwork or grading that could result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil. The only subsurface earthwork that would be involved in the construction of the Proposed Project would be the excavation of 19 pole holes with widths of less than two feet and depths of approximately 7.5 feet. Sierra Pacific or its construction contractor would spread the excess soil material around the pole locations. A hydroaxe that would not penetrate below the soil surface would be used to clear vegetation from the staging area/helicopter yard, the pull and tension sites, the Proposed Project corridor near poles 1-5 and 12-19, and Access Road 2. Temporary topsoil erosion resulting from the construction of the Proposed Project would be less than significant.

c) Located on geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse: *Less than Significant.*

Destabilization of natural slopes would not occur as a result of the proposed construction activities because pole excavation operations would be minor and would not alter existing slope profiles or significantly increase loading that could cause instability. As discussed above in a)iii, the potential for damage as a result of seismic related ground failure caused by liquefaction of soil is considered less than significant. Implementation of standard engineering practices for the installation of power line poles would provide a long stable lifespan. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

d) Located on expansive soil, creating substantial risks to life or property: *Less than Significant.*

Shrink-swell or expansive soil behavior is a condition in which soil reacts to changes in moisture content by expanding or contracting. Typically for construction of buildings, appropriate design features are used to address expansive soils which may include excavation of potentially problematic soils during construction and replacement with engineered backfill. The existing poles along the Proposed Project corridor do not show any sign of damage or other affects that would indicate any problems associated with expansive soils (ESA, 2006). The nature of the Proposed Project, which has limited exposure to subsurface soils, combined with the implementation of standard engineering methods, would ensure that impacts associated with expansive soils remain less than significant.

- e) **Soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater: *No Impact.***

The Proposed Project does not include components that would require the installation of sanitary septic systems, leachfields, or other wastewater disposal systems into area soils. Therefore, there would be no potential impact to soils in the Proposed Project area from wastewater disposal.

References – Geology and Soils

California Geological Survey (CGS), 2002a, *California Geomorphic Provinces*, CGS Note 36, 2002.

California Geological Survey (CGS), 2002b, *How Earthquakes Are Measured*, CGS Note 32, 2002.

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California Geological Survey (CGS), 2005a, *Probabilistic Seismic Hazards Assessment Maps*, <http://www.consrv.ca.gov/cgs/rghm/psha/index.htm>, August 12, 2005.

Environmental Science Associates (ESA), 2006, Field visit of the Hirschdale Power Line Project site conducted by Eric Schniewind, ESA Senior Associate Geologist, August 8, 2006.

Hart, E. W., 1997, *Fault-Rupture Hazard Zones in California: Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zones Act of 1972 with Index to Special Studies Zones Maps*, California Division of Mines and Geology, Special Publication 42, 1990, revised and updated 1997.

Jennings, C. W., 1994, *Fault Activity Map of California and Adjacent Areas*, California Division of Mines and Geology Data Map No. 6, 1:750,000, 1994.

2.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

<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>
7. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS				
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Materials and waste may be considered hazardous if they are poisonous (toxicity), can be ignited by open flame (ignitability), corrode other materials (corrosivity), or react violently, explode or generate vapors when mixed with water (reactivity). The term “hazardous material” is defined in law as any material that, because of quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment.¹ In some cases, past industrial or commercial uses on a site can result in spills or leaks of hazardous materials and petroleum to the ground; thus resulting in soil and groundwater contamination. Federal and State laws require that soils having concentrations of contaminants

¹ State of California, Health and Safety Code, Chapter 6.95, Section 25501(o).

such as lead, gasoline, or industrial solvents that are higher than certain acceptable levels must be handled and disposed of as hazardous waste during excavation, transportation, and disposal. The California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 22, Section 66261.20-24 contains technical descriptions of characteristics that would cause a soil to be classified as a hazardous waste. The use of hazardous materials and disposal of hazardous wastes are subject to numerous laws and regulations at all levels of government.

In addition to toxic substances, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) generally provides information about Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF) in its environmental documents, including this Mitigated Negative Declaration, to inform the public and decision makers; however, it does not consider EMF, in the context of CEQA, as an environmental impact because there is no agreement among scientists that EMF creates a potential health risk and because CEQA does not define or adopt standards for defining any potential risk from EMF. For informational purposes, additional information about EMF generated by power lines is provided in Appendix D.

Existing Environment

Existing Contamination

The Proposed Project route is located in rural Nevada County in an area with undeveloped land and rural residential uses. To assess the potential for contamination to exist in the Proposed Project area, Environmental Data Resources Inc. (EDR) was directed to conduct a regulatory database search of sites, adjacent to and in the vicinity of the proposed power right-of-way (ROW), that are listed on agency files for the documented use, storage, generation, or releases of hazardous materials and/or petroleum products (EDR, 2006). The database search process reviews dozens of lists generated by federal, State, county, and/or city regulatory agencies for historically contaminated properties, and for businesses that use, generate, or dispose of hazardous materials or petroleum products in their operation. In addition, the database search reviews lists of active contaminated sites that are currently undergoing monitoring and remediation.

The database search identified one site within one mile of the target search point at the intersection of Hirschdale and Floriston roads. The site is a solid waste disposal site approximately 250 feet east of the Proposed Project corridor and was identified by the Integrated Waste Management Board's Solid Waste Information System database. The un-permitted site is referred to as the Sierra Pacific Power Company Abandoned Disposal Site. No information about potential contamination at the site was included in the radius search report. The majority of the Proposed Project ROW was also inspected by Environmental Science Associates staff on August 8, 2006, and no visible or olfactory evidence of existing or potential contamination (e.g., stained soils, distressed vegetation, abandoned drums, etc.) was noted.

Wood Treatment Products

The existing distribution line poles are treated with creosote (Sierra Pacific, 2006). This treatment chemical is used in pressure treated wood to protect wood from rotting due to insects and microbial agents. Creosote, for certain uses and quantities, can be considered to be a hazardous material, which requires specific handling procedures prescribed by State and federal regulations. Creosote is typically applied to wood distribution and power line poles at the pole manufacturer's facility and is let to set and dry prior to installation and/or use of the poles. When the chemicals have dried, leaching from the wood into the environment is generally considered to be negligible.

Wildland Fire Conditions

The northern and southern portions of the Proposed Project route are undeveloped and contain plant communities such as Ponderosa pine series, mixed conifer series, white fir series, red fir series, and big sagebrush series. These areas of the route generally contain rugged topography with moderate to steep slopes that can hinder fire fighting activities. These factors, combined with the typically warm, dry summers, make the Proposed Project area conducive to potentially destructive wildland fires. Fire Hazard Severity Zones are identified in Nevada County based on a combination of fuel availability, weather, and topographic characteristics that affect fire severity and behavior. On a scale from moderate to very high, the County has designated the Proposed Project area as a very high Fire Hazard Severity Zone (Nevada County, 2004).

Regulatory Context

Table 2.7-1 provides a brief overview of federal and State laws and regulations with a more detailed discussion to follow.

Federal and State

Soil Contamination

Excavated soils having concentrations of contaminants higher than certain acceptable levels must be handled and disposed of as hazardous waste. The California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Section 66261.20-24, contains technical descriptions of characteristics that would classify a soil as a hazardous waste.

Hazardous Materials Management

The California Hazardous Materials Release Response Plans and Inventory Law of 1985 (Business Plan Act) requires that businesses handling hazardous materials prepare a business plan. In January 1996, Cal EPA adopted regulations implementing a Unified Hazardous Waste and Hazardous Materials Management Regulatory Program (Unified Program). The program has six elements: hazardous waste generators and hazardous waste on-site treatment; underground storage tanks (UST); aboveground storage tanks (AST); hazardous materials release response plans and inventories; risk management and prevention programs; and Unified Fire Code

**TABLE 2.7-1
FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS REGARDING HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

Hazardous Materials Management	State and federal laws require detailed planning to ensure that hazardous materials are properly handled, used, stored, and disposed of, and in the event that such materials are accidentally released, to prevent or to mitigate injury to health or the environment. These laws require hazardous materials users to prepare written plans, such as Hazard Communication Plans, Hazardous Materials Business Plans, and Chemical Hygiene Plans. Laws and regulations require hazardous materials users to store these materials appropriately and to train employees to manage them safely. A number of agencies participate in enforcing hazardous materials management requirements.
Hazardous Waste Handling	The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) regulates the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous material waste. These laws impose "cradle-to-grave" regulatory systems that require generators of hazardous materials waste to handle it in a manner that protects human health and the environment to the extent possible. The DTSC permits and oversees hazardous materials waste treatment, long-term storage, and disposal facilities.
Hazardous Materials Transportation	The U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) regulates the transportation of hazardous materials between states. Within California, the State agencies with primary responsibility for enforcing federal and State regulations, and for responding to transportation emergencies, are the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Together, federal and State agencies determine driver-training requirements, load labeling procedures, and container specifications. Although special requirements apply to transporting hazardous materials, requirements for transporting hazardous waste are more stringent, and hazardous waste haulers must be licensed to transport hazardous waste on public roads.
Soil and Groundwater Contamination	The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act and associated Superfund Amendments provide the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with the authority to identify hazardous sites, require site remediation, and recover the costs of site remediation from polluters. California has enacted similar laws intended to supplement the federal program. The DTSC is primarily responsible for implementing California's Superfund Law.
Emergency Response	California has developed an emergency response plan to coordinate emergency services provided by federal, State, and local government and private agencies. Responding to hazardous materials incidents is one part of this plan. The plan is administered by the State Office of Emergency Services (OES), which coordinates the responses of other agencies, including Cal EPA, CHP, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and the local fire department.

hazardous materials management plans and inventories. The program is implemented at the local level, and the agency responsible for the implementation of the Unified Program is called the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA).

Hazardous Waste Management and Handling

Under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), individual states may implement their own hazardous waste programs in lieu of RCRA as long as the state program is at least as stringent as federal RCRA requirements. The U.S. EPA must approve state programs intended to implement federal regulations. In California, Cal EPA and DTSC, a department within Cal EPA, regulate the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous wastes. The U.S. EPA approved California's RCRA program, called the Hazardous Waste Control Law (HWCL), in 1992. DTSC has primary hazardous material regulatory responsibility, but can delegate enforcement responsibilities to local jurisdictions that enter into agreements with DTSC for the generation, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials under the authority of the HWCL.

The hazardous waste regulations establish criteria for identifying, packaging, and labeling hazardous wastes; prescribe the management of hazardous wastes; establish permit requirements for hazardous waste treatment, storage, disposal, and transportation; and identify hazardous wastes that cannot be disposed of in ordinary landfills. Hazardous waste manifests must be retained by the generator for a minimum of three years. Hazardous waste manifests provide a description of the waste, its intended destination, and regulatory information about the waste. A copy of each manifest must be filed with the State. The generator must match copies of hazardous waste manifests with receipts from treatment, storage, and disposal facilities.

Contaminated soils and other hazardous materials removed from a site during construction or remediation may need to be handled as hazardous waste.

Hazardous Materials Transportation

The State of California has adopted U.S. DOT regulations for the intrastate movement of hazardous materials; State regulations are contained in 26 CCR. In addition, the State regulates the transportation of hazardous waste originating in the State and passing through the State (26 CCR). Both regulatory programs apply in California.

The two State agencies with primary responsibility for enforcing federal and State regulations and responding to hazardous materials transportation emergencies are the CHP and Caltrans. The CHP enforces hazardous material and hazardous waste labeling and packing regulations to prevent leakage and spills of material in transit and to provide detailed information to cleanup crews in the event of an accident. Vehicle and equipment inspection, shipment preparation, container identification, and shipping documentation are the responsibility of the CHP, which conducts regular inspections of licensed transporters to assure regulatory compliance. Caltrans has emergency chemical spill identification teams at as many as 72 locations throughout the State that can respond quickly in the event of a spill.

Common carriers are licensed by the CHP, pursuant to California Vehicle Code Section 32000. This section requires the licensing of every motor (common) carrier who transports, for a fee, in excess of 500 pounds of hazardous materials at one time, and every carrier, if not for hire, who carries more than 1,000 pounds of hazardous material of the type requiring placards.

Every hazardous waste package type used by a hazardous materials shipper must undergo tests that imitate some of the possible rigors of travel. Every package is not put through every test. However, most packages must be able to be kept under running water for a time without leaking; dropped, fully loaded, onto a concrete floor; compressed from both sides for a period of time; subjected to low and high pressure; and frozen and heated alternately.

Hazardous Materials Emergency Response

Pursuant to the Emergency Services Act, California has developed an Emergency Response Plan to coordinate emergency services provided by federal, State, and local governmental agencies and private persons. Response to hazardous materials incidents is one part of this plan. The plan is administered by the State OES. The OES coordinates the responses of other agencies, including

the U.S. EPA, CHP, DFG, the RWQCBs, the local air districts (in this case, the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD)), and local agencies.

Pursuant to the Business Plan Law, local agencies are required to develop “area plans” to response to releases of hazardous materials and wastes. These emergency response plans depend to a large extent on the Business Plans submitted by people who handle hazardous materials. An area plan must include pre-emergency planning and procedures for emergency response, notification, and coordination of affected governmental agencies and responsible parties, training, and follow up.

Worker Health and Safety

At the federal level, worker health and safety is regulated by the Federal Department of Industrial Relations and the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act (MSHA). Worker health and safety in California is regulated by the California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA). California standards for workers dealing with hazardous materials are contained in CCR Title 8 and include practices for all industries (General Industry Safety Orders), and specific practices for construction, and hazardous waste operations and emergency response.

Aviation Safety

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requires helicopter operators to submit an External Load Lift Plan to the agency for review and approval for public safety purposes prior to lifting external loads over or immediately adjacent to structures and/or roads. In the Proposed Project area, the plan would be submitted to and approved by the FAA’s Reno Flight Standards District Office. The plan would be required to show the exact routes that the helicopter would use and the proximity of the routes to all nearby roads and structures. If the helicopter must fly over a building, the building must be vacated and if it would fly over a road, all traffic on the road must be temporarily stopped. If external load helicopter operations are conducted in an area away from structures and roads, a waiver may be obtained exempting the operator from submitting a plan (FAA, 2006).

Local

Nevada County

The primary agencies responsible for local enforcement of State and federal laws controlling hazardous materials management include the Nevada County Environmental Health Department and the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District. The Nevada County Environmental Health Department is a CUPA, the local agency responsible for coordination of hazardous waste generator programs, underground fuel tank management, and hazardous materials storage. The Department is responsible for management of leaking underground storage tank site investigation and cleanup. The Nevada County Consolidated Fire District offers limited hazardous materials response.

Businesses that store, handle, or dispose of hazardous materials must submit a Hazardous Materials Business Plan (business plan) in accordance with the California Health and Safety Code Section 25504. The business plans must be updated every two years or within 30 days after a substantial change in site operations. The business plan must:

- List all the hazardous materials stored at a site
- Identify emergency response procedures for spills and personnel
- Identify evacuation plans and procedures
- Identify training records for personnel to substantiate annual refresher training.

If hazardous materials are used or stored at a site, all employees are also required to receive hazard communication training. The purpose of the training is to ensure that employees understand the nature of the hazardous materials that they handle and can safely use, store, and dispose of the materials in accordance with the California Code of Regulations Title 8. The hazard communication standard requires that employers must:

- Prepare an inventory of hazardous materials
- Make Material Safety Data Sheets available to employees
- Conduct employee training on chemical hazards and safe handling of materials
- Ensure that hazardous material containers are properly stored and labeled

Inspections of businesses that store hazardous materials are performed by Nevada County Environmental Health Department. The hazard communication requirements are enforced by Cal/OSHA.

Nevada County General Plan

The Safety Element of the Nevada County General Plan contains the following objective related to hazards and hazardous materials:

Objective 10.7: Provide means for the identification, safe use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials (Nevada County, 1996).

Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan

The Proposed Project is within the Town of Truckee's Sphere of Influence; therefore the Town's policies and plans are addressed in this IS/MND. The Town's General Plan also contains the following goals, policies, and actions related to hazards and hazardous materials:

Goal SAF-4: Protect lives and property from risks associated with wildland and urban fire.

Policy P4.7: Ensure that the development review process addresses wildland fire risk, including assessment of both construction- and project related fire risks particularly in areas of the Town most susceptible to fire hazards. Cooperate with the TFFPD in reviewing fire safety plans and provisions in new development, including aspects such as emergency access, site design for maintenance of defensible space, and use of non-combustible materials.

Goal SAF-5: Protect the community from the harmful effects of hazardous materials.

Policy P5.1: Continue to coordinate with the Nevada County Environmental Health Department in the review of all projects which require the use, storage or transport of hazardous waste to ensure necessary measures are taken to protect public health and safety.

Policy P5.3: Support efforts to identify and remediate soils and groundwater contaminated with toxic materials, and to identify and eliminate sources contributing to such contamination.

(Town of Truckee, 2006)

Hazards and Hazardous Materials Impacts and Mitigation Measures

- a) **Hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.***

Impact 2.7-1: Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project would require the use of certain materials such as fuels, oils, solvents, and other chemical products that, in large quantities, could pose a potential hazard to the public or the environment if improperly used or inadvertently released. This would be a less than significant impact with implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.7-1a through 2.7-1e.

During Proposed Project construction activities, limited quantities of miscellaneous hazardous substances, such as gasoline, diesel fuel, hydraulic fluid, solvents, oils, etc. would be used to fuel and maintain vehicles and motorized equipment. An accidental spill of any of these substances could impact water and/or groundwater quality. Temporary bulk above-ground storage tanks and 55-gallon drums may be used for fueling and maintenance purposes. The helicopter would be fueled at the staging area/helicopter yard by a fuel truck. No aviation fuel would be stored at the staging area/helicopter yard.

As with any liquid, during handling and transfer from one container to another, the potential for an accidental release would exist. Depending on the relative hazard of the material, if a spill were to occur of significant quantity, the accidental release could pose a hazard to construction workers, the public, as well as the environment. While the Proposed Project would not require long-term operational use, storage, treatment, disposal, or transport of significant quantities of hazardous materials, hazardous materials would be used during Proposed Project construction activities.

Mitigation Measure 2.7-1a: Sierra Pacific and/or its contractor(s) shall implement construction best management practices including but not limited to the following:

- Follow manufacturer's recommendations on use, storage, and disposal of chemical products used in construction;

- Avoid overtopping construction equipment fuel tanks;
- During routine maintenance of construction equipment, properly contain and remove grease and oils; and
- Properly dispose of discarded containers of fuels and other chemicals.

Mitigation Measure 2.7-1b: *Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan* – Sierra Pacific shall prepare a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan (the Plan) for the Proposed Project and implement it during construction to ensure compliance with all applicable federal, State, and local laws and guidelines regarding the handling of hazardous materials. The Plan shall prescribe hazardous material handling procedures to reduce the potential for a spill during construction, or exposure of the workers or public to hazardous materials. The Plan shall also include a discussion of appropriate response actions in the event that hazardous materials are released or encountered during excavation activities. The Plan shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval prior to the commencement of construction activities.

Mitigation Measure 2.7-1c: *Health and Safety Plan* – Sierra Pacific shall prepare and implement a Health and Safety Plan to ensure the health and safety of construction workers and the public during construction. The plan shall include information on the appropriate personal protective equipment to be used during construction. The Plan shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval prior to the commencement of construction activities.

Mitigation Measure 2.7-1d: *Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP)* – Sierra Pacific shall ensure that an environmental training program is established and delivered to communicate environmental concerns and appropriate work practices to all construction field personnel. The training program shall emphasize site-specific physical conditions to improve hazard prevention, and shall include a review of the Health and Safety Plan and the Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan. Sierra Pacific shall submit documentation to the CPUC mitigation monitor prior to the commencement of construction activities that each worker on the project has undergone this training program.

Mitigation Measure 2.7-1e: *Emergency Spill Supplies and Equipment* – Sierra Pacific shall ensure that oil-absorbent material, tarps, and storage drums shall be used to contain and control any minor releases. Emergency spill supplies and equipment shall be kept adjacent to all areas of work, and shall be clearly marked. Detailed information for responding to accidental spills and for handling any resulting hazardous materials shall be provided in the Proposed Project's Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan (see Mitigation Measure 2.7-1b), which shall be implemented during construction.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

- b) **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 with Mitigation.***

Construction

Impact 2.7-2: Construction activities could release previously unidentified hazardous materials into the environment. This would be a less than significant impact with implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.7-2.

It is not anticipated that construction or operation of the Proposed Project would create a significant hazard to the public due to project upset or accidental release of hazardous materials into the environment. Accidental release of hazardous materials routinely used during construction activities are addressed in section a), above. No contamination has been identified in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Project, although a portion of the Proposed Project would be within 250 feet of an abandoned disposal site. Contamination associated with this site, if it exists, may have the potential to migrate; however, implementation of the Proposed Project would not involve significant grading or large excavations that would be likely to unearth previously unknown contamination. Therefore, the potential release and mobilization of previously identified and unidentified hazardous materials would be relatively low.

Moreover, pursuant to Mitigation Measure 2.7-1c, Sierra Pacific would implement appropriate safety measures to ensure the safety of construction workers. In addition, implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.7-2 (below) would ensure that potential impacts associated with releasing previously unidentified hazardous materials into the environment would be less than significant. For mitigation to reduce impacts related to existing contaminated groundwater, refer to Section 2.8, Hydrology and Water Quality.

Mitigation Measure 2.7-2: Sierra Pacific's Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan shall include provisions that would be implemented if any subsurface hazardous materials are encountered during construction. Provisions outlined in the Plan shall include immediately stopping work in the contaminated area and contacting appropriate resource agencies, including the CPUC designated monitor, upon discovery of subsurface hazardous materials. The plan shall include the phone numbers of County and State agencies and primary, secondary, and final cleanup procedures. The Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval prior to the commencement of construction activities.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

Treated wood distribution line poles to be removed under the Proposed Project would either be reused (by private land owners in the area) or would be brought back to Sierra

Pacific's pole yard in Reno, Nevada for proper disposal or reuse (Sierra Pacific, 2006). Impacts related to the removal and disposal of treated wood would be less than significant.

Operations

The Proposed Project would not include a component (e.g., new substation or modification to an existing substation) that would require the ongoing use of hazardous materials; therefore, operations of the Proposed Project would not result in a hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. No operational impacts would occur.

- c) **Result in hazardous emissions or handling of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school: *Less than Significant.***

No existing or proposed elementary schools have been identified within one-quarter mile of the Proposed Project. In addition, construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not be expected to result in releases of hazardous emissions, substances, or waste because Sierra Pacific would be required to adhere to Mitigation Measures 2.7-1a through 2.7-1e (see above), including the development and implementation of hazardous materials best management practices, a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan, a Health and Safety Plan, and a Worker Environmental Awareness Program. Implementation of the Proposed Project would result in less than significant impacts to nearby schools.

- d) **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, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment: *Less than Significant.***

The Proposed Project would not be located on a site with known hazardous materials contamination. If contaminated materials are encountered during Proposed Project construction activities, implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.7-2 would reduce potential impacts associated with release of previously unknown hazardous materials to less than significant levels.

- e) **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, result in safety hazards for people residing or working in the project area: *Less than Significant.***

There are no airports located within two miles of the Proposed Project ROW. Accordingly, there would be no airport safety hazards associated with implementation of the Proposed Project.

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area: *Less than Significant.*

There are no known private airstrips located within two miles of the Proposed Project. Accordingly, there would be no private airstrip safety hazards associated with implementation of the Proposed Project.

However, construction of the Proposed Project would require the use of helicopters to install poles and string conductor and a temporary helicopter yard would be established near the Proposed Project corridor (see Figure 1-3). Given the close proximity of the helicopter yard and proposed helicopter work areas to existing structures and roads, the helicopter operator would be required to submit an External Load Lift Plan to the FAA for review and approval prior to lifting poles and other materials/equipment (FAA, 2006). FAA approval of the Plan would ensure that all appropriate safety precautions would be implemented by the helicopter operators during construction activities. Safety impacts associated with helicopter construction activities would be less than significant.

g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan: *Less than Significant.*

Several roadways that would be crossed by the Proposed Project would likely need to be temporarily closed during power line stringing activities. These roadways could be used by people evacuating the area during an emergency. However, in the event of an emergency, construction crews would cease all work and would remove any equipment that would impede the flow of traffic. Access for emergency vehicles would be maintained throughout construction of the Proposed Project. Although construction activities may require temporary road closures, appropriate traffic control plans would be followed, and encroachment permits would be obtained from Nevada County (see Section 2.15, Traffic and Transportation). Therefore, the Proposed Project would not physically interfere with emergency response or evacuations. Impacts would be less than significant.

h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.*

Impact 2.7-3: Proposed Project construction activities could ignite dry vegetation and start a fire. This would be a less than significant impact with implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.7-3.

Portions of the Proposed Project would be constructed in open woodland areas that are susceptible to wildland fires. Heat or sparks from construction vehicles or equipment have the potential to ignite dry vegetation and cause a fire. Therefore, a high to moderate fire hazard would likely exist during construction of the Proposed Project. However, implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.7-3 would reduce the potentially significant

wildland fire impact associated with the construction of the Proposed Project to less than significant.

Mitigation Measure 2.7-3: Water tanks shall be sited in the Proposed Project area and be available for fire protection. All construction vehicles shall have fire suppression equipment and construction personnel shall be required to park vehicles away from dry vegetation. Sierra Pacific shall contact and coordinate with the California Department of Forestry and Truckee Fire Protection District to determine the minimum amounts of fire equipment to be carried on the vehicles and appropriate locations for the water tanks. Sierra Pacific shall submit verification of its consultation with CDF and the Truckee Fire Protection District to the CPUC.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

Operations

During operations, the Proposed Project could increase the risk of wildland fires in the area because induced current on the new power line could result in sparks that could reach trees and/or vegetation along the power line corridor that could result in fire. To minimize the risk of trees falling on the power line or other accidental ignition of a wildland fire from the power line, Sierra Pacific would follow State vegetation and tree clearing requirements, including CPUC General Order 95, Public Resources Code Section 4293. Implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires; therefore, operational impacts would be less than significant.

References – Hazards and Hazardous Materials

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Town of Truckee, 2006. *Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan*, adopted November 16, 2006.

2.8 Hydrology and Water Quality

<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>
8. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY— Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other authoritative flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Hydrologic Setting – Climate and Drainage Features

The Proposed Project is contained entirely within the Truckee River watershed which covers approximately 2,720 square miles (UCCSN, 2001). The watershed includes Lake Tahoe, Truckee River, and Pyramid Lake. The Truckee River flows out of Lake Tahoe towards the north, then

near the town of Truckee it bends to the east and crosses the California/Nevada border and ultimately empties into Pyramid Lake.

The climate of the Proposed Project area is classified as humid continental, which is characterized by mild summers and cold winters. Annual precipitation averages about 32 inches annually, with a range of 16 inches to over 54 inches for the period of record (UCCSN, 2001). Precipitation occurs primarily as snowfall during the winter months, which increases with elevation.

The Proposed Project corridor is generally parallel to the Truckee River, which is as close as 300 feet to the east. The terrain varies from rolling hills at the northern end of the corridor becoming moderately steep as it rises from the residences of Hirschdale to the southern end. The Proposed Project corridor crosses three small drainages north of the Hirschdale residential area that drain towards the Truckee River. These three drainages appear to be ephemeral and were dry during a field visit in August (ESA, 2006).

Flooding

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is responsible for mapping areas subject to flooding during a 100-year flood event (i.e., 1 percent chance of occurring in a given year). According to FEMA, the entire Proposed Project corridor is located outside the 100-year floodplain and is mapped as Zone C, which is considered to be an area with minimal potential flooding risk (FEMA, 1983).

Surface Water Quality

The Proposed Project site is within the jurisdictional area of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (LRWQCB). The Basin Plan prepared for the Lahontan Region identifies the beneficial uses of surface waters for the development of water quality standards. Beneficial uses of the Truckee River include municipal/domestic water supply, agricultural, groundwater recharge, recreation, commercial fishing, wildlife, cold freshwater habitat, rare species habitat, migration, spawning, and flood control. In consideration of these beneficial uses, the LRWQCB has identified sedimentation/siltation, which includes sediment, settleable materials and suspended materials, as the primary water quality issues for the Truckee River (LRWQCB, 1994). The potential sources of the identified pollutants in the watershed include ski resorts, silvicultural (forestry) activities, urban development, reservoir construction and management, and highly erosive subwatersheds (USEPA, 2003).

Regulatory Context

Federal and State

The legislation governing the water quality aspects of the Proposed Project are the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Division 7 of the California Water Code); these acts provide the basis for water quality regulation. The California legislature has assigned the primary responsibility to administer regulations for the protection and enhancement of water quality to the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)

and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB). The SWRCB provides State-level coordination of the water quality control program by establishing Statewide policies and plans for the implementation of State and federal regulations. Nine RWQCBs throughout California adopt and implement water quality control plans (basin plans) that recognize the unique characteristics of each region with regard to natural water quality, actual and potential beneficial uses, and water quality problems. The Proposed Project is located within the Lahontan RWQCB (LRWQCB) region and would be required to comply with the requirements of the LRWQCB Basin Plan.

Beneficial Use and Section 303(d)

The LRWQCB is responsible for the protection of the beneficial uses of waters within Nevada County. The LRWQCB uses planning, permitting, and enforcement authorities to meet this responsibility and has adopted the Water Quality Control Plan for the Lahontan Region (Basin Plan) to implement plans, policies, and provisions for water quality management. The Basin Plan was originally drafted in 1975 and has been heavily amended between 1975 and 1991, with the most recent version published in 1994 (LRWQCB, 1994). The LRWQCB is currently conducting a triennial review of the Basin Plan that will result in a list of topics to be investigated and worked upon for potential Basin Plan revisions (LRWQCB, 2007).

In accordance with State policy for water quality control, the LRWQCB employs a range of beneficial use definitions for surface waters, groundwater basins, marshes, and mudflats that serve as the basis for establishing water quality objectives and discharge conditions and prohibitions. The Basin Plan has identified existing and potential beneficial uses supported by the key surface water drainages throughout its jurisdiction. The Basin Plan also includes water quality objectives for each of the identified beneficial uses.

Furthermore, under Section 303(d) of the 1972 CWA, the State of California is required to develop a list of quality impaired water bodies that do not meet water quality standards and objectives. A Statewide list of impaired water bodies was first established in 1998 and subsequently has been updated to include more recent information and new pollutants.

NPDES Program

The CWA was amended in 1972 to provide that the discharge of pollutants to waters of the United States from any point source is unlawful unless the discharge is in compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The 1987 amendments to the CWA added Section 402(p), which establishes a framework for regulating municipal and industrial storm water discharges under the NPDES Program. In November 1990, the USEPA published final regulations that establish storm water permit application requirements for discharges of storm water to waters of the United States from construction projects that encompass five or more acres of soil disturbance. Regulations (Phase II Rule) that became final on December 8, 1999, expanded the existing NPDES Program to address storm water discharges from construction sites that disturb land equal to or greater than one acre and less than five acres (small construction sites). The Proposed Project would disturb less than one acre, so it would not be subject to the NPDES Program.

Local

Nevada County General Plan

The Nevada County General Plan includes objectives and policies that are designed to protect the water resources in the County. The following objective and policy are relevant to the Proposed Project:

Objective 10.6: Land use patterns and development standards shall minimize hazards resulting from flooding, earthquake, slope failure, avalanche, and other natural occurrences.

Policy 10.12: Avoid potential increases in downstream flooding potential by protecting natural drainage and vegetative patterns through project site plan review, application of Comprehensive Site Development Standards, use of clustered development and project subdivision design. The Comprehensive Site Development Standards shall include measures applicable to all discretionary and ministerial projects to avoid downstream flooding resulting from new development. Such measures, shall include, but not be limited to:

- a. Avoidance of stream channel modifications;
- b. Avoidance of excessive areas of impervious surfaces; and
- c. Use of on-site retention or detention of storm water.

Objective 11.2: Preserve surface and sub-surface water quality and, where feasible, improve such quality.

Policy 11.4: Cooperate with State and local agencies in efforts to identify and reduce to acceptable levels all sources of existing and potential point- and non-point-source pollution to ground and surface waters, including leaking fuel tanks, discharges from storm drains, auto dismantling and dump sites, sanitary waste systems, parking lots, roadways, logging and mining operations.

Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan

The following goal would be applicable to the Proposed Project:

Goal SAF-2: Reduce hazards associated with flooding.

The four policies included to support this goal do not apply to the Proposed Project since it is not a development project.

Hydrology and Water Quality Impacts and Mitigation Measures

- a) **Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements: *Less than Significant.***

Potential water pollutants could be generated during construction of the Proposed Project, including sediment and petroleum based fuels and lubricants associated with construction

equipment. Construction activities have the potential to temporarily increase the sediment load of stormwater runoff from construction areas (e.g., surface disruption of soil at work areas, the staging area/helicopter yard, access roads, pull and tension sites, etc.). Excess sediment in surface drainage pathways can alter and degrade the aquatic habitat in creeks and rivers. In addition, if construction equipment or workers inadvertently release pollutants such as hydraulic fluid or petroleum to the surface water, these materials could be entrained by stormwater and discharged into surface water features causing water quality degradation. Potential pollutant sources would be present only during the construction phase of the Proposed Project and would not be an issue following its installation.

The Proposed Project is small in scope and would require a minor amount of soil disturbance and mechanized equipment. Soil and vegetation disturbance and equipment that would be used for the Proposed Project would take place in several localized areas including temporary work areas, installation of Access Road 2, pull and tension sites and the staging area/helicopter yard. Establishing these areas would require removal of some low vegetation. Existing access roads would be used to the extent possible, with only one short new overland travel road (Access Road 2) proposed from Hirschdale Road to the existing Line 621 ROW. No grading would be required for any component of the Proposed Project. Each pole installation (approximately 19 all together) would require a work area of approximately 100 square feet. Preparation at each work area may require some vegetation removal and surface soil disturbance but the primary source of soil disturbance would be associated with digging the holes for pole installation. Holes for pole installation would need to be less than 2 feet wide and approximately 7.5 feet deep. A total area of about 13,000 square feet (0.3 acre) is proposed to be cleared of vegetation with a hydroaxe for the Proposed Project staging area/helicopter yard, pull and tension sites, and Access Road 2. Total area of disturbance associated with the Proposed Project would be approximately 15,000 square feet.

Soil erosion risk is determined by two principle factors: 1) the amount of surface runoff generated and 2) the physical characteristics of the soil (i.e., susceptibility to erosion). Implementation of best management practices (BMPs) is standard in the construction industry and is commonly used to minimize water quality degradation. As discussed in the Regulatory Context section above, the Proposed Project would not be required to comply with the NPDES Permit for Construction. However, as a matter of practice, Sierra Pacific implements BMPs on its construction projects as needed for the protection of surface water. Sierra Pacific BMPs that would be implemented as parts of the Proposed Project include, but are not necessarily limited to, proper construction scheduling (i.e., construct during the dry season), preservation of existing vegetation where possible, and revegetation (i.e., seeding) of Access Road 2, the pole sites, the pull and tension sites, and the staging area/helicopter yard.

Considering the use of BMPs, the relatively small scope of activities proposed, and the distance to the Truckee River, the potential impact to surface water quality is considered less than significant.

b) Depletion of groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level: *Less than Significant.*

The depth to groundwater in the Proposed Project area is not known but is likely deeper than 7.5 feet based on topographic information. The Proposed Project would not require the use of available groundwater and would have no impact to the local or regional groundwater resource. In addition, pole installation sites, work areas, pull and tension sites, the staging area/helicopter yard, and access roads required for the Proposed Project would not result in a net increase in impervious surfaces. Thus, the Proposed Project would not cause a measurable reduction in surface infiltration or a decrease in deep percolation to the underlying aquifers. Potential impacts associated with groundwater recharge would be less than significant.

c) Alter existing drainage pattern of the site or area in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site: *Less than Significant.*

The replacement of electrical poles would not alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area. During construction, erosion control measures in the form of BMPs would be implemented to reduce the potential for erosion or siltation to the maximum extent possible. Once installed, the Proposed Project would not result in substantial erosion or siltation and this potential impact would be less than significant.

d) Alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site: *Less than Significant.*

Construction or operation of the Proposed Project would not alter drainage patterns such that they would cause flooding on- or off-site. The proposed vegetation removal and topsoil disturbance would be relatively minor with no increase in impervious surfaces that could cause a noticeable increase in stormwater runoff. The total footprint of each newly installed pole would be the area covered by an approximately two-foot diameter wood pole. The staging area/helicopter yard would be used on a temporary basis and would not significantly affect drainage patterns. Impacts associated with alteration of drainage area and potential flooding would be less than significant.

e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff: *Less than Significant.*

The Proposed Project would not increase runoff to any measurable degree. The Proposed Project is, for the most part, located in open space where no managed stormwater drainage system exists. No additional sources of polluted runoff, aside from those discussed in a), above, would occur as a result of construction activities related to the Proposed Project. Thus, this potential impact is considered less than significant.

f) **Otherwise degrade water quality: *Less than Significant.***

The Proposed Project would not result in potential surface water pollution beyond the issues discussed in a), above. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would not otherwise degrade water quality beyond the issues previously addressed. The potential impact is less than significant.

g) **Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other authoritative flood hazard delineation map: *No Impact.***

The Proposed Project would not include the construction of housing nor is the Proposed Project area located within a 100-year flood zone. Therefore, there is no potential impact.

h) **Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows: *No Impact.***

The Proposed Project area is not located within a 100-year flood zone and no structures would be built capable of redirecting flood flows. Therefore, there is no potential impact.

i) **Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam: *Less than Significant.***

The Proposed Project does not include any habitable structures and is not located in a 100-year flood zone. There are several dams in the area including the Prosser, Boca and Stampede dams. The poles would be able to withstand flooding from a dam failure without damage; however, the release of water due to failure of any of these dams would be contained within the confines of the Truckee River channel and not impact the Proposed Project corridor (Nevada County, 1996). Therefore, the potential impact from flooding due to dam or levee failure is considered less than significant.

j) **Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow: *Less than Significant.***

The Proposed Project is not located near an ocean or enclosed bay that could be impacted by a seiche or tsunami. Mudflows are typically associated with volcanic eruptions. Although the Proposed Project area is located in an area with a history of past volcanic activity, the volcanic flows in the area occurred more than a million years ago and are not likely to occur again (Jennings, 1994). Because volcanic activity is unlikely to occur in this region, the potential for pole and wire damage or service disruption caused by an associated mudflow (or debris avalanche) is low and the impact is less than significant.

References – Hydrology and Water Quality

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- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 1983.
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- Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (LRWQCB), 2007. *LRWQCB Basin Plan webpage*, accessed online (http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb6/BPlan/BPlan_Index.htm) January 3, 2007.
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- University and Community College System of Nevada, Las Vegas, Division of Hydrologic Sciences, Desert Research Institute, 2001, *Water Quality Assessment and Modeling of the California Portion of the Truckee River Basin*, July 2001.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), 2003. *2002 CWA 303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Segment*, Approved by the USEPA July 2003.

2.9 Land Use, Planning, and Policies

<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>
9. LAND USE AND LAND USE PLANNING— Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Regional

Single family residential is the predominant housing type throughout the County, with most of the multi-family housing development located in Grass Valley. In addition, considerable development has occurred throughout much of rural Nevada County. While residences are found along many of the highways and roadways in the rural areas of the County, residential development is also found in a dozen or so smaller rural communities.

The extent of public land is a major factor in the County's land use pattern. There are several land use/land ownerships that cover a significant amount of the County's total land area, including the Tahoe National Forest, Bureau of Land Management Lands, and the Spenceville Wildlife and Recreation Area. Resource based land uses, including agriculture and timberlands continue to be significant in terms of the extent of such uses and the continuity of their function in the County's economy. These uses also contribute to maintenance of the rural environment of the County, and by maintaining the rural character, enhance tourism in the County (Nevada County, 1996).

Local

The Proposed Project transmission line would be in an existing Sierra Pacific distribution line corridor generally paralleling local roads and traversing open space with sagebrush scrub vegetation, including scattered pine trees and pine woodland. A portion of the line would be located within the community of Hirschdale, passing adjacent to several dozen single-family residences. The Truckee River is located immediately to the east of the Proposed Project.

Regulatory Context

California Public Utilities Commission General Order No. 131-D

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has sole and exclusive jurisdiction over the siting and design of the Proposed Project because it authorizes the construction and maintenance of investor-owned public utility facilities. Pursuant to General Order 131-D, Section XIV.B, local jurisdictions acting pursuant to local authority are preempted from regulating electric power line projects constructed by public utilities subject to the Commission's jurisdiction. However, in locating such projects, the public utilities must consult with local agencies regarding land use matters (CPUC, 1994).

Nevada County General Plan

The Proposed Project is located entirely within the jurisdiction of Nevada County and the parcels through which it would traverse are designated by the Nevada County General Plan for *Neighborhood Commercial* (NC); *Urban High Density Residential* (UHD); *Estate* (EST) and *Planned Development* (PD) uses (Nevada County, 2004). The *Neighborhood Commercial* designation is intended to “provide for local needs of nearby neighborhoods, and limited mixed use employment opportunities”; the *Urban High Density Residential* designation is intended for “residential uses...of up to 20 dwelling units per acre”; the *Estate* designation is intended “to provide for low density residential development...in areas which are essentially rural in character”; and the *Planned Development* designation is “intended to designate planned developments in locations where a mix of uses is desirable” and “may allow a variety of land uses, including...residential, commercial, industrial, open space, and/or other land uses consistent with the capability and constraints of the land” (Nevada County, 1996).

Nevada County Zoning Ordinance and Map

The parcels through which the Proposed Project would traverse are currently zoned *Residential Agricultural* (RA-3), *Neighborhood Commercial* (C1), *High Density Residential – Mobilehome Parks Combining District* (R3-MH), and *Interim Development Preserve* (IDR) (Nevada County, 1997). The *Residential Agricultural* zoning district establishes provisions for low density single-family dwellings, as well as other dwelling unit types in keeping with the rural character of the area; the *Neighborhood Commercial* zoning district provides for the retail and service needs of nearby neighborhoods and limited mixed use employment opportunities; the *High Density Residential* zoning district provides for high density multiple-family housing; and the *Interim Development Preserve* district provides an interim zoning district that reflects and reserves the development potential of property designated as Planned Development in the General Plan (Nevada County, 2005).

Combining Districts are established to provide specialized consideration of unique or sensitive areas. When added to a base zoning district, the standards established in the combining district may require more or less restrictive regulations. The *Mobilehome Parks Combining District*, or

MH, provides special regulations for establishing mobilehome parks within residential zoning districts (Nevada County, 2005).

Section L-II 3.14 of the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance generally allows for public utility uses and structures within all zoning districts; specifically, electrical transmission and distribution lines carrying up to 120,000 volts (120 kV) are not regulated by the County Zoning Ordinance (Nevada County, 2005).

Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan

The Town of Truckee adopted its 2025 General Plan in November 2006. The Proposed Project is located within the Town of Truckee's sphere of influence, which is defined as "the area outside of the city limits that the city expects to annex in future years." The following General Plan policy is relevant to the Proposed Project:

Policy P8.3: Encourage in cooperation with Nevada County that development within the sphere of influence, whether annexed in the Town or approved under County jurisdiction, is consistent with the Town 2025 General Plan.

(Town of Truckee, 2006)

Town of Truckee Development Code and Zoning Map

The Truckee Zoning Map does not provide zoning designations for the parcels through which the Proposed Project would traverse because those parcels are not located within the Town's zoning jurisdiction. In addition, Section 18.02.030 of the Truckee Development Code provides that electrical transmission and distribution carrying up to 100,000 volts (100 kV) are exempt from the land use permit requirements of the Development Code (Town of Truckee, 2003).

Land Use and Planning Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Physical division of an established community: *No Impact.*

Because the Proposed Project involves the installation of a 60 kV transmission line in an existing 12.5 kV distribution line right-of-way easement and because the transmission line would not restrict access to or within the community of Hirschdale, the Proposed Project would not result in the physical division of an established community.

b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect: *Less than Significant.*

While local regulation of electric power line projects is preempted under CPUC General Order 131-D, the CPUC seeks to cooperate with local government agencies. Because the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance does not apply to electrical transmission lines that carry less than 120 kV and because the Proposed Project consists of the installation of a

60 kV transmission line, the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance is not applicable to the Proposed Project. In addition, the Zoning Ordinance allows for public utility uses and structures within all zoning districts. Thus, the Proposed Project would not conflict with any applicable land use plans or policies. Similarly, because the Town of Truckee Development Code does not apply to electrical transmission and distribution lines that carry less than 100 kV and because the Proposed Project consists of the installation of a 60 kV transmission line, the Town of Truckee Development Code is not applicable to the Proposed Project. In addition, the Proposed Project is consistent with Town of Truckee General Plan Policy P8.3 in that the project applicant will seek to conform to Town of Truckee policies applicable to the sphere of influence, as feasible. Potential conflicts with the Town of Truckee General Plan are analyzed throughout this MND. Where some MND sections do not include such a discussion, Town of Truckee General Plan policies were found not to be applicable.

c) **Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan: *No Impact.***

There are no adopted habitat conservation or natural community conservation plans that are applicable to the Proposed Project area; therefore, no impacts would occur.

References – Land Use, Planning, and Policies

CPUC, 1994. General Order 131-D: *Rules Relating to the Planning and Construction of Electric Generation, Transmission/Power/Distribution Line Facilities and Substations Located in California*. Decision 94-06-014, Adopted June 8, 1994, Effective July 8, 1994.

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2.10 Mineral 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>
10. MINERAL RESOURCES—Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Existing Mineral Resources

Mineral resources present in Nevada County include gold, copper, silver, lead, zinc, chromite, tungsten, manganese, industrial minerals, and materials suitable for construction aggregate such as sand, gravel and rock (Nevada County, 1995). Numerous aggregate production areas are present in Nevada County with one active production area, the Boca Quarry, located in the eastern portion of the County. Between 0.5 and 2 million tons per year of aggregate materials for Caltrans and other construction projects are produced from the Boca Quarry (Kohler, 2002).

The California Geological Survey (CGS) has classified the regional significance of mineral resources in accordance with the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA). Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) delineated by CGS identify the presence and significance of mineral deposits within the Proposed Project area. In eastern Nevada County, significant mineral resource deposits, classified as MRZ-2, extend along the Truckee River next to the community of Hirschdale.

Geothermal Resources

Known or potential geothermal resources in Nevada County are limited to the eastern half of the County (Laney and Brizzee, 2003). The Proposed Project area lies within a known or potential geothermal resource area with no identified industrial or other geothermal category operation anywhere near the Proposed Project area (Laney and Brizzee, 2003).

Regulatory Context

State

Surface Mining and Reclamation Act

The primary State law concerning conservation and development of mineral resources is the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975, as amended to date. SMARA is found in the California Public Resources Code (PRC), Division 2, Chapter 9, Sections 2710, *et seq.*

Depending on the region, natural resources can include geologic deposits of valuable minerals used in manufacturing processes and the production of construction materials. SMARA was enacted in 1975 to limit new development in areas with significant mineral deposits. SMARA calls for the State geologist to classify the lands within California based on mineral resource availability. In addition, the California Health and Safety Code requires the covering, filling, or fencing of abandoned shafts, pits, and excavations (California Health and Safety Code Sections 24400-03.). Furthermore, mining may also be regulated by local government, which has the authority to prohibit mining pursuant to its general plan and local zoning laws.

Local

Nevada County General Plan

The Nevada County General Plan includes a Mineral Management Chapter to protect the many mineral resources that exist within the entire County and provides guidance for resolving conflicts with different land uses (Nevada County, 1995). The Chapter is compatible with and required by the California State Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975. The following Goal and Objective provides the guidance for the policies developed related to mining:

Goal 17.1: Recognize and protect valuable mineral resources for current and future generations in a manner that does not create land use conflicts.

Objective 17.1: Protect valuable mineral deposits from intrusion by incompatible land uses that will impede or preclude mineral extraction or processing. Promote the proper management of all mineral resource activities in the County and minimize the impact of extraction and processing on neighboring activities and the environment in general.

Mineral Resources Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state: *No Impact*

Extraction operations exist outside the Proposed Project area. The Proposed Project would replace existing poles with new poles and no additional construction is proposed that would cause the loss of a known mineral resource. Therefore, there is no potential for the Proposed Project to result in the loss of mineral or unique geologic features.

b) Loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan: *No Impact*

The activities that would be associated with the Proposed Project would affect only a small area, the majority of which would be located within existing utility right-of-way. The Proposed Project would traverse no areas currently used to extract known mineral resources. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of locally-important minerals.

References – Mineral Resources

Nevada County, 1995. *Nevada County General Plan, Volume 2: Background Data and Analysis*, 1995.

Kohler, Susan L., California Geological Survey, 2002. *Aggregate Availability in California*, July 2002.

Laney, Patrick and Julie Brizzee, 2003. Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory, *California Geothermal Resources*, November, 2003.

2.11 Noise

<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>
11. NOISE—Would the project:				
a) Result in exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan area, or, where such a plan has not been adopted, in an area within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project located in the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Noise Background

Sound is mechanical energy transmitted by pressure waves through a medium such as air. Noise can be defined as unwanted sound. Sound is characterized by various parameters that include the rate of oscillation of sound waves (frequency), the speed of propagation, and the pressure level or energy content (amplitude). In particular, the sound pressure level has become the most common descriptor used to characterize the loudness of an ambient sound level. Sound pressure level is measured in decibels (dB), with zero dB corresponding roughly to the threshold of human hearing, and 120 to 140 dB corresponding to the threshold of pain.

Sound pressure fluctuations can be measured in units of hertz (Hz), which correspond to the frequency of a particular sound. Typically, sound does not consist of a single frequency, but rather a broad band of frequencies varying in levels of magnitude (sound power). When all the audible frequencies of a sound are measured, a sound spectrum is plotted consisting of a range of frequency spanning 20 to 20,000 Hz. The sound pressure level, therefore, constitutes the additive force exerted by a sound corresponding to the sound frequency/sound power level spectrum.

The typical human ear is not equally sensitive to all frequencies of the audible sound spectrum. As a consequence, when assessing potential noise impacts, sound is measured using an electronic filter that de-emphasizes the frequencies below 1,000 Hz and above 5,000 Hz in a manner corresponding to the human ear's decreased sensitivity to low and extremely high frequencies instead of the frequency mid-range. This method of frequency weighting is referred to as A-weighting and is expressed in units of A-weighted decibels (dBA).¹

Noise Exposure and Community Noise

An individual's noise exposure is a measure of the noise experienced by the individual over a period of time. A noise level is a measure of noise at a given instant in time. However, noise levels rarely persist consistently over a long period of time. In fact, community noise varies continuously with time with respect to the contributing sound sources of the community noise environment. Community noise is primarily the product of many distant noise sources, which constitute a relatively stable background noise exposure, with the individual contributors unidentifiable. Background noise levels change throughout a typical day, but do so gradually, corresponding with the addition and subtraction of distant noise sources and atmospheric conditions. The addition of short duration single event noise sources (e.g., aircraft flyovers, motor vehicles, sirens) makes community noise constantly variable throughout a day.

These successive additions of sound to the community noise environment vary the community noise level from instant to instant requiring the measurement of noise exposure over a period of time to legitimately characterize a community noise environment and evaluate cumulative noise impacts. This time-varying characteristic of environmental noise is described using statistical noise descriptors. The most frequently used noise descriptors are summarized below:

L_{eq} : The equivalent sound level is used to describe noise over a specified period of time, in terms of a single numerical value. The L_{eq} is the constant sound level which would contain the same acoustic energy as the varying sound level, during the same time period (i.e., the average noise exposure level for the given time period).

L_{max} : The instantaneous maximum noise level measured during the measurement period of interest.

L_{dn} : The energy average of the A-weighted sound levels occurring during a 24-hour period, and which accounts for the greater sensitivity of most people to nighttime noise by weighting noise levels at night ("penalizing" nighttime noises). Noise between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. is weighted (penalized) by adding 10 dBA to take into account the greater annoyance of nighttime noises.

CNEL: Similar to the L_{dn} , the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) adds a 5-dBA "penalty" for the evening hours between 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. in addition to a 10-dBA penalty between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

¹ All noise levels reported herein reflect A-weighted decibels unless otherwise stated.

Effects of Noise on People

The effects of noise on people can be placed into three categories:

- subjective effects of annoyance, nuisance, dissatisfaction;
- interference with activities such as speech, sleep, learning; and
- physiological effects such as hearing loss or sudden startling.

Environmental noise typically produces effects in the first two categories. Workers at industrial plants often experience noise in the last category. There is no completely satisfactory way to measure the subjective effects of noise, or the corresponding reactions of annoyance and dissatisfaction. A wide variation exists in the individual thresholds of annoyance, and different tolerances to noise tend to develop based on an individual's past experiences with noise.

Thus, an important way of predicting a human reaction to a new noise environment is the way the new noise compares to the existing noise levels to which one has adapted: the so called "ambient noise" level. In general, the more a new noise exceeds the previously existing ambient noise level, the less acceptable the new noise will be judged by those hearing it. With regard to increases in A-weighted noise level, the following relationships occur:

- Except in carefully controlled laboratory experiments, a change of 1 dBA cannot be perceived;
- Outside of the laboratory, a 3 dBA change is considered a just-perceivable difference when the change in noise is perceived but does not cause a human response;
- A change of at least 5 dBA is required before any noticeable change in human response would be expected; and
- A 10 dBA change is subjectively heard as approximately a doubling in loudness, and can cause an adverse response.

These relationships occur in part because of the logarithmic nature of sound and the decibel system. A ruler is a *linear* scale: it has marks on it corresponding to equal quantities of distance. One way of expressing this is to say that the ratio of successive intervals is equal to one. A *logarithmic* scale is different in that the ratio of successive intervals is not equal to one. Each interval on a logarithmic scale is some common factor larger than the previous interval. A typical ratio is 10, so that the marks on the scale read: 1, 10, 100, 1,000, 10,000, etc., doubling the variable plotted on the x-axis. The human ear perceives sound in a non-linear fashion, hence the decibel scale was developed. Because the decibel scale is based on logarithms, two noise sources do not combine in a simple additive fashion, rather logarithmically. For example, if two identical noise sources produce noise levels of 50 dBA, the combined sound level would be 53 dBA, not 100 dBA.

Noise Attenuation

Point sources of noise, including stationary mobile sources such as idling vehicles or onsite construction equipment, attenuate (lessen) at a rate of 6 dBA to 7.5 dBA per doubling of distance from the source, depending upon environmental conditions (e.g., atmospheric conditions, noise

barriers, type of ground surface, etc.). Widely distributed noises such as a large industrial facility spread over many acres or a street with moving vehicles (a “line” source) would typically attenuate at a lower rate of approximately 3 to 4.5 dBA per doubling distance from the source (also dependent upon environmental conditions) (Caltrans, 1998).

Existing Ambient Noise Environment

The Proposed Project encompasses an approximately 3,500-foot long corridor within rural residential and open space areas. The primary contributors to the noise environment along this corridor include vehicle traffic on County roads; airplane overflights; sounds emanating from the town of Hirschdale, including voices, noises from household appliances, and radio and television sets; and naturally occurring sounds such as wind and wind-generated rustling. Ambient L_{eq} and L_{max} noise levels measured along the Proposed Project corridor in the community of Hirschdale are presented in Table 2.11-1.

**TABLE 2.11-1
NOISE LEVELS AT THE PROPOSED PROJECT SITE IN THE COMMUNITY OF HIRSCHDALE**

Measurement Location	Time	L_{eq}	L_{max}	Predominant Noise Sources
Near residences along the east side of Floriston Road.	12:01 p.m.	54.0	69.3	Distant traffic noise associated with Hirschdale Road was noted.
Near the intersection of Juniper Way and Floriston Road, approximately 100 feet west of Hirschdale Road.	12:30 p.m.	60.1	76.5	Traffic noise associated with Hirschdale Road (three semi-tractor trucks passed by during the monitoring period).

NOTE: Short-term (five minute) measurements were collected on August 8, 2006.

Sensitive Receptors

Human response to noise varies considerably from one individual to another. Effects of noise at various levels can include interference with sleep, concentration, and communication, and can cause physiological and psychological stress and hearing loss. Given these effects, some land uses are considered more sensitive to ambient noise levels than others. In general, residences, schools, hotels, hospitals, and nursing homes are considered to be the most sensitive to noise. Places such as churches, libraries, and cemeteries, where people tend to pray, study, and/or contemplate are also sensitive to noise. Commercial and industrial uses are considered the least noise-sensitive. There are approximately 30 homes in the community of Hirschdale that are in close proximity to the Proposed Project corridor. The closest residences to the Proposed Project staging area/helicopter yard are approximately 1,200 feet to the south.

Regulatory Context

Federal, State, and local agencies regulate different aspects of environmental noise. Federal and State agencies generally set noise standards for mobile sources such as aircraft and motor vehicles, while regulation of stationary sources is left to local agencies. Local regulation of noise involves implementation of general plan policies and noise ordinance standards. Local general

plans identify general principles intended to guide and influence development plans; local noise codes establish standards and procedures for addressing specific noise sources and activities.

Nevada County

The Nevada County General Plan Noise Element goals, objectives, and policies applicable to the Proposed Project include:

Goal 9.1: Provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Nevada County through a set of policies designed to encourage an environment free of unnecessary and annoying noise.

Objective 9.1: Determine the existing noise environment and continue to reassess this environment so that a realistic set of noise standards can be developed reflecting the varying nature of different land uses.

Policy 9.1: Pursuant to County Code Section L-11 4.1.7 Noise, the following noise performance standards and land use compatibility standards, shall apply to all discretionary and ministerial projects excluding permitted residential (including tentative maps) land uses. The standards do not apply to those activities associated with the actual construction of a project or to those projects associated with the provision of emergency services or functions. If the measured ambient level exceeds that permitted, then the allowable noise exposure standard shall be set at 5 dBA above the ambient.

**TABLE 2.11-2
NEVADA COUNTY EXTERIOR NOISE LIMITS**

Land Use Category	Zoning Districts	Time Period	Noise Level, dBA	
			Leq	L _{max}
Rural	"A1" "TPZ"	7 am - 7 pm	55	75
	"AE" "OS"	7 pm - 10 pm	50	65
	"FR" "IDR"	10 pm - 7 am	40	55
Residential and Public	"RA" "R2"	7 am - 7 pm	55	75
	"R1" "R3"	7 pm - 10 pm	50	65
	"P"	10 pm - 7 am	45	60
Commercial and Recreation	"C1" "CH" "CS"	7 am - 7 pm	70	90
	"C2" "C3" "OP" "REC"	7 pm - 7 am	65	75
Business Park	"BP"	7 am - 7 pm	65	85
		7 pm - 7 am	60	70
Industrial	"M1" "M2"	any time	80	90

Policy 9.5: Encourage heavy truck traffic to those routes outside residential areas.

Policy 9.9: Limit future noise generating land uses to those locations of the County where their impacts on noise sensitive land uses will be minimized, consistent with the standards found in Policy 9.1.

Policy 9.10: Require the preparation of a comprehensive noise study for all land use projects determined to have a potential to create noise levels inconsistent with those standards found in Policy 9.1, and in accordance with the methodology identified in the

Noise Element Manual contained in General Plan Volume 2, Section 3 - Noise Analysis Appendix A.

Policy 9.11: Provide for adequate design controls to assist in mitigating on-site the significant adverse impacts of future noise generating land uses through increased setbacks, landscaping, earthen berms, and solid fencing;

(Nevada County, 1996)

Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan

The Truckee General Plan includes a Noise Compatibility Matrix to be used as a guideline by the Town and project proponents to achieve long-term noise compatibility for land uses in the Town of Truckee. The guidelines are to be used both to determine the compatibility of situating land uses within a certain noise environment, and for the location of development and transportation system projects that may impact existing uses. The matrix identifies normally acceptable exterior levels in residential areas to be up to 60 Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) and conditionally acceptable levels to be up to 65 CNEL (Section E, Land Use Compatibility).

The General Plan also identifies policies designed to reduce short-term and long-term community noise levels, such as:

Policy P2.1: Require mitigation of all significant noise impacts as a condition of project approval.

Policy P3.1: Enforce provisions of the Municipal Noise Ordinance, which limits maximum permitted noise levels that cross property lines and impact adjacent land uses.

Policy P3.2: Regulate noise from non-emergency construction activities through the Municipal Noise Ordinance.

Policy P3.3: Control the sound of vehicle amplification systems (e.g., loud stereos) by enforcing Section 27007 of the California Motor Vehicle Code. This section prohibits amplified sound which can be heard 50 or more feet from a vehicle.

Policy P3.4: Control excessive vehicle exhaust noise by enforcing Section 27150 of the California Vehicle Code.

Policy P3.5: Investigate other methods for reducing noise associated with vehicles and diesel equipment, and support efforts to reduce vehicle and equipment noise – e.g. through fleet and equipment modernization or retrofits, use of alternative fuel vehicles, and installation of mufflers or other noise reducing equipment.

Policy P3.6: Encourage transportation providers to investigate and consider use of alternative road surfacing materials that minimize vehicle noise.

Policy P3.7: Enforce posted speed limits on Town roads.

Policy P3.13: Require the following standard construction noise control measures to be included as requirements at construction sites in order to minimize construction noise impacts:

- Equip all internal combustion engine driven equipment with intake and exhaust mufflers that are in good condition and appropriate for the equipment.
- Locate stationary noise generating equipment as far as possible from sensitive receptors when sensitive receptors adjoin or are near a construction project area.
- Utilize “quiet” air compressors and other stationary noise generating equipment where appropriate technology exists.
- The project sponsor shall designate a “disturbance coordinator” who would be responsible for responding to any local complaints about construction noise. The disturbance coordinator will determine the cause of the noise complaint (e.g., starting too early, bad muffler, etc.) and will require that reasonable measures warranted to correct the problem be implemented. The project sponsor shall also post a telephone number for excessive noise complaints in conspicuous locations in the vicinity of the project site. Additionally, the project sponsor shall send a notice to neighbors in the project vicinity with information on the construction schedule and the telephone number for noise complaints.

(Town of Truckee, 2006)

Noise Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Evaluation of potential noise impacts from Proposed Project construction and operation included reviewing relevant County noise standards and policies, characterizing the existing noise environment throughout the Proposed Project area, and projecting noise from construction and operation of Proposed Project facilities. Impacts were assessed by comparing the published noise levels of construction equipment and operational activities to the ambient noise environment and significance criteria, based on applicable noise regulations.

Temporary impacts during construction are considered significant if they would substantially interfere with affected land uses. Substantial interference could result from a combination of factors including: the generation of noise levels substantially greater than existing ambient noise levels, construction efforts lasting long periods of time, and/or construction activities that would affect noise-sensitive uses during the nighttime.

The Proposed Project’s operational impact on the ambient noise environment would be considered substantial if it would result in ambient noise levels greater than the standards presented in Table 2.11-2 if the existing noise environment is below those standards. In areas where the existing ambient noise environment is already greater than the standards, an ambient noise level increase of five dBA or more at a sensitive receptor would be considered substantial.

- a) **Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.***

Potential noise impacts associated with construction and operation of the Proposed Project includes noise from construction equipment, blasting activities, corona discharge associated with the power line, and maintenance and inspection activities.

Construction

Impact 2.11-1: The Proposed Project could generate adverse noise levels during project construction. This would be a less than significant impact with implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.11-1a and 2.11-1b.

Construction of the Proposed Project would consist of replacing the existing wood poles with new wood poles and installation of the conductor. The majority of the power line construction activities would take place in open space, though some construction activities would be in and adjacent to a residential area. Construction activities are proposed to occur 12 hours a day, seven days a week for approximately three months.

Construction noise sources are typically regulated on the local level through enforcement of noise ordinances, implementation of general plan policies, and imposition of conditions of approval for permits. However, Nevada County does not have general plan standards or municipal codes that specifically restrict conventional construction noise.

Construction of a power line requires a variety of equipment. During the construction period, noise levels generated by Proposed Project construction would vary depending on the particular type, number, and duration of use of various pieces of construction equipment. Typical noise levels at 50 feet from the source for some of the heavy pieces of construction equipment that would be required to construct the Proposed Project are listed in Table 2.11-3. As shown in the table, intermittent and continuous use of construction equipment would generate noise levels in excess of 85 dBA at 50 feet. This equates to a noise level of approximately 79 dBA at 100 feet or as high as 73 dBA at 200 feet.

In addition to the types of equipment listed in Table 2.11-3, Sierra Pacific would also use more unconventional types of construction equipment and materials, including the use of helicopters and blasting at pole locations 1-5 and 12-19 (see Figure 1-3). Heavy-duty helicopters would be used to install poles and transport equipment to the pole sites and light-duty helicopters would be used to string conductor. Based on the analysis of a similar project, heavy-duty helicopters can be expected to generate noise levels of approximately 89 dBA at 200 feet and light-duty helicopters can be expected to generate noise levels of approximately 80 dBA at 200 feet (CPUC, 2006). Only one helicopter would be used at a time for no longer than four hours per day. The helicopter yard would

**TABLE 2.11-3
TYPICAL NOISE LEVELS FROM CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT**

Construction Equipment	Noise Level (dBA, at 50 feet)
Truck	88
Drill Rig	98
Air Compressor	81
Dozer	85
Grader	85
Mobile Crane	83

SOURCE: FTA, 2006.

be located approximately 1,200 feet from the nearest residences. Heavy-duty helicopter noise from the helicopter yard at these residences would be approximately 74 dBA.

Rock blasting would be conducted where digging or drilling at pole locations 1-5 and 12-19 are impeded by bedrock. At this time it is not possible to determine which specific pole locations would require the use of blasting techniques. Noise levels associated with blasting would be instantaneous and site specific, and highly dependent on the amount of explosives used and the below-surface elevation of the explosion. Specific blasting procedures and techniques would be developed by a licensed blasting contractor and approved by the Nevada County Sheriff Department through its Blasting Permit process. The blasting contractor would limit noise levels by using current and professionally accepted methods (e.g., use of blast mats) and materials based on the site specific conditions and the proximity to residences in the community of Hirschdale. The closest residences to a potential blast site are at a distance of approximately 100 feet. Relatively small charges would be used to clear the 7.5-foot deep and 16-inch wide power pole holes.

The duration of noise impacts would be relatively brief, estimated to be approximately three days at any one pole location along the Proposed Project construction corridor for pole installation and approximately one other day at each pole location for conductor stringing. Construction activity would likely occur each day at the staging area/helicopter yard during the three-month construction period. Construction activity is proposed to occur 12 hours per day, seven days a week; however, helicopter activity would only occur up to four hours per day. Given this short duration of impacts at any one location, construction noise would not be considered significant at affected residences if the residents are given advance notice and if construction is limited to daytime hours. Implementation of the Mitigation Measures 2.11-1a and 2.11-1b would ensure that the impact of construction noise would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure 2.11-1a: General construction activity shall be limited to the least noise-sensitive daytime hours between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. and blasting

and helicopter activity shall be limited to between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., with some exceptions (as approved by the CPUC and/or the Sheriff Department) as required for safety considerations or certain construction procedures that cannot be interrupted. Helicopter use shall be limited to Sierra Pacific's proposed four hours per day. No construction activity shall occur on a holiday.

Mitigation Measure 2.11-1b: The following noise reduction and suppression techniques shall be employed during project construction to minimize the impact of temporary construction-related noise on nearby sensitive receptors:

- Comply with manufacturers' muffler requirements.
- Notify residences in the community of Hirschdale of the construction schedule and how many days they may be affected. The notice shall provide specific information regarding the planned schedule for helicopter and blasting activities. The notice shall contain the phone number of the construction supervisor who would handle construction noise questions and complaints.
- Minimize idling of engines; turn off engines when not in use, where applicable.
- Shield compressors and other small stationary equipment with portable barriers when within 100 feet of residences.
- Route truck traffic away from noise-sensitive areas where feasible.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

Operation

Operation of Proposed Project would include maintaining voltage across the power line, which could generate noise associated with corona discharge. In addition, line inspection activities would include the annual use of a helicopter or an all terrain vehicle to inspect the power line facilities along the Proposed Project.

Operation of high voltage power lines can generate random crackling or hissing noise associated with corona discharge. Corona discharge occurs when the voltage of the line exceeds the insulating capability of air. Corona is higher on foggy or rainy days because the air has a lower insulating ability when moist. Also, particles such as dust and water droplets that may come in contact with a conductor tend to increase corona discharge. Therefore, the potential for noise from corona discharge is greatest during wet weather.

Sierra Pacific has indicated that the Proposed Project power line would not be expected to generate corona discharge under normal operating conditions given the relatively high surface factor (estimated to be 0.6) and low voltage (60 kV) of the new conductor. However, during adverse weather conditions such as fog or rain, power lines with greater

voltage (115 kV) have been estimated to typically generate between 30 and 40 dBA at 90 feet from the outer conductor (WIA, 1998). Corona noise levels associated with the Proposed Project would likely be less than those associated a 115 kV line and would typically be below the ambient noise levels in the Proposed Project area. Because operation of the Proposed Project would not result in the generation of noise levels that exceed existing noise levels, this would constitute a less than significant impact.

b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels: *Less than Significant.*

The Proposed Project would involve temporary sources of groundborne vibration and groundborne noise during construction from operation of heavy equipment and blasting. The activity that would most likely cause groundborne vibration would be rock blasting. However, the closest potential blasting site is approximately 100 to 200 feet from residences.

Since the duration of impact at any one location along the corridors would be brief, the impact would occur during less sensitive daytime hours, the blasting sites would not be immediately adjacent to residences, and because all blasting would occur under the jurisdiction of the Nevada County Sheriff Department, the impact from construction-related groundborne vibration and groundborne noise would be less than significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.11-1a and 2.11-1b would further ensure that this impact would remain less than significant.

c) Permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project: *Less than Significant.*

As discussed in a), above, the only permanent noise sources that could be introduced by the Proposed Project would be the slight hissing or crackling noise associated with corona discharge during wet weather conditions. However, this increase would not be considered significant, as it would not increase ambient noise levels. Therefore, the long-term impact of the Proposed Project on ambient noise levels in the Proposed Project area would be less than significant.

d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.*

See discussion under a), above

e) Expose people residing or working in the area to excessive noise levels if the project is located within an airport land use plan area, or, where such a plan has not been adopted, in an area within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the area to excessive noise levels: *No Impact.*

The Proposed Project would not involve the development of noise-sensitive land uses, and thus, would not expose people to excessive aircraft noise.

- f) **Expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels if the project is located in the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the area to excessive noise levels: *No Impact.***

The Proposed Project is not in the vicinity of a private airstrip.

References – Noise

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2.12 Population and Housing

<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>
12. POPULATION AND HOUSING— Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting

The Proposed Project route is entirely within an existing utility easement on private property. The route passes through the small community of Hirschdale, which is comprised of about 30 homes near the Truckee River. Existing distribution line poles would be replaced by new power line poles, with distribution underbuild, in the same general location.

Population

The U.S. Census Bureau 2005 population estimate for Nevada County is 98,394. Resident population in the County was estimated to be 92,033 in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). The County’s population has increased by approximately 24.1 percent over a 15-year period (1990-2005). According to the California Department of Finance, Nevada County population is expected to increase at a rapid pace through 2020 to 126,912, and then steadily increase, but at a slower pace, through 2050 to 155,161 (California Department of Finance, 2004). Table 2.12-1 shows projected population trends from 2000 to 2050 for Nevada County.

**TABLE 2.12-1
NEVADA COUNTY POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 2000–2050**

Area	2000	2010	% Change 2000–2010	2020	% Change 2010–2020	2030	% Change 2020–2030	2040	% Change 2030–2040	2050	% Change 2040–2050
Nevada County	92,033	106,910	16.2	126,912	18.7	137,965	8.7	146,432	6.1	155,161	6.0

SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 and California Department of Finance, 2004.

Housing

According to the California Department of Finance, as of 2005, Nevada County had approximately 49,000 total housing units with approximately 18 percent of these dwelling units vacant. Within the unincorporated areas of Nevada County, there are an estimated 19,155 housing units and about 30 percent of the units are vacant (California Department of Finance, 2006).

Current housing and development restrictions within the Truckee/Tahoe area, coupled with high housing costs have created an affordable housing shortage within the area. The area is generally comprised of second homes and investment in affordable housing is unattractive because of high land values and recreation-oriented land uses (Nevada County, 1996).

Regulatory Context

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2 requires a discussion of the ways in which a proposed project could directly or indirectly foster economic development or population growth, and how that growth would, in turn, affect the surrounding environment. The following regulatory context is provided to set forth the planning framework that is anticipated under the General Plan for Nevada County.

Nevada County

According to the Nevada County General Plan, “rapid growth in the past decade has resulted in strains on the County’s infrastructure, with ever increasing demands for highways, water, schools, and other public facilities” (Nevada County, 1996). To address these concerns about population growth, one of the General Plan’s central themes is to provide urban services only in areas with sufficient land use intensities or population densities. The General Plan divides all portions of the County into two classifications: *Community Regions* and *Rural Regions*. Using these classifications, the General Plan includes the following growth management goals, objectives, and policies applicable to the Proposed Project:

Goal 1.1: Promote and encourage growth in *Community Regions* while limiting growth in *Rural Regions*.

Objective 1.1: Define and maintain a distinct boundary between *Rural* and *Community Regions*.

Policy 1.1: The General Plan divides the County into *Community Regions* and *Rural Regions*. All of the land area of the County is placed in one of these regions. Within the *Rural Regions*, growth is limited to those types and densities of development which are consistent with the open, rural lifestyle, pastoral character and natural setting and surrounding land use patterns which exists in these areas. Within the *Community Regions*, balanced growth is encouraged to provide managed housing, opportunities appropriate to each community, located for convenience, efficiency and affordability.

Goal 2.1: Provide for a strong economic base while protecting and maintaining communities and neighborhoods.

Objective 2.2: Achieve a positive balance between the job growth rate and the population growth rate through land use and related policies.

Policy 2.5: In the General Plan Land Use Maps, provide a balance between land designated for commercial, business and industrial use, and land designated for residential development to provide for a County-wide jobs to housing ratio at build out of 1.2 jobs per dwelling unit. In addition, the General Plan is intended to provide appropriate land use designations for balanced resource management and production, including agriculture, timber production, and mining, through designation of rural and forest land use areas as well as mineral resource zones. The County shall monitor the balance of land uses through its annual review of the implementation of the General Plan, and shall consider the effect on such balance in review of all General Plan amendments.

Goal 3.1: Provide for public facilities and services commensurate with development type and intensity.

Objective 3.1: Public facilities and services shall be directed as follows: a higher level to *Community Regions* and a lower level to *Rural Regions*.

Policy 3.1: The levels of service and provision of public facilities in *Community Regions* shall be based upon improving the capacity of public facilities to serve higher levels of development directed to *Community Regions*. The levels of service and provision of public facilities in *Rural Regions* shall be based upon limiting the amount of development to ensure that adequate facilities are available.

Policy 3.2: The County shall encourage development within *Community Regions* where higher density development can more efficiently be provided with a full range of public facilities and services.

Policy 3.3: The land use pattern reflected in the Nevada County General Plan Land Use Map is correlated with the future provision of public facilities to adequately serve said land uses based upon the service criteria and levels of service identified in Policy 3.1 and Policy 3.10. All General Plan amendments shall be required to show that the public facilities and services necessary to serve the proposed development are also correlated with the future provision of facilities and services according to the same criteria.

(Nevada County, 1996)

Population and Housing Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) **Population growth inducement, either directly or indirectly: *Less than Significant.***

Construction is expected to last approximately three months from July 2007 to October 2007. The total number of construction crew members for the Proposed Project is estimated to be approximately 17, including Sierra Pacific and contracted construction personnel. The Proposed Project construction activities would be temporary, and therefore would not result in any direct growth-inducing impacts, would not result in any significant increase in local population or housing, and would not indirectly induce growth by creating new opportunities for local industry or commerce.

Construction of the Proposed Project is needed to meet electric system demand and ensure transmission system reliability in the Nevada County area. The Proposed Project is designed to increase reliability and accommodate existing and planned electrical load growth; it would not induce growth.

Growth in the project area is planned and regulated by applicable local planning policies and zoning ordinances. The availability of electrical capacity by itself does not normally ensure or encourage growth within a particular area. Other factors such as economic conditions, land availability, population trends, availability of water supply or sewer services and local planning policies have a more direct effect on growth.

Therefore, the Proposed Project would not induce substantial population growth in the project area and this impact would be less than significant.

b) Displacement of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere: *No Impact.*

The Proposed Project would traverse existing Sierra Pacific utility right-of-way in open space and adjacent to County roads and homes in the community of Hirschdale. The proposed new poles and conductor would be placed entirely within the existing Sierra Pacific easement. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in the displacement of existing housing.

c) Displacement of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere: *No Impact.*

The Proposed Project would be constructed in an existing Sierra Pacific utility right-of-way in open space and adjacent to County roads and homes in the community of Hirschdale. Construction activities proposed to occur would be entirely within the existing Sierra Pacific easement. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in the displacement of people.

References – Population and Housing

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2.13 Public Services

<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>
13. PUBLIC SERVICES— Would the project:				
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of, or the need for, new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:				
i) Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v) Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

Wildland fire protection services for unincorporated Nevada County are provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) during the fire season from June to October. Therefore, most of the County does not have year-round wildland fire protection. In addition, most of the CDF units are staffed with volunteers (Nevada County, 1996). The CDF Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit, which serves the Proposed Project area, manages 21 fire stations, one conservation camp, and one air attack base. Battalion 15, Truckee and Donner Summit Area, provides fire protection services within the vicinity of the Proposed Project (CDF, 2006). The closest CDF station to the Proposed Project site is located at 10277 Truckee-Tahoe Airport Road, near Highway 67/North Shore Boulevard, southwest of the City of Truckee. CDF operates an air attack base located at 13120 Loma Rich Drive in the City of Grass Valley and a conservation camp located at 11425 Conservation Camp Road in Nevada City (CDF, 2006).

Structural fire protection services in the Proposed Project area are provided by the Truckee Fire Protection District. The District currently operates six fire stations in the Truckee area, with three of the stations staffed 24 hours a day. The station serving the Proposed Project area is Glenshire Station, which is in the Glenshire Sub-division at 10900 Manchester Drive (approximately two miles to the southwest of the Proposed Project site). This station is staffed full time, with one Captain/Paramedic and two firefighters. The station is also equipped with one fire engine and one Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance (TFPD, 2006). For large fire emergencies, CDF and Nevada County Fire Services participate in the Statewide Mutual Aid System, which provides more equipment and personnel on an as needed basis.

Police Protection

The Nevada County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services for the entire County, including patrol, dispatch, investigations, search and rescue, boat patrol, correctional facilities, coroner, and court security services. The Department's service area encompasses 980 square miles, covering both the eastern and western sides of the Sierra Nevada mountain range (NCSD, 2006). The Department's main office is located at the Eric Rood Administration Building in western Nevada County. The Department also has offices at the Truckee Government Center. Sheriffs are dispatched and patrols are initiated from these locations (Nevada County, 1995). In 2005, Truckee dispatch received approximately 52,000 phone calls and approximately 3,000 emergency 911 phone calls (Mortier, 2006).

California Highway Patrol (CHP) has a mutual aid agreement and would provide additional equipment and personnel in cases of larger-scale emergencies in Nevada County. CHP also provides police protection on all State and County roads in Nevada County (CHP, 2006).

Schools

Public school services in the Proposed Project area are provided by the Tahoe-Truckee Unified School District, which serves approximately 4,100 students in Nevada, Placer, and El Dorado counties. The District office is located at 11839 Donner Pass Road in the City of Truckee (TTUSD, 2006). The District is comprised of 12 schools: two comprehensive high schools, one continuation high school, two middle schools, five elementary schools, a K-5 magnet school, and a K-12 alternative school (TTUSD, 2003). Specifically, the Proposed Project area is served by Glenshire Elementary School, Alder Creek Middle School, and Tahoe-Truckee High School.

The total K-12 demographic projections for the area show that the District will experience a growing enrollment through the 2008-2009 school year. The Master Plan predicts that enrollment will peak in the 2008-2009 school year at a total of 4,914 students and decline to 4,833 students by the 2009-2010 school year (TTUSD, 2003).

Parks and Recreation

The Proposed Project site is located on private land within close proximity to the Truckee River and the Tahoe National Forest. The area offers several recreational opportunities including, but not limited to, camping, hiking, mountain biking, recreational mining, and boating. See Section 2.14, *Recreation*, for more information regarding existing recreation resources in the Proposed Project area.

Regulatory Context

Nevada County General Plan

The Nevada County General Plan contains the following goals, objectives, and policies that would be applicable to the Proposed Project:

Objective 2.6: Within community regions, provide adequate public services and facilities to employment-generating uses.

Objective 3.2: Ensure that the capacity, availability, financing, and capability of public services and facilities are sufficient to meet levels of service requirements for developments.

Policy 3.8: Based upon the adopted level of service standards, the County shall adopt a comprehensive development fee impact program in order to offset the costs of growth-related infrastructure and facilities based upon buildout of the General Plan.

Goal 7.1: Facilitate the development and maintenance of schools and educational facilities to ensure the economic and cultural vitality of the County.

Goal 10.1: Develop and maintain a high level of safety for people and property.

Objective 10.1: Encourage fire protection agencies to determine appropriate levels of fire protection facilities and services for both *Community* and *Rural Regions*.

Policy 10.1: Encourage the development of one uniform County-wide fire protection ordinance that maintains high fire protection standards for all public and private development, including adequate access and water flow standards. Also encourage local districts to adopt/accept uniform ordinance with minimal adjustments to reflect local circumstances.

Policy 10.3: Cooperate with the California Department of Forestry, U.S. Forest Service, and local fire districts in fire prevention programs.

Policy 10.4: Through establishment of the office of the County Fire Marshal or other appropriate means, the County shall coordinate and centralize firesafe reviews which will include coordination of development with respect to fire prevention and safety, and implementation of County fire safety programs, standards and procedures.

Policy 10.6: In those areas outside *Community Regions*, which are clearly shown to have a high fire hazard and/or lack adequate year-round fire protection facilities, maintain low-density land use designations (Rural or Forest) in order to minimize the potential fire hazard.

Policy 10.8: Promote the continued effectiveness and public awareness of the Nevada County Emergency Operational Plan, through the local Office of Emergency Services, as the focus for planning for emergency evacuation of threatened population. The Plan identifies procedures and responsibilities for designating and preparing local evacuation routes on an area-specific and event-specific basis.

Policy 10.20: The County will encourage joint service agreements and consolidation of police, fire, and emergency services between the County, cities, and service districts.

(Nevada County, 1996)

The Nevada County General Plan level of service standards identified in Policy 3.10 do not establish law enforcement service levels (Nevada County, 1996).

Nevada County Fire Plan

The intent of the Nevada County Fire Plan (NCFP) is to provide recommendations to the County Board of Supervisors to reduce impacts of wildland fires to life, property, and natural resources in Nevada County. The primary goals of the NCFP are to:

- Reduce fire severity and intensity through fuels management;
- Enhance public safety and improve effectiveness of emergency services through infrastructure improvements;
- Reduce risk of life and property through new or revised codes, ordinances and compliance programs;
- Increase community awareness and involvement to promote participation and voluntary compliance; and
- Involve fire agencies, County departments, public and private land managers, and the fire safe council in collaborating on County-wide goals and plans to consistently and efficiently implement mitigation measures.

(NCFP, 2004)

CDF Nevada-Yuba-Placer Fire Management Plan

The CDF Nevada-Yuba-Placer Fire Management Plan identifies transmission lines as assets that need protection within the area. In addition, the Plan contains the following goals and objectives that could be applicable to the Proposed Project:

Goals

- To reduce the risks to citizens and firefighters from wildland fire.
- Develop a “land stewardship” ethic in the residents of the wildland areas within the Unit.

Objectives

- Implement specific and landscape level projects and programs that increase the potential for success on initial attack.
- Raise citizen and stakeholder awareness of fire risks and hazards and enlist their help and participation in the reduction of risks and hazards.
- Create a Fire Mitigation Framework to assist local government in the development of standards, policies, and plans that will result in community and landscape level fuel modifications.
- Provide recommendations that individuals and the community can take to reduce the ignitability of homes and other structures in the Wildland Urban Interface.

(CDF, 2005)

Public Services Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of, or the need for, new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:

a.i) Fire Protection: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.*

As discussed in the Setting section, fire protection services in the Proposed Project area would be provided by the CDF and the Truckee Fire Protection District, as well as other fire protection agencies in the area that participate in automatic aid agreements. In general, increases in demand for fire protection services are associated with substantial increases in population. The Proposed Project would include a construction crew of up to 17 crew members, but would not result in a substantial population increase that would increase the demand for fire protection services (See Section 2.12, *Population and Housing*, for further discussion). Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in a substantial increased demand for fire protection services. Construction of the Proposed Project could affect the demand for fire protection and emergency response services, as discussed below.

Impact 2.13-1: Proposed Project construction activities could temporarily increase the demand for fire protection services. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.13-1a and 1b would reduce these impacts to less than significant.

Because a majority of the Proposed Project traverses largely undeveloped areas, emergency situations could result that would require fire suppression services and emergency response. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.13-1a, which requires the preparation of a Health and Safety Plan through the implementation of *Hazards and Hazardous Materials* Mitigation Measure 2.7-1c (see Section 2.7), and Mitigation Measure 2.13-1b, which requires water tanks to be available at the construction sites through the implementation of *Hazards and Hazardous Materials* Mitigation Measure 2.7-3 (see Section 2.7), would reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant.

Mitigation Measure 2.13-1a: Sierra Pacific shall implement Mitigation Measure 2.7-1c (see Section 2.7, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*).

Mitigation Measure 2.13-1b: Sierra Pacific shall implement Mitigation Measure 2.7-3 (see Section 2.7, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*).

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

Project construction related to the Proposed Project would cross and/or parallel Juniper Way and Floriston Road, which are under the jurisdiction of Nevada County. (See Section 2.15, *Transportation*, for further discussion.)

Impact 2.13-2: Proposed Project construction work in proximity to public roadways could potentially affect vehicle access and fire department response times. This would be a less than significant impact with implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.13-2.

Mitigation Measure 2.13-2: Sierra Pacific shall coordinate with Nevada County emergency service providers prior to construction to ensure that construction activities and associated lane closures would not significantly affect emergency response vehicles. Sierra Pacific shall submit verification of its consultation with emergency service providers to the CPUC.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

a.ii) Police Protection: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.*

Police protection services in the Proposed Project area would be provided by the Nevada County Sheriff's Department. Generally, increases in the demand for police protection services are associated with substantial increases in population. The Proposed Project would not result in a substantial population increase. (See Section 2.12, *Population and Housing*, for further discussion.) Therefore, operations of the Proposed Project would not result in a substantial increased demand for police protection services. Proposed Project construction could affect police protection services, as discussed below.

Impact 2.13-3: Proposed Project construction activities could temporarily increase the demand for police services. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.13-3a, 3b and 3c would reduce these impacts to less than significant.

Proposed Project construction may require police services due to possible theft of construction equipment and/or vandalism that might occur during the construction period. Additionally, Proposed Project construction may, at times, require temporary partial closure of adjacent roadways, requiring traffic control measures, or safety measures that would typically be coordinated with local police.

Mitigation Measure 2.13-3a: Sierra Pacific shall implement standard precautionary measures, such as securing equipment when left unattended to minimize theft and vandalism.

Mitigation Measure 2.13-3b: Sierra Pacific shall provide traffic control, if necessary, in coordination with the appropriate police agency.

Mitigation Measure 2.13-3c: Sierra Pacific shall implement public safety measures, including covering and securing all open holes once activity at that location is stopped (after hours), and the placement of safety structures adjacent to roadways during overhead wire installation activity to protect vehicles and pedestrians.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

a.iii) Schools: *Less than Significant.*

The Proposed Project would not result in substantial adverse impacts to school facilities. The proposed construction crew is estimated to be up to 17 crew members, including Sierra Pacific and contracted construction personnel. The Proposed Project would not result in a significant increase of local population or housing (see Section 2.12 *Population and Housing* for additional discussion), which is associated with increased demand for public school services. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in a substantial increase in demand for school facilities and impacts to public school services would be less than significant.

a.iv) Parks: *Less than Significant.*

The Proposed Project would not result in a significant increase in the local population or housing (see Section 2.12 *Population and Housing* for additional discussion); therefore, there would be no substantial increased demand for park facilities. Impacts to parks would be less than significant. See Section 2.14, *Recreation* for additional discussion of potential impacts to parks.

a.v) Other Public Facilities: *Less than Significant.*

The Proposed Project would not result in substantial adverse impacts to other public facilities, such as public libraries or other civic uses. For a discussion of impacts related to road closures and potential impacts to public roadways, see Section 2.15, *Transportation and Traffic*. No other public facilities would be adversely impacted by the construction or operation of the Proposed Project.

References – Public Services

California Department of Forestry (CDF), 2006. Webpage available at: www.fire.ca.gov, accessed August 21, 2006.

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Tahoe-Truckee Unified School District (TTUSD), 2003. *Facilities Master Plan, 2003*. Webpage available at: <http://www.ttusdprojects.org/>, accessed August 22, 2006.

Truckee Fire Protection District (TFPD), 2006. Webpage available at www.truckee-fire.org, accessed September 6, 2006.

2.14 Recreation

<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>
14. RECREATION—Would the project:				
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting

The Proposed Project area is located near the Truckee River (i.e. the majority of the Proposed Project is within 500 feet of the river, the remainder is within 1000 feet) and within the vicinity of many other popular recreational destinations. There are several public land ownerships that cover a significant amount of Nevada County’s total land area and provide camping, hiking, and other passive recreational opportunities. National forest lands are located along the County’s northern border, throughout the San Juan Ridge and Chalk Bluff Ridge and due east towards the California-Nevada state line. The Tahoe National Forest, located approximately one mile north of the Proposed Project site, covers approximately 169,000 acres or 265 square miles of land in Nevada County. The Toiyabe National Forest covers approximately 2,600 acres in eastern Nevada County. The Spenceville Wildlife and Recreation Area contains approximately 11,000 acres or 17 square miles, with half the tract in Nevada County and the other half in Yuba County. The Bureau of Land Management has approximately 20,000 acres of land in Nevada County. These areas cover a total of approximately 314 square miles (or approximately 33 percent) of the County’s 943 square miles (Nevada County, 1996). Several creeks and reservoirs are also located close to the Proposed Project area, including Prosser Creek, Boca Reservoir, and Stampede Reservoir. The Town of Truckee also has a system of completed and approved trails and bikeways within the nearby town limits.

Nevada County also has three recreation and park districts, with Truckee Donner Recreation and Park District (TDRPD) located closest to the Proposed Project area (Nevada County, 1996). TDRPD manages the majority of the Town of Truckee’s ten public parks and four recreational facilities (total approximately 120 acres), including the following parks within the vicinity of the Proposed Project area:

- **Glenshire Park** is the closest neighborhood park to the Proposed Project area (approximately 1.5 miles to the southwest) with ball fields and open turf on six acres adjacent to Glenshire Elementary School on Glenshire Drive.

- **Truckee River Regional Park** is located approximately five miles southwest of the Proposed Project site. This 62-acre park has several ball fields, picnic areas, a horse arena, nature trail, amphitheater, and a skate park.

(Tahoe.com, 2006).

In addition to the public lands, Nevada County supports a variety of private and commercial recreational facilities, including ski areas and resorts, golf courses, and campgrounds. Among the most extensive private facilities are those provided by the Tahoe Donner Association in the Truckee area, with a golf course, swimming, tennis, downhill and cross-country skiing (Nevada County, 1996).

Regulatory Context

Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan

The Land and Resource Management Plan (1990) for the Tahoe National Forest (1990) provides direction for managing the Tahoe National Forest for the next 10 to 15 years. The Plan goals are to “ensure the wise use and protection of Tahoe National Forest resources, fulfill legislative requirements, and address local, Regional, and National issues.” The Proposed Project would be located within an existing utility easement on private property approximately one mile south of the Tahoe National Forest and thus, does not cross or impinge on National Forest Lands.

Nevada County General Plan

The Nevada County General Plan contains the following recreation goals, objectives, or policies that would be applicable to the Proposed Project:

Goal 5.1: Provide a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities.

Objective 5.1: Provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities at a regional, district, community, and neighborhood level.

Objective 5.2: Acquire, develop and maintain park lands to serve the needs of Nevada County.

Policy 5.5: The County shall base park and recreation facility planning on the following level of service standard for County park land to provide regional parks serving both *Community Regions* and *Rural Regions*: 3.0 acres of park land for each increase of 1,000 persons in county-wide population.

(Nevada County, 1996)

To achieve the level of service standard for recreational needs, the County collects Quimby Act fees on new subdivision lots and distributors those fees to the cities, to existing recreation and park districts, specific community recreational facilities or to school districts (Nevada County, 1996).

Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan

The Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan Circulation Element includes a trails and bikeways plan. The Plan identifies several completed and approved bicycle and pedestrian trails within the Town limits. No completed or approved trails are identified within the Proposed Project area (Town of Truckee, 2006).

Recreation Impacts and Mitigation Measures

- a) **Increased use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities would occur or be accelerated: *Less than Significant.***

Increases in demand for recreational facilities are typically associated with substantial increases in population. As discussed in Section 2.12, *Population and Housing*, the Proposed Project would not result in any additional need for long term employees, but would require up to 17 total construction workers, including Sierra Pacific and contracted personnel. Proposed Project construction activities would be temporary and therefore, would not result in a substantial increased demand for recreational facilities or adversely affect Nevada County park/population standards.

- b) **Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment: *No Impact.***

The Proposed Project does not include any plans for the addition of any recreational facilities nor would it require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. The entire Proposed Project area would be located on an existing Sierra Pacific utility easement on private property, with no parks or other public recreational uses designated on the site. There are no attractions, such as established hiking or bicycle trails, streams or wetlands, scenic vistas, campgrounds, picnic areas, or wildlife viewing areas that would bring recreational users to the Proposed Project area. Hunting would not be allowed within the Proposed Project area because of the nearby residences. Recreational use at the Proposed Project site would likely be limited to nearby residents taking walks with their animals or accessing public lands in the Tahoe National Forest by crossing the easement. However, the Proposed Project is not expected to impact this type of recreational use and thus, the construction of additional recreational facilities would not be necessary. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in any adverse physical effects on the environment from construction or expansion of additional recreational facilities.

References – Recreation

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Tahoe.com, 2006. *Truckee Area Parks and Recreation*, <http://www.tahoe.com>, February 1, 2006.

Town of Truckee, 2006. *Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan*, adopted November 16, 2006.

USDA Forest Service, 1990. *Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) for the Tahoe National Forest*, http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/tahoe/documents/forest_plan/1990_tnf_lrmp.pdf, 1990.

2.15 Transportation and Traffic

<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>
15. TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC— Would the project:				
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume-to-capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that would result in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., conflict with policies promoting bus turnouts, bicycle racks, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Nevada County is primarily a rural, low-density county with its major trip attractors dispersed throughout the County. Therefore, the dominant mode of transportation is the private automobile. The roadway network that would be affected by the Proposed Project is located in eastern Nevada County and in the community of Hirschdale. The transportation system in the area of the Proposed Project is composed of an interconnected network of State and County roads and a rail right-of-way. The roadway network in the Proposed Project area is described below.

Roadway Network

Regional and local access to the Proposed Project site is provided by several State and County roadways, each of which would be used to transport construction materials, equipment, and workers to and throughout the Proposed Project corridor. The Proposed Project corridor and surrounding roadway network are illustrated in Figure 1-1. Descriptions of the regional and local roadway network are provided below.

Regional Roadways

Regional access to the Proposed Project is provided by Interstate-80 (I-80) and State Route 89 (SR 89), both of which are under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

Interstate 80 is an east-west freeway that extends from San Francisco, California to the suburbs of New York City, New York, making it the second longest Interstate Highway in the United States. In the Proposed Project vicinity, I-80 is generally a four-lane divided freeway that runs along the southern border of Nevada County and serves as the primary east-west interstate facility in the region connecting the large urban areas of Reno, Sacramento, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Consequently, the roadway carries a significant amount of traffic destined for areas outside the County. Traffic volumes along I-80 in the Proposed Project area are moderate, with an annual average daily traffic (ADT) level of 30,000 vehicles per day (vpd) (Caltrans, 2006).

State Route 89 is a major north-south route that serves the northern Sierra Nevada mountain communities. SR 89 extends from Topaz Lake near the California-Nevada State Line at its Junction with U.S. 395, up through Markleeville, Woodfords, South Lake Tahoe, and Truckee, to its northern terminus at the junction with Interstate 5 at Mount Shasta. SR 89 intersects I-80 at the Town of Truckee. SR 89 is a two-lane highway with relatively low volumes (i.e., ADT level of 6,100) north of the I-80 interchange compared to more moderate volumes (i.e., ADT level of 21,500) south of the I-80 interchange (Caltrans, 2006).

Local Roadways

Hirschdale Road is a two-lane roadway classified by Nevada County as a Major Collector. Hirschdale Road is accessed from I-80 and parallels the northern portion of the Proposed Project corridor for approximately 2,000 feet, between 150 feet and 250 feet to the east of the corridor. Project vehicles would access the Proposed Project staging area/helicopter yard site directly from Hirschdale Road. Traffic levels along Hirschdale Road were measured at 2,644 daily trips in 2003 (Nevada County, 2006).

Juniper Way is a two-lane residential roadway that is accessed from Hirschdale Road. The Proposed Project would cross Juniper Way immediately west of its intersection with Hirschdale Road.

Floriston Road is a two-lane residential roadway that is accessed from Juniper Way approximately 100 feet west of Hirschdale. The Proposed Project would cross Floriston Road immediately south of its intersection with Juniper Way Road and would parallel the road through the community of Hirschdale. Access to Floriston Road is controlled by a locked gate approximately 1,000 feet south of its intersection with Juniper Way. South of the locked gate, Floriston Road is a dirt roadway.

Public Transit

The Truckee-North Tahoe Transportation Management Association provides the Tahoe Area Regional Transit (TART) bus route and Truckee Transit provides service connecting the Town of Truckee and Donner Lake to surrounding towns in the northern Tahoe area. TART routes utilize SR 89 between Truckee and South Lake Tahoe (TMA, 2006).

Airports

Truckee-Tahoe Airport is a regional general aviation facility located in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. The airport is owned and operated by the Truckee-Tahoe Airport District, a bi-county special district within the counties of Nevada and Placer. The Town of Truckee surrounds the airport on the north and west, but the airport is not within the town limits. The Truckee-Tahoe Airport's primary runway is about 7,000 feet long and the secondary runway is about 4,650 feet long (Mead & Hunt, 2004). Truckee-Tahoe Airport is approximately four miles southwest of the nearest portion of the Proposed Project.

Railroad, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Transportation

There are no designated bicycle or pedestrian facilities that would be crossed or affected by the Proposed Project. No railroads would be crossed or otherwise affected by the Proposed Project.

Regulatory Context

The development and regulation of the Proposed Project area transportation network primarily involves State and local jurisdictions. All public roads within the Proposed Project area are under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) or the Nevada County Department of Transportation and Sanitation. Caltrans jurisdiction includes permitting and regulation of the use of State roads, while the Department of Transportation and Sanitation jurisdiction includes implementation of State permitting, policies, and regulations, as well as management and regulation of Nevada County roads. Proposed Project construction work that would occur within or over a public roadway would require encroachment permits prior to commencing work in the public ROW from all jurisdictions that manage or maintain the applicable roadway(s). Applicable State and County laws and regulations related to traffic and transportation issues are discussed below.

California Department of Transportation

Caltrans manages interregional transportation, including management of construction activities within or above the California highway system. In addition, Caltrans is responsible for permitting and regulating the use of State roadways. The Proposed Project area includes two roadways that fall under Caltrans' jurisdiction (i.e., I-80 and SR 89).

Caltrans requires that permits be obtained for transportation of oversized loads and transportation of certain materials, and for construction-related traffic disturbances. Caltrans regulations would

apply to the transportation of oversized loads on State roadways (e.g., I-80 and SR 89) associated with the construction of the Proposed Project.

Local

Nevada County General Plan

The two roads that parallel and/or would be crossed by the Proposed Project are under the jurisdiction of Nevada County. Encroachment and oversized load permits from the Nevada County Department of Transportation and Sanitation would be required for construction of the power line over or within County road ROWs and for the hauling of large or heavy loads on County roadways. The Nevada County General Plan also provides the following goals, objectives, and policies specific to transportation and circulation that would be applicable to the Proposed Project:

Objective 4.1: In *Rural Regions*, establish and maintain a desired level of service that minimizes growth and development.

Policy 4.1: The minimum level of service allowable in the *Rural Regions* of the County, as identified in the General Plan, shall be level of service (LOS) C, except where the existing LOS is less than C. In those situations, the LOS shall not be allowed to be less than the existing. Level of Service shall be based on the typical highest peak hour of weekday traffic. Special events may be permitted which temporarily exceed this minimum level of service.

(Nevada County, 1996)

Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan

The Proposed Project is within the Town of Truckee's Sphere of Influence; therefore the Town's policies and plans are addressed in this IS/MND. The Town's General Plan also contains the following goals, policies, and actions related to transportation and traffic that are indirectly applicable to the Proposed Project:

Goal CIR-2: Maintain adequate Level of Service on Truckee's roadways and intersections to ensure the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the Town.

Policy P2.1: Establish and maintain a Level of Service D or better on road segments and for total intersection movements in portions of the Town outside of the Downtown Specific Plan Area. Establish and maintain a Level of Service E or better on arterial and collector road segments and for total intersection movements within the Downtown Specific Plan Area. Throughout the Town, individual turning movements at unsignalized intersections shall not be allowed to reach LOS F and to exceed a cumulative vehicle delay of four vehicle hours. Both of these conditions shall be let for traffic operations to be considered unacceptable.

Goal CIR-3: Minimize the impacts of new development on the existing roadway network.

Policy P3.2: Require the assessment of construction-related project impacts in traffic impact analyses that assesses and adequately mitigates the effect of construction traffic on the roadway network, as well as any potential disruption to or re-routing of traffic that might be needed during project construction.

(Town of Truckee, 2006)

Transportation and Traffic Impacts and Mitigation Measures

According to the *CEQA Guidelines*, a project would normally result in an impact to transportation and traffic if it would cause an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system. Occasional post-construction maintenance activities involving one or two vehicle trips at a time would briefly affect only local segments. Therefore, these impacts would be less than significant.

The duration of potentially significant impacts related to short-term disruption of traffic flow and increased congestion generated by construction vehicles and/or loss of a travel lane to accommodate the construction work zone, would be limited to the period of time needed to complete construction of a Proposed Project component. Therefore, mitigation measures identified below focus on reducing the short-term construction effects; long-term mitigation measures are not needed. Impacts to transportation and traffic would result from increases in traffic volumes, short-term closure of roads and loss of travel lanes.

- a) **Increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.***

See discussion under b), below.

- b) **Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.***

The Proposed Project would not introduce any new uses to the project corridor that would generate long-term changes in traffic. Thus, potential traffic and transportation effects to area roadways would be confined to construction of the Proposed Project.

Construction activities would consist of replacing the existing 19 wood poles with new wood poles and installation of conductor. Daily vehicle trips would be generated by the arrival and departure of construction workers. Approximately 17 workers would commute to the construction site each day for approximately three months. Oversized load truck trips would be required to haul equipment and materials including poles, conductor spools, etc., to and from the Proposed Project staging area/helicopter yard.

The staging area/helicopter yard is proposed to be located off Hirschdale Road, approximately 100 feet west of the road. Access to the site would be achieved directly from Hirschdale Road. The staging area/helicopter yard would provide a reporting area

for workers, be used to store materials and equipment, include a parking area for Proposed Project vehicles, and have a designated helicopter land site. Construction related trips would be concentrated along Hirschdale Road near the staging area/helicopter yard site.

It is anticipated that construction of the Proposed Project would require temporary lane closures of Floriston Road during installation and removal of poles along the road. Temporary closure of this road could disrupt access to residences in the area. Installation of the Proposed Project would require overhead crossings of Juniper Way and Floriston Road. The placement of the power line on poles across these roadways would temporarily disrupt existing local traffic patterns in the vicinity of the crossings. Impacts would include short-term disruption of access along these roads.

Prior to stringing conductor, temporary guard structures are proposed to be installed along the road crossings for public protection. The purpose of the guard structures would be to prevent the conductor from being lowered or falling onto vehicles. The guard structures would consist of either: a pole with stringing sheaves attached, a pole with timbers attached, two or more poles connected with a fiber rope, or two or more poles joined by timbers with guys or braces. Installation and removal of the guard structures would be similar to that of wood poles. It should be noted that the use of guard structures during power line stringing activities over County roadways would be at the discretion of the Nevada County Department of Transportation and Sanitation. For example, the Department may require other or additional safety measures as part of its encroachment permit requirements.

In addition to power line stringing activities over public roads, the Proposed Project would cross private roads and driveways in the Hirschdale community, potentially resulting in short-term (e.g., a couple of hours) restrictions to private property access.

Construction of the power line would generate both construction worker and truck delivery trips. Assuming a trip generation rate of 1.5 trips per day per worker, the 17 employees would generate 26 auto round trips (52 one-way trips) to and from the work site each day. Accounting for the delivery of construction materials and equipment, the total number of construction truck trips would be approximately five round trips (10 one-way trips) dispersed throughout each day over a three-month period.

Construction-generated traffic would be temporary and would not result in any long-term degradation in operating conditions or level of service on any of the roadways in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. Therefore, this short-term increase in vehicle trips would not significantly affect level of service and traffic flow on roadways. The primary impacts from the movement of construction trucks would include short-term and intermittent lessening of roadway capacities due to slower movements and larger turning radii of the trucks compared to passenger vehicles.

Once constructed, the power line would require routine maintenance trips, inspection, and vegetation management activities. Vegetation management in the right-of-way could include control of noxious weeds and trimming of shrubs or trees for safety upkeep on a seasonal basis. Maintenance activities would not increase above existing levels that are employed to maintain the existing distribution line and therefore, would not result in an increase in traffic in the Proposed Project area.

Impact 2.15-1: Project construction activities could adversely affect traffic and transportation conditions in the Proposed Project area. This would be a less than significant impact with implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.15-1a and 2.15-1b.

Sierra Pacific would be required to obtain and comply with all necessary road encroachment permits for all work conducted within or over public road ROWs and as specified under Mitigation Measure 2.15-1a, Sierra Pacific shall coordinate all private road crossings with applicable property owners prior to construction. In addition, Mitigation Measure 2.15-1b requires the contractor to prepare a traffic management plan in accordance with professional engineering standards prior to construction. Specific requirements that may be included in the traffic management plan are identified in Mitigation Measure 2.15-1b. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.15-1a and 2.15-1b would ensure that potential impacts associated with temporary road and lane closures, and increases in construction traffic, would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure 2.15-1a: Sierra Pacific shall coordinate short-term construction activities at private road crossings with the applicable private property owners. Evidence of private property coordination shall be provided to the CPUC prior to the commencement of construction activities.

Mitigation Measure 2.15-1b: Sierra Pacific shall prepare and implement a Traffic Management Plan subject to approval by Nevada County. The approved Traffic Management Plan and documentation of agency approval shall be submitted to the CPUC prior to the commencement of construction activities. The plan shall:

- Include a discussion of work hours, haul routes, work area delineation, traffic control and flagging;
- Identify all access and parking restriction and signage requirements;
- Lay out plans for notifications and a process for communication with affected residents and landowners prior to the start of construction. Advance public notification shall include a mailing or door to door posting of notices to residents of Hirschdale and appropriate signage of construction activities. The written notification shall include the construction schedule, the exact location and duration of activities within each street (i.e., which road/lanes and access point/driveways would be blocked on which days and for how long), and a toll-free telephone number for receiving questions or complaints; and

- Include plans to coordinate all construction activities with emergency service providers in the area, consistent with Mitigation Measure 2.13-2 (see Section 2.13, *Public Services*). Emergency service providers would be notified of the timing, location, and duration of construction activities. All roads would remain passable to emergency service vehicles at all times.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

c) **Change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location, that results in substantial safety risks: *Less than Significant.***

The Proposed Project would not change long term air traffic patterns. However, construction of the Proposed Project would require the use of helicopters to install poles and string conductor, which would temporarily change air traffic patterns in the Proposed Project area. Given the close proximity of the Proposed Project area to existing structures and roads, the helicopter operator would be required to submit an External Load Lift Plan to the FAA for review and approval prior to lifting poles and other materials/equipment (FAA, 2006). FAA approval of the Plan would ensure that all appropriate safety precautions would be implemented by the helicopter operators during construction activities. Safety risk impacts associated with helicopter construction activities would be less than significant.

d) **Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment): *Less than Significant with Mitigation.***

The Proposed Project would not change the configuration (alignment) of area roadways, and would not introduce types of vehicles that are not already traveling on area roads. However, heavy equipment operating adjacent to or within a road right-of-way could increase the risk of accidents. Construction related trucks on local and State roadways would interact with other vehicles. Potential conflicts could also occur between construction traffic and alternative modes of transportation (e.g., bicyclists).

Impact 2.15-2: Project construction activities could increase potential traffic safety hazards for vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians on public roadways. This would be a less than significant impact with implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.15-1b.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.15-1b requires Sierra Pacific to prepare a Traffic Management Plan in accordance with professional engineering standards prior to construction, including compliance with roadside safety protocols to reduce the risk of accidents. Specific requirements that shall be included in the Traffic Management Plan to reduce the potential for traffic safety hazards are identified under Mitigation Measure 2.15-1b. Thus, implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.15-1b would ensure that

temporary impacts associated with increases in the potential for accidents would be mitigated to a less than significant level.

Mitigation: Implement Mitigation Measure 2.15-1b.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

e) **Result in inadequate emergency access: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.***

Impact 2.15-3: Project construction activities could result in delays for emergency vehicles on roadways in the Proposed Project area. This would be a less than significant impact with implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.15-1b.

Construction of the Proposed Project would have temporary effects on traffic flow, particularly where the line would be constructed over or immediately adjacent to roadways. Power line installation across roads and the temporary reduction in travel lanes could result in delays for emergency vehicles passing through the vicinity of a Proposed Project work areas.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.15-1b would require the construction contractor to establish methods to maintain traffic flow in and along the Proposed Project to minimize disruption to emergency vehicle access to land uses along the alignment. Specific emergency service access requirements that shall be included in the traffic management plan are identified under Mitigation Measure 2.15-1b. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.15-1b would ensure potential impacts associated with temporary effects on emergency access would be mitigated to a less than significant level.

Mitigation: Implement Mitigation Measure 2.15-1b.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

f) **Result in inadequate parking capacity: *Less than Significant.***

Construction vehicles and equipment associated with the Proposed Project would be parked overnight at the construction staging area. It is anticipated that the helicopters would not be parked overnight at the helicopter yard, but would park at a nearby airport (e.g., Truckee Airport). Other vehicles may be parked at the various active construction sites along Juniper Way and Floriston Road. Nonetheless, given the dispersed nature and small size of the proposed construction workforce, the Proposed Project would not generate a substantial number of parked vehicles along the alignments at any one location and impacts would be relatively brief. Impacts would be less than significant.

g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks): *No Impact.*

The Proposed Project would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs that support alternative transportation.

References – Transportation and Traffic

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2006. 2005 Traffic Volumes on California State Highways. Accessed the Traffic and Vehicle Data Systems Unit website (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops//saferesr/trafdata/index.htm>) on September 8, 2006.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). 2006. Personal communication with Reid Walburg, Operations Supervisor, FAA Reno Flight Standards District Office, December 21, 2006.

Mead & Hunt, 2004. *Truckee Tahoe Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan*. Chapter 3. Adopted by Foothill Airport Land Use Commission, December 2, 2004. Accessed website: <http://sedd.org/> on August 24, 2006.

Nevada County, 1996, *Nevada County General Plan*, 1996.

Nevada County. 2006. Accessed from Department of Transportation and Sanitation website (<http://new.mynevadacounty.com/dots/index.cfm?ccs=532>) on September 8, 2006.

Town of Truckee, 2006. *Town of Truckee 2025 General Plan*, adopted November 16, 2006.

Truckee-North Tahoe Transportation Management Association (TMA). 2006. Accessed website (<http://www.laketahoetransit.com/tahoe/SITE/top/listing.cfm/other/4175/251.32972.30515095/direct?c=1>) on September 8, 2006.

2.16 Utilities and Service Systems

<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>
16. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS—Would the project:				
a) Conflict with wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Require new or expanded water supply resources or entitlements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that would serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Contact and/or disturb underground utility lines and/or facilities during construction activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Due to the rural location of the Proposed Project site, public utility services are limited or not available. The Proposed Project lies within unincorporated Nevada County, near the town of Hirschdale, an area along the Truckee River comprised of about 30 homes with average lot sizes of 1/3 an acre. Following are descriptions of the utilities and service systems in the Proposed Project area.

Water

Unincorporated Nevada County is not served by any water district, but rather is served by personal water wells under permits issued by the Nevada County Department of Environmental Health (Nevada County, 2006a). However, water service within the town of Hirschdale is provided by the Truckee Donner Public Utility District. The drinking water the District serves to its customers in the Hirschdale system is groundwater from a deep well. Each month the system is sampled for microbiological quality. In total, the District serves approximately 11,500 water customers throughout Nevada County (TDPUD, 2006).

Sanitary Sewer

Within the unincorporated area of Nevada County, including the town of Hirschdale, individual properties are serviced by on-site sewage disposal systems under permits issued by the Nevada County Department of Environmental Health (Nevada County, 2006b). The permits establish requirements for *sub-surface* sewage disposal. The Department follows a set of sewage disposal regulations that apply to all new construction, relocated buildings, and trailers and to all alterations, repairs, or reconstruction within the unincorporated areas of the County (Nevada County, 2006b).

Electricity and Natural Gas

Sierra Pacific provides electric service to the town of Hirschdale via the distribution line in the Proposed Project corridor. Natural gas is provided to the town by PG&E (Truckee Donner Public Utility District, 2006).

Cable and Telephone

AT&T and SBC provide telephone service to the Proposed Project area. Cable television in the Proposed Project area is provided by Cambridge Connections (Nevada County, 2006a).

Solid Waste and Recycling Service

Nevada County provides solid waste collection service through a franchise for collection and disposal of waste from residential areas and nonresidential areas. Solid waste collection services are provided by Waste Management, Inc., the current prevailing contractor in Nevada County.

There are currently no existing landfills within Nevada County. The following disposal facilities are used by Nevada County: Western Regional Landfill (Placer County); Arvin Sanitary Landfill (Kern County), Forward, Inc. (San Joaquin County), Ostrom Road Landfill (Yuba County/Sutter Regional Waste Management Authority), Portrero Hills Landfill (Solano County), and Redwood Sanitary Landfill (Marin County Hazardous and Solid Waste Management Authority). Two landfills close to the Proposed Project area have recently closed. The former Nevada County Landfill site on McCourtney Road is now operated as a solid waste transfer station facility. The Eastern Regional Landfill site three miles south of the City of Truckee in Placer County closed in fall of 1998 and now operates exclusively as a transfer station (CIWMB, 2006).

The closest landfill located near the Proposed Project area is Western Regional Landfill located at 3195 Athens Road in the City of Lincoln in Placer County. The Western Regional Landfill is currently permitted to accept 1,900 tons of solid waste per day and has an estimated remaining capacity of 29,094,000 cubic yards (80 percent) until 2065 (CIWMB, 2006).

Regulatory Context

State

Assembly Bill 939 (AB 939), enacted in 1989 and known as the Integrated Waste Management Act, required each city and/or county to develop a Source Reduction and Recycling Element to reduce the amount of waste being disposed to landfills, with diversion goals of 50 percent by the year 2000. Nevada County had a diversion rate of 41 percent in 1998. The preliminary diversion rates for Nevada County for later years are 32 percent in 2002, 30 percent in 2003, and 24 percent in 2004 (CIWMB, 2006).

Local

Nevada County General Plan

The Nevada County General Plan includes policies designed to maintain adequate water supply, stormwater runoff, and sewage and solid waste disposal for the Proposed Project area. The following General Plan policies may be applicable to the Proposed Project:

Policy 3.12: Encourage all other districts serving the County (including school, utility, cemetery, park, and fire districts) to develop and to regularly update a Master Service Plan based on realistic growth which specifies a district's policies and requirements for facilities based upon buildout of the County's General Plan. The County shall review all proposed facility sites in the districts' Facilities Master Plans for consistency with the General Plan.

Policy 3.17: The use of community sewer and/or water systems are encouraged where such systems are economically feasible for the intended service area.

Policy 3.19A: For all discretionary development, increases in stormwater runoff due to new development, which could result in flood damage to downstream residences, commercial, industrial, active natural resource management uses (e.g., farming, ranching, mining, timber harvesting, etc.), public facilities, roads, bridges, and utilities shall not be permitted. Required retention/detention facilities, where necessary, shall be designed such that the water surface returns to its base elevation within 24 hours after the applicable storm event. The sizing of such facilities, when needed, shall be based upon the protection of downstream facilities.

Policy 3.21: Where water, sewer, and other underground utilities are extended through undeveloped natural areas, consideration shall be given to restoration of areas of cut, back-fill, and grading. All surfaces shall be revegetated with appropriate groundcovers and plant materials.

Policy 3.24: The County, in cooperation with other affected agencies, shall continue to implement the County Integrated Waste Management Plan. Preparation of a comprehensive long-range facilities plan for the County shall consider the need for transfer stations, composting sites, hazardous waste collection facilities, and other solid waste disposal facilities.

Policy 3.25: It is recognized that for the immediate future, solid waste is being disposed of outside the County. However, this method of disposal may not be viable in the long term. Therefore, the County will develop a long-range plan for disposal of solid waste.

Policy 3.5: Within Community Regions with existing public sewer and water systems, all new residential land divisions shall be required to connect to public sanitary sewer and water systems. Temporary use of private on-site systems may be allowed where public systems are not yet available but where a specific improvement plan and funding mechanisms are in place. A legally binding mechanism shall be required to insure that the development will connect to the public systems when available, and that the private systems will be discontinued.

Policy 11.6: The County shall continue to enforce its regulations concerning the installation and operation of private sanitary waste disposal systems in order to protect the quality of surface and ground water. The location of septic tanks and leach fields and their appropriate setbacks from water courses shall be in accordance with the guidelines of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (eastern County) and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (western County).

(Nevada County, 1996).

Utilities and Service Systems Impacts and Mitigation Measures

- a) **Conflict with wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board: *No Impact*. See discussion under e).**
- b) **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: *No Impact*.**

As described in e) below, water use that would be generated by the Proposed Project would be minimal and wastewater disposal would not be affected. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not require or result in the construction of new or expanded water or wastewater treatment plant facilities. No impact would occur.

- c) **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 require the replacement of approximately 19 poles. Pole installation sites, work areas, pull and tension sites, the staging area/helicopter yard, and access roads required for the Proposed Project would not result in a considerable net increase in impervious surfaces. Slight increases of impermeable surfaces of a couple square feet would result at each pole site, but these increases would have a negligible effect on runoff and drainage facilities. Since the Proposed Project would not substantially increase the amount of impervious surfaces, it would not substantially increase runoff. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not require or result in the construction of a new or expanded storm drainage facility. No impacts would occur.

d) Require new or expanded water supply resources or entitlements: *Less than Significant.*

Operations of the Proposed Project would not require the use of water. The primary use of water during construction of the Proposed Project would be for dust suppression on access roads. Any water that would be required for construction of the power line would be trucked in from off-site. Sierra Pacific would be required to obtain permits from Nevada County if fire hydrants within the County's jurisdiction are used to fill water trucks. Dust suppression would be performed as necessary and is not anticipated to occur on a regular basis. A small amount of water would also be available for fire suppression. Water used during the construction period would be available from existing municipal water sources and would not require local water providers to obtain additional water entitlements. Because use of domestic water is not anticipated to be used on a regular basis and would only be used as necessary to control dust on access roads and for fire suppression, the amount of water for construction would be minimal. Impacts would be less than significant.

e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that would 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 primary use of water during construction and operation of the Proposed Project would be for dust suppression measures on access roads. Disposal would not be required because the water used during dust suppression activities would be minimal and consequently this water would evaporate or be absorbed into the ground. No other sources of wastewater are anticipated during the Proposed Project construction activities. The ability of wastewater treatment facilities to serve the Proposed Project area would not be affected by the Proposed Project. Thus, there would be no impact.

f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs: *Less than Significant.*

Construction activities would result in the generation of a small amount of construction waste material. However, the majority of material associated with the existing distribution line would be reused, recycled, or disposed of in accordance with applicable federal, State and local laws.. The Proposed Project would require the removal of approximately 19 existing creosote treated wood poles. Sierra Pacific would dispose of the poles by either (1) making the poles available for reuse by offering them to private landowners; (2) hauling the poles back to Sierra Pacific's pole yard in Reno, Nevada to potentially be reused (Sierra Pacific, 2006b); or (3) placing the poles in a Department of Transportation (DOT)-approved container, labeled as a hazardous waste with the project information, and then transporting them to an appropriate hazardous waste disposal facility.

Other miscellaneous non-hazardous construction materials that could not be recycled or reused would likely be acceptable for disposal at municipal county landfills. Any other hazardous material would be recycled, treated and/or disposed of in accordance with applicable federal, State and local laws.

The Western Regional Landfill currently has a remaining permitted capacity of approximately 29 million cubic yards and is not estimated to close until 2065 (CIWMB, 2006). Therefore, the Proposed Project would not adversely impact existing capacities of the Western Regional Landfill.

Therefore, impacts related to the recycling, reuse, and disposal of construction materials would be less than significant (see Section 2.7, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials* for additional information). Note, the conductor associated with the existing distribution line would be re-installed on the new power line poles.

g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste: *Less than Significant.*

The Proposed Project would generate a limited amount of construction waste and possibly the one time disposal of wood poles that could not be reused. Operation of the Proposed Project would not produce any solid waste. The construction waste generated would be minimal and Sierra Pacific would recycle, reuse or dispose of the waste in an appropriate landfill with sufficient capacity to accept the waste.

Nevada County has an adopted Countywide Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE) that establishes goals and methodologies for compliance with the California Assembly Bill 939, which establishes 50 percent diversion of solid waste from landfills. Nevada County's diversion rate in 1998 was 41 percent, which did not meet the requirement of AB 939 (CIWMB, 2006). Nevada County has adopted various programs and policies to help the County meet the requirement. On April 23, 2002, the County adopted the "Green Procurement and Sustainable Practices Policy" to encourage the reduction of solid waste entering landfill sites. This policy requires waste prevention, recycling, market development, and use of recycled/recyclable materials through lease agreements, contractual relationships and purchasing practices with vendors, contractors, businesses, and other public and governmental agencies (Nevada County, 2006a). In addition, Nevada County Department of Transportation and Sanitation recently received a \$100,000 grant from the CIWMB to fund the program *Nevada County Recycles* that is dedicated to educating schools, businesses, and individuals about recycling (Nevada County, 2006a).

Sierra Pacific would reduce its construction material and treated wood pole waste through various measures to act in accordance with Nevada County's recycling and reduction policies. As previously described, Sierra Pacific would make the old poles available for reuse by offering them to private landowners. Thus, there would be no conflicts with statutes and regulations relating to solid waste. Impacts would be less than significant.

h) Contact and/or disturb underground utility lines and/or facilities during construction activities: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.*

Construction equipment could inadvertently contact underground facilities during pole excavation, possibly leading to short-term utility service interruptions.

Impact 2.16-1: Construction activities could inadvertently contact underground utility lines and/or facilities during excavation and other ground disturbance, possibly leading to short-term utility service interruptions. This would be a less than significant impact with implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.16-1.

Mitigation Measure 2.16-1: Sierra Pacific shall ensure that Underground Service Alert is notified at least 10 days prior to initiation of construction activities that require ground disturbance. Underground Service Alert verifies the location of all existing underground facilities and alerts the other utilities to mark their facilities in the area of anticipated construction activities.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

References – Utilities and Service Systems

California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB), 2006. Accessed CIWMB website (<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov>) on August 23, 2006.

Nevada County, 1996. *Nevada County General Plan*, adopted 1996.

Nevada County, 2006a. County of Nevada County. Webpage available at: www.mynevadacounty.com, accessed September 6, 2006.

Nevada County, 2006b. *Nevada County Land Use & Development Code, Individual On-Site Sewage Disposal Regulation*. <https://docs.co.nevada.ca.us/dsweb/Get/Document-9999/welcome.htm>, accessed September 6, 2006.

Sierra Pacific, 2006a. *Proponent's Environmental Assessment for the Hirschdale Transmission Line Upgrade Project*, May 9, 2006.

Sierra Pacific, 2006b. Supplement to Sierra Pacific's Application A.0604017 for Permit to Construct, September 28, 2006.

Truckee Donner Public Utility District (TDPUD), 2006. Webpage available at: <http://www.tdpud.org>, accessed September 6, 2006.

2.17 Mandatory Findings of Significance

<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>
17. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE				
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>

Mandatory Findings of Significance Discussion

a) Potential to degrade the quality of the environment: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.*

As discussed in the *Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Noise, Public Services, and Traffic and Transportation* sections of this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, the Proposed Project would result in potentially significant temporary impacts as a result of construction of the power line that would have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment. However, adoption and implementation of mitigation measures described in this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration would reduce these individual impacts to less than significant levels.

As described in Section 2.4, *Biological Resources*, the Proposed Project would have the potential to 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, or reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.4-1, 2.4-2a, 2.4-2b, and 2.4-3a identified in Section 2.4 would reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

Section 2.5, *Cultural Resources*, concludes that the Proposed Project would have the potential to eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or pre-history. However, implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.5-1 through 2.5-3 would reduce such impacts to less than significant levels. Additionally, there would be no direct impacts to known cultural resources during construction of the Proposed Project. There are no known areas of cultural significance located within the Proposed Project area.

b) Impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.*

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 requires a discussion of the cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is "cumulatively considerable," meaning that the project's incremental effects are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects. The cumulative impacts discussion does not need to provide as much detail as is provided in the analysis of project-only impacts and should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) identifies the following three elements as necessary for an adequate cumulative analysis:

- A list of past, present, and reasonably anticipated future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including those projects outside the control of the Lead Agency; or a summary of projections contained in an adopted General Plan or related planning document designed to evaluate regional or area-wide conditions. This information is provided in Table 2.17-1.
- A summary of expected environmental effects to be produced by those projects. The summary shall include specific reference to additional information stating where that information is available.
- A reasonable analysis of the cumulative impacts of the relevant projects, and an examination of reasonable options for mitigating or avoiding any significant cumulative effects of a proposed project.

The cumulative projects considered in this analysis are provided in Table 2.17-1. These projects include a bridge replacement project, a General Plan amendment and use permit project, an Interstate-80 resurfacing project, and a power line relocation project. The projects listed in Table 2.17-1 are considered reasonably likely to be constructed and/or operated during a similar timeframe as the Proposed Project. The projects are examined in light of their potential to contribute to short-term, construction-related effects as well as long-term operational effects in conjunction with the Proposed Project. It is anticipated that construction of the Proposed Project would last approximately three months. Projects within the vicinity of the Proposed Project area were evaluated in this analysis of cumulative impacts. No past projects were identified that would not already be included in the baseline conditions considered in the evaluation of the Proposed Project.

**TABLE 2.17-1
CUMULATIVE PROJECTS WITHIN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

APN or Project Name	Description	Address / Location	Agency / Organization	Details	Distance from Proposed Project
48-090-62; Acevedo General Plan Amendment and Use Permit	Changing a 6.2 acre portion of an 8.8 acre parcel, from Recreation to Neighborhood Commercial, retaining 2.6 acres of Open Space on the site to construct a 66,500 square foot mini-storage facility, containing 240 individual units, and proposing to add 7,800 square feet to an existing, 2-story recreation building, converting the resulting 18,894 square foot building to office space.	10068 Hirschdale Road, Hirschdale	Nevada County Community Development Department (lead agency)	A Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration has been circulated for this project. The project is on hold indefinitely, pending direction from the developer.	Approximately 4,000 feet north of the northern end of the Proposed Project.
Hirschdale Road Bridges Replacement at the Truckee River and SPRR Tracks	Replacement of the Hirschdale Road bridges at the Truckee River and UPRR Tracks due to the deterioration of those structures.	Hirschdale Road at the Truckee River and UPRR.	Nevada County Department of Transportation and Sanitation	The date of anticipated construction has yet to be determined.	The Truckee River Bridge is approximately 400 feet east of the Proposed Project and the UPRR is approximately 1,300 feet east of the Proposed Project.
I-80 Resurfacing Project	Resurfacing I-80 in the Truckee Area.	I-80 in the Truckee Area.	California Department of Transportation	The date of anticipated construction has yet to be determined.	Approximately 0.75 of a mile to the north.
Line 621 Relocation Project	Relocation of approximately 3,000 feet of 60 kV power line to accommodate California Department of Transportation's I-80 Resurfacing Project	I-80 in the north Truckee Area.	Sierra Pacific Power Company	Sierra Pacific Power Company anticipates that the line will be relocated prior to or concurrently with the Proposed Project.	Approximately 1.5 miles west of the northern portion of the Proposed Project.

SOURCES: Sierra Pacific, 2006, and Nevada County, 2007, 2006a, 2006b, and 2005.

Short-Term Construction-Related Effects

In conjunction with the Proposed Project, several short-term construction-related cumulative impacts may occur. These potential impacts include cumulative impacts to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, public services, and transportation and traffic.

Air Quality

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project, as described in Section 2.3, *Air Quality*, could have a temporary impact on local air quality through temporary increases in exhaust emissions (e.g., NO_x, ROG, and PM₁₀) and fugitive dust. Proposed Project impacts associated with temporary NO_x construction emissions would be potentially significant; however, Sierra Pacific has agreed to implement Mitigation Measure 2.3-1 to reduce the potentially significant impact to a less than significant level through detailed phasing of construction activities.

Impact 2.17-1: Proposed Project construction emissions of NO_x could be cumulatively considerable if proposed skycrane helicopter activities occur on one or more of the same days as construction activities associated with the Line 621 Relocation Project. Mitigation Measure 2.17-1 would reduce this cumulative impact to a less than significant level.

Proposed Project NO_x emissions could be cumulatively significant when combined with other projects described in Table 2.17-1. One of the cumulative projects (Line 621 Relocation Project) is proposed to be constructed before or concurrent with the Proposed Project. If construction related to the Line 621 Relocation Project were to occur on one or more of the same days that skycrane helicopter activities associated with the Proposed Project would occur, a potentially significant cumulative impact related to short-term NO_x emissions could result. To ensure that short-term cumulative impacts do not occur, implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.17-1 shall be required.

Mitigation Measure 2.17-1: Sierra Pacific shall ensure that the skycrane helicopter (or any other heavy-duty helicopter designed to lift heavy loads) would not be operated on any of the same days that construction equipment associated with the Line 621 Relocation Project would be operated.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

Biological Resources

The Proposed Project would have the potential to significantly affect populations of Plumavivora, disturb nesting raptors, and spread noxious or invasive weeds. These impacts could be cumulatively considerable when combined with impacts of the cumulative projects identified in Table 2.17-1. However, implementation of Mitigation

Measures 2.4-1, 2.4-2a, 2.4-2b, and 2.4-3a identified in Section 2.4, *Biological Resources*, would reduce Proposed Project impacts to less than significant levels. Therefore, biological impacts associated with the Proposed Project would not be cumulatively considerable and cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

Cultural Resources

Section 2.5, *Cultural Resources*, concludes that the Proposed Project would have the potential to eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or pre-history. This impact could be cumulatively considerable when combined with impacts of the cumulative projects identified in Table 2.17-1. However, implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.5-1 through 2.5-3 would reduce such impacts to less than significant levels. Additionally, there would be no direct impacts to known cultural resources during construction of the Proposed Project. There are no known areas of cultural significance located within the Proposed Project area. Therefore, construction of the Proposed Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to cultural or historical resources.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project, as described in Section 2.7, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, could result in potentially significant impacts related to the improper use or spill of hazardous materials, the release of previously unidentified hazardous materials, and/or starting a wildland fire. These impacts could be cumulatively considerable when combined with impacts of the cumulative projects identified in Table 2.17-1. However, implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.7-1a through 2.7-1e, 2.7-2, and 2.7-3 would reduce Proposed Project hazards and hazardous materials impacts to less than significant levels, thereby reducing the cumulative contribution of the Proposed Project. As a result, the Proposed Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact related to hazards or hazardous materials.

Noise

Equipment used during construction activities would temporarily increase short-term noise levels in the Proposed Project area. However, it is unlikely that the Proposed Project, in conjunction with the other projects listed in Table 2.17-1, would have the potential to contribute to a cumulative noise impact because construction of the cumulative projects would not likely occur in the immediate area as the Proposed Project. Therefore, since construction noise associated with the various projects would not likely overlap geographically; no cumulative noise impact would occur. Even if construction of the Proposed Project were to occur simultaneously with the various other projects, implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.11-1a and 2.11-1b identified in Section 2.11, *Noise*, would ensure that the Proposed Project's construction-related noise impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable (i.e., because the Proposed Project would mitigate

its contribution to the cumulative impact). As a result, the Proposed Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable noise impact.

Public Services

As described in Section 2.13, *Public Services*, construction activities associated with the Proposed Project could result in potentially significant impacts related to increasing demand and response times for fire protection and police services. These impacts could be cumulatively considerable when combined with impacts of the cumulative projects identified in Table 2.17-1. However, implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.13-1, 2.13-2, and 2.13-3a through 2.13-3c would reduce Proposed Project impacts to public services to less than significant levels, thereby reducing the cumulative contribution of the Proposed Project. As a result, the Proposed Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact on public services.

Transportation/Traffic

Proposed Project construction activities, as described in Section 2.15, *Transportation and Traffic*, could have a temporary construction-related impact on local traffic flow in the Proposed Project area as street and lane closures may be required. In conjunction with other construction projects identified in Table 2.17-1, potential cumulative impacts could occur. As specified in Section 2.15, *Traffic and Transportation*, Mitigation Measure 2.15-1b requires Sierra Pacific to prepare a Traffic Management Plan prior to construction. This Plan would be subject to the approval of Nevada County and would ensure that the Proposed Project's contribution to transportation and traffic-related impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

Long-Term Operational Effects

As documented in the foregoing sections of this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, the operation of the Proposed Project would not result in the potential for any individually significant impacts. Because of the limited nature and scope of the cumulative projects listed in Table 2.17-1, these cumulative projects would also be expected to have limited individual operational impacts. Therefore, the operational impacts of the Proposed Project would not be cumulatively considerable.

c) Environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly: *Less than Significant with Mitigation.*

Project impacts include the potential for an accidental release of hazardous materials stored in the Proposed Project staging area and used during the construction of the power line that could enter nearby waterways, adjacent lands, or public roadways. With implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.7-1a through 2.7-1e, 2.7-2, and 2.7-3, provided in Section 2.7, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, the Proposed Project would not result in environmental effects that could cause adverse effects on human beings, either directly

or indirectly. Temporary impacts to human beings through degradation of local air quality and noise could occur during project construction from the operation of construction equipment. However, with implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.3-1, 2.11-1a and 2.11-1b provided in Sections 2.3 (*Air Quality*) and 2.11 (*Noise*), temporary impacts would result in less than significant adverse effects on human beings.

References – Mandatory Findings of Significance

Nevada County Department of Transportation and Sanitation. 2006a. *2006/2007 Transportation Capital Improvement and Road Maintenance Program*. February, 2006.

Nevada County Planning Department. 2006b. Personal communication with Stephanie Wagner, Associate Planner with the Nevada County Planning Department, September 13, 2006.

Nevada County Community Development Department. 2005. *Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Acevedo General Plan Amendment and Use Permit Project*. December 12, 2005.

Nevada County Planning Department. 2007. *Current Planning Projects*. Website (<https://docs.co.nevada.ca.us/dscgi/ds.py/View/Collection-1581>) accessed January 17, 2007.

Sierra Pacific Power Company. 2006. 608-621 Tie Line Project, Hirschdale, California, Supplication 2 to Application A.06-04-017. December 2006.