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## **CHAPTER 4 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY**

### **4.0 Introduction**

Potential environmental impacts associated with construction and operation of the Proposed Project were evaluated consistent with the requirements of CEQA and the CPUC's Information and Criteria List. In addition, the CPUC's PEA Checklist (CPUC 2008) was used as a guidance. The CPUC's Information and Criteria List states that the independently reviewed and evaluated PEA can be adopted as the CPUC's CEQA document. This PEA was prepared in accordance with the provisions of CEQA and the CPUC's Information and Criteria List; as such, it can serve as the CPUC's CEQA document.

The sections (4.1 through 4.17) listed below provide an assessment of potential environmental impacts for the following resource areas:

- Aesthetics – *Section 4.1*
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources – *Section 4.2*
- Air Quality – *Section 4.3*
- Biological Resources – *Section 4.4*
- Cultural Resources – *Section 4.5*
- Geology and Soils – *Section 4.6*
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions – *Section 4.7*
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials – *Section 4.8*
- Hydrology and Water Quality – *Section 4.9*
- Land Use and Planning – *Section 4.10*
- Mineral Resources – *Section 4.11*
- Noise – *Section 4.12*
- Population and Housing – *Section 4.13*
- Public Services – *Section 4.14*
- Recreation – *Section 4.15*
- Transportation and Traffic – *Section 4.16*
- Utilities and Service Systems – *Section 4.17*

### **4.0.1 Environmental Analysis Procedures**

Sections 4.1 through 4.17 provide a discussion of the environmental settings as they pertain to each resource area, and identify potential impacts associated with these resources anticipated with implementation of the Proposed Project. Each resource section is organized into the sections summarized below.

#### **4.0.1.1 Checklist**

Potential impacts are identified and evaluated based on the significance criteria outlined in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. A completed CEQA checklist is provided at the beginning of each resource section to summarize the level of impact (i.e., No Impact, Less-than-Significant Impact, Potentially Significant Unless APMs Incorporated, and Potentially Significant Impact) to each respective resource area according to the significance criteria used for the analysis.

#### **4.0.1.2 Introduction**

The introduction in each resource section provides a synopsis of what is discussed in that particular section and an overall statement on whether that section includes separate discussions for Proposed Project components or if a general analysis is provided.

#### **4.0.1.3 Methodology**

Methodology is discussed for each resource section to identify the approach used to analyze any potential impacts in that section. A suitable approach is used in each resource area.

#### **4.0.1.4 Environmental Setting**

The environmental setting section includes a discussion of the resource setting, including a description of the physical environment in the vicinity of the Proposed Project to establish baseline conditions used for evaluation. The environmental setting also includes a description of the regulatory setting for each of the resource areas. The regulatory setting may include federal, state, regional, local, and other pertinent regulations, as appropriate.

#### **4.0.1.5 Impacts**

For each resource area, the analysis includes an evaluation of potential adverse and beneficial environmental consequences (also referred to as environmental impacts or effects) associated with construction, operation, and maintenance of the Proposed Project. In general, construction-related impacts discussed within the PEA are those temporary impacts that could occur as a result of construction activities. However, permanent impacts to biological resources are discussed as construction impacts (see Section 4.4, Biological Resources) to maximize consistency with SDG&E's Subregional NCCP, which addresses avoidance and minimization of biological resources for all of SDG&E's activities, including those relating to the Proposed Project. Operations and maintenance-related impacts discussed within the PEA are those permanent (or on-going) impacts that result from operation and maintenance of Proposed Project facilities following completion of construction. Given the nature of the Proposed Project, minimal operation and maintenance activities are anticipated following construction of

the components and energizing the substation; therefore, no operational impacts were identified.

Where potential impacts related to construction are anticipated, the discussion of temporary construction impacts is separated into Proposed Project components: the proposed Salt Creek Substation, TL 6965 and the TL 6910 loop-in, Existing Substation modifications, and the staging yards. The transmission line components, TL 6965 and the TL 6910 loop-in, are analyzed together because they both originate within the existing Transmission Corridor and extend into the proposed Salt Creek Substation. Where it was determined that no impacts would result from construction activities, the analysis discusses the Proposed Project components in general terms and does not provide a further detailed discussion of separate components. A statement regarding the format of each section is included in the introduction.

The Proposed Project would result in no impacts to Mineral Resources or Public Services; it would result in less-than-significant impacts to Aesthetics, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Population and Housing, Recreation, Transportation and Traffic, and Utilities and Service Systems. The Proposed Project would result in potentially significant impacts to the remaining resource areas: Biological Resources and Cultural Resources.

#### **4.0.1.6 Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operations Restrictions**

This section identifies the policies, standards, and regulations that would be applicable to the Proposed Project, and the design features that would be applied to help avoid potential impacts. These include responsible agency requirements and SDG&E standard practices that apply to all projects. Section 3.8, Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operations Restrictions, lists the design features and ordinary construction and operating restrictions to be implemented during construction, operation, and maintenance of the Proposed Project.

#### **4.0.1.7 Applicant-Proposed Measures**

Applicant-Proposed Measures (APMs) are measures proposed by SDG&E if the impact analysis determines that the Proposed Project would result in significant impacts to a given resource area. APMs are provided to avoid, minimize, or reduce potential impacts to less-than-significant levels. Standard SDG&E processes, Proposed Project design features, ordinary construction/operations restrictions, and compliance with existing laws and regulations are not APMs.

APMs are proposed in the following resources areas to ensure that all potential significant impacts remain less than significant:

- Biological Resources – *APM-BIO-1*
- Cultural Resources – *APM-CUL-1 through APM-CUL-7*

The above APMs are discussed in detail in their relevant sections and are summarized in Table 3-8, Applicant Proposed Measures, in Chapter 3.0, Project Description.

**4.0.1.8 Detailed Discussion of Significant Impacts**

This section discusses any significant impacts identified in the impact analysis section and the APMs that are proposed to address those impacts.