

D.1 Introduction to Environmental Analysis

D.1.1 Introduction/Background

This section provides discussion and full public disclosure of the significant environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and the Proposed Project alternatives, including the No Project alternative. This section examines the real and potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Project are examined as they relate to the following 12 areas of environmental analysis:

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|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| D.2 Air Quality | D.8 Noise and Vibration |
| D.3 Biological Resources | D.9 Public Health and Safety |
| D.4 Cultural Resources | D.10 Public Services & Utilities |
| D.5 Geology, Soils, and Paleontology | D.11 Socioeconomics |
| D.6 Hydrology and Water Quality | D.12 Transportation and Traffic |
| D.7 Land Use and Recreation | D.13 Visual Resources |

Analysis within each issue area includes consideration of the following components of the Proposed Project:

- Addition of a 35-mile segment of single-circuit 230 kV transmission line within an existing SDG&E right-of-way between Miguel and Mission Substations, including modifications to and replacement of existing tower structures;
- Relocation of the existing 138 kV and 69 kV circuits onto a new pole alignment within the existing SDG&E ROW between Miguel Substation and Fanita Junction;
- Modifications and additions to the Miguel and Mission Substations to accommodate the new 230 kV circuit.
- Construction/operation of a future second 230 kV circuit between Miguel Substation and Fanita Junction.

Within each of the environmental areas listed above, the discussion of project impacts is provided in the following format:

- Environmental Setting for the Proposed Project
- Applicable Regulations, Plans, and Standards
- Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Project
- Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Project Alternatives
- Environmental Impacts of the No Project Alternative
- Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance, and Reporting Table

In addition to the No Project Alternative, the following alternatives were fully analyzed in this EIR:

- Proposed Project with Jamacha Valley 138 kV/69 kV Underground Alternative
- Proposed Project with Jamacha Valley Overhead A Alternative
- Proposed Project with Jamacha Valley Overhead B Alternative
- Proposed Project with City of Santee 138 kV/69 kV Underground Alternative
- Proposed Project with City of Santee 230 kV Overhead Northern ROW Boundary Alternative

For a full discussion of the alternatives that were developed for the Proposed Project, please refer to Section E of this Draft EIR and the Alternatives Screening Report (Appendix 2).

D.1.2 Environmental Assessment Methodology

D.1.2.1 Environmental Baseline

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines (Section 15125(a)), the environmental setting used to determine the impacts associated with the Proposed Project and alternatives is based on the environmental conditions that existed in the project area in September 2003 at the time the Notice of Preparation was published.

Subsequent to the NOP's release, a number of large wildfires denuded portions of the existing Miguel-Mission ROW, destroying both the vegetation and infrastructure within the project area. Section A.3 summarizes the effects the San Diego wildfires had on the existing infrastructure and baseline conditions. The effect of the wildfire on the Proposed Project is addressed in Section D of this EIR for those issues areas that may be affected by the change in existing conditions (e.g., Water Resources, Visual Resources, Biology).

D.1.2.2 Environmental Consequences

The DEIR evaluates the environmental consequences and potential impacts that the Proposed Project and the alternatives would create. The impacts identified were compared with predetermined, specific significance criteria, and were classified according to significance categories listed in each issue area. The cumulative impacts of the Proposed Project taken together with the related cumulative projects (listed in Section F) were assessed next, and mitigation measures for each impact identified, if applicable. The focus in the cumulative impact analyses was to identify those project impacts that might not be significant when considered alone, but contribute to a significant impact when viewed in conjunction with future planned projects. The same methodology was applied systematically to each alternative project and alternative route alignment. A comparative analysis of the Proposed Project and the alternatives is provided in Section E of this document.

Once a significant impact was identified, diligent effort was taken to identify mitigation measures that would reduce the impact to a less than significant level. Since some of the reviewing agencies require a demonstration of reduction of impacts to the maximum extent possible, mitigation measures were identified for all classes of impacts (except beneficial impacts). The mitigation measures recommended by this study are identified in the Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance, and Reporting table at the end of each individual area of environmental analysis (D.2 through D.13). For a discussion of the Mitigation Monitoring Program refer to Section G.

Applicant Proposed Measures (Project Protocols, or PPs). In the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (July 2002), SDG&E identified a total of 66 measures and protocols that would be implemented to avoid or reduce potential impacts from the Proposed Project. During the preparation of this EIR, these Project Protocols were assumed to be part of the Proposed Project and are not considered as CPUC-recommended mitigation measures. However, SDG&E's Project Protocols will be monitored by the CPUC as they will be compiled with the CPUC-recommended mitigation measures into the Final Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance and Reporting Program, which will be completed upon adoption of the Final EIR. Table B-6 in the Project Description provides a list of SDG&E's Project Protocols.

Impact Significance Criteria. While the criteria for determining the significance of an impact are unique to each area of the environmental analysis, the following classifications were uniformly applied to each identified impact:

- Class I:** Significant; cannot be mitigated to a level that is less than significant
- Class II:** Significant; can be mitigated to a level that is less than significant
- Class III:** Adverse, less than significant
- Class IV:** Beneficial impact