

# 4: Initial Study

## 4.0 Introduction

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This Initial Study evaluates the environmental consequences of the project as proposed in the SCG application and settlement and the reasonably foreseeable related scenarios identified in Section 3.0 (Approach to Analysis). The Initial Study in conjunction with other Sections of this document form the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

While SCG has specifically proposed to recover storage gas and decommission the MGSF, the conservative approach to environmental assessment for changes and effects requires that this Initial Study assume that the MGSF will be sold and the land developed commensurate with their surroundings. The Initial Study also evaluates impacts associated with recovery of the storage gas, decommissioning of facilities, and continuation of SCG use of a communications facility within the Main Facility.

In terms of reasonable foreseeable operations after sale of the plant, this Initial Study examines only one scenario:

- Complete decommissioning of all gas storage operations
- Cessation of any practical oil or gas operations on the existing MGSF lands
- Complete urban development of MGSF lands

For this Project, no reasonable alternative is now considered as reasonable or practical, and decommissioning of the facility appears to be in the highest benefit for the public good and in the public and ratepayers interests.

The MGSF contains several different sites and two different stages that are reviewed and assessment within a single checklist of significance for total impact. Therefore if any one site has a significant impact for a particular environmental sector then the Project would have a significant impact.

The Initial Study is arranged in accordance with a typical environmental checklist of environmental sectors arranged alphabetically. Within each sector, a regional and local setting is provided followed by the regulatory setting appropriate to that sector. Based on the designations within the various checklist questions, impacts are assigned a level of significance and then assessed in detail. Where mitigation or other measures are required or recommended, they are described in the last section for each sector and then compiled in Sec. 7, the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program.

The last sub-section of the Initial Study, 4.17, summarizes the important, cumulative and considerable, and potential human or community effects of the Project given in the individual sub-sections, 4.1-4.16. The assessments of sectoral subsections of the Initial Study can be summarized as follows:

<b>Environmental Sector- Checklist Issues</b>	<b>Potentially Significant Impact</b>	<b>Less-Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated</b>	<b>Less-Than- Significant Impact</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
Aesthetics – 4	0	1	2	1
Agriculture – 3	0	0	1	2
Air Resources – 6	0	1	1	4
Biological Resources – 6	0	3	1	2
Cultural Resources – 4	0	4	0	0
Geology and Soils – 10	0	6	2	2
Hazards and Hazardous Substances – 8	0	4	0	4
Hydrology/ Water Resources – 10	0	1	4	5
Land Uses/ Planning – 3	0	0	0	3
Mineral Resources – 2	0	1	1	0
Noise – 6	0	2	0	4
Population and Housing - 3	0	0	1	2
Public Services – 5	0	0	4	0
Recreation – 2	0	0	2	0
Transportation – 7	0	1	3	3
Utilities/ Public Services – 7	0	1	0	6
<b>Total Issues - 85</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>38</b>

Such a summary indicates the relatively low impact in many sectors and the potentially large cumulative effect, while also emphasizing the degree of effect reduction added to the

proposed Project. These assessments also include the effects of connected actions that are the source of significant and less than significant indirect effects for many sectors.

