

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

Selection of the No Project/Action Alternative would mean that the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project, as proposed, would not be implemented. As such, the environmental impacts associated with the Project, as described in Section 6, would not occur. However, in the absence of the proposed Project or an alternative to the Project, the purposes and need for the power transmission capabilities that would be met by the proposed Project (or an alternative) would not be achieved. As a result, it is possible that another, similar transmission line project would be constructed in the future to meet the power transmission needs of developing wind farms in the Tehachapi Wind Resource Area. Such a project would likely introduce similar impacts to Geology, Soils, and Paleontology that would be introduced through the proposed TRTP or an alternative.

Environmental conditions in the Project Area are expected to naturally change or evolve over time and therefore, independently of the proposed Project or an alternative to the Project (including the No Project/Action Alternative), the regional setting and baseline conditions in the Project Area which are discussed in Section 2.2 (Regional Setting) would not remain static. If the No Project/Action Alternative is implemented, geologic and soil conditions as well as paleontologic resources preserved in the natural formation within the Project Area will remain unchanged over a short geologic time period, and will be independent of the potential impacts associated with the proposed TRTP.

Because the potential impacts of the proposed Project would not occur under the No Project/Action Alternative, the significance criteria described in Section 4 (Impact Analysis Approach) are not used for analysis of the No Project/Action Alternative. The continued development of lands within the Counties of Kern, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino will result in the continued potential for development in areas with geologic risk factors such as hillside areas with potential slope stability issues. However, new developments will be subject to existing and new building codes that restrict development in geologically unstable areas. In addition, areas with previously unknown geologic hazards and unsuitable soil will likely be discovered during planning, followed by the required analysis, implementation of the required design and construction standards, or avoidance of these areas.