

## 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>
<b>17. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE</b>				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<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 impact with incorporated mitigation.***

As discussed in the *Agriculture Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Public Services, Traffic and Transportation, and Utilities and Services Systems* sections of this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, the Proposed Project and/or Weed Segment would result in potentially significant temporary impacts as a result of construction of the transmission lines and substation upgrades 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 2.1, *Aesthetics*, an expanded fenceline at the Weed Substation would have the potential to impact scenic resources along Highway 97, and Poles 11 through 14 of the new 1.6-mile segment would have the potential to degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surroundings. However, implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.1-1 through 2.1-4 would reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

As described in Section 2.4, *Biological Resources*, the Proposed Project and Weed Segment 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 through 2.4-9 identified in Section 2.4 would reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

Section 2.5, *Cultural Resources*, concludes that the Proposed Project and Weed Segment 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 or Weed Segment. There are no known areas of cultural significance located within the Proposed Project or Weed Segment areas.

**b) Impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable: *less than significant*.**

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-specific impacts and should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) identifies the following three elements that are 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 County of Siskiyou, City of Weed, and Caltrans were contacted for information on projects within their jurisdiction. Development, utility improvement, and capital

**TABLE 2.17-1  
CUMULATIVE PROJECTS WITHIN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR WEED SEGMENT**

APN or Project Name	Description	Address / Location	Agency / Organization	Details	Distance from Proposed Project/Weed Segment
Prather Street Rehabilitation	Roadway rehabilitation.	6 <sup>th</sup> Street to 9 <sup>th</sup> Street.	City of Montague	Rehabilitate roadway and drainage improvements.	Approximately 1.5 miles northeast of the northern end of the Proposed Project.
Siskiyou Boulevard Project	Road reconstruction.	Near Grenada on Siskiyou Avenue.	Siskiyou County	No additional details available.	Approximately 100 feet east of the Proposed Project.
Tennant Road Project	Road overlay and re-stripe.	Near Weed, from SR 97 to MP 12.8.	Siskiyou County	No additional details available.	Not identified
APN 020-410-170 and APN 020-410-170	Zone changes.	19030 Rainbow Way, approximately 800 feet northeast of the Weed City Limits on State Route 97.	Siskiyou County	Rezone a 33.3-acre parcel from Non-Prime Agricultural to Non-Prime Agricultural and a 1.4 acre parcel from Neighborhood Commercial to Rural Residential Agricultural.	Immediately adjacent to the southeastern end of the Proposed Project route, near Weed Junction Substation.
Alamo Avenue Rehabilitation	Road rehabilitation.	City of Weed, Siskiyou Way and Alamo Avenue Rehabilitation	City of Weed	Rehabilitate curb, gutter, sidewalks, resurface, and improve drainage.	Approximately 2,000 feet southeast of the Weed Segment (Weed Substation).
APN 020-130-090	Annex 120.5 acres.	Just north of City limits, along both sides of Hoy Road	City of Weed	Re-zone for single family residential, and subdivide four parcels.	Approximately 200 feet east of the Weed Segment.
APN 060-221-010, APN 060-241-110, and APN 060-231-090	Parcel subdivision.	Off the west end of W. Lincoln Avenue, west of Kennedy Avenue.	City of Weed	Subdivide into four parcels for residential use; one parcel will be an equipment yard and shop.	Approximately 300 feet west of the Weed Segment.
APN 060-241-010 and APN 060-241-120	Annex 24.4 acres.	East of Highway 97, across from Alamo Avenue.	City of Weed	Will combine with 15.2 acres in City limits for residential development.	Approximately 500 feet east of the Weed Segment.
Yreka Substation Upgrade	Substation upgrade.	Within the existing property line of Yreka Substation, in the City of Yreka.	PacifiCorp	Addition of a new 115 kV breaker.	Northern terminus of the Proposed Project.
Weed Junction Substation Upgrade	Substation upgrade.	Within the existing property line of Weed Junction Substation, in the City of Weed.	PacifiCorp	Addition of new 115 kV line position and splitting the new 115 kV bus.	Southern terminus of the Proposed Project.

SOURCES: Siskiyou County, 2006; City of Weed, 2006; Caltrans, 2006; and PacifiCorp, 2005.

investment projects that could combine with the Proposed Project or Weed Segment to result in a cumulative impact are shown in Table 2.17-1. These projects are in the general geographic area of the Proposed Project or Weed Segment, and range from street re-striping projects to annexation projects that may result in the construction of residential developments. 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 and/or Weed Segment. 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 and/or Weed Segment. It is anticipated that construction of the Proposed Project would last approximately four months and the construction period for the Weed Segment would last approximately eight months. Projects within the vicinity of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment areas 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 and Weed Segment.

### **Short-Term Construction-Related Effects**

In conjunction with the Proposed Project and Weed Segment, several short-term construction-related cumulative impacts may occur. These potential impacts include cumulative impacts to air quality, cultural resources, hydrology and water quality, noise, and traffic.

#### ***Air Quality***

Siskiyou County is in attainment or unclassified status for all of the NAAQS and CAAQS. Therefore, the existing condition is not significantly degraded. Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project and Weed Segment, as described in Section 2.3, *Air Quality*, could have a temporary impact on local air quality through temporary increases in exhaust emissions (i.e., NO<sub>x</sub>, ROG, CO, SO<sub>2</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub>) and fugitive dust which could be cumulatively significant when combined with other projects described in Table 2.17-1. Mitigation Measure 2.3-1 would ensure that the Proposed Project and Weed Segment's temporary air quality construction impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable (i.e., because the Proposed Project and Weed Segment would be required to mitigate, and thereby reduce, its contribution to the cumulative impact). As a result, the Proposed Project and Weed Segment would not have a significant cumulative air quality impact.

#### ***Cultural Resources***

Section 2.5, *Cultural Resources*, concludes that the Proposed Project and Weed Segment 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 or Weed Segment. There are no known areas of cultural significance located within the Proposed Project or Weed Segment areas. Therefore, construction of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to cultural or historical resources.

### ***Hydrology and Water Quality***

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project and the Weed Segment, as described in Section 2.8, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, could impact water quality by temporarily exacerbating the processes of soil erosion and entrainment of sediment in stormwater runoff associated with disturbance of soil at work areas, the staging area, access roads, pull and tension sites, etc. This impact could be cumulatively considerable when combined with impacts of the cumulative projects identified in Table 2.17-1. However, implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.8-1 would reduce Proposed Project- and Weed Segment-induced soil erosion and sediment entrainment impacts to less than significant levels, thereby reducing the cumulative contribution of the Project. As a result, the Proposed Project or Weed Segment would not have a significant cumulative hydrology or water quality impact.

### ***Noise***

Equipment used during construction activities would temporarily increase short-term noise levels in the Proposed Project and Weed Segment areas. However, it is unlikely that the Proposed Project or Weed Segment, 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 or at the same time as the Proposed Project or Weed Segment. Therefore, since construction noise associated with the various projects would not likely overlap geographically or temporally, no cumulative noise impact would occur. Even if construction of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment 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 and Weed Segment's construction-related noise impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable (i.e., because the Proposed Project and Weed Segment would mitigate its contribution to the cumulative impact). As a result, the Proposed Project and Weed Segment would not have a significant cumulative noise impact.

### ***Transportation/Traffic***

Proposed Project and Weed Segment 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 and Weed Segment areas as street, lane, and sidewalk closures may be required, including short-term disruption of traffic flow on Interstate 5 at two locations where the transmission line would cross the freeway. 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 PacifiCorp to prepare a Traffic Management Plan prior to construction. This Plan would be subject to the approval of the CPUC and would ensure that the Proposed Project and Weed Segment's contribution to transportation and traffic-related cumulative impacts would not be considerable.

## Long-Term Operational Effects

As documented in the foregoing sections of this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, the operation of the Proposed Project and Weed segment would not result in the potential for any individually significant impacts with the exception of *Aesthetics* and *Biological Resources*, which are discussed below. 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 and Weed Segment would not be cumulatively considerable.

For *Aesthetics*, the operational impacts of the Proposed Project and the Weed Segment would be limited to physical changes in the fenceline and the addition of low-profile structures at the Weed Substation, and the installation of new poles (specifically Poles 11 through 14) in the new 1.6-mile segment. As noted above, these impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels with the implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.1-1 through 2.1-4. The cumulative projects listed in Table 2.17-1 would be expected to result in limited aesthetic changes; therefore, the impact of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment to aesthetic resources would not be cumulatively considerable.

For *Biological Resources*, the operational impact of the Proposed Project would be limited to the potential for sandhill crane collisions with the transmission line. The Weed Segment would not result in a similar collision risk because it is not in the potential nesting area of the sandhill crane. The cumulative projects listed in Table 2.17-1 would be unlikely to result in any increased risk of sandhill crane collisions because they would not include construction of transmission lines in the sandhill crane nesting area, so the impact of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment 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 incorporated.***

Project impacts include the potential for an accidental release of hazardous materials stored in staging areas and used during the construction of the transmission line that could enter nearby waterways, adjacent lands, or public roadways. With implementation of Mitigation Measures 2.7-1a through 2.7-1e, and 2.7-2, provided in Section 2.7, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, the Proposed Project and Weed Segment 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

Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2006. Personal communication with Carl Anderson, Caltrans District 2, August 18, 2006.

City of Weed. 2006. Personal communication with Deborah Salvestrin, City of Weed, July 24 and 31, 2006.

Siskiyou County. 2006. Personal communication with Beverly Shaw-Ritter, Siskiyou County, July 21 and August 2, 2006.

PaciCorp 2005. *Proponent's Environmental Assessment, Yreka-Weed Transmission Upgrade Project*, December, 2005. Prepared by Power Engineers, Inc.