Site 10. CUESTA GRADE WORKAROUND

Environmental Checklist

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

1. Facility Title:
Level 3 Communications Infrastructure Project, Cuesta Grade Workaround

2. Lead Agency Name and Address:
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 703-2782

3. Contact Person and Phone Number:
Gary Finni, Level 3 Communications
6689 Owens Drive, Suite A, Pleasanton, CA 94588
(925) 398-3000

4. Facility Location:
The site is located northeast of the city of San Luis Obispo in an unincorporated portion of San Luis Obispo County. The site is an easement 20 feet wide and approximately 5.6 miles long, adjacent to a utility pipeline easement. The Workaround route will start at the intersection of Miossi Road and Loomis Street, head in a northeasterly direction, and end where the route rejoins the UPRR ROW on the north side of Cuesta Pass. A site vicinity map is provided as Figure 10-1. Additional site figures are available in the PEA (PEA, 2000, following p. 10-41)

5. Proponent's Name and Address:
Level 3 Communications, LLC ("Level 3")
1450 Infinite Drive, Louisville, CO 80027 (303) 926-3000

6. General Plan Designation: Agriculture and Rural Lands

7. Zoning: Agriculture and Rural Lands

8. Description of Facility:
This checklist evaluates the Cuesta Grade Workaround that would be constructed outside of existing utility corridors. The Workaround is required due to UPRR tunnels along this section of the fiber optic network and the absence of other utility corridors along part of the route.

The Cuesta Grade Workaround route begins where the fiber optic running line leaves the existing utility corridor, at the intersection of Miossi Road and Loomis Street in the City of San Luis Obispo. At this point, the utility corridor ends and the running line enters private property. The Workaround runs in a northeasterly direction adjacent to a utility pipeline easement until it intersects with SR-101. At this point, the Workaround will be bored approximately 2,100 feet under private property to the intersection of SR-101 and Old Stage Coach Road. From this point, the Workaround proceeds north along Old Stage Coach Road to its intersection with SR-101 at the summit of Cuesta Pass. From here the Workaround route bores across the summit of Cuesta Pass and proceeds approximately 1,200 feet to Cuesta Springs Road. The route then turns west down Cuesta Springs Road for approximately 2,400 feet, where is crosses under a SR-101 overpass. Here the running line re-enters the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) right-of-way (ROW) to proceed to the city of Atascadero and points north.

Level 3 Communications
Infrastructure Project

Figure 10-1

Cuesta Grade Workaround
USGS Quad Sheet

Aspen
Environmental Group

Source: PEA, 2000

An alternative to the upper portion of the Old Stage Coach Road route would be along Padre Road, a private unpaved road (See Figure 4 of the PEA (PEA, 2000, follows p. 10-41)). This alternate route is located to the east between San Luis Obispo Creek and Highway 101. It would proceed north through the intersection of Old Stage Coach Road and Padre Road and continue north along Padre Road to where once again it intersects with Old Stagecoach Road at the summit of Cuesta Pass where the bore through the summit begins. The total length of this alternate route is approximately 1 mile. The total length of the Workaround is approximately 5.6 miles.

The distance of the closest air/noise receptor to the Workaround is approximately 20 feet on the west end (a park), while the closest residence is approximately 50 feet from the Workaround route along Cuesta Springs Road.

Site development begins with required pre-construction surveys as required to mark environmentally sensitive areas for avoidance. One hundred meter buffer zones (setbacks) will be established between the construction zone and riparian areas, except where a stream must be crossed. As required, brush will be cleared and the area of cable placement will be grubbed. A 20 feet-wide construction area will be defined.

The fiber optic cable will be installed along the Workaround by plowing, trenching, or directional boring to a depth of approximately five feet and a width of one foot. The specific technique will vary depending upon site conditions. A "spider" plow may be used when wet, soft, or restricted areas are encountered. After the innerduct is buried, usually with 42 inches of cover, the fiber optic cable is pulled through the innerduct and spliced at regularly spaced handholes. Handholes are round structures approximately 36 inches in diameter made of concrete and fiberglass composite; they are used to house splices and provide access to the fiber cable for maintenance. These handholes result in minimal environmental disturbance. Handhole structures will be buried approximately 6 to 24 inches below the ground surface or the top of the cover may be set at grade. They will be located approximately every 3,600 feet along the ROW.

Following construction, the disturbed soil surface will be restored (e.g., re-graded to original slope) within two days and revegetated. If open trenching is required, select, compacted fill will be placed in the trench prior to re-grading and revegetation. In areas where erosion control is required by local agencies due to topographical or hydrological conditions, site-appropriate measures will be incorporated into a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP). These measures may include use of devises such as straw bales or fiber mats for temporary erosion-control impacts and/or erosion-controlling plant materials native to the local areas to preclude long-term erosion. Where necessary to ensure establishment of erosion-controlling plant materials, a temporary irrigation system will be installed or periodic watering by water trucks will be used. The appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board will approve erosion-control measures in each SWPPP.

Except for periodic inspections, negligible maintenance activities on the Workarounds are anticipated once native vegetation cover has been re-established. There are no other operation-phase activities associated with the Workaround. No utilities will be required for either construction or operation of the Workaround.

The proponent will fully compensate a grantor of an easement for any damage or injury done to livestock, growing crops, improvements, structures, parking areas, landscaping, and other appurtenances and/or improvements in the course of construction and (minimal) maintenance of

the Workaround. Level 3 agrees that the easements, as well as any areas adjacent to, but outside the easements, that are altered or damaged as a result of construction or maintenance by Level 3, shall be restored to their prior condition when work is completed. When the agreement ends, responsibilities for maintenance revert to the property owner.

Current and potential cumulative projects in the vicinity of the proposed Cuesta Grade Workaround are provided in Table 10-1 of the PEA (PEA, 2000, follows p. 10-41). There are few in number, owing to the rural setting of the site. Projects listed in Table 1 meet the following criteria:

- Projects that are within two miles of the site. In some cases these projects are in more than one jurisdiction.
- Projects that are scheduled for construction from one year before to one year after the "construction -related facilities, or between March 1999 to March 2003.
- Current projects that include those which have been approved by the lead agency and have had their environmental document signed, approved, and/or certified.
- Potential projects that have been formally submitted to the lead agency and which are defined well enough to discern where they are, what they are (type of land use), and how big they are (acres, dwelling units, square footage, etc.). Although these submitted, but not approved projects are considered "speculative" under CEQA, they give an indication of potential future development around the facility site.

As indicated in Table 10-1 of the PEA there is currently a major, multi-year Caltrans SR-101 widening project located in close proximity to the Workaround. No future projects are currently planned within the project area.

9. Surrounding Land Uses and Environmental Setting:

Cuesta County Park is located at the southern end of the site. The park contains a picnic area and playground equipment, an animal hospital and an animal exhibit area, and an administrative building. San Luis Obispo Creek runs through the park. Surrounding uses to the north, east, and west of the segment along Miossi Road, are gently rolling grazing lands. The area surrounding Old Stage Coach Road is mountainous with moderately dense vegetation, a few scattered rural residential homes occur at the southern end of the route along near Old Stage Coach Road. San Luis Obispo Creek runs along the east side of a portion of Old Stage Coach Road. The area surrounding the alternative alignment along Padre Road is similar to the Old Stage Coach Road surroundings, and is characterized by steep slopes. SR-101 is visible to the east on portions of the Workaround. Resource-specific baseline settings are provided in Sections I – XVI of this checklist.

10. Other Agencies Whose Approval is Required:

The site is located within the jurisdiction of the County of San Luis Obispo. It is also located within San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (SLOCAPCD).

Specific local policies relevant to each of the sixteen environmental impact issue areas are provided in Table 10-2 of the PEA (PEA, 2000, follows p. 10-41). When there are no relevant and applicable policies, this fact is stated with an explanation. Sources for the policies are provided at the end of the listing. San Luis Obispo County will require a Minor Use Permit to allow installation of the cable in the Cuesta Grade Workaround.

11. Determination:

On the basis the analysis of this Initial Study, the proposed action would not have a significant effect on the environment because all potential impacts have been mitigated to a level of less than significant through either 1) the additional mitigation measures recommended in this checklist, or 2) the Environmental Commitments described below

The proposed site is part of the project addressed in an Application for Modification of an existing Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) (Decision 98-03-066). That CPCN Decision was supported by a Negative Declaration that included Mitigation Measures to be implemented in the construction and operation of the previously approved telecommunications facilities within existing utility rights-of-way. The project will incorporate all of the mitigation measures outlined in the previous Decision, as well as those of this environmental review, into its design and construction of the project. Therefore, the actions previously imposed as mitigation measures are now the proponent's Environmental Commitments for the facility addressed herein. These Environmental Commitments include:

- Measures to mitigate potential impacts to various resources
- All required local, regional, state and federal approvals and permits required for construction and operation of the project
- Coordination with local and resource management agencies
- Notifications of adjacent property owners
- Coordination with other utility projects in the area
- Documentation and reporting of compliance.

A complete list of mitigation measures from the previous Negative Declaration is provided in Appendix B of the PEA (PEA, 2000, Volume 3).

I. AESTHETICS

The Workaround is located in a predominantly rural landscape composed of an assemblage of rolling grazing lands, steep wooded slopes, scattered rural residences and the Highway 101 transportation infrastructure. Existing visual quality and viewer sensitivity are rated moderate to high while visual absorption capability is rated high and viewer exposure is rated low, (see the Visual Analysis Data Sheet at the end of this Initial Study). The Workaround will result in minimal evidence of its presence and will not be inconsistent with existing landscape characteristics. Based on a field study of the site and vicinity, analysis of PEA data and conclusions, a review of applicable local planning policy and guidance, and/or planning agency confirmation of PEA accuracy, no project-induced visual contrast is anticipated. No significant visual impacts are expected and no mitigation measures are recommended. Figure 10-I-1 shows the location of the Key Viewpoint from which the Visual Analysis Data Sheet was developed. Figure 10-I-2 shows the view from the Key Viewpoint. These figures are found at the end of this Initial Study. Also, see PEA Photos 10-A through C for additional views (PEA, 2000, follows p.10-41).

Evaluation

a)	Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

a) No Impact. The Workaround would be an underground facility and would not impact views from scenic vistas. Furthermore, the proposed project will not appreciably change the existing visual character of the project site.

b)	Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☒	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☐

b) Less than Significant with Mitigation. The Workaround would not substantially damage scenic resources such as trees, rock outcroppings, or historic structures. The site is visible from Highway 101, which is designated "Eligible" for state scenic highway designation. However, views of the route would be brief and the only aboveground evidence of the Workaround would generally be the periodic warning markers, which would not be noticeable within the context of the existing landscape features. However, it is possible that without proper revegetation and erosion control practices on the steeper portions of the route, erosion of disturbed soils could occur, resulting in visible land scars. Should those circumstances occur, a significant visual impact could result. Therefore, Mitigation Measure 10-I-1 (below) is recommended.

c)	Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☒	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☐

c) Less than Significant with Mitigation. Existing views from Highway 101 provide a brief, overall impression of a rural landscape consisting of rolling grasslands, steep slopes, and roadside signage. The underground nature of the proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site or surroundings. However, it is possible that without proper revegetation and erosion control practices on the steeper portions of the route, erosion of disturbed soils could occur, resulting in visible land scars. Should those circumstances occur, a significant visual impact could result. Therefore, Mitigation Measure 10-I-1 is recommended.

d)	Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

d) No Impact. There will be no permanent lighting associated with the Workaround.

Mitigation Measure 10-I-1: A landscaping and erosion control plan will be prepared showing the location of proposed landscaping, the varieties and sizes of plants and/or seed mixes to be used, and the proposed time to maturity for each species. The landscaping plan will be developed and submitted for

CPUC approval prior to issuance of a construction notice to proceed, and should be consistent with local agency guidelines. Adherence to the approved landscaping plan will be determined by the CPUC construction monitor.

II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Setting

The Workaround is zoned "Agriculture" and "Rural Use" and much of the route passes through areas used primarily for grazing. The site is not located on Prime Farmland nor is it under a Williamson Act Contract. Based on a field study of the site and vicinity, analysis of PEA data and conclusions, a review of applicable local planning policy and guidance, and/or planning agency confirmation of PEA accuracy, no significant agricultural impacts are anticipated as a result of project implementation.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project 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 non-agricultural use?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

a) No Impact. The site is not located on land designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local or Statewide Importance. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the conversion of such farmland to non-agricultural uses.

b)	Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

b) No Impact**.** The site is not zoned for agricultural use nor is the site under a Williamson Act contract.

c)	Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

c) No Impact. The site does not retain properties of significant agricultural value (see [a] and [b] above). Project construction would not result in the conversion of farmland or significant agricultural potential to a non-agricultural use.

III. AIR QUALITY

Setting

The proposed project is within the South Central Coast Air Basin. The South Central Coast Air Basin is currently designated as a nonattainment area for state ozone and PM10 standards, but not for National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (SLOCAPCD) provides guidelines to lead agencies in determining whether a project would be likely to exceed an air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected exceedance. For evaluating construction-phase air quality impacts, SLOCAPCD recommends use of emissions-based significance criteria of 185 pounds per day (lb/day) for ROG and NO_x, and 2.5 tons per quarter (tpq) of PM10. The PM10 threshold includes both engine exhaust and fugitive dust sources.

The District has translated these ROG and NO_x emissions-based criteria into the following construction-phase activity thresholds, which are to be used where detailed construction specifications are not known: 2,000 cubic yards per day or 50,000 cubic yards per quarter. For PM10, the District considers that any project with a grading area greater than 4 acres of continuously worked area would exceed the 2.5 tons per quarter criterion. Disturbance along the Workaround will be primarily due to spider plowing. No grading activities are expected to occur along the Workaround route.

The SLOCAPCD also provides quantitative thresholds of significance for operational-phase impacts. However, the Cuesta Grande Workaround would not have operations at the site beyond an occasional inspection visit by one worker (and one vehicle). The emissions and air quality impacts associated with this occasional visit of one vehicle are negligible, and hence, require no further analysis.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

a) Less Than Significant Impact. Emission rates associated with construction engine exhaust for all five pollutants are below regulatory thresholds, see Table 10-III-1 (PEA, 2000, Table 10-3). Given the small scale of the construction effort and its temporary nature, project construction would not significantly affect regional ozone concentrations. In that context, while mobile construction equipment would generate emissions of ozone precursors, NO_x and ROG, the applicable ozone plan anticipates that such mobile emission sources would continue to be regulated at the state and federal level, rather than on a project-by-project basis at the local level. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan.

Construction for the proposed project would not continuously work an area greater than 4 acres, which would not trigger the 2.5 tons per quarter criterion. Even though PM10 emissions would be below the applicable SLOCAPCD significance threshold, certain basic fugitive dust control measures would be implemented during construction. Level 3 would implement a comprehensive series of dust control measures to manage fugitive dust during construction, further reducing the associated PM10 emissions below the level of significance.

10-III-1 AIR QUALITY CALCULATIONS

Construction Engine Emissions

SOURCE	SIZE / GROSS HP	DAILY AMOUNT (hrs or trips) [2]	DAYS OF ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF UNITS	ONE-WAY DISTANCE (miles)	NO_x EF (g/hr) [3]	NO_x Daily (lbs/day)	NO_x Total (tons)	ROG EF (g/hr) [3]	ROG Daily (lbs/day)	ROG Total (tons)	PM_{10} EF (g/hr) [3]	PM_{10} Daily (lbs/day)	PM_{10} Total (tons)	SO_x EF (g/hr) [3]	SO_x Daily (lbs/day)	SO_x Total (tons)	CO EF (g/hr) [3]	CO Daily (lbs/day)	CO Total (tons)	NOTES
Surveying & Potholing (10 tons)																					
Backhoe Loader	78	10	1	1	-	774	17	0.009	64	1.4	0.001	13	0.3	0.0001	58	1.3	0.001	79	1.7	0.001	5
Vac Truck	C6500	1	1	-	15	2.2	0.15	0.0001	0.66	0.04	0.00002	0.05	0.003	0.000002	0.3	0.02	0.00001	9.6	0.6	0.0003	6
Surveying Lt-Heavy Duty Truck	3/4 - 1 ton	1	1	-	15	2.2	0.15	0.0001	0.66	0.04	0.00002	0.05	0.003	0.000002	0.3	0.02	0.00001	9.6	0.6	0.0003	6
Lt-Heavy Duty Truck	3/4 - 1 ton	3	1	-	15	2.2	0.44	0.0002	0.66	0.13	0.0001	0.05	0.010	0.000005	0.3	0.06	0.00003	9.6	1.9	0.001	6
Worker Light Truck	Light	8	1	-	15	1.0	0.53	0.0003	0.35	0.19	0.0001	0	0	0	0.06	0.032	0.00002	7.2	3.8	0.0019	6
Subtotals (Surveying & Potholing)							18	0.009		1.8	0.001		0.31	0.0002		1.41	0.001		8.72	0.004	
Boring & Clearing (3300 feet)																					
Boring Rig (Rock)	DD6	10	4	1	-	2.8	0.06	0.0001	0.20	0.004	0.00001	0.40	0.009	0.000018	1.36	0.0300	0.0001	1.0	0.02	0.00004	7
Rig Truck & Trailer	HH Truck	1	4	-	15	11.3	0.7	0.001	2.2	0.15	0.0003	0.6	0.04	0.0001	0.3	0.0	0.0000	14.0	0.9	0.002	6
Water Truck	4500 gal.	1	4	-	15	11.3	0.7	0.001	2.2	0.15	0.0003	0.6	0.04	0.0001	0.3	0.02	0.0000	14.0	0.9	0.002	5
Skid Truck	3/4 - 1 ton	1	4	-	15	2.24	0.15	0.0003	0.66	0.04	0.0001	0.05	0.003	0.00001	0.31	0.02	0.0000	9.57	0.6	0.001	6
Dozer (D4)	D4	10	4	1	-	977	22	0.04	69	1.5	0.003	11	0.25	0.001	72	1.6	0.003	77	2	0.003	5
Dozer (D6)	D6	10	4	1	-	1660	37	0.07	110	2.4	0.005	15	0.33	0.001	105	2.3	0.005	110	2	0.005	5
Backhoe Loader	416C	10	4	1	-	774	17	0.03	64	1.4	0.003	13	0.29	0.001	58	1.3	0.003	79	1.7	0.003	5
Flatbed	3/4 ton	2	4	-	15	2.24	0.3	0.001	0.66	0.09	0.0002	0.05	0.01	0.00001	0.31	0.04	0.0001	9.57	1.3	0.003	6
Lt-Heavy Duty Truck	3/4 - 1 ton	7	4	-	15	2.24	1.0	0.002	0.66	0.31	0.0006	0.05	0.02	0.00005	0.31	0.14	0.0003	9.57	4.4	0.009	6
Worker Light Truck	Light	12	4	-	15	1.0	0.79	0.0016	0.4	0.28	0.0006	0	0	0	0.06	0.05	0.0001	7.2	5.7	0.011	6
Subtotals (Boring & Clearing)							77	0.15		6.08	0.012		0.91	0.002		5.43	0.01		18	0.04	
Plowing, Spider (5 miles)																					
Backhoe Loader	78	10	2	1	-	774	17	0.017	64	1.4	0.0014	13	0.3	0.0003	58	1.3	0.001	79	1.7	0.002	5
Dozer (D9) [5]	401	10	2	1	-	2520	56	0.056	250	5.5	0.006	55	1.2	0.001	270	6.0	0.006	305	6.7	0.007	5
Ag. Tractor	225	10	2	1	-	1238	27	0.03	75	1.7	0.002	9.0	0.2	0.0002	90	2.0	0.002	75	2	0.002	5
Spiderplow	FSP17	10	2	1	-	1238	27	0.027	75	1.7	0.0017	9.0	0.2	0.0002	90	2.0	0.002	75	1.7	0.002	6
Water Truck	132	10	2	1	-	1310	29	0.029	40	0.9	0.0009	50	1.1	0.0011	125	2.8	0.003	170	3.7	0.004	7
Lt-Heavy Duty Truck	3/4 - 1 ton	10	2	-	15	2.24	1.48	0.0015	0.66	0.44	0.0004	0.05	0.03	0.000033	0.31	0.21	0.00021	9.57	6.3	0.006	6
Worker Light Truck	Light	10	2	-	15	1.00	0.66	0.0007	0.35	0.23	0.0002	0	0	0	0.06	0.04	0.00004	7.22	4.8	0.005	6
Subtotals (Plowing, Spider)							158	0.16		12	0.012		3.0	0.003		14	0.014		27	0.027	
Proofing (10 tons)																					
Backhoe Loader	78	10	1	1	-	774	17	0.009	64	1.4	0.001	13	0.29	0.0001	58	1.3	0.001	79	1.7	0.001	5
Lt-Heavy Duty Truck	3/4 - 1 ton	2	1	-	15	11	1.5	0.001	2	0.29	0.0001	0.6	0.08	0.00004	0.3	0.04	0.00002	14	1.9	0.001	6
Worker Light Truck	Light	3	1	-	15	1.00	0.20	0.0001	0.35	0.07	0.00003	0	0	0	0.06	0.01	0.00001	7.2	1.4	0.001	6
Subtotals (Proofing)							19	0.01		1.8	0.001		0.37	0.0002		1.33	0.001		5.0	0.003	
Cable Installation & Splicing (10 tons)																					
Backhoe Loader	78	10	1	1	-	774	17	0.009	64	1.4	0.001	13	0.29	0.0001	58	1.3	0.001	79	1.7	0.001	5
Flatbed	3/4 ton	1	1	-	15	2.2	0.15	0.0001	0.7	0.04	0.00002	0.05	0.003	0.000002	0.31	0.02	0.00001	9.6	0.6	0.0003	6
Lt-Heavy Duty Truck	3/4 - 1 ton	2	1	-	15	2.2	0.30	0.0001	0.7	0.09	0.00004	0.05	0.007	0.000003	0.31	0.04	0.00002	9.6	1.3	0.001	6
Worker Light Truck	Light	5	1	-	15	1.0	0.33	0.0002	0.35	0.12	0.0001	0	0	0	0.06	0.02	0.00001	7.2	2.4	0.001	6
Subtotals (Cable & Splicing)							18	0.01		1.7	0.001		0.30	0.0002		1.35	0.001		6.0	0.003	
Handholes (12 tons)																					
Backhoe Loader	78	10	1	1	-	774	17	0.009	64	1.4	0.001	13	0.29	0.0001	58	1.3	0.001	79	1.7	0.001	5
Flatbed	3/4 ton	1	1	-	15	2.2	0.15	0.0001	0.7	0.04	0.00002	0.05	0.00	0.000002	0.31	0.02	0.00001	9.6	0.6	0.0003	6
Lt-Heavy Duty Truck	3/4 - 1 ton	2	1	-	15	2.2	0.30	0.0001	0.7	0.09	0.00004	0.05	0.01	0.000003	0.31	0.04	0.00002	9.6	1.3	0.0006	6
Worker Light Truck	Light	4	1	-	15	1.0	0.26	0.0001	0.35	0.09	0.00005	0	0	0	0.06	0.02	0.00001	7.2	1.9	0.0010	6
Subtotals (Handholes)							18	0.01		1.6	0.001		0.30	0.0002		1.35	0.001		5.5	0.003	
Markers																					
Flatbed	3/4 ton	1	1	-	15	2.2	0.15	0.0001	0.7	0.04	0.00002	0.1	0.003	0.000002	0.3	0.02	0.00001	9.6	0.63	0.0003	6
Worker Light Truck	Light	2	1	-	15	1.0	0.13	0.0001	0.4	0.05	0.00002	0	0	0	0.1	0.01	0.000004	7.2	0.96	0.0005	6
Subtotals (Markers)							0.28	0.0001		0.09	0.00004		0.003	0.000002		0.03	0.00001		1.6	0.0008	
Restoration																					
Ag. Tractor	225	10	1	1	-	2370	52	0.026	180	4.0	0.002	15	0.33	0.0002	135	3.0	0.001	205	4.5	0.002	5
Dozer (D6)	153	10	1	1	-	1660	37	0.018	110	2.4	0.001	15	0.33	0.0002	105	2.3	0.001	110	2.4	0.001	5
Dozer (D4)	80	10	1	1	-	977	22	0.011	69	1.5	0.001	11	0.25	0.0001	72	1.6	0.001	77	1.7	0.001	5
Water Truck	1,000 gal.	10	1	1	-	1310	29	0.014	40	0.88	0.0004	50	1.1	0.001	125	2.8	0.001	170	3.7	0.002	5
Lt-Heavy Duty Truck	3/4 - 1 ton	2	1	-	15	11.3	1.5	0.001	2.2	0.29	0.0001	0.6	0.08	0.00004	0.3	0.04	0.00002	14.0	1.9	0.001	6
Worker Light Truck	Light	6	1	-	15	1.0	0.40	0.0002	0.4	0.14	0.0001	0	0	0	0.1	0.02	0.00001	7.2	2.9	0.001	6
Subtotals (Restoration)							141	0.07		9.23	0.005		2.09	0.001		9.7	0.00		17	0.01	
Subtotals, Construction Engine Emissions [4]							158	0.42		11.8	0.03			0.01		14	0.03		27	0.08	
Total Construction Emissions (Fugitive plus exhaust)								0.42			0.03			1.59			0.03			0.08	
Construction Thresholds							185 lb/day			185 lb ROG/day				2.5 tpq			--			--	
Insignifigant Impact [8]							Yes			Yes				Yes			Yes			Yes	

(Continued)

Construction Fugitive Dust Emissions

SOURCE	DAILY AMOUNT (hours)	DAYS OF ACTIVITY	AREA OF GRADING / TRENCHING	PM10 EMISSIONS EF	PM10 EMISSIONS (daily lbs)	PM10 EMISSIONS (total tons)	NOTES
General Construction Activities	10	12	6.68 acres	39.4 lb/acre-day	263	1.581	9
Trenching - Cable Installation	10	2	--	0.00 lb/hr	0.0	0.000	
Wind Erosion	24	2	0.67 acres	0.00 lb/acre-day	0.0	0.000	10
Subtotal, Construction Fugitive Emissions [4]					263	1.58	
Total PM10 Construction Emissions (Engine Exhaust and Fugitive)						1.587	

'-' = Not applicable

Unit abbreviations: g/hr = grams per hour, lb/day = pounds per day, tpy = tons per year, tpq = tons per quarter

(1) Workarounds have no equipment operating after construction (trenching for long-haul fiber optic cable).

(2) Daily amount is measured in hours for off-road construction equipment (e.g., backhoe), and in number of trips for on-road vehicles (e.g., worker light-truck).

(3) Emission factors are in grams per hour for off-road equipment, and in grams per mile for on-road vehicles.

(4) Construction emission subtotals are for the complete set of equipment in an activity (e.g., plowing) or fugitive PM10 generating processes.

(5) Emission factors are from Caterpillar Corp.

(6) MVEI7G Emission Factors (1998, 15mph, 75°F)

(7) SCAQMD CEQA Handbook, Tables A9-8-A & A9-8-B

(8) Construction emissions have insignifigant impact when emission of a set of off-road equipment used in one activity (e.g., plowing) does not exceed thresholds (i.e., each activity proceeds in one day, not all activities and equipment concurrently durin

(9) Area subjected to general construction activity is 29,111-foot length of workaround times 10-foot width. Period of time equals sum of days for all construction activities.

(10) Wind erosion applies to days for plowing/trenching fiber optic cable along full length of workaround.

Level 3 has already committed to implementation of a construction-phase dust abatement program, including the following activities:

- Water all active construction areas at least twice daily.
- Cover all trucks hauling soil, sand, and other loose materials or require all trucks to maintain at least two feet of freeboard.
- Apply water three times daily, or apply soil stabilizers (non-toxic) on all unpaved access roads, parking areas, and staging areas at construction sites.
- Sweep daily (with water sweepers) all paved access roads, parking areas, and staging areas at construction sites.
- Sweep streets daily (with water sweepers) if visible soil material is carried onto adjacent public streets.

b) Would the project violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☒	☐

b) Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed above, the project site lies in an area designated as "nonattainment" for the state ambient air quality standards for ozone and PM10.

Construction maximum daily emissions are below the regulatory thresholds, and hence, are less than significant. PM10 emissions from exhaust and fugitive dust associated with construction activities would also comply with the 2.5 tpq threshold, as shown in Table 10-III-1. Although PM10 emissions would be below the applicable SLOCAPCD significance threshold, fugitive dust control measures would be implemented during construction.

c) Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal and state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☒	☐

c) Less Than Significant Impact. The Cuesta Grade Workaround is one of two PEA sites located in San Luis Obispo County. The other site is the San Luis Obispo 3R D-Node facility.

As indicated in Tables 10-III-1 and 11-III-1 (San Luis Obispo 3R D-Node site), the estimated NO_x emissions that would be generated by the proposed Cuesta Grande Workaround and the San Luis Obispo 3R D-Node site are 158 lbs/day and 28 lbs/day, respectively. These emissions assume 10 hours a day of spider plowing along the Cuesta Workaround. The total combined cumulative emissions would exceed the daily threshold for NO_x (185 lbs/day). However, implementation of Applicant-Proposed Mitigation Measure (see below) would reduce this potential cumulative impact to less than significant.

Because combined emissions from the San Luis Obispo 3R D-Node and Cuesta Grade Workaround would exceed the threshold of significance for daily NO_x emissions, Level 3 will reduce Workaround spider plowing activities to nine hours per day if plowing occurs simultaneously with construction of the San Luis Obispo 3R D-Node.

d)	Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

d) No Impact. Along much of its length, the Workaround passes through rural areas. The closest sensitive receptors include a number of residences located approximately 50 feet away from the northeast end of the Workaround route.

Air quality impacts would occur over a short period of time at any one location because project construction would proceed at a rate of approximately 2.5 miles per day, depending upon the type of construction method to be used along a given segment. This would greatly limit the time any receptor would be potentially exposed to pollutants associated with Workaround construction activities. It is very unlikely that exhaust emissions or fugitive dust associated with these activities would impact receptors in the vicinity of the proposed Workaround.

During construction, site access would be easy and direct for all work conducted along public roads. Construction vehicles would not block traffic on Highway 101 or other streets in the area for a significant period of time. Thus, emissions from idling vehicles in the vicinity of any sensitive receptors would be infrequent and minimal.

e)	Would the project create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

e) No Impact. The project would not include activities that create objectionable odors.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Setting

The majority of the proposed Workaround corridor consists of active vehicular roadways. The remainder of the corridor accesses land that has been disturbed due to cattle grazing, resulting in a predominance of non-native grassland. Remnants of scrub vegetation are evident in small patchy areas. Several jurisdictional drainages, ranging from ephemeral to perennial, are crossed by the project alignment. Wetland and riparian habitats are associated with these drainages.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

a) Less Than Significant Impact. An inclusive database search was performed for sensitive plant and wildlife species with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Workaround alignment (California Natural Diversity Database, San Luis Obispo and Lopez Mountain Quadrangles, California Department of Fish and Game, March 2000). The occurrence potentials for all sensitive species revealed in this search are included in Table 10-IV-1. The California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*, federal threatened and a California Species of Special Concern), and the Chorro Creek bog thistle (*Cirsium fontinale* var. *obispoense*, federal and state endangered), have the potential to occur in several previously identified streambeds along the project alignment. Sensitive raptor species may also find suitable nesting and perching habitat in the coast live oak woodland found throughout the alignment.

The southern portion of the Workaround transects a recently grazed grassland community. Approximately half of the sensitive species listed in Table 10-IV-1 are associated with this community type. The remaining species listed in Table 10-IV-1 are associated with chaparral, oak woodland, and riparian communities (habitats contained with in the northern section of the Workaround).

Level 3 Communications understands that there may be some degree of adverse affect to these species. However, the resulting impact shall remain below a significant level given the small size of the affected area and the mitigation described below. Low impact construction methods such as directional bore and spider-plow are planned for this area.

In addition, by design Level (3) has already committed to the following mitigation measures.

- The creeks and dry beds located in the northern portion of the project alignment will be crossed by the existing dirt road (Old Stagecoach Road). The route follows this road where the cable innerduct will be buried into the road substrate. All culverts that appear to be obstacles for such trenching will be bored. All construction activities will be constrained to the existing dirt road.

- The southern portion of the alignment is not accessed by an existing road. Three drainages located in this section do provide suitable habitat for sensitive species (California red-legged frog, southwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallida*), and southern steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*) and will consequently be bored. Marginal habitat occurs for the silvery legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra pulchra*) and the California horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum frontale*). Boring equipment will be moved to opposite side of the drainage by the use of established access roads. These drainages will not be physically crossed. Based on life history patterns of the California red-legged frog, the setback distance or "buffer zone" between the edge of riparian vegetation and construction activity will be at least 100 meters where applicable (PEA, 2000, Figure 8). Additionally, seasonal avoidance by prohibiting construction during periods of precipitation will minimize potential impacts to this species. Biological monitors will be present at all environmental sites that have been identified as suitable habitat for sensitive species. Due to overlapping habitat associations, the implementation of the above commitments will also provide for avoidance of the Chorro Creek bog thistle habitat.

Table 10-IV-1
Potential for Habitat at the Cuesta Grade Workaround to Support Sensitive Species Occurring in the Vicinity

*Adobe sanicle (*Sanicula maritima*), a federal species of concern, California state rare, and a CNPS listing of 1B, is associated with moist soils in meadow, grassland, chaparral, and coastal prairie communities.* This work around segment has moderately appropriate grassland habitat for the Adobe sanicle.
*Chorro Creek bog thistle (*Cirsium rontinale *var.* obispoense*), a federal and California state endangered species, and CNPS listing of 1B, is associated with serpentine seeps in chaparral and cismontane woodland communities. This species is endemic to San Luis Obispo County.* This work around segment provides low quality habitat for the Choro Creek bog thistle.
*Congdon's tarplant (*Hemizonia parryi *ssp.* Congdonii*), a federal species of concern and a CNPS listing of 1B, is associated with alkaline soils in grassland communities.* This work around segment has appropriate grassland habitat for Congdon's tarplant.
*Jones's layia (*Layia jonesii*), a federal species of concern and a CNPS listing of 1B, is associated with clay soils and serpentine outcrops in chaparral and grassland communities. This species is endemic to Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties.* This work around segment has moderately appropriate habitat for Jones's layia.
*Cambria morning glory (*Calystegia subacaulis *ssp.* Episcopalis*), a federal species of concern and a CNPS listing of 1B, is associated with chaparral and cismontane woodland communities. This species is endemic to San Luis Obispo County.* This work around segment has moderately appropriate habitat for Cambria morning glory.
*San Luis Obispo serpentine dudleya (*Dudleya abramsii *ssp.* bettinai*), a federal species of concern and a CNPS listing of 1B, is associated with coastal scrub, grassland, and chaparral communities. This species is often found on rocky outcrops within scrub vegetation. The San Luis Obispo serpentine dudleya is endemic to San Luis Obispo County.* This work around segment has moderately appropriate habitat for the San Luis Obispo serpentine dudleya.
*Blochman's dudleya (*Dudleya blochmaniae *ssp.* blochmaniae*), a federal species of concern and a CNPS listing of 1B, is associated with coastal scrub, coastal bluff scrub, and valley and foothill grassland communities. This species is often found on open, rocky slopes in shallow clay or serpentine soils* This work around segment has moderately appropriate habitat for Blochman's dudleya.
*Arroyo De La Cruz manzanita (*Arctostaphylos cruzensis*), a federal species of concern and a CNPS listing of 1B, is associated with sandy soils in a variety of habitats.* This work around segment has appropriate habitat for Arroyo De La Cruz manzanita.
*Santa Lucia manzanita (*Arctostaphylos luciana*), a federal species of concern and a CNPS listing of 1B, is associated with chaparral communities. This species is often found on shale outcrops and sloping topography. Santa Lucia manzanita is endemic to San Luis Obispo County* This work around segment has appropriate habitat for Santa Lucia manzanita.

Table 10-IV-1
Potential for Habitat at the Cuesta Grade Workaround to Support Sensitive Species Occurring in the Vicinity

*Morro manzanita (*Arctostaphylos morroensis*), a federal threatened species and a CNPS listing of 1B, is endemic to the Morro Bay area.* This work around segment is not within the narrowly defined distribution range for the Morro manzanita.
*Cuesta Pass checkerbloom (*Sidalcea hickmanii *ssp.* anomala*), a federal species of concern, a California state rare, and a CNPS listing of 1B, is associated with closed-coned coniferous forest and is endemic to San Luis Obispo County.* This work around segment does not include appropriate coniferous forest habitat for the Cuesta Pass checkerbloom.
*San Benito fritillary (*Fritillaria viridea*), a federal species of concern and a CNPS listing of 4, is associated with serpentine slopes in chaparral communities.* This work around segment has moderately appropriate habitat for San Benito fritillary.
*San Luis Obispo County lupine (*Lupinus ludovicianus*), a federal species of concern and a CNPS listing of 1B, is associated with open sandy areas in chaparral and cismontane woodland communities. This species is endemic to San Luis Obispo County.* This work around segment has moderately appropriate habitat for San Luis Obispo County lupine.
*Dune larkspur (*Delphinium parryi *ssp.* Blochmaniae*), a federal species of concern and a CNPS listing of 1B, is associated with chapparal and maritime coastal dune communities. This species is often found near rocky areas and dunes.* This work around segment does not include appropriate habitat for the dune larkspur.
San Luis mariposa lily (*Calochortus obispoensis*) has a CNPS listing of 1B. It is associated with chaparral, coastal scrub, ultramafic, valley and foothill grassland communities. This species is often found in serpentine grassland. This site provides no appropriate native habitat for the San Luis mariposa lily.
*San Luis Obispo sedge (*Carex obispoensis*) has a CNPS listing of 1B. It is associated with ultramafic, valley and foothill grassland communities as well as closed-cone coniferous forest, chaparral and coastal prairie, and coastal scrub.* This site provides no appropriate native habitat for the San Luis Obispo sedge.
*Dwarf soaproot (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum *var.* minus*) has a CNPS listing of 1B. It is associated with valley, foothill grassland, ultramafic, and chaparral communities.* This site provides no appropriate native habitat for the Dwarf soaproot.
*Brewer's spineflower (*Chorizanthe breweri*) has a CNPS listing of 1B. It is associated with as closed-cone coniferous forest valley, chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub and ultramafic communities.* This site provides no appropriate native habitat for the Brewer's spineflower.
*Rayless ragwort (*Senecio aphanactis*) has a CNPS listing of 2. It is associated with as cismontane woodland and coastal scrub.* This site provides no appropriate native habitat for the Rayless ragwort.

Table 10-IV-1
Potential for Habitat at the Cuesta Grade Workaround to Support Sensitive Species Occurring in the Vicinity

Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) has no listing but its winter roost sites are considered sensitive habitat by the CDFG. These roost sites include groves of eucalyptus, Monterey pine, and cypress trees. The site does not include stands of trees necessary for monarch butterfly roosting habitat.
*Atascadero june beetle (*Polyphylla nubila*), a federal species of concern, is endemic to the sand dune areas near Atascadero and San Luis Obispo.* This site has no significant dune habitat for the Atascadero june beetle
Southern steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*), a federal threatened and California state species of concern, is associated with perennial coastal streams of southern California. Southern steelhead depend more on fresh water streams than other salmonid species. This species relies on river and stream headwaters for nursery areas. Unlike other salmonids species, Southern steelhead usually do not die after spawning. Appropriate aquatic habitat for the southern steelhead is found along a perennial tributary to San Luis Obispo Creek.
*The California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*) is a federal threatened and California state species of special concern whose potential habitat includes all aquatic and riparian areas within it's range. During the dry season, the red-legged frog retreats to upland refuge. Upland habitat includes any landscape features that might provide sufficient cover and moisture. Currently, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara counties support the greatest density of occupied drainages.* Appropriate aquatic habitat for the California red-legged frog is found along various perennial and ephemeral drainages on the work around.
*Silvery legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra pulchra*), a federal species of concern and a California state species of concern, must have habitat where the soil is moist. They prefer habitat with soils with a high moisture content.* This site has marginal and occasional habitat for the Silvery legless lizard.
The southwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallida*), a federal and California state species of concern, is found along streams with deep pools, basking sites and safe underwater retreats. Modest aquatic habitat for the southwestern pond turtle is found along a perennial tributary to San Luis Obispo Creek.
The California horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum frontale*), a federal and California state species of concern, is associated with a wide variety of habitat. The California horned lizard is often found near sandy washes with scattered scrub vegetation. This lizard requires open areas for sunning, bushes for cover, patches of loose soil for burial, and an abundant supply of ants and other insects. *This work around segment is characterized by marginal habitat for the California horned lizard.*
The prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), a California state species of concern, is associated with open desert scrub and grassland communities. This species nests on cliff ledges and in trees. *This work around segment includes areas of appropriate foraging habitat but is not characterized by suitable nesting areas.*

Table 10-IV-1
Potential for Habitat at the Cuesta Grade Workaround to Support Sensitive Species Occurring in the Vicinity

The western yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), a California state endangered species, is a rare summer transient of southern California. This species nests in deciduous riparian forest and cottonwood-willow woodland communities. *Appropriate riparian habitat for the western yellow-billed cuckoo is found along various perennial and ephemeral drainages on the work around.*
The tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), a federal and California state species of concern, is largely endemic to California. This colonial nesting species is associated with freshwater marshes with cattail, tule, bulrush, or sedge vegetation. *Wetland habitat occurs along the work around segment but is not likely extensive enough to support a tricolored blackbird nesting colony.*
*The San Diego desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*) is a federal and California state species of concern associated with coastal southern California sagebrush scrub and chaparral communities from San Diego to San Luis Obispo County.* This work around segment has appropriate sagebrush and chaparral habitat for the San Diego desert woodrat.

Source: California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), *San Luis Obispo and Lopez Mountain Quadrangles*, *California Natural Diversity Database*, March 2000.

Surveys to identify active raptor and riparian dependent bird nests will be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than two weeks before the start of construction during the nesting season. Construction will be delayed within 500 feet of any occupied nest until the birds have vacated the area. Efforts will be made to avoid removal of all trees during project construction and none is anticipated. In the unlikely event that tree removal is unavoidable, trees with unoccupied raptor nests may only be removed prior to March 1, or following the nesting season (March 1 through July 30).

b)	Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

b) Less Than Significant Impact. The high degree of disturbance associated with the project alignment has limited the plant community to predominately invasive, ruderal species. However, drainages with associated wetland and riparian areas are within the project alignment. The drainages and associated sensitive habitat will be avoided by directional boring. Where applicable, the bore will be defined by a 100-meter buffer extending out from the edge of riparian vegetation (PEA, 2000, Figure 10-8, follows p.10-41). Continuing consultation with the U.S.Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and California Department of Fish and Game is planned to establish appropriate vehicle streambed crossing methodology and resolve additional environmental commitments.

c)	Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

c) No Impact. Drainages with associated wetland areas are within the project alignment. The drainages and associated sensitive habitat will be avoided by directional boring. Where applicable, the bore will be defined by a 100-meter buffer extending out from the edge of wetland vegetation. Sufficient erosion control devices will be installed adjacent to all wetland habitats to ensure that no discharge or fill will impact such areas. An on-site environmental monitor will be present to inspect the proper implementation of such erosion control devices. Continuing consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and California Department of Fish and Game is planned to establish appropriate vehicle streambed crossing methodology and resolve additional environmental commitments.

d)	Would the proposal interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

d) Less Than Significant Impact. The site is likely to function as a terrestrial wildlife corridor because of its unobstructed connection to native habitat. The site may also provide nursery habitat for native upland wildlife species. Pre-construction surveys will ensure avoidance of upland wildlife species and nesting bird species. Surveys to identify active raptor and riparian dependent bird nests will be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than two weeks before the start of construction during the nesting season. Construction will be delayed within 500 feet of any occupied nest until the birds have vacated the area. All impacts to the natural migration or movement of terrestrial wildlife species will be temporary. The project will not interfere with the movement of any migratory fish species.

e)	Would the proposal conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

e) No Impact. The project will not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. Efforts will be made to avoid removal of all trees during project construction and none is anticipated. In the unlikely event that tree removal is unavoidable, all appropriate permits will be attained by the County of San Luis Obispo.

f)	Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

f) No Impact. The project will not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Setting

The Cuesta Grade Workaround alignment crosses a ridge in a saddle between two hills and then follows Old Stagecoach Road to U.S. 101 at Cuesta Pass. Most of the area is undeveloped. The project area is located in the region occupied by the Chumash when the first Spanish land expedition passed through the area in A.D. 1769.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

b)	Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

a) and b) No Impact. An archival record search was completed of the site and area within a one-mile radius by the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), Central Coastal Center, UC Santa Barbara. The search also included a check of the California Office of Historic Preservation Historic Property Data File for San Luis Obispo County, the National Register of Historic Places (listings and eligibility determinations), California Points of Historical Interest, California Register of Historical Resources, and California Historical Landmarks. The records search reported that the property had not been previously surveyed (File No. Not Provided). The record search also indicated that there are four previously recorded archaeological sites (3 historic, 1 prehistoric) within a half mile of the alignment. No other properties within a half-mile are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, California State Historic Resources Inventory, California Historical Landmarks, and California Points of Historical Interest.

The State of California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) completed a search of the NAHC Sacred Lands file with negative results and identified locally knowledgeable Native Americans for follow-on contact/consultation. These individuals were contacted, and no response has been sent to Level 3 as of March 14, 2000.

The field inventory of the alignment noted no archaeological resources potentially eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources.

c)	Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

c) Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is underlain by Jurassic and Cretaceous metamorphic rocks of the Franciscan Formation (units KJf, KJfv); early Cretaceous marine sedimentary strata (unit K) likely assigned to the Toro Formation; the Miocene-age marine Monterey Formation (Unit Mm);

and Quaternary Alluvium (unit Qal). Archival records at the University of California Museum of Paleontology indicate the Franciscan Formation has yielded the remains of a presumed marine vertebrate elsewhere in San Luis Obispo County; the Toro Formation has yielded the remains of fossil marine invertebrates in several localities in the project site vicinity. The fossilized remains of marine vertebrates and invertebrates have been recovered from the Monterey Formation at a number of UCMP localities elsewhere in San Luis Obispo County. These fossil occurrences suggest a potential for Mesozoic and Cenozoic marine invertebrate and vertebrate fossil remains being encountered by construction-related earth moving at the project site (PEA, 2000, p. 10-17).

Level 3 has already committed to complete a paleontologic preconstruction field survey and to provide for paleontological monitoring by a qualified vertebrate paleontologist to allow for recovery of larger fossil remains and rock samples will be processed to allow for the recovery of smaller fossil remains during earth moving activities on the facility site. All recovered fossil remains will be fully treated (prepared, identified by knowledgeable paleontologists, curated, catalogued) and, along with associated specimen data and corresponding geologic and geographic site data, placed in a recognized museum repository. The paleontologist will prepare a final report of findings that includes an inventory of recovered fossil remains. These measures would be in compliance with the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology Guidelines for the management of paleontologic resources and for the museum's acceptance of a monitoring program for fossil collection.

d)	Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

d) No Impact. The CHRIS records search and field survey provided no evidence of the presence of human remains (File No. 99-669). If suspected human remains are encountered during construction, operations will stop until the proper official is notified, the find evaluated, any mitigation recommendations implemented, and Level 3 has been cleared to resume construction in the area of the find (see *Level 3 Long-Haul Fiber Optics Project Cultural Resources Procedures* (PBNS, 1999:25-39)).

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Setting

The Cuesta Grade Workaround is located east of the city of San Luis Obispo along the southwestern edge of the Santa Lucia Mountain Range. This area is geologically complex, and Tertiary to Mesozoic igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rocks underlie the Workaround route. This area is moderately active seismically. Several active faults are located in the vicinity of the alignment that could cause moderate to severe groundshaking, the Rinconada, Los Osos, and San Andreas, and Hosgri faults. The alignment would not cross and would not be adjacent to any Alquist-Priolo zones. The project is located in a mountainous bedrock area and would not be subject to liquefaction hazards. The project area has a moderate potential for landslide hazards (CDMG, 1973; PEA, 2000). The area is mapped as having a moderate erosion potential (CDMG, 1973).

Soil along the Workaround alignment is predominantly moderately expansive, however due to the wide range of parent materials soil of high and low expansion potential is expected to occur locally (USDA, 1984).

Evaluation

a)	Would the project expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: i) Rupture of known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Mines and Geology Special Publication 42. ii) Strong seismic-related groundshaking? iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? iv) Landslides?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

a) Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is not located within or adjacent to an Alquist-Priolo zone, however there are several major active faults in the vicinity (Blake, 1998; CDMG, 1994). The project area is susceptible to severe to moderate magnitude groundshaking from these faults (Blake, 1998; CDMG, 1996). The major active faults in the vicinity of the project site and their approximate minimum distance from the project site are as follows:

- Los Osos, 4 miles;
- Rinconada, 5 miles;
- and Hosgri, 16 miles
- the San Andreas, 32 miles (Blake, 1998).

Although seismically induced groundshaking is potentially damaging to buried utilities, proper design of a fiber optic cable would allow it to withstand vertical and horizontal ground motion. It is located in an area with little to no or liquefaction hazard. The site would not be manned and would not expose people to the above seismic risks.

b)	Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

b) No Impact. Although the Workaround route traverses relatively rugged terrain of the Santa Lucia Range and is located in an area designated as having moderate erosion activity (CDMG, 1973), proper techniques during construction will minimize any short-term erosion. Operation of the Workaround would not result in any erosion.

c)	Would the project be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on or off site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

c) No Impact. The Workaround route traverses relatively rugged terrain of the Santa Lucia Range and has moderate potential for landslides. However, the shallow trench depths and minimal site grading,

combined with the temporary nature of the construction activities should not increase or trigger slope instability in the area. Operation of the emplaced fiber optic cable would not impact slope stability.

d)	Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

d) No Impact. The soil in the project area is mapped as having predominantly moderately expansive soil, with local areas of soil with low and high expansion potential (USDA, 1984). This project site would only have buried fiber optic cable, no structures, which would not be significantly affected by the presence of moderately expansive soils.

e)	Would the project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

e) No Impact. The Workaround would have no structures or daily on-site personnel and would not require any wastewater disposal facilities.

VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Setting

Review of a database of regulatory agency recognized hazardous waste sites revealed no potentially contaminated sites at or adjacent to the project site (Vista, 2000). No schools are located within one-quarter mile of the site, and it is not located in the vicinity of an airport or within an airport land use plan.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

a) No Impact. Level 3 will handle hazardous materials on site during construction using best management practices.

b)	Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

b) No Impact. Hazardous materials would not be used or stored at the project site. During construction best management practices would be used to prevent release of hazardous materials during refueling of equipment.

c)	Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

c) No Impact. The project area is located in a rural area and no schools or proposed schools are located within one-quarter mile of the project site.

d)	Would the project be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

d) No Impact. The project site is not included on a list of regulatory agency recognized hazardous materials sites (Vista, 2000).

e)	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

e) No Impact. The project site is not within an airport land use plan or within two miles of public or public use airport.

f)	For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

f) No Impact. There are no private airstrips within the vicinity of the project site.

g)	Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

g) No Impact. Installation of the Workaround would not alter, impair, or interfere with adopted emergency response and evacuation plans.

h)	Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☒	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☐

h) Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation. No structures would be built on this site, therefore wildland fires would not present a significant risk to the site. A fire prevention plan for construction activities would minimize any risk of wildfire and is recommended as an additional mitigation mesasure.

The project proponent should prepare a fire prevention plan, to be approved by the appropriate local fire district, prior to construction on the Workaround (Mitigation Measure 10-VII-1)

VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Setting

The Cuesta Grade Workaround crosses several jurisdictional waters of the U.S. (PEA, 2000, Figure 10-9). San Luis Obispo Creek is located approximately 100 feet from the southern end of the site.

The following mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project by Level 3 to minimize potential impacts:

- Jurisdictional wetlands will avoided by directional boring. The boring will be approximately 12-inches in diameter, and will be backfilled with bentonite slurry. The bentonite slurry will seal the boring and will prevent the boring acting as a conduit for drainage of these drainage and wetland area. Details on use of bentonite slurry in directional boring and its past performance in similar situations have been provided (PEA, 2000, Appendix C, Volume 3).

- Level 3 is currently developing a contingency plan for non-roadway bores that would result in lower impacts for hydrologic resources. This policy is currently under review by the CPUC and agencies.

- The following actions will be taken to ensure that hydrology/water quality impacts are minimized during construction and operation of this site. The actions will be applied as appropriate. Details regarding these actions have been provided (PEA, 2000, Appendix E, Volume 3).
  - Bore under sensitive habitats when practicable;
  - Implement erosion control measures during construction;
  - Remove cover vegetation as close to the time of construction as practicable;
  - Confine construction equipment and associated activities to the construction corridor;
  - No refueling of construction equipment will take place within 100 feet of an aquatic environment;
  - Comply with state, federal, and local permits;
  - Perform proper sediment control;
  - Prepare and implement a spill prevention and response plan;
  - Remove all installation debris, construction spoils, and miscellaneous litter for proper off-site disposal; and
  - Complete post-construction vegetation monitoring and supplemental revegetation where needed.

- A Notification of Intent (NOI) will be submitted to the applicable RWQCB and the State Water Resources Control Board for construction of the site under the General Storm Water Permit to Discharge Storm Water Associated With Construction Activity. The Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will include the following: 1) Project Description; 2) Best Management Practices for Storm Water Pollution Prevention; 3) Inspection, Maintenance, and Record Keeping; and 4) Training.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

a) No Impact. Proposed construction, operation, and waste disposal activities are to be performed in accordance with all applicable regulations.

b)	Would the project substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

b) No Impact. The project will not involve groundwater extraction. Net impermeable area will not be increased on the site, so groundwater recharge will not be impacted.

c)	Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

c) Less Than Significant Impact. The site is to be restored to the original condition after construction activities are completed, so no substantial alteration of the drainage pattern of the site would be expected. During construction, erosion control measures are to be employed to reduce short term impacts to a less than significant level.

d)	Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on or off site?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

d) Less Than Significant Impact. The site is to be restored to the original condition after construction activities are completed, so no substantial alteration of the drainage pattern of the site would be expected.

e)	Would the project create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

e) Less Than Significant Impact. Runoff characteristics under project conditions will not substantially differ from existing conditions, since the site is to be returned to its original cover and topographic conditions after construction activities are completed.

f)	Would the project otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

f) Less Than Significant Impact. Proposed construction practices are expected to minimize impacts to water quality to the less than significant level.

g)	Would the project place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

g) No Impact. The project does not include housing.

h)	Would the project place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

h) No Impact. The project involves buried cable. No above-ground structures are planned in areas affected by flood flows.

i)	Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

i) Less Than Significant Impact. The project will be unmanned, and involves buried cable, rather than structures. Any risk to life and limb would be present only during project construction and maintenance, and is therefore considered less than significant.

j)	Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death due to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

j) Less Than Significant Impact. The project will be unmanned, and involves buried cable, rather than structures. Any risk to life and limb would be present only during project construction and maintenance, and is therefore considered less than significant.

IX. LAND USE PLANNING

Setting

The 5.6-mile long Workaround site extends from the intersection of Miossi Road and Loomis Street at the southern end to the Union Pacific Railroad right of way at Cuesta Pass. The route generally parallels the Highway 101 corridor to the west of the highway, along a pipeline easement. At the southern end of the route is Cuesta County Park. Much of the route is through gently rolling grazing lands. The route also parallels portions of the Old Stage Coach Road. There are also a few scattered

rural residences near the southern portion of the route. See Figures 10-I-1, 10-1 and 10-2 (at the end of this Initial Study) and Figures 10-1 through 7 (PEA, 2000, following p.10-41) for detailed locator and site vicinity maps.

The southern portion of the site is designated "Agriculture" under the San Luis Obispo County General Plan. A northern portion of the route is designated "Rural Use," which seeks to provide for residential and other development at a low density compatible with the rural character of the open countryside and agricultural uses. These designations could allow for a use such as the proposed project contingent upon the granting of a Minor Use Permit. The proposed project would not conflict with any adjacent uses and is considered consistent with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Based on a field study of the site and vicinity, analysis of PEA data and conclusions, a review of applicable local planning policy and guidance, and/or planning agency confirmation of PEA accuracy, no significant land use impacts are anticipated.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project physically divide an established community?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

a) No Impact. The project site would be undergrounded in close proximity to the Highway 101 corridor. Its location would not divide elements of the local community.

b)	Would the project conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

b) No Impact**.** The proposed utility use could be allowed (subject to the granting of a Minor Use Permit) under the existing General Plan and Zoning designations of "Agriculture" and "Rural Use." Therefore, the proposed project is not expected to conflict with any applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations.

c)	Would the project conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

c) No Impact. The proposed Workaround would not conflict with any Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other conservation plan.

X. MINERAL RESOURCES

Setting

The project site is not located within an area designated by the state or San Luis Obispo County for mineral resources (PEA, 2000, p. 10-26).

Evaluation

a)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

a) No Impact. There are no known mineral resources within the project area.

b)	Would the project result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan other land use plan?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

b) No Impact. There are no known mineral resources within the project area.

XI. NOISE

Setting

The Cuesta Grade Workaround is located along Cuesta Grade, which is approximately six miles north of the City of San Luis Obispo in San Luis Obispo County. Along much of its length, the Workaround passes through rural areas. However, at the start (i.e., southwest end) of the Workaround there is a county park located within close proximity (approximately 20 feet). The closest residences are located approximately 50 feet from the Workaround near the northeast end. The San Luis Obispo County General Plan land use designations for the site are "Agriculture" and "Rural Residential". The Zoning Ordinance allows construction of utilities with a Minor Use Permit in any zone in the county.

Local noise regulations exempt construction activities from noise standards during the period 7 am to 9 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 5 pm on weekends. Construction activities would be restricted to these periods and days; hence, no numerical thresholds apply. Regulations associated with long-term noise generation do not apply to this project, because limited noise would be generated during proposed project operations.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project result in exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

a) Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would not generate noise levels in excess of local standards during construction or operation because no numerical standards apply. However, local noise regulations restrict construction activities to between 7 am to 9 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 5 pm on weekends. Level 3 has agreed to comply with time restrictions. The estimated maximum noise level at the nearest receptor (a county park) is 92 dBA. Since construction activities are linear and would proceed quickly, nearby receptors, which are located at both ends of the Workaround, would be exposed to this noise level for a very short time. Therefore, potential construction related noise impacts are less than significant.

Except for negligible noise from the occasional visit of one vehicle to the Workaround for inspection, there would be no operational noise sources associated with the proposed project. Therefore, operation related noise impacts are less than significant.

Level 3 has already committed to comply with local construction-related noise ordinances by restricting construction activities to the period between 7 am to 9 pm weekdays and 8 am to 5 pm on weekends.

b)	Would the proposal result in exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

b) Less Than Significant Impact. Neither project construction or project operations would generate excessive groundborne noise or vibration. The low level groundborne vibration and noise generated during construction will be short term in nature, and generally would not extend more than a few feet from the active work area. Since the nearest public receptor is 20 feet from the site, and the nearest sensitive receptor is 50 feet from the site, there would be a less than significant impact from groundborne vibrations or noise during construction.

During the operational period, there would be no aboveground machinery (e.g., generator) for this Workaround that could potentially generate excessive groundborne noise or vibrations; in addition, the buried fiber optic cable would not generate any perceptible vibrations or noise. Consequently, there would be no excessive groundborne vibration or noise impacts from site operations.

c)	Would the proposal result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

c) No Impact. The proposed project would not increase permanent ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the site and there would be no resultant impact.

d)	Would the proposal result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

d) Less Than Significant Impact. Construction noise associated with the proposed project would be temporary. Temporary noise increases would occur during construction, but would be in compliance with the local construction noise regulations, and, therefore would be less than significant. With regard to operations, the periodic noise generated by an occasional visit of one vehicle to inspect the site would be negligible.

e)	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

e) No Impact. The site is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or a public use airport.

f)	For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

f) No Impact. The site is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip.

XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Setting

The Workaround is located within San Luis Obispo County, with an estimated population of 234,100 as of January, 1999 (PEA, 2000, p.10-29). The nearest housing is a single-family dwelling approximately 50 feet northeast of the intersection of Old Stage Coach Road, a private road, and SR-101.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

a) No impact. The proposed project would neither create new housing, nor extend roads or other infrastructure that could directly or indirectly induce population growth.

b)	Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

b) No impact. The project would not displace any existing housing units, and would not, therefore require replacement housing.

c)	Would the project displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

c) No Impact. The project does not involve the removal of any housing units, and therefore will neither displace local residents nor trigger the need for new housing.

XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES

Setting

The site is located within San Luis Obispo County. Fire protection is provided by the California Department of Forestry. Police protection is provided by the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department and the San Luis Obispo City Police through a mutual aid agreement. The nearest public park is Cuesta County Park, located adjacent to the southern end of the project (Figure 10-2). Approximately one-half mile west of the project site is a public elementary school and approximately one-half mile south of the project is San Luis Obispo High School. Also, California State Polytechnic University at San Luis Obispo is located approximately three-quarters of a mile northwest of the southern end of the project (Figure 10-1).

Evaluation

a)	Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any or the public services: Fire protection? Police protection? Schools? Parks? Other public facilities?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

a) No Impact. The approximate 5.6-mile Workaround would have no impact on the local schools, parks, police, fire, or other public facilities. Although parks are in the vicinity, the Cuesta Grade Workaround would not have a physical effect on the parks or increase the need for parks in the area.

XIV. RECREATION

Setting

Cuesta Park is adjacent to the southern terminus of the Workaround. The park contains a picnic area, playground equipment, animal hospital, animal exhibit area, and administration building. A parking lot

separates the Workaround route from the park facilities by approximately 200 feet. Due to the un-staffed nature of the facility, the proposed project will not result in additional use of existing recreation facilities or require construction of additional recreation facilities. Based on a field study of the site and vicinity, analysis of PEA data and conclusions, a review of applicable local planning policy and guidance, and/or planning agency confirmation of PEA accuracy, no significant recreation impacts are anticipated with project implementation.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

a) No Impact. The proposed Workaround is an un-staffed, underground facility, and will not contribute additional use of any recreation facilities.

b)	Would the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or ex pansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse effect on the environment?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

b) No Impact. The project would not include recreation facilities. Since the proposed project will be un-staffed, it will not require the construction of new recreation facilities which might have an adverse effect on the environment.

XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

Setting

The Workaround would be located within public and private roads and on private property. The Miossi Road and Old Stage Coach Roads are public roads under County jurisdiction. Miossi Road is a two-lane paved road with no on-street parking and an unpaved shoulder. Miossi Road is designated as a local road in the San Luis Obispo County General Plan Circulation Element (Margason 1999). Old Stage Coach Road is a County-maintained unpaved road and is unclassified in the San Luis Obispo County General Plan. Padre Road is an unpaved private road and is not classified in the San Luis Obispo County General Plan.

The Workaround would begin in the south at the point where Miossi Road becomes Loomis Street. Loomis Street is a public two-lane road, and is classified as a local road in the San Luis Obispo County General Plan Circulation Element. Loomis Street ends at the entrance to the parking lot for Cuesta County Park and becomes Miossi Road from this point north.

SR-101 parallels the Workaround for its entire length. SR-101 is a limited-access four-lane divided highway in the project area. The Workaround would not encroach upon SR-101. Caltrans recently began a program to widen SR-101 in the project area. The Caltrans widening project will take approximately five years.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

a) Less Than Significant Impact. During construction at the site approximately 4 workers would be commuting to the site for approximately four to six weeks. The project construction would not result in a permanent substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio roads, or congestion at intersections. Therefore, potential impacts are less than significant.

b)	Would the project exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

b) No Impact. There would be no operational impact to levels of service associated with the project because the project site would not be occupied (it is a Workaround site).

c)	Would the project result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

c) No Impact. The project would not affect air traffic patterns.

d)	Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

d) No Impact. The project would not increase hazards due to design features or incompatible uses.

e)	Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☒	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☐

e) Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation. The Workaround would be located within public and private roads, construction of which may affect emergency access along these roads. If construction should cause the loss of a lane or a temporarily blocked road, emergency response time may lengthen or congestion may increase. This potential impact is considered less than significant with the following additional mitigation incorporated:

At locations where access to nearby property is blocked, provision shall be ready at all times to accommodate emergency vehicles, such as plating over excavations, short detours, and alternate routes (Mitigation Measure 10-XV-1).

f)	Would the project result in inadequate parking capacity?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

f) Less Than Significant Impact. During construction, approximately 4 workers would park on land traversed by the Workaround cable or off adjacent, low-use roads. Workers should have adequate parking in these areas and not have a significant impact.

g)	Would the project conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

g) No Impact. The Workaround would not conflict with any adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation.

XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Setting

The Workaround would consist of the underground fiber optic cable and would not require utilities or service systems. Portions of the Workaround will be installed near or adjacent to other existing utility lines, including another fiber optic carrier and a petroleum pipeline.

A minimal amount of "green" waste will be generated at the Cuesta Grade Workaround during cable placement operations. The Workaround includes no aboveground structures, so there is no operation-phase waste associated with the Workaround. If necessary, Level 3 will utilize the Cold Canyon Landfill for disposal of the small amount of solid waste generated during site clearing. The capacity of the Cold Canyon Landfill is sufficient to accept the anticipated waste from the proposed project.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

a) No Impact. No aboveground facilities would be constructed; therefore, the proposed site would not be subject to wastewater treatment requirements.

b)	Would the project require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

b) No Impact. No aboveground facilities would be constructed; therefore the proposed project would not require the construction or expansion of a wastewater treatment facility.

c)	Would the project require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

c) No Impact. No aboveground facilities would be constructed; therefore the proposed project would not require the construction or expansion of a storm water drainage facility.

d)	Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

d) No Impact. No aboveground facilities would be constructed; therefore the proposed project would not need access to an available water supply.

e)	Would the project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

e) No Impact. The proposed site would not require a wastewater treatment provider since there would be no aboveground facilities that would produce wastewater.

f)	Would the project be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

f) No Impact. There would be no solid waste associated with facility construction or operation since there would be no aboveground structures.

g)	Would the project comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

g) No Impact. The proposed site would generate a minimal amount of solid waste. The site would comply with solid waste regulations.

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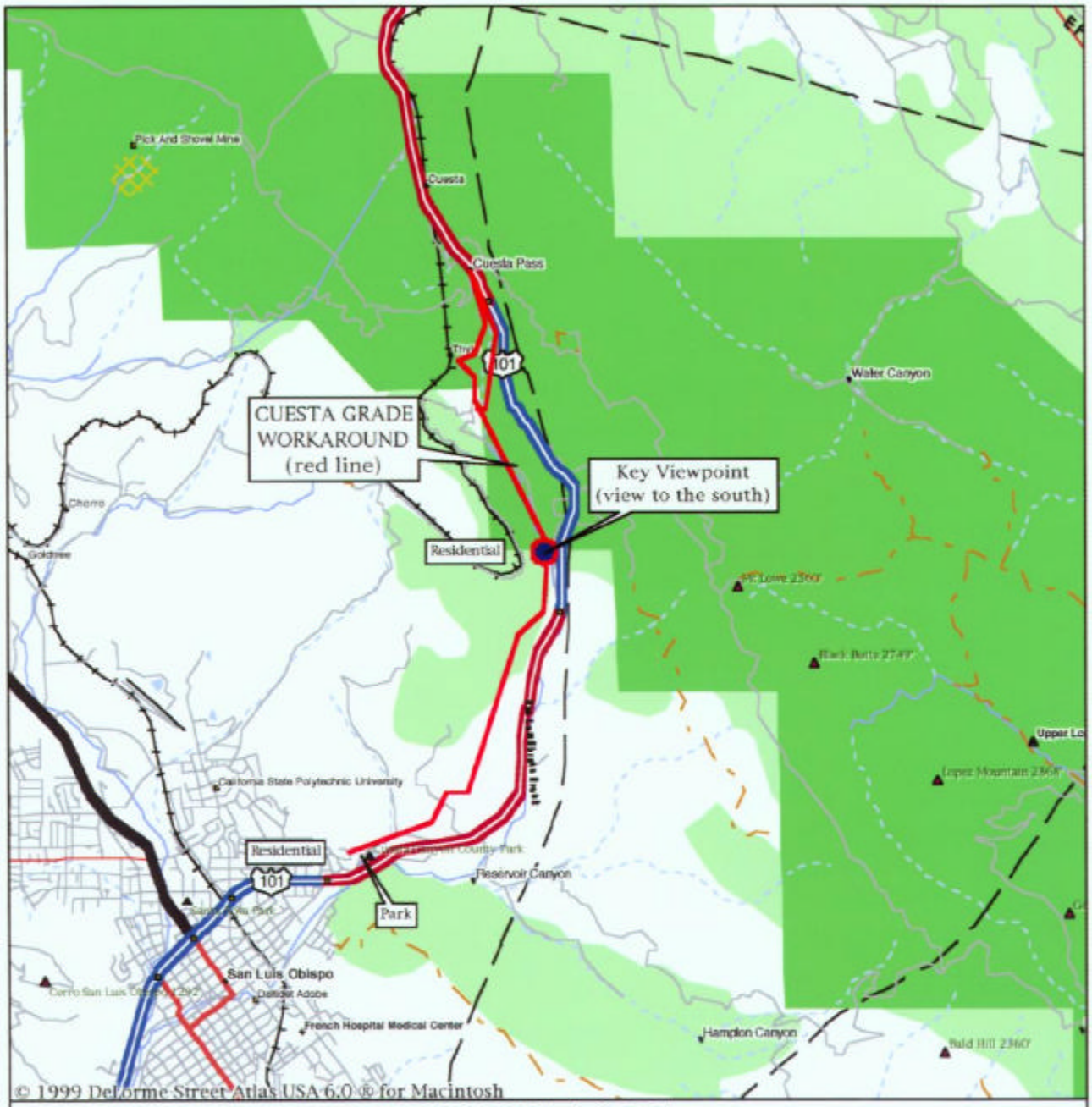

FIGURE 10-I-1

Mag 13.00
Fri Feb 25 16:08 2000
Scale 1:62,500 (at center)
1 Miles
2 KM

Local Road
Major Connector
State Route
Primary State Route
Trail

Interstate/Limited Access
US Highway
Exit
Utility/Pipe
Railroad

Level 3 Communications Infrastructure Project	**Figure 10-I-2** **Cuesta Grade Workaround**	View to the south from a location immediately adjacent, and to the south of, the Hawk Hill Road exit from southbound U.S. Highway 101. The view is down the workaround route adjacent, and to the west of, Highway 101.

VISUAL ANALYSIS DATA SHEET

KEY VIEWPOINT DESCRIPTION

LEVEL 3 SITE NO.
10
PROJECT COMPONENT
Cuesta Grade Workaround
VIEWPOINT LOCATION
Immediately adjacent, and to the south of, the Hawk Hill Road exit from southbound Hwy. 101, viewing to the south down the workaround route adjacent, and to the west of, Highway 101.
ANALYST
Michael Clayton
DATE
2/8/00

VISUAL QUALITY

☐ Low ☒ Moderate ☐ High	This portion of the proposed route parallels, and is immediately adjacent to, Highway 101. The foreground landscape is dominated by transportation infrastructure (Highway 101), telecommunications infrastructure, and roadside signage. Middleground to background views are composed primarily of rural scenes consisting of harmonious and vivid scenes of pastoral slopes and dramatic mountain ranges. Overall visual quality is considered **moderate to high**, and reflects the visual contrast between built and natural features.

VISUAL ABSORPTION CAPABILITY

Slope: **MODERATE** - Fairly level terrain which will not overly expose the cable right of way or aboveground markers.

Vegetative Cover: **HIGH** - Grassland vegetation will recover quickly, effectiely obscuring evidence of the cable's underground presence

Reclamation Potential: **HIGH** - Areas of vegetation and soil disturbance would recover quickly following reclamation and replanting.

VIEWER SENSITIVITY

The proposed project would not significantly alter the existing landscape character of the workaround site. Viewer expectations would not change and viewer sensitivity would remain **high**.

VIEWER EXPOSURE

Visibility: Low	**Duration of View:** Brief
Distance Zones: [FG: 0-0.5mi.; MG: 0.5-4mi.; BG: 4mi.-horizon] Foreground	**Overall Viewer Exposure:** **Low** - due to low visibility of the adjacent cable route, brief duration of view from Highway 101, and high numbers of viewers.
Numbers of Viewers: High	

VISUAL IMPACT SUSCEPTIBILITY

☒ Low ☐ Moderate ☐ High	Although existing visual quality is moderate to high and viewer sensitiity is considered high, the low visibility of the underground cable and right of way to motorists on Highway 101 (travelling at high rates of speed), combined with the route's high visual absorption capability, lead to an overall rating of **low** for visual impact susceptibility.

(over)

Level 3 Site No. 10 Viewpoint
(continued)

VISUAL CONTRAST RATING

CHARACTERISTIC LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION			
	LAND/WATER BODY	**VEGETATION**	**STRUCTURES**
FORM	Angular to rounded blocks	Well-defined continuous blocks to irregular patchiness	Prominent, horizontal and vertical to rectangular geometric
LINE	Curvilinear to irregular	Prominent, yet somewhat irregular and indistinct	Vertical to horizontal
COLOR	Tan to indistinct	Green, tan, and brown	Grey, brown, white, orange
TEXTURE	Smooth to granular	Smooth to coarse	Smooth

PROPOSED ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION			
	LAND/WATER BODY	**VEGETATION**	**STRUCTURES**
FORM	Same	Same	Same
LINE	Same	Same	Same
COLOR	Same	Same	Same
TEXTURE	Same	Same	Same

DEGREE OF CONTRAST

	LAND/WATER BODY				VEGETATION				STRUCTURES			
	NONE	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	NONE	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	NONE	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
FORM	√				√				√			
LINE	√				√				√			
COLOR	√				√				√			
TEXTURE	√				√				√			

TERM: ☑ Long ☐ Short

CONTRAST SUMMARY: ☑ None ☐ Low ☐ Moderate ☐ High

PROJECT DOMINANCE

Subordinate ☑ **Co-Dominant** ☐ **Dominant** ☐

VIEW IMPAIRMENT

None ☑ **Low** ☐ **Moderate** ☐ **High** ☐

VISUAL IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☑