2.10 Mineral Resources

Issues (and Supporting Information Sources):	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

Existing Mineral Resources

Mineral resources present in Siskiyou County that are considered major producing areas include crushed stone and pumice (CGS/USGS, 2004). Numerous small aggregate production areas are present in Siskiyou County but none are producing more than 0.5 million tons per year and all are located outside the Proposed Project and Weed Segment areas (Kohler, 2002). No known mineral resources or aggregate production areas are located within the City of Weed.

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 project area. In general, areas subject to pressures of urbanization are zoned by the CGS, while those areas outside these areas are not. The CGS has not prepared any reports that designate Mineral Resource Zones to be protected in Siskiyou County (Kohler, 2002).

Geothermal Resources

Known or potential geothermal resources in Siskiyou County are limited to the eastern half of the County (Laney and Brizzee, 2003). The Proposed Project and Weed Segment areas lie at the edge of this known or potential geothermal resource area with no identified industrial or other geothermal category operation anywhere near the 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.

SMARA states that the extraction of minerals is essential to the continued economic well-being of the State and to the needs of society, and that reclamation of mined lands is necessary to prevent or minimize adverse effects on the environment and to protect the public health and safety. The reclamation of mined lands will permit the continued mining of minerals and will provide for the protection and subsequent beneficial use of the mined and reclaimed land. Surface mining takes place in diverse areas where the geologic, topographic, climatic, biological, and social conditions are significantly different, and reclamation operations and the specifications therefore may vary accordingly (California Public Resources Code Section 2711).

Local

Siskiyou County General Plan

The Siskiyou County General Plan does not contain a Mineral Resource Element and does not identify any specific areas of mineral resources within the County to be protected (Siskiyou County, 1973). However, there is mention of sufficient aggregate resources in the County which are being processed but no commercially extracted minerals are identified.

City of Weed General Plan

The City of Weed General Plan does not contain a Mineral Resource Element and does not identify any specific areas of mineral resources within the City (City of Weed, 1987).

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 and Weed Segment areas. There are no known economically viable sources of rock materials in the immediate Proposed Project and Weed Segment areas. In addition, there are no unique geologic features identified within the Proposed Project and Weed Segment areas. Therefore, there is no potential for the Proposed Project and Weed Segment to result in the loss of mineral or unique geologic features and therefore there is no impact.

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 from the Proposed Project and Weed Segment including pole replacement, new pole installation, and substation upgrades affect only a small area, the majority of which is located within existing right-of-way property and existing substation fence lines. Therefore, the Proposed Project and Weed Segment would not result in the loss of any availability of locally-important minerals as the Proposed Project and Weed Segment traverse no areas currently used to extract known mineral resources. Thus, the Proposed Project and Weed Segment would not result in any impacts to mineral resources.

References – Mineral Resources

California Geological Survey (CGS)/U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), *The Mineral Industry of California, Annual Report*, 2004.

City of Weed, *City of Weed General Plan*, 1987.

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

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

Siskiyou County, Siskiyou County General Plan Conservation Element, June 1973.