3.12 VISUAL RESOURCES

This section describes the character of the landscape in the project area, as well as the local government planning and policy guidelines that are relevant to the physical appearance of project components for the project and project alternatives. This section also describes whether the project and project alternatives would be compatible with local scenic highways and byways, and the measures and methods available for reducing visual impacts.

3.12.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The project area lies in north central California, in the northern part of San Joaquin County and the southern part of Sacramento County. The terrain within and surrounding the project area is nearly flat, with a gentle drop in elevation from its eastern to western end of approximately 71 feet over a distance of approximately 32 miles. The flat terrain within the project area allows for distant views to the horizon from most vantage points, uninterrupted by ridges and undulating topography. Views are predominantly open and unrestricted, with minor screening provided by operative agricultural fields, orchards, and isolated groups of trees.

The project area is comprised of the Delta landscape and the rural residential landscape, both of which are dominated by the agricultural production occurring on these lands. These two landscapes are generally separated by Interstate 5, with the Delta region to the west and the rural residential landscape to the east.

The landscape scenery of the Delta region is comprised of agricultural patterning separated by a series of levees, sloughs and rivers, and riparian vegetation associated with the waterways. Waterway bottoms vary from the wide-open meandering valleys of the Sacramento River to the narrow, confined channel of the Jackson Slough. The interlacing waterways and associated riparian corridors and floodplains of the Delta are of statewide importance because they sustain many varieties of wildlife and vegetation of biological, commercial, recreational, and scenic resources. The crops within the affected areas of the Delta region are primarily annual crops such as corn and alfalfa, which are typically flood irrigated.

The landscape scenery of the rural residential landscape east of Interstate 5 is comprised of agricultural lands, interspersed groups of trees, and residential properties. Open vineyards, orchards, and fallow tracts characterize these rural residential and agricultural lands. Residences in the vicinity of the project area are concentrated along Collier, Peltier, Jahant, Kennefick, Dustin, Bruella, and Sowels Roads and Highway 99.

SENSITIVE VIEWERS

Sensitive viewers in the project area include occupants of the rural and subdivision residences, users of designated recreational areas, and travelers on highways (including County and State designated scenic corridors) and minor destination roads. Table 3.12-1 lists potentially sensitive viewers within the project area.

TABLE 3.12-1
SENSITIVE VIEWERS WITHIN THE PROJECT AREA

Types of Viewers	Location
Residential	Small subdivisions located throughout the project area
	Rural residences located throughout the project area
Recreational	Brannan Island State Recreation Area, located about 1.5 miles west of the PG&E Line 401 interconnect
	Franks Tract State Recreation Area, located about 4.5 miles south of the PG&E Line 401 interconnect
Travelers	Highway 99 (N-S), bisecting the project area and connecting Los Angeles to Redding
	Interstate 5 (N-S), bisecting the project area and connecting California to Washington
	Highway 160 (N-S), a state- and county-designated scenic route west of the project area that connects Antioch to Sacramento
	Brannan Island Road, a county-designated scenic route on the south side of Brannan and Andrus Islands between Highway 160 and Highway 12
	Terminous Road, a county designated scenic route that connects Highway 12 to Jackson Slough Road
	Collier Road (E-W), connecting Highway 99 to Highway 88
	Jahant Road (E-W), connecting Highway 99 to Jones Road along the Mokelumne River
	Peltier Road (E-W), connecting Interstate 5 to Tully Road
	Dustin Road (N-S), connecting Woodbridge Road to Highway 104
	Bruella Road (N-S), connecting Highway 12 to Liberty Road
	Sowels Road (N-S), connecting Peltier Road to Liberty Road

As identified in the open space element of the San Joaquin County General Plan, designated scenic routes in the county include Interstate 5 from the Sacramento County line south to Stockton. Sacramento County's designated scenic corridors include a number of roads that run along the crowns of the levees situated adjacent to the rivers and sloughs of the Delta. Two of these roads, Brannan Island Road and Terminous Road, are county-designated scenic corridors within the project area. Highway 160, located near the western end of the project, is both a state- and county-designated scenic highway.

3.12.2 REGULATORY SETTING

The following state, regional, and local plans and policies have been developed to preserve visual resources and protect scenic values within the project area.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SCENIC HIGHWAY PROGRAM

California Department of Transportation has implemented a statewide scenic highway program to preserve and enhance the beauty of California. The designation of a scenic highway requires that local government agencies take action to protect the scenic appearance of designated corridors by regulation of land use, detailed land and site planning, control of outdoor advertising, and careful attention to earthmoving, landscaping, and the design and appearance of structures and equipment (California Department of Transportation Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency, 1996).

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The open space element of the San Joaquin County General Plan includes the following policies that are relevant to the proposed project and project alternatives to preserve or protect visual resources:

- Areas with substantial development constraints, such as the Delta, should be maintained as open space.
- Ridgelines and major hill tops shall remain undeveloped.
- Views of waterways, hilltops, and oak groves from public land and public roadways shall be protected.
- Outstanding scenic vistas shall be preserved and public access provided to them whenever possible.
- The County should recognize the specified roads as scenic routes (Interstate 5 from the Sacramento County line to Stockton) and as valuable in enhancing the recreational experience for the county residents and nonresidents.

- Development proposals along scenic routes shall not detract from the visual and recreational experience.

To ensure that these policies are implemented, the San Joaquin County Planning Department's *Design Review Manual* includes requirements for landscape plans for development along and within the viewshed of scenic routes, and requires landscaping as a visual buffer for non-residential uses along minor arterial roadways and also higher classification roadways (San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors, 1992).

SACRAMENTO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The Sacramento County General Plan specifically regulates development in scenic corridors. The Scenic Highway Element identifies the following policies that are applicable to the proposed project and project alternatives to preserve or protect visual resources:

- design review of all signs and other structures within the scenic corridor is required,
- sign controls are fully enforced, and
- maintenance of natural roadside vegetation and landscaping with native plants is encouraged (Sacramento County Planning and Community Development Department, 1973).

3.12.3 SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Criteria for determining the significance of visual resources impacts were developed based on questions contained in the environmental checklist form in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. Based on the checklist questions, a project may have a significant effect on the environment if it would result in:

- substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- substantial damage to scenic resources along a scenic highway, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings;
- degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- creation of a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.

For the purposes of assessing the significance of visual resource impacts associated with the proposed project and project alternatives, an impact is considered significant if the project would result in a conflict with the goals and policies of the Sacramento County or San Joaquin County General Plans. In the absence of specific procedures to identify significant visual impacts in either general plan, methodology based on visibility of

features, visual contrast, and character was developed to determine the significance of potential visual impacts. This methodology is described in detail below.

The appearance of features in the landscape varies with the viewing distance, the visual contrast, and the visual character of the facilities. The potential views seen from existing viewers in the project area can be divided into four distance zones:

- immediate foreground (from the viewer to 300 feet away),
- foreground (from 300 feet to 0.25 mile),
- middleground (from 0.25 mile to 1 mile), and
- background (from 1 mile to 5 miles).

In the immediate foreground, all aboveground components of the project, including the smaller elements such as well heads and valve station, would dominate the view, while in foreground the remaining larger elements would dominate the view. Project components in the middleground or background would have far less effect on the view. Table 3.12-2 provides a general description of project facilities and potential visibility.

Visual contrast is a measure of the degree of perceptible change in the form, line, color and texture of the landscape resulting from project construction and operation. The contrast levels (strong, moderate, and weak) and types of visual contrast that could result from the project components are defined below:

- Strong contrast occurs where project activities attract attention and dominate the landscape setting.

- Moderate contrast occurs where project activities are noticeable and start to dominate the setting.

- Weak contrast occurs where project activities are noticeable but do not attract attention or dominate the setting.

Vegetation contrast is caused by clearing trees, shrubs, and grasses, and is primarily related to the density and height of vegetation cleared. Structure contrast is caused by the introduction of project facilities and is primarily related to scale, shape, and color of the object. Objects that are smaller in size and irregular or organic in shape (i.e., not completely solid, allowing for partial views through the object) recede into the landscape much more effectively than do large, solid geometric structures.

The visual character of a facility is related to how the facility blends with other facilities and the visual character of the area. For example, a mirrored-glass office building does not blend well the with the visual character of a predominantly agricultural or rural area. An industrial building that is similar in appearance to a hay barn, packing facility, or milking house could be consistent with the visual character of an agricultural area.

Potential impact levels for visual resources are driven primarily by visibility from sensitive viewers and estimated contrast levels (Table 3.12-3). The character of a facility must also be evaluated in context with other facilities in the project area. Potentially significant impacts could result from strong contrast as seen from immediate foreground, foreground, and middleground views, and moderate contrast seen from immediate foreground and foreground views. However, structures that are consistent with other structures or land uses in the sensitive viewing area may not be considered a significant impact.

TABLE 3.12-3
POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT LEVELS

Contrast	Immediate Foreground (0-300 feet)	Foreground (300 feet-0.25 mile)	Middleground (0.25-1 mile)	Background (1-5 miles)
Strong	S	S	S	LTS
Moderate	S	S	LTS	LTS
Weak	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

Notes: S = significant, LTS = less than significant

3.12.4 IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact 3.12-1: Potential to Degrade the Existing Visual Character of the Site

Several of the project facilities are large enough or close enough to sensitive viewers that they may degrade the visual character of the site. The project proponent has agreed, however, to implement the following measures as part of the project to minimize disturbance of the visual character of the site:

- Construction disturbances will be minimized to help reduce contrast between exposed soils and naturally vegetated areas.
- There will be minimum clearing of vegetation and trees at facilities sites.
- Facilities will be painted with non-glare, earthtone colors to blend with the surrounding vegetation/landscape.

TABLE 3.12-2
PROJECT FACILITIES AND POTENTIAL VISIBILITY

Project Facilities and Attributes		Anticipated Visibility of Facilities within the Project Area Landscape			
Structural Elements	**Occurrence**	**Immediate Foreground (0-300 feet)**	**Foreground (300 feet-0.25 mile)**	**Middleground (0.25-1 mile)**	**Background (1-5 miles)**
Well head	Two on each 2-acre well pad	P	S	U	U
Meter house	One on each 2-acre well pad	P	S	U	U
Interconnect piping and meter gauge	One on each 2-acre well pad	P	S	U	U
Horizontal separator	Two at the separation facility site	P	S	U	U
Water injection pump and well	Two at the separation facility site	P	S	U	U
Pig launcher/receiver	One at the separation facility site	P	S	U	U
250-bbl produced-water storage tank	One at the separation facility site, two at the compressor site	P	P	S	U
Fully enclosed compressor building	One at the compressor site	P	P	P	S
Air coolers	One for each housed compressor	P	P	P	S
Office, control room, and workshop	Typically housed within one or two units	P	P	P	S
Glycol regeneration skid and vertical contracting towers	Two at the compressor site	P	P	P	S
Buried drain sump	One at the compressor site	S	U	U	U
250-bbl onsite water storage tank	One at the compressor site	P	P	S	U
Valve station	One at the compressor site	P	S	S	U
Access roads	To each well pad, the separation facility, and the compressor station	S	S	U	U
Pipeline	33-35.6 miles long (depending on route)	S	S	U	U

Notes: U = unnoticed (minor, does not attract attention)
S = subordinate (begins to attract attention)
P = prominent (dominates surrounding setting)

Source: Dames & Moore, 1999

- A few rows of the orchard at the compressor site will be preserved to provide a vegetative screen.

- Vegetative landscaping will be used to screen aboveground facility components. LGS will submit landscaping plans for the compressor, separator, and well sites to CPUC for review and approval. Plans will address height, types, and spacing of plants; type of irrigation systems; and long-term maintenance commitments.

- LGS will provide a surety bond in the amount of the estimated annual cost of maintaining the landscaping. The surety bond shall remain in effect until 1 year following the termination of project operations.

- Shielded, non-glare lighting will be used at facilities.

- Disturbed agricultural land will be replanted following pipeline construction to minimize views of the pipeline right-of-way.

The following sections describe each of the facilities, identify sensitive viewers, and identify the significance level of the impact that the project would cause on the visual character of the site.

Well Pads and Injection Sites

The well head structure and control valves would be relatively small and prominent only within immediate foreground views (up to 300 feet). Five of the six gas injection/extraction gas well sites would be located within the area bounded by Jahant Road to the south, Collier Road to the north, Bruella road to the east, and Dustin Road to the west (Figure 2-2). The sixth well pad site would be located south of Jahant Road and east of Bruella Road. Dispersed rural residences border all of the adjacent roads. However, none of the well pad sites would occur within immediate foreground views for potentially sensitive residential viewers. Each of the well pad sites is within foreground distance zones from residences along Jahant, Collier, Bruella, and Dustin Roads as well as travelers on portions of these roads. Although the appearance of the wells is not substantially different from the appearance of the agricultural wells, irrigation stand pipes, and drip irrigation filter systems that are common in the project area and the facilities would not be highly visible, they represent a new intrusion that would affect the rural character of the project area. Therefore, this impact is significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.12-1, described below, will reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Separation Facility

The proposed separation facility would be composed of both solid geometric structures and relatively small irregularly shaped structures. Figure 3.12-1 shows the facility site in its existing condition and a photosimulation of the facility with earthtoned structures and with vegetative buffers. The largest structures associated with the separation facility are the produced water storage tanks, which are approximately 15 feet in height and 25 feet in diameter. Other large structural components include two horizontal production separators that are approximately 30 feet in length and 6 feet in diameter.

The proposed separation facility would be located along Jahant Road between Dustin and Bruella Roads, within fallow lands. Dispersed rural residences border all of the adjacent roads. The separation facility would be within immediate foreground views (up to 300 feet) of one residence and travelers on portions of Jahant Road. This facility would be within foreground views (300 feet to 0.25 mile) of three additional residences and travelers on portions of Jahant and Bruella Roads. The separation facility would also be within middleground views (0.25 mile to 1 mile) of approximately 56 residences and portions of Jahant, Bruella, Dustin, and Peltier Roads.

Although large tanks are occasionally found in agricultural areas, the size and scale of the separation facility components is not consistent with the visual character of the project area, which is dominated by pastures, row crops, vineyards, and rural residences. As described above, the project design incorporates measures to minimize disturbance of the visual character of the site, including the use of non-glare materials and earthtone colors to reduce visibility of project components (Figure 3.12-1). The combination of earthtone structures and a vegetative buffer substantially reduces the prominence and visibility of the separation facility. However, the separation facility would represent a new intrusion of a somewhat industrial facility that would affect the rural character of the project area. Therefore, this impact is significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.12-1, described below, would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Compressor Facility

The components associated with the compressor site would include a compressor building, four coolant fans and exhaust stacks, and an office, control room, and maintenance facility buildings. The ridgeline of the top of the compressor building is approximately 30 feet high. Some features, such as vents and exhaust stacks, may be as high as 35 feet. Other facilities include several processing vessels, storage tanks, and a pig launcher/receiver (a "pig" is a mechanical testing robot used to check the inside of the pipeline). Figure 3.12-2 shows the facility site in its existing condition and a photosimulation of the facility with earthtone structures and with a vegetative buffer.

This facility would be within immediate foreground views of travelers on portions of Highway 99 and within foreground views of three residences. The facility would be also be within middleground views of approximately 145 residences, primarily along Kennefick and Jahant Roads.

Although other industrial facilities are found along Highway 99 at the Peltier and Jahant Road exits, this facility is not consistent with the visual character of the project area. The views from sensitive residential viewers are currently dominated by vineyards. The size of this facility is such that it would stand out on the horizon above the existing crops. The project design incorporates measures to minimize the disturbance of the visual character of the site, as described above (Figure 3.12-2). Although the project design incorporates general measures to reduce the visibility of the compressor facility from nearby sensitive viewers, including the general framework of a landscaping plan, no specific measures have been developed to ensure that the compressor facility is effectively screened from view to the maximum extent practicable. Therefore, the potential exists for the compressor facility to have a significant impact on the visual character of the project

site. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.12-1, described below, will reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

PG&E Line 401 and Line 196 Interconnect and Meter Stations

The interconnect and meter station facilities are relatively small and are prominent only within immediate foreground views (up to 300 feet). The PG&E Line 401 interconnect and meter station would be located 3,000 feet south of Highway 160, within agricultural lands. From this distance, these facilities would not appear substantially different in appearance to the agricultural wells and irrigation stand pipes in the area. The PG&E Line 196 interconnect and meter station would be located approximately 1.25 miles south of Woodbridge Road, within agricultural fields. From this distance, the interconnect and meter station facilities would appear similar to the existing PG&E Las Vinas station facilities. Therefore, these impacts are less than significant.

Pipeline

Due to the flat nature of the terrain within the project area, the pipeline right-of-way will not be visually apparent, except for the absence of local vegetation around the immediate pipeline area. The field and transmission pipelines would be buried within annual and perennial agriculturally productive areas, fallow tracts, and under roadways. Within perennial crop fields, the potential impacts to viewers would be short term, resulting from a right-of-way cut that will be returned to agricultural production the following season. Therefore, this impact is less than significant.

Permanent pipeline markers, required by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Pipeline Safety (49 CFR 192), will be located at the edge of fields and at all road, railway, and water crossings to delineate the location of the pipeline. Markers for pipeline and other buried utilities are common elements throughout the project region; therefore, views of additional pipeline markers will not encroach on the agricultural character or degrade the visual quality of region's rural views. This impact is less than significant.

Mitigation Measure 3.12-1: Develop and implement landscaping and site design plan

In consultation with San Joaquin County, and subject to the approval of CPUC, LGS will develop and implement a landscaping and site design plan for the well pad, separation facility, and compressor facility, which includes, but is not limited to, consideration of the following elements:

- reducing the profile of the compressor facility by undergrounding a portion of the facility and using the excavated material to create a berm around the structures (The berm would partially screen the facility and serves as a base for planting a landscape buffer);

- using evergreen trees and shrubs at a sufficient density to establish an effective landscape buffer around project facilities;

- planting the landscaping buffer prior to construction to facilitate the rapid establishment of a mature landscape buffer around project facilities;

- identifying performance criteria for the successful establishment of landscape vegetation; and

- developing a long-term maintenance program to ensure plant survivorship.

Monitoring Action — LGS will submit a landscaping and site design plan to CPUC for review and approval. CPUC will monitor the landscaping plan following completed installation of all plantings to ensure compliance with the plan. LGS will conduct annual monitoring of facility landscaping for 10 years after installation and submit annual monitoring reports to CPUC.

Responsibility — CPUC and LGS

Timing — Monitoring should occur after all facility landscaping has been installed, and thereafter annually for a period of 10 years.

Impact 3.12-2: Potential to Create New Sources of Substantial Light and Glare That Would Adversely Affect Nighttime Views in the Project Area

Except for the compressor facility, all aboveground facilities will have low-pressure sodium or similar low-glare lights (5 foot-candles). The lights will be shielded and directed downward away from traffic, and likely unnoticeable from distances greater than 0.25 mile. In addition, the lights will be illuminated only when nighttime activities are necessary.

The proposed compressor facility will have three light poles with low intensity lights (5 foot-candles). These lights will illuminate the facility at all times. The facility will also have high intensity flood lights (30 foot-candles) for nighttime servicing. These lights, however, would be illuminated only when necessary.

Although the project would introduce several new light sources into the area, these lights are similar to those commonly used for farm or rural residential lighting. Because these facilities would be located in areas with existing low density residential development, they would not substantially alter nighttime views. Therefore, this impact is less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Impact 3.12-3: Potential to Affect Scenic Vistas and Damage Scenic Resources along a Scenic Highway

The well pads, compressor facility, and separation facility are located 25 miles or more from Highway 160, the only state-designated scenic highway in the vicinity. No San Joaquin County designated scenic corridors are located in the vicinity of these project facilities. Because these facilities would be located on flat terrain, they would not be visible from Highway 160. Therefore, this impact is less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

3.12.5 IMPACTS OF THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY ROUTE ALTERNATIVE AND MITIGATION MEASURES

IMPACTS

Under this alternative, visual impacts related to the development of the well pad and injection sites, the separation facility, and the PG&E Line 196 and Line 401 interconnects and meter stations would be essentially identical to those described for the proposed project because these facilities would be sited in the same location as for the proposed project. Visual impacts related to the development of these facilities would be less than significant.

Similarly, visual impacts of this alternative related to scenic vistas, scenic resources, and scenic highways would also be identical to the proposed project because no designated scenic highway is located proximate to project facilities.

Pipeline construction under this alternative would expose a greater number of viewers to short-term changes in the visual character of local road rights-of-way because this alternative follow local roadways for a substantial length. Approximately 140 residences are located within 220 yards of this alternative pipeline alignment. Additionally, travelers on local roadways in the vicinity of the pipeline would also have views of construction activities. The short-term nature of the visual change, together with the Applicant's commitment to minimize construction disturbance to reduce contrast between exposed soils and naturally vegetated areas (see Section 2.4.13, "Mitigation Measures Proposed by the Applicant") and the revegetation of the pipeline right-of-way following construction, would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

The primary difference between the proposed project and the Public Right-of-Way Route Alternative is that the compressor facility would be located at the airport site, which is generally more distant from residences than the compressor site identified under the proposed project. This increased distance would further reduce the potential for facility lighting to encroach on rural residences in the area. Additionally, under this alternative the compressor facility would be located farther away (approximately 0.5 mile) from Highway 99 than under the proposed project. This facility would be in the middleground views of travelers on portions of

Highway 99, as compared to the immediate foreground views described for the proposed project, reducing the visibility of this structure for highway motorists. Figure 3.12-3 shows the facility site in its existing condition and a photosimulation of the facility earthtone structures and vegetative buffers. Similar to the proposed project, the lack of specificity regarding the landscaping of this facility has the potential to result in significant visual impacts, particularly with regard to the nearest residential viewers. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.12-1 would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.12-1, as described above, would reduce significant visual impacts of the Public Right-of-Way Route Alternative to less-than-significant levels.

3.12.6 IMPACTS OF THE EXISTING PIPELINE CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVE AND MITIGATION MEASURES

IMPACTS

Visual impacts of the Existing Pipeline Corridor Alternative would be similar to the visual impacts associated with the proposed project, with the exception of visual impacts resulting from development of the compressor facility. Under this alternative, the compressor facility would be located at the airport site, the same site proposed for this facility under the Public Right-of-Way Route Alternative. As discussed above, even with the implementation of the Applicant's measures, including painting the structures in earthtones and establishing a vegetative buffer, the lack of specificity regarding the landscaping of this facility has the potential to result in significant alteration of the areas visual character, particularly for the site's nearest residential viewers. This impact is significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.12-1 would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Construction of the pipeline under this alternative would be less visible to adjacent residents and motorists as compared to the Public Right-of-Way Route Alternative, because the pipeline alignment west of Interstate 5 parallels existing utility corridors through agricultural fields to the PG&E Line 401 interconnect.

Mitigation Measures

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.12-1, as described above, would reduce significant visual impacts of the Existing Pipeline Corridor Alternative to less-than-significant levels.

3.12.7 IMPACTS OF THE COMPOSITE ROUTE ALTERNATIVE AND MITIGATION MEASURES

IMPACTS

Visual impacts of the Composite Route Alternative would be similar to the visual impacts associated with the proposed project, with the exception of visual impacts resulting from development of the compressor facility. Under this alternative, the compressor facility would be located at the airport site, the same site proposed for this facility under the Public Right-of-Way Route Alternative. As discussed above, even with the implementation of the Applicant's measures, including painting the structures in earthtones and establishing a vegetative buffer, the lack of specificity regarding the landscaping of this facility has the potential to result in significant alteration of the areas visual character, particularly for the site's nearest residential viewers. This impact is significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.12-1 would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Construction of the pipeline under this alternative would be less visible to adjacent residents and motorists as compared to the Public Right-of-Way Route Alternative, because the pipeline alignment west of Interstate 5 parallels existing utility corridors through agricultural fields to the PG&E Line 401 interconnect.

Mitigation Measures

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.12-1, as described above, would reduce significant visual impacts of the Existing Pipeline Corridor Alternative to less-than-significant levels.

REFERENCES—VISUAL RESOURCES

California Department of Transportation, Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency, *Guidelines for the Official Designation of Scenic Highways,* Sacramento, Calif., 1996.

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