Section 3.10

3.10 MINERAL RESOURCES

This section describes existing conditions and the potential mineral resources impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Project and alternatives.

3.10.1 Existing Conditions

Sand and gravel and rock products are still mined in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, but are not currently mined within 0.5 miles of any elements of the Proposed Project or the alternatives. The California Geologic Survey maps indicate that sand and gravel along with dimensional stone are produced in both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Approximately five million short tons per year of sand and gravel have been mined in Riverside County in the past (CGSMR, 2006).

Metallic minerals are mined in the bedrock areas. The nearest mines are located in the San Bernardino Mountains. The nearest project elements to these mountains are the Mill Creek Communications Site and the fiber optic system that would be constructed on existing poles and within existing underground duct banks. Most of the metallic mineral deposits in the desert areas are no longer economically viable (CGSMR, 2006).

There are no known commercially valuable deposits of oil, gas, or coal within the project areas. According to the California Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources' maps, six dry wells were drilled in the area west and south of Banning and outside of the project areas (CDOGGR, 2005). Two of these dry wells are located between Banning and Beaumont and are approximately 5,000 feet north of the 115 kV subtransmission line. Three of the other four dry wells are located south of the proposed subtransmission line route at distances of approximately 350,400 and 2,500 feet. The last dry well is approximately 1,600 feet north of the 115 kV subtransmission line.

San Bernardino County also still mines sand, gravel, and rock products. However, no mining appears to take place within 0.5 miles of the Zanja Substation or the Mill Creek Communications Site (City of Redlands, 1996).

3.10.2 Significance Criteria

Impacts to mineral resources are considered potentially significant if the project would:

- Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state
- Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use map

The California Geological Survey is the state agency responsible for inventorying and mapping mineral resources in California. Regulations pursuant to the California Geological

Survey mineral resource determinations are generally linked with the County General Plan Land Use Element and other types of local/regional development rules. These regulations would not be triggered by the Proposed Project.

3.10.3 Proposed Project Impacts

As stated above, known mineral resources of significance to the region and the state are not located within approximately 0.5 miles of the proposed subtransmission line, El Casco Substation, or loop-in. Installation of the fiber optic line on existing poles and in existing duct banks would have no impact to mineral resources. Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not require the use of sand and gravel. In general, local metallic mineral mines are not in operation due to economic viability. In addition, potential oil wells were designated as dry. In summary, the construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not impact mineral resources.

3.10.3.1 Applicant Proposed Mitigation Measures

Because no impacts to mineral resources would occur, no mitigation measures are required.

3.10.4 Alternatives

3.10.4.1 Northerly 115 kV Subtransmission Line Route

As stated above, known mineral resources that are of significance to the region and the state are not located within approximately 0.5 miles of the northerly 115 kV subtransmission line route. In general, local metallic mineral mines are not in operation due to economic viability. In addition, potential oil wells were designated as dry. In summary, the construction and operation of the northerly 115 kV subtransmission line route would not impact mineral resources.

3.10.4.2 Site 38 (Alternate Site)

As stated above, known mineral resources that are of significance to the region and the state are not located within approximately 0.5 miles of Site 38 (Alternate Site). In general, local metallic mineral mines are not in operation due to economic viability. In addition, potential oil wells were designated as dry. In summary, the construction and operation of the substation at the Site 38 site alternative would not impact mineral resources.