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## CHAPTER 4 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 4.16 CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS

#### 4.16.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses potential cumulative impacts related to the construction and operation of the proposed East County (ECO) Substation Project (Proposed Project). The Proposed Project is intended to facilitate interconnection of renewable resources in its vicinity and improve reliability to the communities of Boulevard and Jacumba, as described further in Chapter 2 – Project Purpose and Need. Implementation of the Proposed Project will not result in a significant cumulative environmental impact in any of resource areas evaluated under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

#### 4.16.1 Significance Criteria

The CEQA defines a cumulative impact as one “which is created as a result of the project...together with other [past, present, and future] projects causing related impacts.” (Guidelines § 15130(a)(1)). Impacts will be considered significant if they exceed the individual criterion established for each resource area as described in Sections 4.1 through 4.15, and, if so, the Proposed Project’s contribution will be analyzed to determine whether it is cumulatively considerable (Guidelines § 15064(h)(1)). CEQA Guidelines § 15064(h)(1) further explains that “when assessing whether a cumulative effect requires an [Environmental Impact Report], the lead agency shall consider whether the cumulative impact is significant and [whether] the project’s incremental effect, though individually limited, is ‘cumulatively considerable.’” Applying this qualitative standard necessarily requires application of judgment based on the facts of a particular project subject to CEQA. Further, the significance of an impact maybe weighed against the overall effect as both increases and decreases in impacts may balance one another. As noted in the CEQA Guidelines, “the mere existence of significant cumulative impacts caused by other projects alone shall not constitute substantial evidence that the proposed project’s incremental effects are cumulatively considerable” (CEQA Guidelines § 15064(h)(4)).

#### 4.16.2 Timeframe of Analysis

For the purpose of this cumulative impacts analysis, the Proposed Project is defined in terms of construction duration and post-construction restoration, operation, and maintenance. San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) anticipates that construction of the Proposed Project will take a total of approximately two years. Construction is scheduled to begin in June 2010 and be completed in May 2012 (refer to Section 3.7.4 in Chapter 3 – Project Description for more detailed schedule information). Post-construction restoration will occur as needed following the completion of construction. Mitigation monitoring and maintenance of the restored areas will continue for a period of three to five years following the completion of Proposed Project construction.

#### 4.16.3 Area of Analysis

A list of past, present, and planned and probable future projects within one mile of the Proposed Project has been developed in accordance with Guidelines Section 15130(b). The analysis of

potential cumulative impacts was limited to within one mile of the proposed ECO Substation site, Boulevard Substation rebuild site, White Star Communication Facility rebuild site, proposed Southwest Powerlink (SWPL) loop-in location, and 138 kilovolt (kV) transmission line alignment because this distance was estimated to be the furthest that the majority of the Proposed Project impacts would extend.

#### **4.16.4 Methodology**

Existing conditions and reasonably foreseeable projects were identified within a one-mile radius of each project facility. Information was gathered from Internet searches of local planning department and state agency websites and correspondence with agency staff. The following entities were contacted regarding development projects, road and utility improvement projects, and capital investment projects:

- County of San Diego
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- Imperial County
- SunCal Companies
- California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)
- California Independent System Operator (CAISO)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- California Energy Commission

#### **4.16.5 Existing/Operating Projects**

Land uses surrounding the Proposed Project consist primarily of rural undeveloped land, but also include open space, active farmland, and sparsely situated single-family residences. Refer to Table 4.9-1 in Section 4.9 Land Use and Planning for information regarding the land uses surrounding each component. The existing and operating projects in the area consist mainly of continuous light commercial activity on Old Highway 80, transportation activities, existing utility infrastructure, and ongoing maintenance to roads and other infrastructure.

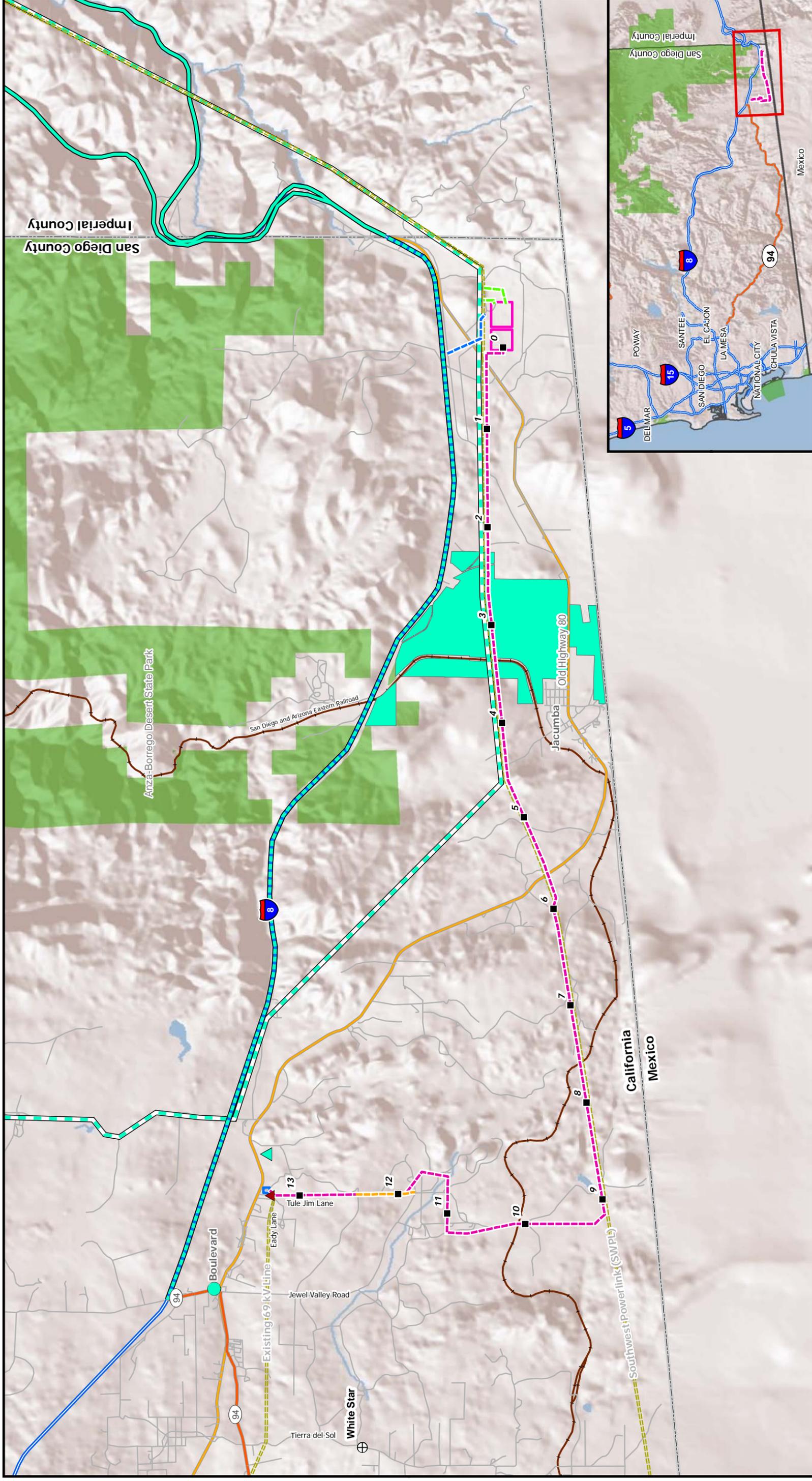
#### **4.16.6 Foreseeable Projects Inventory**

For the purposes of this document, “reasonably foreseeable” refers to projects that federal, state, or local agency representatives have knowledge of resulting from pre-application meetings or the formal application process. Table 4.16-1: Foreseeable Projects lists known projects that are within one mile of Proposed Project facilities. Figure 4.16-1: Foreseeable Projects Map shows the location of each project in respect to the proposed ECO Substation, SWPL loop-in, 138 kV transmission line, Boulevard Substation rebuild, and White Star Communication Facility rebuild. A total of 12 projects have been identified within one mile of the Proposed Project. The projects in the cumulative scenario include a range of project types from interstate highway work, to specific planned communities, to new energy generation and transmission. These projects include six generators that have project applications into the CAISO for approval to connect to the SWPL in order to provide renewable generation for San Diego County and other Southern California communities.

Table 4.16-1: Foreseeable Projects

Project Name	Address/ Location	Proximity (miles)	Description	Size	Status	Anticipated Construction Schedule	
						Begin	End
Reconstruct Caltrans Maintenance Building Project	Interstate (I-) 8 in Boulevard near Ribbonwood/I-8/State Route (SR-) 94	1	Reconstruction of an existing Caltrans maintenance building- Part of the Ten-Year State Highway Operations and Protection Plan	100 acres	Planned	2010	2010/2011
I-8 Pavement Rehabilitation- Imperial County Project	I-8 from the San Diego County Line to I-8/SR-98 junction	1	Pavement rehabilitation- Part of the Ten-Year State Highway Operations and Protection Plan	9 miles	Planned	2010	2010/2011
I-8 Pavement Rehabilitation- San Diego County Project	I-8 from Crestwood Road to Imperial County Line	0.75	Pavement rehabilitation- Part of the Ten-Year State Highway Operations and Protection Plan	11.75 miles	Planned	2016	2017
Ketchum Ranch Project	Adjacent to Old Highway 80 in Jacumba, crossed at Milepost 3	0	Specific planned community	1,250 acres	Proposed	Unknown	Unknown
Unnamed Residential Project	Adjacent to Old Highway 80, approximately 0.25 mile east of the Boulevard Substation	0.25	Minor residential subdivision – four residential lots	109.29 acres	Proposed	Unknown	Unknown

Project Name	Address/ Location	Proximity (miles)	Description	Size	Status	Anticipated Construction Schedule	
						Begin	End
Sunrise Powerlink Project	Modified Environmentally Superior Southern Alternative follows I-8 north of the proposed ECO Substation	< 0.25	Approximately 120-mile-long transmission line between Imperial and San Diego Counties	120 miles	Approved	2009	2011
CAISO Project #32	Unknown	Unknown	Proposed wind power plant to connect with the Boulevard Substation	201 Megawatt (MW)	In the CAISO queue	Unknown	2012
CAISO Project #106a	Unknown	Unknown	Proposed wind power plant to connect with the ECO Substation	160 MW	In the CAISO queue	Unknown	2012
CAISO Project #159a	Unknown	Unknown	Proposed wind power plant to connect with the ECO Substation	400 MW	In the CAISO queue	Unknown	2012
CAISO Project #183	Unknown	Unknown	Proposed wind power plant to connect with the ECO Substation	300 MW	In the CAISO queue	Unknown	2009
CAISO Project #209	Unknown	Unknown	Proposed wind power plant to connect with the ECO Substation	400 MW	In the CAISO queue	Unknown	2010
CAISO Project #215	Unknown	Unknown	Proposed wind power plant to connect with the ECO Substation	420 MW	In the CAISO queue	Unknown	2011



**Figure 4.16-1: Foreseeable Projects Map**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Proposed SWPL Loop-In</li> <li> Proposed 138 kV Line</li> <li> Proposed 12 kV Temporary Distribution Tap</li> <li> 445 Circuit Collocated with 138 kV Line</li> <li> Existing Transmission Line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Proposed ECO Substation</li> <li> Boulevard Substation Rebuild</li> <li> Existing Boulevard Substation</li> <li> Proposed 138 kV Line Milepost</li> <li> Communication Facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Interstate</li> <li> Highway</li> <li> Local Road</li> <li> Major Road</li> <li> Railroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Concurrent Projects</li> <li> I-8 Pavement Rehabilitation-San Diego County Project</li> <li> I-8 Pavement Rehabilitation-Imperial County Project</li> <li> Sunrise Powerlink Project</li> <li> Ketchum Ranch Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Unnamed Residential Project</li> <li> Reconstruct Caltrans Maintenance Building Project</li> </ul>
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Note: CAISO-queued projects were not mapped because their locations are unknown

1:60,000

Miles



#### 4.16.7 Potential Cumulative Impacts

This section discusses whether, when combined with other past, present, and planned and probable future projects in the area, the Proposed Project will result in either significant short-term or long-term environmental impacts. Short-term impacts are generally associated with construction of the Proposed Project, while long-term impacts are those that result from permanent Proposed Project features or operation of the Proposed Project.

Construction and operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project will not impact the following resources and, therefore, will not contribute to a cumulative effect:

- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Public Services

If construction of any of the other projects occurs in close proximity and within the same timeframe as SDG&E's Proposed Project, temporary impacts could also be cumulative. Construction of at least four of the projects listed in Table 4.16-1: Foreseeable Projects may occur during the same timeframe as the Proposed Project. A number of the other projects listed in the table also have the potential to be constructed during the same timeframe because their construction timelines are currently unknown. Cumulative impacts to the following resources could occur as a result of construction in conjunction with the other planned and probable projects:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

Construction of foreseeable projects (refer to Table 4.16-1: Foreseeable Projects) near the proposed ECO Substation, SWPL loop-in, 138 kV transmission line route, Boulevard Substation rebuild, or White Star Communication Facility rebuild could result in permanent cumulative impacts to the following resources:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality

- Biological Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

### **Aesthetics**

Cumulative impacts to visual resources could occur where project facilities would be viewed in combination with other past, present, and future developments. The significance of cumulative visual impacts depends upon a number of factors including the degree to which the viewshed is altered and the extent that scenic resources in the area are disrupted due to either view obstructions or direct impacts to scenic resource features. Construction schedules for the Sunrise Powerlink and the CAISO projects may overlap with the Proposed Project, as may some or all of the energy-generation projects, thereby increasing the potential for adverse cumulative impacts to occur from construction equipment, vehicles, materials, staging areas, and project personnel. Adverse visual impacts during construction, however, would be temporary and are generally accepted by the public. While these impacts will be cumulative, they are not expected to be significant.

Expected visual change associated with future development in the general Proposed Project area will result from a combination of roadway improvements, new transmission line facilities, wind turbines, and planned residential development. When taken together, the introduction of these projects will, to varying degrees, alter the appearance of the existing landscape setting. The Proposed Project will not be dissimilar to other future transmission improvement projects in terms of its visual character and appearance. Similarly, it is expected that the Proposed Project's visual character will generally be compatible with future, planned roadway linear improvements. Because major portions of the foreseeable future development, including the Ketchum Ranch Project, Sunrise Powerlink transmission line, and CAISO projects lay outside of the Proposed Project viewshed area, substantial cumulative effects on views in the immediate Proposed Project area are not anticipated. Therefore, cumulative visual effects within the Proposed Project viewshed are expected to be incremental and less than significant.

### **Agricultural Resources**

Cumulative impacts to agricultural resources could result from the loss of farmland, as well as a disruption to agricultural practices. Two projects—the Ketchum Ranch and Sunrise Powerlink projects—are expected to affect agricultural resources. Some of the CAISO energy-generation projects may also affect agriculture. The Ketchum Ranch Project is proposed to be constructed within an existing agricultural area and will eliminate currently farmed fields. Should the Ketchum Ranch Project proceed, the Proposed Project will not impact agricultural resources because the existing agricultural area will be eliminated by the Ketchum Ranch development. Should the Ketchum Ranch Project not proceed to development, the Proposed Project and the Sunrise Powerlink Project will have a cumulative impact resulting from the permanent loss of farmland where towers will be constructed. Due to the small size of the tower footprints

(estimated to impact less than one percent of agricultural land for both transmission projects) and the amount of surrounding available land, the cumulative impact will be less than significant.

### **Air Quality**

Most, if not all, of the projects listed in Table 4.16-1: Foreseeable Projects could occur simultaneously; therefore, there could be a cumulative air quality impact in the Proposed Project area during construction. However, with the implementation of applicant-proposed measures (APMs) to reduce emissions and dust during construction, these potentially concurrent projects are not expected to exceed identified significance thresholds. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions will also result from the construction of the Proposed Project and other foreseeable projects in the area. The vehicles and heavy equipment used during construction will be the primary sources of these emissions. While these emissions have the potential to contribute to a cumulative increase in GHG, the emissions during Proposed Project construction will be negligible when compared to the existing baseline GHG emissions in the area. Furthermore, adherence to the standards and requirements of the San Diego Air Pollution Control District will ensure potential cumulative impacts are minimized. As a result, cumulative impacts are expected to be less than significant.

During the operational phase, the residential projects may contribute to GHG accumulation by emitting carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, methane, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorinated carbon, and other GHGs. Proposed Project construction will also generate negligible amounts of GHG from the use of vehicles and construction equipment. The implementation of an APM to monitor sulfur hexafluoride levels within the substation equipment during construction will reduce the potential for significant GHG emissions. While these emissions have the potential to contribute to a cumulative increase in GHG, the Proposed Project's contribution will be minimal and will not result in a significant cumulative impact.

### **Biological Resources**

Of the projects in the cumulative scenario, only the Sunrise Powerlink Project and potentially the CAISO energy-generation projects are expected to have potential impacts to sensitive biological resources because the other projects are located in disturbed areas. While the temporary footprints of these projects will be large, the overall permanent footprints will be relatively small, with the exception of the substations. Most of the temporary impacts to sensitive biological resources can be avoided during construction of these projects through the use of mitigation measures and regulatory agency protocols. These projects will all be subject to the same permitting requirements under the federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) and California Endangered Species Act (CESA), which are intended to minimize impacts to a species, both at the project level and in a regional context.

The above-mentioned foreseeable projects, such as the Sunrise Powerlink Project and the CAISO energy-generation projects will be fairly widespread in areas that are predominantly undeveloped, leaving a substantial acreage of land available for biological resources. The individual impacts for these projects as well as the Proposed Project are relatively small when compared to the overall expanse of open undeveloped land in this region of the county and within the vicinity of the planned projects. Furthermore, a large percentage of this region's undeveloped lands in the vicinity of the projects is currently preserved through the USFWS's

designated critical habitat for the Quino checkerspot butterfly (QCB) and Peninsular bighorn sheep. Several other large tracts of preserved land exist in the nearby Table Mountain Area of Critical Environmental Concern, the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, two wilderness areas, and the McCain Valley Resource Conservation Area. Additionally, because the poles located within a utility right-of-way (ROW) have a relatively small footprint, a good portion of the ROW can remain undeveloped. This ROW can serve as wildlife movement corridors and can continue to be utilized as habitat by numerous wildlife and plant species.

Therefore, while the other projects in the area could cumulatively result in a significant impact when all of their impacts to biological resources are aggregated, the Proposed Project's contribution to a significant cumulative effect will be nominal. The majority of the Proposed Project's permanent impacts will be limited to areas that are not highly sensitive, with the exception of approximately 1.69 acres of permanent impacts from poles and access roads located in USFWS-designated critical habitat for the QCB.

The Proposed Project may also contribute to a cumulative impact to avian species, which will also be impacted by the Sunrise Powerlink Project and the CAISO energy-generation projects. Of all the project components, the 138 kV transmission line may have the greatest potential to impact avian species. The Proposed Project will be constructed in compliance with the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee's Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Power Lines, thereby minimizing impacts to avian species by increasing spacing between the conductors. In addition, the majority of the 138 kV transmission line will generally parallel the existing SWPL 500 kV transmission line and will be constructed along existing distribution line routes. As a result, it will not represent a new structural impediment. Therefore, while the Proposed Project may contribute to a cumulative impact to avian species, the Proposed Project's contribution to this impact will be less than significant.

### **Cultural Resources**

Cumulative impacts to cultural resources could occur as a result of increased ground-disturbing activities in previously undisturbed areas by multiple projects. Of the known existing and proposed projects, four—the Reconstruct Caltrans Maintenance Building Project, I-8 Pavement Rehabilitation-Imperial County Project, I-8 Pavement Rehabilitation-San Diego County Project, and Unnamed Residential Project—do not have the potential to create a cumulative impact to cultural resources when combined with the Proposed Project. These projects are located in previously disturbed areas and/or do not include any ground-disturbing work. The Ketchum Ranch Project, Sunrise Powerlink Project, and the CAISO energy-generation projects, on the other hand, all have the potential to create a cumulative impact to cultural resources when combined with the Proposed Project. However, due to federal agency involvement, most, if not all, of these projects are required to initiate Section 106 consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), which requires that impacts to potentially significant cultural resources be avoided or mitigated. In addition, the Proposed Project is not anticipated to impact any significant archaeological resources. Because all of these projects will be required to implement appropriate measures to protect cultural resources and the Proposed Project is not expected to have any impacts, cumulative impacts are expected to be less than significant.

## **Geology and Soils**

The potential cumulative impacts that may occur as a result of construction of the Proposed Project in conjunction with other planned and future projects include soil disturbance from grading and excavation activities that may cause erosion and sedimentation. All of the projects, except for the Caltrans repaving project, which are scheduled during the same timeframe, will involve soil disturbance. However, the potential for soil erosion and sedimentation will be minimized through the implementation of Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans, which are required for all projects that disturb one or more acres of soil. As a result, the potential for a significant cumulative impact to geology and soils is low and not expected to be significant. All of the projects will be designed to meet current building code and safety standards, thereby ensuring that the potential for long-term impacts are less than significant.

## **Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

Cumulative impacts to hazards and/or hazardous materials can result from the construction of concurrent projects having an increased effect on public or worker safety, including exposure to hazardous materials, increased fire potential, or physical hazards. All of the planned and probable projects have the potential to have a cumulative impact to overall hazards or hazardous materials when combined with the Proposed Project. Because all of the projects require construction equipment, they all have the potential to have a temporary impact from accidental releases of diesel and gasoline fuel, hydraulic fluids, and other hazardous liquids. While no impact is anticipated, there is a potential for accidental spills or leaks. While this potential hazard will exist during construction, the projects are far enough away from one another that a spill would be very unlikely to occur in the same immediate vicinity. Furthermore, SDG&E will implement a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plan, as will all of the projects handling or storing a large volume of hazardous materials. With the proper implementation of this plan and adherence to state and federal regulations, large releases of hazardous materials are highly unlikely and small releases would be contained, cleaned up, and disposed of properly. As a result, the Proposed Project's contribution to a significant hazardous materials impact would be minimal and less than significant.

Potential permanent cumulative impacts related to hazardous materials are also present in conjunction with the Ketchum Ranch Project's planned wastewater treatment plant. The rebuilt Boulevard Substation and ECO Substation will require approximately 581,660 gallons of oil housed within transformer banks and approximately 1,300 gallons of mineral oil as part of everyday operations. These facilities are also of sufficient distance from each other and will be operated utilizing industry standards for the storage of these materials. Further, SDG&E will implement a SPCC Plan for both of these facilities. With the implementation of these measures, cumulative impacts related to hazardous materials are expected to be less than significant. A potential permanent cumulative hazard to air traffic could also result from the construction of the Proposed Project in conjunction with the other transmission projects. The existing Jacumba Airport is located three miles from the proposed ECO Substation and runs parallel to the proposed 138 kV transmission line. The construction of the CAISO energy-generation projects' transmission lines and the Sunrise Powerlink Project along with the Proposed Project will constitute a substantial increase in the number of overhead transmission lines within the general vicinity of the Jacumba Airport. In addition to the area surrounding the proposed ECO Substation, construction of the 138 kV transmission line and the CAISO energy-generation

projects that will tie into the rebuilt Boulevard Substation will create an additional power line hazard in the vicinity of the Empire Ranch private airstrip and Boulevard Substation vicinity. However, all projects will be required to comply with all applicable Federal Aviation Administration regulations. Furthermore, the Proposed Project will be parallel to the SWPL for approximately nine miles, which is approximately 65 percent of its length, and will be overbuilt with an existing distribution line for an additional one mile. As a result, the Proposed Project's contribution to cumulative impacts to hazards is anticipated to be less than significant.

### **Hydrology and Water Quality**

Cumulative impacts to hydrology and/or water quality have the potential to result from increases in local groundwater use and alterations to existing and natural drainage patterns of the landscape. All of the foreseeable projects and the Proposed Project will require the use of water to meet construction needs. This could potentially produce a temporary cumulative impact to the groundwater supply. These impacts are not expected to be significant due to the available volume of water in the area and because several of the projects will access water from different aquifers.

Permanent impacts to groundwater could result from ongoing usage of the groundwater beyond construction. While the Proposed Project and the Unnamed Residential Project would likely utilize small amounts of groundwater, the Ketchum Ranch Project has the potential to utilize significant amounts. However, the Ketchum Ranch Project is located in an agricultural area that already uses large volumes of water for crop production. Likewise, as described in Section 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality, there is an abundant supply of groundwater in the area and the Proposed Project's net loss of water will be nominal. As a result, the Proposed Project's contribution to a cumulative impact to hydrology will be less than significant.

Potentially cumulative impacts to hydrology could also occur in the event that multiple projects reshape and redirect surface water drainage patterns. The Ketchum Ranch Project has plans to construct three artificial drainages in order to redirect water during heavy rains away from the development. The proposed ECO Substation, located approximately three miles east of the Ketchum Ranch Project, also plans to construct berms, retention basins, and other drainage features to redirect water during heavy rains to prevent flash flooding. While all of these projects may affect the natural course or flow of water for short distances, none of them are anticipated to redirect the water to areas it otherwise would not flow. Therefore, cumulative impacts are expected to be less than significant.

### **Noise**

All foreseeable projects, including the Proposed Project, are expected to have cumulative temporary noise-related impacts during times of overlapping construction. Because many of these projects are not located adjacent to each other and because they exist in rural or unpopulated areas, these temporary impacts are expected to be less than significant. Operational noise from the proposed ECO Substation is not anticipated to contribute to a cumulative impact due to its distance from the other facilities and sensitive receptors. The Boulevard Substation, on the other hand, is located in a populated area and will be a connection point for one of the generation projects. Receptors in the immediate vicinity of the substation will be exposed to both substation noise and corona from the operation of the other interconnecting transmission

lines. However, corona generally only reaches sound levels of approximately 45 to 50 A-weighted Decibels within the transmission corridor, which is considered less than significant. Furthermore, all noise will be in compliance with local regulations.

### **Population and Housing**

Given the rural setting of the projects identified in Table 4.16-1: Foreseeable Projects and the limited workforce in the area, it is conceivable that a number of workers involved in building these projects will not be local and will require temporary lodging during construction. Depending on the number of concurrent activities and specialty contractors that mobilize from out of town or out of state, there may be a shortage of available lodging within the immediate vicinity of the projects. However, there is an abundance of lodging approximately 50 miles west and 30 miles east of the projects that could temporarily house workers if all of the projects occurred simultaneously. Therefore, construction would not have a significant impact on population and housing and would not be considered cumulatively considerable.

Once completed, the Ketchum Ranch Project would increase population by adding approximately 2,125 units on a 1,250-acre property in the rural area between Jacumba and Boulevard. In addition, the Unnamed Residential Project near the Boulevard Substation would increase housing by up to four units. The Proposed Project would remove one house as part of the Boulevard Substation rebuild. This impact would be offset by the construction of the new housing in the area, resulting in a beneficial cumulative impact.

### **Recreation**

Only one foreseeable project has the potential to generate a cumulative impact to recreation when combined with the Proposed Project. The proposed 138 kV transmission line and Sunrise Powerlink Project are planned to cross through a small section (approximately 1.5 miles) of land managed by the BLM. Because BLM-managed land is available to the public for recreational purposes, this could potentially impact the area temporarily during construction where the towers will be constructed. Because the BLM-managed land that will be crossed is not part of any formally recognized or designated recreation area, and access to the land will only be restricted for a short duration during construction of each of these projects, impacts are expected to be less than significant. Permanent impacts are also expected to be less than significant because only a small area will be utilized for tower placement, existing high-voltage power lines are already present through the area, and the area will remain accessible for use after the new structures have been installed.

### **Transportation and Traffic**

During the construction phase, traffic impacts will occur from all of the projects that have overlapping construction timeframes. As discussed in Section 4.14 Transportation and Traffic, impacts due to construction of the Proposed Project will be less than significant. Traffic will be increased in the area of Boulevard during concurrent construction of the Unnamed Residential Project. However, both of these sites are relatively small and associated traffic levels are not expected to be high. The Ketchum Ranch Project, on the other hand, will likely have significant traffic associated with its construction. However, the 138 kV transmission line, which is the only Proposed Project component in close proximity to the Ketchum Ranch Project, will require the

installation of only a few poles in the area. This is also true for the Sunrise Powerlink Project and the CAISO energy-generation projects. Work associated with the installation of structures for the Proposed Project is expected to take only a few days at a time per structure for the individual components of installing the structure and stringing the wire. This will require limited amounts of equipment and trips. As a result, construction of the Proposed Project will not contribute appreciably to a cumulative impact on traffic and transportation in the project area. No other projects are in close enough proximity to result in a cumulative traffic impact.

After construction, the Proposed Project will be operated and maintained by existing SDG&E staff that already serve the facilities in the area. As a result, no appreciable increase in traffic is anticipated and cumulative impacts will not occur or will be less than significant.

### **Utilities and Service Systems**

Cumulative impacts to utilities or service systems have the potential to occur if multiple projects have a combined impact on local utility services or infrastructure. All foreseeable projects, as well as the Proposed Project, could potentially impact drainage patterns and groundwater levels, as previously discussed in Hydrology and Water Quality. While the Ketchum Ranch Project is expected to require new services, including electricity, the Proposed Project, Sunrise Powerlink Project, and the CAISO energy-generation projects will all import power into the area, having a positive impact to the existing electric system by providing more reliable power to residents and businesses. As a result, the cumulative impact will be positive.

#### **4.16.8 Conclusion**

While the Proposed Project will contribute to certain cumulative impacts with the level of development activity in its vicinity, its contribution to these impacts is anticipated to be minimal. A positive cumulative impact is expected in the areas of housing and utilities. For the other resource areas, a potentially adverse cumulative impact may result; however, it is anticipated that the other projects within the vicinity will be required to implement avoidance and minimization measures similar to SDG&E's APMs and permit conditions in accordance with the CEQA, FESA, CESA, and NHPA. These measures will minimize environmental impacts, thereby minimizing the overall cumulative effect. As a result, impacts are expected to be less than significant.

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