

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**4.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES ..... 4.2-1**  
4.2.0 Introduction..... 4.2-1  
4.2.1 Methodology ..... 4.2-1  
4.2.2 Existing Conditions..... 4.2-2  
4.2.3 Impacts ..... 4.2-4  
4.2.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures ..... 4.2-5  
4.2.5 References..... 4.2-5



## CHAPTER 4 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 4.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-Than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

#### 4.2.0 Introduction

This section describes the agricultural resources in the vicinity of the proposed San Diego Gas & Electric Company South Bay Substation Relocation Project (Proposed Project) and analyzes potential impacts to these resources from construction and operation of the Proposed Project. The California Department of Conservation's (DOC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) has not designated any farmland within three miles of the Proposed Project. Because the Proposed Project components would not cross any land that is under a Williamson Act contract, zoned for agricultural use, or designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Farmland of Local Importance, the Proposed Project would have no impact to agricultural resources.

#### 4.2.1 Methodology

Research involved the review of the City of Chula Vista Vision 2020 General Plan and the Municipal Code. A review of the DOC FMMP, the Joint Powers Agency of the City of San Diego and County of San Diego geographic information system (GIS) database (SANGIS) for Williamson Act parcels, and general plan and zoning maps for the Proposed Project area was also conducted. Additionally, a field visit to the site was conducted to confirm land uses.

## 4.2.2 Existing Conditions

### Regulatory Background

#### *Federal and State*

#### *Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program Important Farmland Designations*

The DOC Division of Land Resource Protection FMMP generates maps depicting Important Farmlands. These farmlands are categorized according to specific criteria, including soil quality and irrigation conditions. Approximately 94 percent of the FMMP study area is based on the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service soil classification system, which evaluates both physical and chemical conditions, including soil temperature, moisture regime, pH, flooding, groundwater depth, erodibility, permeability, and sodium content. FMMP maps are updated every two years using aerial imagery review, field reconnaissance, computer mapping analyses, and public input. The minimum land use mapping unit is 10 acres; smaller units of land are generally incorporated into surrounding map classifications.

The DOC has established the following eight land use classifications:

- **Prime Farmland:** Prime Farmland has the optimum combination of physical and chemical conditions that are able to sustain long-term agricultural production. The soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply on Prime Farmlands provides conditions to produce sustained high yields. Prime Farmlands must have been used for irrigated production within four years of the mapping date.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance:** Farmland of Statewide Importance is similar to Prime Farmland; however, these farmlands have minor shortcomings, such as a higher slope or decreased ability to store soil moisture. Similar to Prime Farmlands, Farmlands of Statewide Importance must have been used for irrigated production within four years of the mapping date.
- **Unique Farmland:** Unique Farmlands have lower quality soils and are used for the production of California's leading agricultural products. Unique Farmlands are typically irrigated but may also include non-irrigated vineyards or orchards found in certain climatic zones. Unique Farmlands must have been cropped within four years of the mapping date.
- **Farmland of Local Importance:** Farmlands of Local Importance are farmlands that are vital to the local agricultural economy, as identified by each county's local advisory committee and board of supervisors.
- **Grazing Land:** Grazing Land is land on which existing vegetation is suitable for livestock grazing.
- **Urban and Built-Up Land:** Urban and Built-Up Land is defined as land that is occupied by buildings or other structures at a minimum density of one unit to 1.5 acres (or

approximately six structures to 10 acres). This land is used for development purposes, including residential, commercial, industrial, construction, public administration, institutional, transportation yards, airports, cemeteries, golf courses, sewage treatment, sanitary landfills, and water control structures.

- **Other Land:** Other Land includes all lands that are not in any other map category, such as water bodies smaller than 40 acres; low-density rural developments; confined livestock, poultry, or aquaculture facilities; and brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing.
- **Water:** Water includes all perennial water bodies that are a minimum of 40 acres.

For the purposes of this section, “Important Farmlands” include Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Farmland of Local Importance.

#### *Williamson Act Land Designations*

The Williamson Act, also known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (California Government Code [CGC] § 51200 *et seq.*), preserves agricultural and open space lands from conversion to urban land uses by establishing a contract between local governments (i.e., city and county governments) and private landowners to voluntarily restrict their land holdings to agricultural or open space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments based on farming or open space use rather than assessments based on the full market property value, which is typically 20 percent to 75 percent higher. Williamson Act contracts are valid for a minimum of 10 years and are automatically renewable after each 10-year term.

The Williamson Act also allows local governments to establish Agricultural Preserves, parcels of land for which cities or counties are willing to enter into Williamson Act contracts. Agricultural Preserves must include a minimum of 100 acres and typically avoid areas in which public utility improvements and associated land acquisitions may be necessary (CGC § 51230). Although the Williamson Act does not specify compatible land uses for property located adjacent to contract lands or Agricultural Preserves, it does state that cities and counties must determine compatible land use types while recognizing that temporary or permanent population increases frequently impair or hamper agricultural operations (CGC § 51220.5).

#### *County of San Diego*

Farmland of Local Importance is land of value to the local economy, as defined by each county's local advisory committee and adopted by its Board of Supervisors. Farmland of Local Importance is either currently producing, or has the capability to produce agricultural products, but does not meet the criteria of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland. Authority to adopt or to recommend changes to the category of Farmland of Local Importance rests with the Board of Supervisors of San Diego County.

#### *City of Chula Vista*

The City of Chula Vista Vision 2020 General Plan and Zoning Ordinance and the Chula Vista Bayfront Master Plan (CVBMP) were reviewed for agricultural resource policies that are relevant to the Proposed Project. None were identified within these plans.

### *Unified Port of San Diego*

The Proposed Project area is subject to the regulations and policies contained within the Unified Port of San Diego Master Plan; however, this plan does not contain any regulations or policies that address agricultural uses.

### **Agricultural Setting**

The Proposed Project is not located on and would not cross any Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance or land under a Williamson Act contract. None of the Proposed Project area is under active crop cultivation nor is it used for livestock grazing. The area is not designated or zoned by the City of Chula Vista for agricultural uses.

### **4.2.3 Impacts**

#### **Significance Criteria**

Standards of significance were derived from Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines. Impacts to agricultural resources would be considered significant if the project:

- Converts Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use for a long period of time or permanently
- Conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural use
- Conflicts with a Williamson Act contract such that it must be cancelled
- Involves other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in permanent or long-term conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use

#### **Question 4.2a – Farmland Conversion – *No Impact***

The Proposed Project is not located on any land designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Farmland of Local Importance. As a result, no impact would occur.

#### **Question 4.2b – Zoning or Williamson Act Contract Conflicts – *No Impact***

The Proposed Project is not located in any areas that are zoned for agricultural use or on any land under a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, there would be no conflicts with agricultural zoning or Williamson Act contracts, and no impact would occur.

#### **Question 4.2c – Other Farmland Conversion – *No Impact***

The Proposed Project is not located on any land used for agricultural purposes or with the potential to be used for agriculture. Therefore, there would be no conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use as a result of the Proposed Project, and there would be no impact.

#### 4.2.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures

Because the Proposed Project would have no impact on agricultural resources, no avoidance or minimization measures are proposed.

#### 4.2.5 References

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