

## E.1.8 Noise

### E.1.8.1 Environmental Setting

**Ambient Noise Levels.** Varying noise levels occur in the Interstate 8 Alternative area. Rural communities or unpopulated lands are the quietest, but noise can be sporadically elevated in localized areas where influenced by on-road traffic or aircraft. Natural noise levels absent human activity are generally low. Unpopulated natural areas are expected to be as low as 35 to 50 dBA, and ambient levels tend to be below 50 dBA in open areas. Much of the route would be adjacent to I-8 where noise levels are the highest (over 80 dBA). Parallel to the existing 500 kV Southwest Powerlink transmission line, corona noise can be heard as a crackling or hissing sound at levels of approximately 50 dBA.

**Noise-Sensitive Receptors.** Residences are near the alternative route at many locations: along the route between Jacumba, Boulevard, and Campo; and in the Pine Valley area, Alpine, and Lakeside. Approximately 1,300 residences and about six religious facilities and schools are within 1,000 feet of the alternative 500 kV line in these communities and in the intervening rural areas. The Campo, La Posta and Viejas Reservations are also adjacent to the ROW. Tribal areas are considered noise-sensitive because they may have residential uses and may be used for passive enjoyment of the land. Much of the remainder of the route occurs on BLM and national forest land, which provides a rural and natural setting, but is not noise-sensitive. Recreational land uses within the BLM and the Cleveland National Forest (CNF) that would be noise-sensitive include: the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail at MP I8-12; the BLM Coyote Mountains Wilderness 0.3 miles north of the route; the BLM Carrizo Gorge Wilderness Area 0.25 miles north of the route; the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) within CNF; Boulder Oaks Campground 0.5 miles west of the route near MP I8 54; the Secret Canyon Trail near MP I8-63.5; CNF Pine Creek Wilderness where camping is allowed immediately adjacent to the route; the California Riding and Hiking Trail near MP I8-74.2; the Trans-County Trail; the San Vicente Highlands Open Space Preserve; and the Sycamore Canyon Open Space Preserve. Wildlife that is sensitive to noise and the related impacts are discussed as part of Biological Resources (see Sections E.1.2.3 and E.1.2.4, Impacts B-7, B-8, and B-12). See Table E.1.4-1, Land Use, for the land uses in the vicinity of this alternative, and Table E.1.4-2 identifies sensitive uses.

#### Applicable Regulations, Plans, and Standards

See Section D.8.3.3 for the noise ordinances and limitations within unincorporated Imperial County, San Diego County, and the City of San Diego.

### E.1.8.2 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Table E.1.8-1 summarizes the noise impacts of the Interstate 8 Alternative.

Table E.1.8-1. Impacts Identified – Alternatives – Noise

Impact No.	Description	Impact Significance
<b>Interstate 8 Alternative (Including all options except Campo North and Buckman Springs Options)</b>		
N-1	Construction noise would substantially disturb sensitive receptors and violate local rules, standards, and/or ordinances	Class I

Table E.1.8-1. Impacts Identified – Alternatives – Noise

Impact No.	Description	Impact Significance
N-2	Construction activity would temporarily cause groundborne vibration	Class III
N-3	Permanent noise levels would increase due to corona noise from operation of the transmission lines and noise from other project components	Class I
N-4	Routine inspection and maintenance activities would increase ambient noise levels	Class I
I-8 Substation Alternative and Campo North and Buckman Springs Options – <i>No Impact</i>		

## Construction Impacts

### ***Impact N-1: Construction noise would substantially disturb sensitive receptors and violate local rules, standards, and/or ordinances (Class I)***

Construction of the Interstate 8 Alternative would temporarily substantially increase ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the alternative overhead line, along the alternative route, and along all transport access routes, and it would result in construction noise impacts identical to those of the proposed 500 kV transmission line but in the vicinity of otherwise unaffected residences, religious facilities, educational facilities, tribal lands, and recreational uses. Construction noise would result in a significant impact by causing substantial noise increases at rural residences and other noise-sensitive uses. SDG&E would implement NOI-APM-1 to notify sensitive receptors. Although NOI-APM-1 includes steps to notify the affected community, this impact would be significant without additional measures. In addition to the notification process suggested in NOI-APM-1, Mitigation Measure L-1a would be implemented as it is more comprehensive (see Section D.4, Land Use). By establishing best management practices for activities likely to violate local noise standards, Mitigation Measure N-1a, in combination with the notification required by Mitigation Measure L-1a, would reduce this impact to the extent feasible, but the substantial noise increase from construction would be significant and unavoidable (Class I). (See Appendix 12 for the full text of the mitigation measures.)

### ***Mitigation Measures for Impact N-1: Construction noise would substantially disturb sensitive receptors and violate local rules, standards, and/or ordinances***

**L-1a Prepare Construction Notification Plan.**

**N-1a Implement Best Management Practices for construction noise.**

### ***Impact N-2: Construction activity would temporarily cause groundborne vibration (Class III)***

A groundborne vibration impact would occur in the immediate vicinity of construction sites. Absent advance notification, a nuisance or annoyance could occur with perceptible vibration, but physical damage would not occur because no vulnerable structures would be close enough to the drilling. Blasting is not expected to be necessary for the Interstate 8 Alternative. The notification process suggested in NOI-APM-1 would reduce the likelihood of a nuisance or annoyance occurring. With notification, the impacts from construction-related groundborne vibration would be adverse but not excessive, and this impact would be less than significant (Class III).

## Operational Impacts

### ***Impact N-3: Permanent noise levels would increase due to corona noise from operation of the transmission lines and noise from other project components (Class I)***

Operational noise from the corona effect would cause a substantial permanent increase of more than 5 dBA within 500 feet of the alternative 500 kV ROW and in natural areas where existing noise levels could be as low as 35 dBA. This would result in a significant impact. Mitigation Measure N-3a would help to minimize the nuisance experienced at residences, tribal lands, and recreational uses that are near the edge of the Interstate 8 Alternative ROW to the extent feasible, but the noise increase would remain and create an infrequent but significant and unavoidable impact (Class I).

### ***Mitigation Measure for Impact N-3: Permanent noise levels would increase due to corona noise from operation of the transmission lines and noise from other project components***

**N-3a Respond to complaints of corona noise.**

### ***Impact N-4: Routine inspection and maintenance activities would increase ambient noise levels (Class I)***

Helicopter and ground-level inspection and maintenance, including occasional emergency repairs, would result in substantial temporary periodic increases in noise levels above existing levels identical to transmission line construction. Inspection and maintenance noise would be intermittent over the life of the line. However, helicopters and other equipment within 200 feet of sensitive receptors would periodically cause a substantial increase in noise over conditions occurring without the Proposed Project resulting in a significant impact. Because the need for emergency response cannot be predicted and advance notification or restricting the noise from work to daytime hours would not be practical, this would be a significant and unavoidable impact (Class I).

## E.1.8.3 Interstate 8 Alternative Substation

### Environmental Setting

**Noise-Sensitive Receptors.** No residences, recreational uses, or otherwise sensitive receptors are located within 1,000 feet of the I-8 Alternative Substation site, which is in a rural and natural setting.

### Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Construction of the alternative substation would cause noise from grading and access road construction along with other construction activities similar to those of transmission line construction. Noise from access road traffic would also occur, although not within 1,000 feet of a residence. Because no nearby noise-sensitive receptors would be affected, construction noise (Impact N-1, Class III) would not cause any impact. Similarly, a groundborne vibration impact (Impact N-2) would not occur.

Operational noise would not cause any local ordinance to be violated or any notable change in existing noise levels. Noise from operating the new substation (Impact N-3, Class III) and noise from maintenance activities (Impact N-4, Class III) would not adversely affect any noise-sensitive receptors.

## E.1.8.4 Interstate 8 Route Options

### Campo North Option

No residences, recreational uses, or otherwise sensitive receptors are located within 1,000 feet of the Campo North Option, which would remain north of the freeway in the vicinity of the wind farm. Although this option would occur on tribal land, the route of the option was developed in response to a request from the Campo Tribe. As such, it would not occur within or affect any noise-sensitive areas of the tribal land. No noise or vibration impact would occur due to sufficient distance to noise-sensitive receptors (Impacts N-1 through N-4, No Impact).

### Buckman Springs Underground Option

No residences, recreational uses, or otherwise sensitive receptors are located within 1,000 feet of the Buckman Springs Underground Option or along Sheephead Mountain Road. Although this option would traverse land used for parks and recreation/open space, this open space is not noise-sensitive because it is not used for recreation that involves passive enjoyment. Construction noise (Impact N-1, No Impact) for the two overhead/underground transition stations for the 500 kV line, and installation of an underground route segment for approximately 1.9 miles would be substantially greater in duration for the Buckman Springs Underground Option than for the Proposed Project, but no nearby sensitive receptors would be affected. Similarly, a groundborne vibration impact (Impact N-2) would not occur at any sensitive location because of sufficient distance. Operational noise for this segment would not cause any local ordinance to be violated or any substantial change in existing ambient noise levels at noise-sensitive receptors (Impacts N-3 and N-4, No Impact).

### West Buckman Springs Option

#### *Environmental Setting*

**Noise-Sensitive Receptors.** No residences are located within 1,000 feet of the West Buckman Springs Option, but noise-sensitive recreational uses would be affected. The route option would cross the Pacific Crest Trail and parallel the PCT for approximately 0.4 miles, and the route option would pass just west of the Boulder Oaks Campground near MP BSW-2.

#### *Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures*

***Impact N-1: Construction noise would substantially disturb sensitive receptors and violate local rules, standards, and/or ordinances (Class I)***

The West Buckman Springs Option to the Interstate 8 Alternative would cause construction noise impacts identical to those of the Interstate 8 Alternative 500 kV transmission line in the vicinity of the PCT and the Boulder Oaks Campground. Construction of the alternative 500 kV line would result in a significant impact by causing substantial noise increases for these recreational uses. Establishing best management practices, Mitigation Measure N-1a, and providing the advance notification required by Mitigation Measure L-1a, would reduce the impact of construction noise to the extent feasible, but the substantial noise increase from construction would be significant and unavoidable (Class I).

***Mitigation Measure for Impact N-1: Construction noise would substantially disturb sensitive receptors and violate local rules, standards, and/or ordinances***

**L-1a Prepare Construction Notification Plan.**

**N-1a Implement Best Management Practices for construction noise.**

***Impact N-2: Construction activity would temporarily cause groundborne vibration (No Impact)***

A groundborne vibration impact would not occur at any sensitive location because of sufficient distance (No Impact).

***Impact N-3: Permanent noise levels would increase due to corona noise from operation of the transmission lines and noise from other project components (Class I)***

Within 500 feet of the alternative 500 kV ROW, corona noise would cause an ambient noise increase of 5 dBA, resulting in a significant impact. Mitigation Measure N-3a would help to minimize the nuisance experienced at the edge of the ROW to the extent feasible, but the noise increase would remain and create an infrequent but significant and unavoidable impact (Class I).

***Mitigation Measure for Impact N-3: Permanent noise levels would increase due to corona noise from operation of the transmission lines and noise from other project components***

**N-3a Respond to complaints of corona noise.**

***Impact N-4: Routine inspection and maintenance activities would increase ambient noise levels (Class I)***

Noise from occasional inspection and maintenance activities, including occasional emergency repairs, would be identical to construction noise and would periodically cause a substantial increase in noise over conditions occurring without the alternative resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact (Class I).

## South Buckman Springs Option

### ***Environmental Setting***

**Noise-Sensitive Receptors.** Section E.1.4.3, Land Use, shows that seven rural residences are located along Cameron Truck Trail within 1,000 feet of the South Buckman Springs Option. Although this option would traverse land used for parks and recreation/open space, this open space is not noise-sensitive because it is not used for recreation that involves passive enjoyment.

### ***Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures***

***Impact N-1: Construction noise would substantially disturb sensitive receptors and violate local rules, standards, and/or ordinances (Class I)***

The South Buckman Springs Option to the Interstate 8 Alternative would cause construction noise impacts identical to those of the Interstate 8 Alternative 500 kV transmission line in the vicinity of seven rural residences that would otherwise be unaffected. Construction of the alternative 500 kV line would result in a significant impact by causing substantial noise increases for these residences. Establishing best management practices, Mitigation Measure N-1a, and providing the advance notification required by Mitigation Measure L-1a, would reduce the impact of construction noise to the extent feasible, but the substantial noise increase from construction would be significant and unavoidable (Class I).

***Mitigation Measure for Impact N-1: Construction noise would substantially disturb sensitive receptors and violate local rules, standards, and/or ordinances***

**L-1a Prepare Construction Notification Plan.**

**N-1a Implement Best Management Practices for construction noise.**

***Impact N-2: Construction activity would temporarily cause groundborne vibration (No Impact)***

A groundborne vibration impact would not occur at any sensitive location because of sufficient distance (No Impact).

***Impact N-3: Permanent noise levels would increase due to corona noise from operation of the transmission lines and noise from other project components (Class I)***

Within 500 feet of the alternative 500 kV ROW, corona noise would cause an ambient noise increase of 5 dBA, resulting in a significant impact. Mitigation Measure N-3a would help to minimize the nuisance experienced at the edge of the ROW to the extent feasible, but the noise increase would remain and create an infrequent but significant and unavoidable impact (Class I).

***Mitigation Measure for Impact N-3: Permanent noise levels would increase due to corona noise from operation of the transmission lines and noise from other project components***

**N-3a Respond to complaints of corona noise.**

***Impact N-4: Routine inspection and maintenance activities would increase ambient noise levels (Class I)***

Noise from occasional inspection and maintenance activities, including occasional emergency repairs, would be identical to construction noise and would periodically cause a substantial increase in noise over conditions occurring without the alternative resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact (Class I).

## Chocolate Canyon Option

### ***Environmental Setting***

**Noise-Sensitive Receptors.** No residences are located within 1,000 feet of the Chocolate Canyon Option, but noise-sensitive recreational uses would be affected. The route of this option would be immediately south of the Trans-County Trail.

### ***Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures***

***Impact N-1: Construction noise would substantially disturb sensitive receptors and violate local rules, standards, and/or ordinances (Class I)***

The Chocolate Canyon Option to the Interstate 8 Alternative would cause construction noise impacts identical to those of the Interstate 8 Alternative 230 kV transmission line in the vicinity of the Trans-County Trail. Construction of the alternative 230 kV line would result in a significant impact by causing substantial noise increases for these recreational uses. Establishing best management practices, Mitigation Measure N-1a, and providing the advance notification required by Mitigation Measure L-1a, would reduce the impact of construction noise to the extent feasible, but the substantial noise increase from construction would be significant and unavoidable (Class I).

***Mitigation Measure for Impact N-1: Construction noise would substantially disturb sensitive receptors and violate local rules, standards, and/or ordinances***

**L-1a Prepare Construction Notification Plan.**

**N-1a Implement Best Management Practices for construction noise.**

***Impact N-2: Construction activity would temporarily cause groundborne vibration (No Impact)***

A groundborne vibration impact would not occur at any sensitive location because of sufficient distance (No Impact).

***Impact N-3: Permanent noise levels would increase due to corona noise from operation of the transmission lines and noise from other project components (Class III)***

Operational noise would not cause any local ordinance to be violated or any notable change in existing ambient noise levels because the overhead 230 kV line would cause less than 40 dBA in corona noise (Class III).

***Mitigation Measure for Impact N-3: Permanent noise levels would increase due to corona noise from operation of the transmission lines and noise from other project components***

**N-3a Respond to complaints of corona noise.**

***Impact N-4: Routine inspection and maintenance activities would increase ambient noise levels (Class I)***

Noise from occasional inspection and maintenance activities, including occasional emergency repairs, would be identical to construction noise and would periodically cause a substantial increase in noise over conditions occurring without the alternative resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact (Class I).

### **E.1.8.5 Future Transmission System Expansion for Interstate 8 Alternative**

As described in Section E.1.1, the Interstate 8 Alternative Substation that would be built as a part of the Interstate 8 Alternative would accommodate up to six 230 kV circuits and a 500 kV circuit. Only two 230 kV circuits are proposed by this alternative at this time, but construction of additional 230 kV circuits and a 500 kV circuit out of the Interstate 8 Alternative Substation may be required in the future. This section considers the impacts of construction and operation of these potential future transmission lines. There are three routes that are most likely for these future lines; each is addressed below. Figure Ap.1-29 illustrates the potential routes of the transmission lines.

#### **Environmental Setting – 230 or 500 kV Future Transmission System Expansion**

The future 230 and/or 500 kV lines from the Interstate 8 Alternative Substation would most likely follow one or more of the following routes:

##### ***Interstate 8 Route Including Underground Within Alpine Boulevard***

Please note the Interstate 8 route including underground within Alpine Boulevard would only be applicable for future 230 kV lines.

Additional 230 kV circuits could be installed underground within Alpine Boulevard, with appropriate compact duct banks and engineering to avoid, or possibly relocate, existing utilities. See Section

E.1.8.1 and E.1.8.2 for a description of the Environmental Setting and Mitigation Measures for Noise for the Interstate 8 Alternative. The future transmission line route would follow the Interstate 8 Alternative's 230 kV route to the point where it meets the Proposed Project at MP 131. The future transmission route would then join the proposed route corridor to the west, continuing past the Sycamore Canyon Substation to the Chicarita Substation. See Sections D.8.2, D.8.8, and D.8.9 for a description of the Environmental Setting and Mitigation Measures for Noise of the Inland Valley Link and the Coastal Link of the Proposed Project. The Interstate 8 230 kV future transmission route could then follow the Proposed Project's 230 kV Future Transmission Expansion route from Chicarita to the Escondido Substation shown in Figure B-12a. See Section D.8.11 for a description of the Environmental Setting and Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Project's Future Transmission Expansion route.

#### ***Route D Alternative Corridor***

Additional 230 or 500 kV circuits could follow the Route D Alternative corridor to the north of Descanso, after following the Interstate 8 Alternative 230 kV route from the Interstate 8 Substation to MP I8 70.3. The Environmental Setting and Mitigation Measures for Noise of the Route D Alternative can be found in Section E.3.8.1 and in Section E.3.8.2. It should be noted, however, that the Route D Alternative Noise impacts and mitigation measures are for a 500 kV transmission line, and the Interstate 8 future transmission line as detailed above could be either a 500 kV line or a 230 kV line.

The Route D corridor would connect with the Proposed Project corridor at Milepost 114.5, and could then follow either: (1) the Proposed Project southwest to the Chicarita Substation and then follow the Proposed Project's 230 kV Future Transmission Expansion route (see description in Section B.2.7) from Chicarita to the Escondido Substation; or (2) the Proposed Project northeast to the Proposed Central East Substation and then follow the Proposed Project's 500 kV Future Transmission Expansion route shown in Figure B-12b (see description in Section B.2.7) to connect with SCE's existing Serrano-Valley 500 kV line in Riverside County. See Section D.8.2 for more information on the noise setting of the Central, Inland Valley, and Coastal Links of the Proposed Project.

For the noise setting, impacts, and mitigation measures of the Proposed Project's 230 kV Future Transmission Expansion route and the Proposed Project's 500 kV Future Transmission Expansion route see Section D.8.11.

#### ***Interstate 8 Alternative with Modified Route D alignment and West of Forest Alignment***

The future 230 or 500 kV lines could follow the proposed Interstate 8 Alternative route from the Interstate 8 Alternative Substation until reaching the Modified Route D Alternative corridor (within the 368 Corridor identified by the Department of Energy's Draft West-wide Corridor Programmatic EIS) and then follow the Modified Route D Alternative corridor south for 11 miles to MP MD-26. For the Noise Setting and Impacts along the Modified Route D corridor see Section E.4.8. At MP MD-26, new 230 or 500 kV circuits would turn west and connect with the northernmost segment of the West of Forest Alternative route as described in Section E.1.1. This route would meet up with the Interstate 8 Alternative at approximately MP I8-79 and would follow the Interstate 8 Alternative's overhead 230 kV route to the point where it meets the Proposed Project at MP 131. The future transmission route would then join the proposed route corridor to the west, continuing past the Sycamore Canyon Substation to the Chicarita Substation. It could then follow the Proposed Project's 230 kV Future Transmission Expansion route (see description in Section B.2.7) from Chicarita to the Escondido Substation.

The 230 or 500 kV future transmission route would be located within San Diego County and Riverside County. For San Diego County, noise is regulated by San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances and local jurisdictions (See Section D.8.3.3), and Riverside County Code and General Plan apply within Riverside County (See Section D.8.11.3).

**Ambient Noise Levels.** Noise levels along the corridor from MP MD-26 to MP I8-79 vary from low in undeveloped park and recreation areas to elevated levels near the traffic of suburban roads, residential, and commercial areas.

**Noise-Sensitive Receptors.** Surrounding land uses from MP MD-26 to MP I8-79 include undeveloped park and recreation land and open space. Noise-sensitive receptors consist of single-family residences near the intersection of Skyline Truck Trail and Wisecarver Truck Trail, single-family residences along and near Lawson Valley Road, single-family residences near Sycuan Truck Trail, single-family residences near Dehesa Road. Noise-sensitive receptors also occur within the communities of Alpine and Harbison Canyon (See Section E.1.4.4, Land Use).

## Environmental Impacts – 230 or 500 kV Future Transmission System Expansion

### Construction Impacts

#### ***Impact N-1: Construction noise would substantially disturb sensitive receptors and violate local rules, standards, and/or ordinances (Class I)***

Construction noise would temporarily substantially increase ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Future Expansion project areas and along all transport access routes. To build the Future Expansion, concurrent construction activity could be necessary with multiple crews at separate locations. Construction noise would impact residences within 200 feet of work sites, where grading for access roads would be within about 200 feet of rural residences. Recreational lands in open space areas, wilderness, and parks would also be disrupted. Maximum intermittent noise level would range from 80 to 90 dBA at 50 feet from a work site up to 99 dBA near helicopter operations for installing the line or certain structures. Project-related construction would be subject to the limits of the San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances, which prohibits construction noise at a residential property line over 75 dBA weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and the Riverside County Code, which restricts the hours of construction near residences. Construction noise would adversely affect passive enjoyment of recreational areas and wildlife including listed or sensitive species (addressed in Section E.1.2.4).

Blasting may be needed along certain segments of the Future Expansion project routes, especially in central and western San Diego County. Blasting would need to be subject to a blasting plan and intense peak noise levels would occur, but because each blast would be very brief in duration, this would not cause a violation of the 75 dBA limit, which is based on an average throughout the day.

By causing substantial noise increases, the construction noise impact would be significant without additional measures. Mitigation would need to be implemented including notification to residences and sensitive receptors, including land managers of recreational areas, such as Mitigation Measures L-1a (Prepare construction notification plan) and N-1a (Implement Best Management Practices for construction noise). The measures would reduce the impact to the extent feasible, but the substantial noise increase from construction would be significant and unavoidable for nearby sensitive receptors (Class I). The full text of all mitigation measures is presented in Appendix 12.

***Mitigation Measures for Impact N-1: Construction noise would substantially disturb sensitive receptors and violate local rules, standards, and/or ordinances***

**L-1a Prepare Construction Notification Plan.**

**N-1a Implement Best Management Practices for construction noise.**

***Impact N-2: Construction activity would temporarily cause groundborne vibration (Class II)***

Vibration levels from construction equipment, rock drilling, and blasting would be perceptible to receptors in the immediate vicinity of any Future Expansion construction sites. To manage blasting and its effects on nearby land uses and structures, a detailed Blasting Plan would be developed for each Future Expansion site. These plans would include the blasting methods, surveys of existing structures and other built facilities, and distance calculations to estimate the area of effect of the blasting. The likelihood of a nuisance or annoyance occurring would be significant, and the potential for physical damage to existing structures would also be significant for any blasting. With the notification plan of Mitigation Measure L-1a the likelihood of a nuisance or annoyance would be reduced, and with a blasting plan that restores structures damaged by blasting, as in Mitigation Measure N-2a, the impacts from construction-related groundborne vibration would be adverse but not excessive, and this impact would be reduced to a less than significant level (Class II).

***Mitigation Measures for Impact N-2: Construction activity would temporarily cause groundborne vibration***

**L-1a Prepare Construction Notification Plan.**

**N-2a Avoid blasting where damage to structures could occur.**

**Operational Impacts**

***Impact N-3: Permanent noise levels would increase due to corona noise from operation of the transmission lines and noise from other project components (Class I)***

The Interstate 8 future 230 or 500 kV transmission lines would cause a permanent noise increase due to audible corona. Depending on the ultimate configuration and location of the lines, levels up to and possibly over 40 dBA are expected. The nighttime limit of 45 dBA Leq established by the San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances would not be exceeded with the addition of the future 230 or 500 kV lines, but a substantial (more than 5 dBA) increase would occur for nearby noise-sensitive receptors in very quiet areas. For noise-sensitive residential and recreational uses, this would be a significant increase. There are few options for mitigating this noise source. Mitigation Measure N-3a would help to minimize the nuisance to the extent feasible. The impact would occur for noise-sensitive receptors at the edge of the transmission line ROW where natural existing noise levels could be as low as 35 dBA, and this increased noise would be an infrequent but significant and unavoidable impact (Class I).

***Mitigation Measure for Impact N-3: Permanent noise levels would increase due to corona noise from operation of the transmission lines and noise from other project components***

**N-3a Respond to complaints of corona noise.**

***Impact N-4: Routine inspection and maintenance activities would increase ambient noise levels (Class I)***

Inspection and maintenance, including occasional emergency repairs, would involve occasional helicopter, truck, or earthmoving equipment activity along the ROW. Because this activity would involve occasionally increased noise at levels identical to transmission line construction, helicopters and other equipment within 200 feet of sensitive receptors would periodically cause a substantial increase in noise over conditions occurring without the Proposed Project. This would result in a significant and unavoidable impact (Class I).