3.18 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Table 3.18-1 Mandatory Findings of Significance Checklist

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b.	Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c.	Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Applicant Proposed Measures

The applicant has incorporated the following applicant proposed measures (APMs) into the project to minimize or avoid impacts. See Chapter 1.0 for a full description of each APM that the applicant has incorporated into the project to avoid or minimize impacts on all resource areas.

APM BIO-1 through BIO-24

APM CR-1: Stop work if previously unknown cultural resources are discovered.

APM CR-2: Stop work if previously unknown paleontological resources are discovered.

APM CR-3: Stop work if human remains are discovered.

APM HAZ-1: Implement a Spill Prevention Plan

APM HAZ-2: Conduct construction soil sampling and testing if soil contamination is suspected.

APM HAZ-3: Conduct groundwater sampling and testing if suspected contaminated groundwater is encountered during construction.

APM HAZ-4: Develop and implement a helicopter lift plan

APM HAZ-5: Prepare a health and safety plan

APM HAZ-6: Develop and implement a fire risk management plan

a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION. A number of special-status wildlife and plants have been identified that may be impacted by construction of the project. Implementation of the APMs and mitigation measures (MMs) discussed in Section 3.4, Biological Resources, however, would be sufficient to protect these species and their habitat. The APMs and MMs would also be sufficient to protect other fish and wildlife found in the project area and would reduce potential impacts to less than significant levels.

Though the project route would cross several areas of high paleontological sensitivity, implementation of the APMs and MMs discussed in Section 3.5, Cultural Resources, to protect potential historical, archaeological, and paleontological findings during construction of the project, would be sufficient to reduce impacts to less than significant levels. Therefore, impacts under this criterion would be reduced to less than significant levels.

b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT. The project involves the reconstruction of an existing transmission line including the replacement of towers, poles, and conductors. Potential cumulative impacts could occur with regard to air pollutant or greenhouse gas emissions. Implementation of the APMs discussed in Section 3.3, Air Quality, and Section 3.7, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, would be sufficient to mitigate air quality impacts during construction and operation of the project. Cumulative impacts associated with air pollutants are addressed in Section 3.3, Air Quality.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and their contribution to climate change, are an inherently cumulative impact. However, GHG emissions from electrical transmission projects are generally much lower than those from other types of construction projects. In 2008, the most recent year that data is available, GHG emissions in California were estimated by the California Air Resources Board to be approximately 477.74 million metric tons (MMT) of carbon dioxide or carbon dioxide equivalents (CO_2e). Of this total, 0.96 MMT (or 0.2%) were calculated to be associated with electric transmission and distribution (CARB 2010). Based on this data, project emissions would account for approximately 0.0006% of GHG emissions statewide (2652 MT CO_2e for the project, Appendix A). To further reduce the cumulative significance of project-related GHG emissions, under APM AIR-3, worker carpooling, construction waste recycling, and biodiesel use would be encouraged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions during construction.

Cumulative impacts could also occur with regard to other resource areas. Other than the maintenance of existing transmission lines in the regional area, however, no activities associated with past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future projects are anticipated. Therefore, impacts under this criterion would be less than significant.

c. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION. Implementation of the APMs and MMs discussed in Section 3.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, for hazardous materials, substance, and waste handling and wildfire prevention would reduce potential impacts to human beings, either directly or indirectly, to less than significant levels. Therefore, impacts under this criterion would be reduced to less than significant levels.

References

California Air Resources Board (CARB). 2010. California Greenhouse Gas Inventory for 2000 to 2008: By Category as Defined in the Scoping Plan. May 12.

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