

D. Environmental Analysis

D.1 INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

D.1.1 Introduction/Background

Section D (Environmental Analysis) of this EIR examines the environmental consequences associated with the Proposed Project and its alternatives. Section D includes analyses of the eleven environmental issue areas listed below:

D.2 Air Quality	D.8 Hydrology and Water Quality
D.3 Land Use	D.9 Noise
D.4 Biological Resources	D.10 Public Services and Utilities
D.5 Cultural Resources	D.11 Transportation and Traffic
D.6 Geology and Soils	D.12 Visual Resources
D.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials	

Within each issue area, discussions are presented in the following order:

- Environmental Setting for the Proposed Project
- Applicable Regulations, Plans, and Standards
- Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Project
- Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures of CPUC's Northerly Route Alternative Option 3
- Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures of the Partial Underground Alternative
- Environmental Impacts of the No Project Alternative
- Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance, and Reporting

By identifying the impacts associated with each issue area and the offsetting mitigation measures, the regulatory agencies and the general public are offered a discussion and full disclosure of the significant environmental impacts of this Proposed Project and its alternatives, including the No Project Alternative.

Analysis within each issue area includes consideration of the following components of the Proposed Project:

- Construct the new El Casco 220/115/12 kV Substation within the Norton Younglove Reserve in the County of Riverside, associated 220 kV and 115 kV interconnections, and new 12 kV line getaways.
- Replace approximately 13 miles of existing single-circuit 115 kV subtransmission lines with new, higher capacity double-circuit 115 kV subtransmission lines and replace support structures within existing SCE ROWs in the Cities of Banning and Beaumont and unincorporated areas of Riverside County.¹
- Replace approximately 1.9 miles of existing single-circuit 115 kV subtransmission lines with new, higher capacity single-circuit 115 kV subtransmission lines and replace support structures within existing SCE ROWs in the City of Beaumont and unincorporated Riverside County.
- Replace approximately 0.5 mile of existing single-circuit 115 kV subtransmission lines with new, higher capacity single-circuit 115 kV subtransmission lines on existing support structures within existing SCE ROWs in the City of Beaumont and unincorporated Riverside County.
- Rebuild 115 kV switchracks within Zanja and Banning Substations in the Cities of Yucaipa and Banning, respectively.
- Install telecommunications equipment at the proposed El Casco Substation and at SCE's existing Mill Creek Communications Site.

¹ Various segments of the existing 115 kV subtransmission lines also have distribution lines on the same structures. Where there are existing distribution lines on the structures, they would be transferred to the new structures.

- Install fiber optic cables within public streets and on existing SCE structures between the Cities of Redlands and Banning.

Each issue area in Section D also considers each of the following alternatives as well as the No Project Alternative:

- CPUC's Northerly Route Alternative Option 3
- Partial Underground Alternative

D.1.2 Environmental Assessment Methodology

D.1.2.1 Environmental Baseline

For the purpose of this document, and pursuant to CEQA Guidelines (Section 15125[a]), the environmental setting used for the impact analysis reflects conditions at the time of issuance of the Notice of Preparation (July 2007).

D.1.2.2 Environmental Consequences

The EIR evaluates the environmental consequences and potential impacts that would result from implementation of the Proposed Project and the alternatives. The impacts identified were compared with predetermined, specific significance criteria, and were classified according to significance categories listed in each issue area. The cumulative impacts of the Project taken together with the related cumulative projects listed in Section F (Other Considerations) were assessed next, and mitigation measures for each impact were identified, if applicable (see Section F for a complete analysis of the cumulative impacts of the Proposed Project). The focus in the cumulative impact analyses was to identify those Project impacts that might not be significant when considered alone, but contribute to a significant impact when viewed in conjunction with future planned projects. The same methodology was applied systematically to each Project alternative. A comparative analysis of the Proposed Project and the alternatives is provided in Section E (Comparison of Alternatives) of this document.

Once an impact was identified, diligent effort was taken to identify mitigation measures that would reduce the impact to a level that is not significant. Since some reviewing agencies require a demonstration of reduction of impacts to the maximum extent possible, mitigation measures were identified for all classes of impacts (except beneficial impacts). The mitigation measures recommended by this study have been identified in the impact assessment sections and presented in a Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance, and Reporting Table at the end of the analysis for each issue area (also see Section G, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting, for discussion of the Mitigation Monitoring Program).

Applicant-Proposed Measures (APMs). The Applicant has incorporated a number of measures and procedures to avoid or reduce impacts into the description of its Proposed Project. In the assessment of the impacts, these measures have been considered part of the Proposed Project and are not included as mitigation measures; however, implementation of each APM will be monitored by CPUC and SCE. The APMs that are intended to reduce the potential impacts in a specific issue area (such as air quality, biology, etc.) are listed in the section addressing that issue area.

Impact Significance Criteria. While the criteria for determining significant impacts are unique to each issue area, the classification of the impacts was uniformly applied in accordance with the following definitions:

- **Class I:** Significant; cannot be mitigated to a level that is less than significant
- **Class II:** Significant; can be mitigated to a level that is less than significant
- **Class III:** Adverse, less than significant
- **Class IV:** Beneficial impact