

4.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

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4.2.1 Environmental Setting

Agriculture

Agriculture is the fifth-largest component of the County of San Diego economy (County of San Diego 2011a). The County grossed the 10th and 11th-highest agriculture production values (in dollar amounts) in California in 2010 and 2011, respectively (CDFA 2012). Major crop categories produced in the County in 2011 included nursery and cut flower products, fruits and nuts, vegetables, field crops, apiary, timber products, and livestock and poultry (County of San Diego 2011a).

State Designation of Agricultural Lands

The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) of the California Resources Agency Department of Conservation (CDC) rates land for agriculture based on soil quality, irrigation status, and current land use. Definitions of the FMMP land designation types and FMMP Farmland areas in the County and the City are listed in Table 4.2-1. The project area includes lands designated as Farmland of Local Importance and Grazing Land (Figure 4.2-1), which are generally referred to as Farmland (CDC 2013b).

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open-space use (CDC 2013c). No agricultural preserves or lands subject to Williamson Act contracts are located in the project area, as shown in Figure 4.2-1.

Local Designation of Agricultural Lands

Two agricultural land use designations are identified in the San Diego County General Plan: Intensive Agriculture and Extensive Agriculture (County of San Diego 2011b). Agricultural zoning categories in the County include Limited Agriculture (A70) and General Agriculture (A72) (County of San Diego 2013b). Land zoned for Limited Agriculture is located immediately west of the utility corridor in which TL 6965 would be constructed and south of Miguel Substation (SanGIS 2009).

The City identifies two agricultural zone categories (A-8 and A-X) where land is designated for preservation through agricultural use but where it is also noted that the land “may be suited for eventual development” (City of Chula Vista 2005). The City also allows agricultural activities on lands designated as Planned Community land use (P-C) on an interim basis (City of Chula Vista 2005). The project area includes land designated as Planned Community (City of Chula Vista 2009); however, there are no agricultural activities occurring in these locations.

The County and City-designated agricultural lands in the project area are shown on Figure 4.2-1. The County and City land designations for agricultural activities are described in Table 4.2-2.

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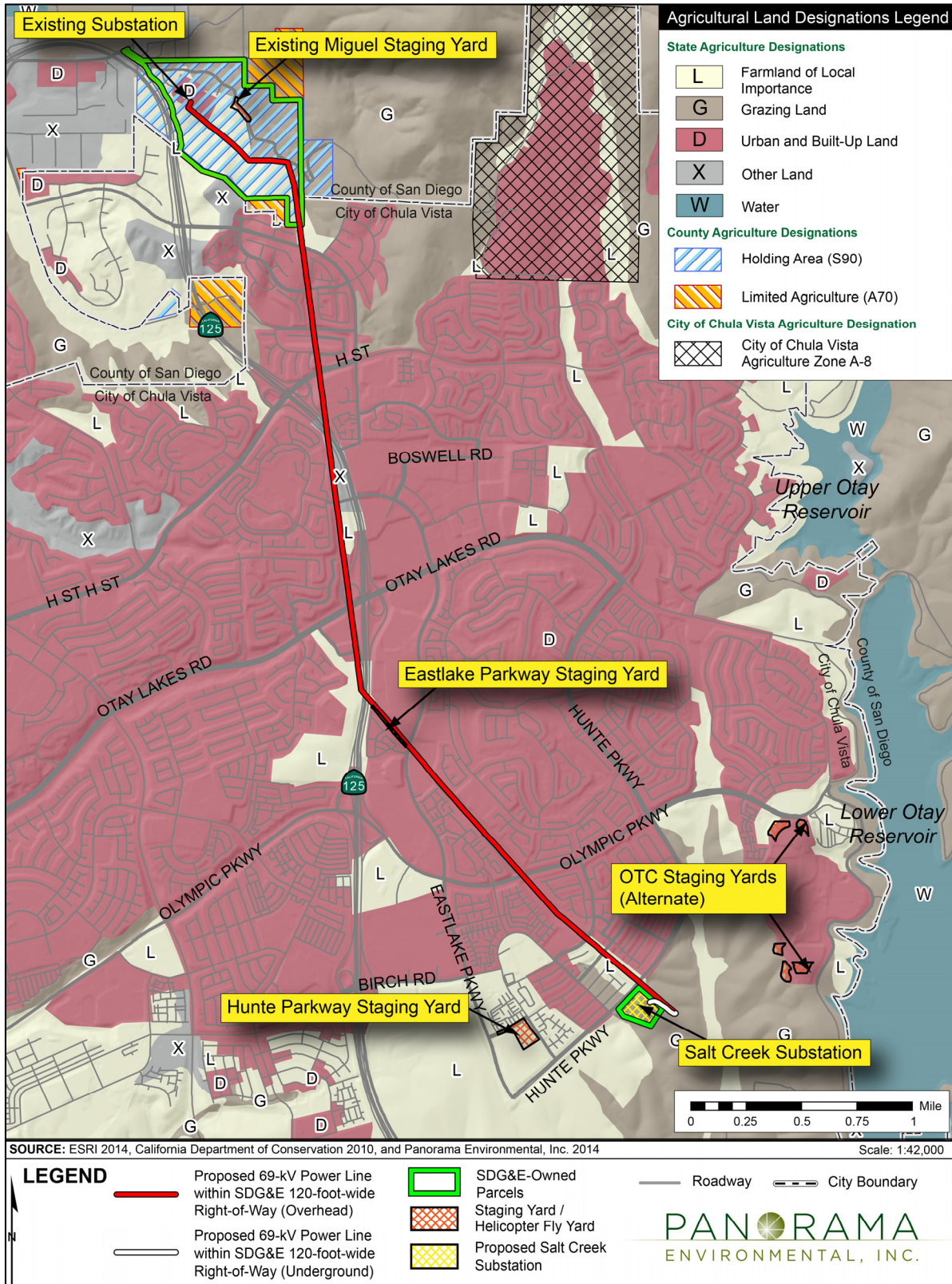
Table 4.2-1 Definitions of Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program Designations and Areas within County of San Diego and City of Chula Vista

Designation	Definition	County of San Diego (acres)	City of Chula Vista (acres)
Important Farmland Categories			
Prime Farmland	Farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.	7,085	0
Farmland of Statewide Importance	Farmland similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.	9,439	0
Unique Farmland	Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.	48,359	0
Farmland of Local Importance	Land that meets all the characteristics of Prime and Statewide [Farmland], with the exception of irrigation. Farmlands not covered by the above categories but of significant economic importance to the county. They have a history of good production for locally adapted crops. The soils are grouped into types that are suited for truck crops (such as tomatoes, strawberries, cucumbers, potatoes, celery, squash, romaine lettuce, and cauliflower) and soils suited for orchard crops (avocados and citrus).	154,038	4,275
Other Agricultural Land			
Grazing Land	Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock.	126,496	4,472

Sources: CDC 2013b, CDC 2010a, and CDC 2010b

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Figure 4.2-1 State and Local Agricultural Land in the Project Area



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Table 4.2-2 Definitions of Local Agricultural Land Use Designations in County of San Diego and City of Chula Vista

Designation	Description
County Land Use Categories	
Intensive Agriculture	Land designation for agriculture, including row crops, grains, nurseries, greenhouses, flower fields, dairies, livestock, poultry, equine ranches, orchards, and vineyards.
Extensive Agriculture	Land designation for pastures, grazing, and fallow lands.
County Zoning Categories	
Limited Agriculture (A70)	Land designation to protect moderate- to high-quality crops or animal agriculture.
General Agriculture (A72)	Land designation to create preserve areas for raising crops and animals, with limitations on processing and commercial activities.
City Zoning Categories	
A-8	Land designated for agricultural activities on a minimum of 8 acres intended to preserve in agricultural use land that may be suited for eventual development.
A-X	Land designated for agricultural activities on more than 8 acres ("X" represents a number of acres greater than 8) intended to preserve in agricultural use land that may be suited for eventual development.
P-C	Land designated for agricultural activities on an interim basis intended to preserve in agricultural use land that may be suited for eventual development.

Sources: City of Chula Vista 2005, County of San Diego 2011b, and County of San Diego 2013b

Forestry Resources

The California Public Resources Code provides definitions of forest land (Cal. Pub. Res. Code § 12220(g)) and timberland (Cal. Pub. Res. Code § 4526). California Government Code Section 51105(g) defines Timberland Production zoned land (Cal. Gov't Code § 51104(g)).

There are no forest lands, timberland, or timberland production zones in the project area.

4.2.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

There are no federal laws or regulations pertaining to agriculture and forestry resources that are applicable to the proposed project.

State

Williamson Act

The Williamson Act, officially known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, allows private landowners to enter into contracts with counties and cities to voluntarily restrict specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open-space uses (CDC 2013c). In return, landowners

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receive property tax assessments at a rate consistent with agricultural or open-space use rather than potential market value.

Local

City of Chula Vista General Plan

The City of General Plan (City of Chula Vista 2005) establishes goals and objectives to provide guidance in the growth of the City. The following agricultural resources objective was identified in the City of Chula Vista General Plan:

Objective E.4 Maintain the opportunity for limited agricultural and related uses to occur as an interim land use within planned development areas and as a potential permanent land use within appropriate locations.

4.2.3 Applicant Proposed Measures

SDG&E did not propose any measures to reduce impacts to agricultural and forestry resources.

4.2.4 Significance Criteria

Appendix G of CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 *et seq.*) provides guidance on assessing whether a project will have significant impacts on the environment. Consistent with Appendix G, the proposed project would have significant impacts to agriculture and forest resources if it would:

- a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use.
- b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract.
- c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined in Public Resource Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined in Government Code Section 51104 (g)).
- d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.
- e. Involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

4.2.5 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This impact analysis considers the potential effects to agriculture and forestry resources from activities associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed project.

Impact Assessment

Table 4.2-3 provides a summary of the significance of potential impacts to agriculture and forestry resources prior to application of APMs, after application of APMs and before implementation of mitigation measures, and after the implementation of mitigation measures.

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Table 4.2-3 Summary of Potential Impacts to Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Significance Criteria	Project Phase	Significance Prior to APMS	Significance After APMS and Before Mitigation	Significance After Mitigation
Impact AgForest-1: Convert Farmland to nonagricultural use	Construction	Less than significant	Less than significant	Less than significant
	Operation and Maintenance	Less than significant	Less than significant	Less than significant
Impact AgForest-2: Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract	Construction	No impact	No impact	No impact
	Operation and Maintenance	No impact	No impact	No impact
Impact AgForest-3: Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production	Construction	No impact	No impact	No impact
	Operation and Maintenance	No impact	No impact	No impact
Impact AgForest-4: Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use	Construction	No impact	No impact	No impact
	Operation and Maintenance	No impact	No impact	No impact
Impact AgForest-5: Involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use	Construction	No impact	No impact	No impact
	Operation and Maintenance	No impact	No impact	No impact

Impact AgForest-1: Convert Farmland to nonagricultural use (*Less than significant; no mitigation required*)

Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance do not occur in the project area and would not be impacted by the project. Construction, operation, and maintenance of the project would result in temporary and permanent impacts to FMMP-designated Farmland of Local Importance and Grazing Land. Temporary and permanent impacts to FMMP-designated farmland are summarized in Table 4.2-4. The amount of permanently impacted FMMP-designated Farmland would be less than significant and represents less than 0.004 percent of available Farmland in the County and less than 0.12 percent of Farmland in the City of Chula Vista. FMMP-designated Farmland that would be impacted by the proposed project has either been previously developed or is not being used for agricultural purposes. The project would therefore not convert agricultural land to non-agricultural use or result in the loss of agricultural land. The impact to Farmland would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None Required.

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Table 4.2-4 Project Impacts to State-designated Farmland

Project Component	Farmland of Local Importance (acres)		Grazing Land (acres)		Total Impact to Farmland by Project Component (acres)	
	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent
Proposed Substation ¹	0.21	0.16	2.43	9.77	2.64	9.93
Poles and Work Pads	0.78	0.50	0.27	<0.01	1.05	0.50
New and Temporary Access	0.03	0.02	0	0.07	0.03	0.09
Staging Yards	8.47	0	<0.04	0	8.51	0
Total Impact to Farmland Type	9.49	0.68	2.74	9.85	12.23	10.52

Note:

¹ Includes access road to Hunte Parkway, 12-kV distribution, 69-kV loop-in, and drainage to discharge dissipator

Impact AgForest-2: Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract (No impact)

There are no Williamson Act contract lands in the project vicinity, and the proposed project is not located on land specifically zoned for agricultural use. The proposed substation, Hunte Parkway staging yard, and Eastlake Parkway staging yard would be located on land zoned by the City as P-C. Miguel Substation and the adjacent staging yard are located on land zoned by the County of San Diego as Holding Area (S90). These categories are not designated specifically for agricultural use; however, both allow for agricultural activities on an interim basis. The proposed project would affect land with these designations has either been previously developed or is not being used for agricultural purposes. The proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or affect lands subject to a Williamson Act contract. There would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures: None Required.

Impact AgForest-3: Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production (No impact)

There is no forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned as Timberland Production in the vicinity of the project. There would be no impact to forest land or timberland.

Mitigation Measures: None Required.

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Impact AgForest-4: Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use (No impact)

There is no forest land in the vicinity of the project. There would be no impact to forest land.

Mitigation Measures: None Required.

Impact AgForest-5: Involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use (No impact)

The project would not involve any other changes to the environment that would result in the conversion of Farmland or forest land. There would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures: None Required.

4.2.6 Project Alternatives

Table 4.2-5 provides a summary of the potential impacts to agricultural and forestry resources from the project alternatives.

Table 4.2-5 Summary of Impacts from Alternatives by Significance Criteria

Significance Criteria	No Project Alternative	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Impact AgForest-1: Convert Farmland to nonagricultural use	No impact	Less than significant	Less than significant	Less than significant
Impact AgForest-2: Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact
Impact AgForest-3: Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact
Impact AgForest-4: Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact
Impact AgForest-5: Involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact

Alternative 1: 230/12-kV Substation and 230-kV Loop-In

Environmental Setting

This alternative would involve construction of a larger substation within the SDG&E fee-owned parcel south of Hunte Parkway. The existing agriculture and forestry conditions for this

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alternative are the same as for the proposed substation and Hunte Parkway and OTC staging yards described in Section 4.2.1.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The 230/12-kV substation would be larger than the proposed substation but would require slightly less land for the construction of the substation site south of Hunte Parkway. Both Alternative 1 and the proposed project would include installation of underground 12-kV distribution circuits. The 230/12-kV substation would require a loop-in of an existing 230-kV transmission line instead of the 69-kV power line. The land surrounding the proposed substation site is FMMP-designated Farmland of Local Importance and Grazing Land (see Figure 4.2-1). Impacts to FMMP-designated Farmland of Local Importance and Grazing land are summarized in Table 4.2-6. The amount of permanently impacted FMMP-designated farmland would be slightly less than the proposed project and therefore less than significant.

Alternative 1 would not involve installation of a 5-mile-long 69-kV power line within the transmission corridor. Impacts to FMMP-designated Farmland associated with the 69-kV power line would be avoided. Temporary impacts to FMMP-designated Farmland from staging yards would be reduced by 1.95 acres relative to the proposed project because there would be no staging at the Miguel Substation and Eastlake Parkway staging yards. This alternative would avoid temporary and permanent impacts to Farmland associated with poles, work pads, and new and temporary access roads.

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 1 would not impact lands under a Williamson Act contract and would not impact forestry resources.

Table 4.2-6 Alternative 1 Impacts to State-designated Farmland

Project Component	Farmland of Local Importance (acres)		Grazing Land (acres)		Total Impact to Farmland by Project Component (acres)	
	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent
230-kV substation (includes access road to Hunte Parkway, 12-kV distribution, 230-kV loop-in, and drainage to discharge dissipater)	0.24	0.16	1.94	10.01	2.18	10.17
Hunte Parkway staging yard (same as proposed project)	6.50	0	0.00	0	6.50	0
OTC staging yards (same as proposed project)	0.00	0	0.20	0	0.20	0
Total Impact to Farmland	6.74	0.16	2.14	10.01	8.88	10.17

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Alternative 2: 69/12-kV Substation and Generation at Border and Larkspur Electric Generating Facilities

Environmental Setting

This alternative would involve construction of a substation, distribution lines, and TL 6910 loop-in in the same manner as the proposed project. The existing agriculture and forestry conditions for this alternative are the same as for the proposed substation and Hunte Parkway and OTC staging yards described in Section 4.2.1.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Agriculture and forestry impacts resulting from construction and operation of Alternative 2 would be similar to the proposed substation impacts. Unlike the proposed project, Alternative 2 does not include construction of a new 69-kV power line and thereby avoids impacts to Farmland associated with power line construction. Temporary and permanent impacts to Farmland from this alternative are summarized in Table 4.2-7. Use of the existing gas turbines located at Border and Larkspur electric generating facilities would have no impact to agriculture and forestry resources because the generating facilities currently exist, and no land conversion would be required to generate additional power at these facilities. The amount of permanently impacted FMMP-designated Farmland would be less than impacts from the proposed project and would therefore be less than significant.

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 2 would not impact lands under a Williamson Act contract and would not impact forestry resources.

Alternative 3: 69/12-kV Substation and Underground 69-kV Power Line within Public ROW

Environmental Setting

This alternative would involve construction of a substation, distribution lines, and TL 6910 loop-in in the same manner as the proposed project. This alternative also involves construction

Table 4.2-7 Alternative 2 Impacts to State-designated Farmland

Project Component	Farmland of Local Importance (acres)		Grazing Land (acres)		Total Impact to Farmland by Project Component (acres)	
	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent
69-kV Substation (same as proposed project)	0.21	0.16	2.43	9.77	2.64	9.93
Hunte Parkway staging yard (same as proposed project)	6.50	0	0.00	0	6.50	0
OTC staging yards (same as proposed project)	0.00	0	0.20	0	0.20	0
Total Impact to Farmland	6.71	0.16	2.63	9.77	9.34	9.93

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of an underground power line. The underground power line would be located within a paved roadway. There is no agricultural use within the proposed underground work area.

The existing agriculture and forestry conditions for this alternative are the same as for the Salt Creek Substation, Miguel Substation and staging yard, and Hunte Parkway and OTC staging yards described in Section 4.2.1.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Potential impacts to agriculture and forestry resources resulting from construction and operation of Alternative 3 would be similar to the proposed project. Alternative 3 involves construction of a substation and loop-in of TL 6910 in the same manner and location as the proposed project. Alternative 3 also involves overhead construction of TL 6965 within the Miguel Substation property in the same manner as the proposed project. Unlike the proposed project, Alternative 3 would build a new underground 69-kV power line within public roads and easements between the Miguel Substation and proposed substation. The underground power line would have no impact to Farmland because the power line would be installed within an existing paved roadway. Temporary and permanent impacts to Farmland from this alternative are summarized in Table 4.2-8. The amount of permanently impacted FMMP-designated Farmland would be slightly less than the proposed project and therefore would be less than significant.

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 3 would not impact lands under a Williamson Act contract and would not impact forestry resources.

Table 4.2-8 Alternative 3 Impacts to State-designated Farmland

Project Component	Farmland of Local Importance (acres)		Grazing Land (acres)		Total Impact to Farmland by Project Component (acres)	
	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent
69-kV Substation (same as proposed project)	0.21	0.16	2.43	9.77	2.64	9.93
Hunte Parkway staging yard (same as proposed project)	6.50	0	0.00	0	6.50	0
OTC staging yards (same as proposed project)	0.00	0	0.20	0	0.20	0
Miguel Staging Yard (same as proposed project)	1.90	0	0.05	0	1.95	0
Total Impact to Farmland	8.61	0.16	2.68	9.77	11.29	9.93

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No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, SDG&E would meet energy needs of the southeast Chula Vista area by adding two additional transformer banks at the Proctor Valley Substation and installing 6 to 7 miles of distribution circuits to the Otay Ranch Area. The build-out of the substations within the existing substation yards would have no impact on agriculture or forestry resources. The addition of distribution circuits within existing roadways would have no impact on agriculture or forestry resources. The No Project Alternative would therefore have no impact on agriculture or forestry resources.