

## 5. **Alternative 1 (No Project/Action): Impacts**

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Selection of the No Project/Action Alternative would mean that the proposed TRTP would not be implemented. As such, none of the associated Project activities would occur and the environmental impacts associated with the proposed Project would not occur.

The No Project Alternative includes the assumption that existing transmission lines and power plants would continue to operate. The effects that these facilities cause on the existing environment would not change, so no new impacts would occur from continuing operation of the existing transmission lines and power plants. Also, under the No Project Alternative, the proposed TRTP Project would not be constructed, so the impacts associated with construction and operation of the Project would not occur. The impacts avoided would include the adverse impacts from the dust and exhaust emissions caused by construction activities and the beneficial impacts due to the changes in emissions from power plants that could be caused by operation of TRTP.

The first component of the No Project Alternative is the continuation of ongoing demand-side actions, including energy conservation and distributed generation (DG). These actions would result in possible localized air quality impacts as a result of development of DG units by energy consumers. This would be the case if fossil-fuel fired or other combustion or thermal DG technologies become more widespread. For this type of development, local jurisdictions such as cities, counties, and air districts, would need to conduct environmental reviews and issue air quality permits for stationary sources related to these facilities. Increased conservation would not cause any air quality impacts.

The second component of the No Project Alternative is the continuation of supply-side actions, resulting in potentially increased generation within California or increased transmission into California to serve anticipated growth in electricity consumption, specifically within SCAQMD jurisdiction. The impacts of new power plants and new transmission lines could add air pollutants contributing to existing nonattainment conditions or violations of ambient air quality standards, if they occur in areas of substantial existing pollution. Although construction and operation of new power plants and transmission lines may occur, their locations and development schedules cannot be predicted. New generation and construction activities would need to comply with local air quality management requirements and may require local air permit review. Stationary sources that would cause criteria pollutant emissions above regulatory limits would be required to implement the Best Available Control Technology, and if occurring in nonattainment areas, new emissions would need to be offset with emission reductions from the control or shutdown of existing emission sources. These requirements are components of the New Source Review program and the emissions offset programs within SCAQMD which apply to any new major source of emissions. These requirements are effective at minimizing but not eliminating the air quality impacts of new stationary sources of power generation.

The forecast net decrease in emissions from power plants (described later under Impact AQ-7) would not occur with implementation of the No Project Alternative (CAISO, 2008). However, under the No Project/Action Alternative, some currently unknown plan would need to be developed to provide the transmission upgrades necessary to interconnect renewable generation projects in the Tehachapi area and to also address the existing transmission problems south of the Lugo Substation. Similarly, other yet unspecified transmission upgrades would presumably be proposed in the future to provide the needed capacity and reliability to serve growing electrical load in the Antelope Valley and South Coast Air Basin. To interconnect wind projects in the Tehachapi area, it is possible that other electrical utilities with transmission facilities in the area, such as LADWP, might purchase some of the power from Tehachapi area wind developers and integrate it into their

system. Another possibility is the development of a private transmission line that could connect wind projects to the electrical grid. Any of these projects, which would occur as a result of the unfulfilled electrical transmission need in the absence of TRTP, are likely to have similar impacts as those identified for the proposed Project. However, if a transmission line were to be constructed in the absence of TRTP that reroutes the transmission outside of the SoCAB or ANF (such as interconnection to existing lines in the San Joaquin Valley), or was located in a new ROW that is more accessible by paved roads, or requires fewer or no helicopter tower construction, then such projects having similar power carrying capacity would have the potential to have lower emissions or emissions in other regions than the proposed TRTP Project and potentially have reduced impacts.