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4.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless APMs Incorporated	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4.2.1 Introduction

This section describes the agricultural and forestry resources in the vicinity of the Proposed Project, and analyzes potential impacts to these resources from construction and operation of the Proposed Project. The proposed Salt Creek Substation site and the majority of the proposed TL 6965 and TL 6910 loop-in are located within the City of Chula Vista in southwestern San Diego County. The Proposed Project components would not cross any land under a Williamson Act contract. A portion of the proposed TL 6965 would cross Farmland of Local Importance; however, impacts to these lands would be minimal since construction of the power lines would occur within existing SDG&E ROW and would not change existing land uses. The proposed substation site would be located on vacant land formerly used for grazing and would not conflict with existing land use. As a result, impacts on agricultural and forestry resources would be less than significant.

4.2.2 Methodology

The Proposed Project analysis involved a review of the City of Chula Vista Vision 2020 General Plan and the Municipal Code (City of Chula Vista 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2010); the California Department of Conservation’s (CDC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) (CDC 2012a); 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 (SANGIS 2012); and general plan and zoning maps for the Proposed Project area. Additionally, a field visit to the site was conducted to confirm land uses.

In determining whether impacts on agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model prepared by the CDC as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland (CDC 2007). In determining whether impacts on forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project, and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in the Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

4.2.3 Existing Conditions

4.2.3.1 Regulatory Background

Federal and State

Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The CDC’s 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% of the FMMP study area is based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service soil classification system, which evaluates physical and chemical conditions, including soil temperature, moisture regime, the hydrogen ion concentration (pH), flooding, groundwater depth, erodibility, permeability,

and sodium content. FMMP maps are updated every 2 years using aerial imagery review, field reconnaissance, computer mapping analyses, and public input. The FMMP map series uses a minimum land use mapping unit of 10 acres; smaller units of land are generally incorporated into surrounding map classifications. The FMMP map series identifies the following eight land classifications (CDC 2012a):

- **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 provide conditions to produce sustained high yields. Prime Farmlands must have been used for irrigated production within 4 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. Farmlands of Statewide Importance must have been used for irrigated production within 4 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 4 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 1 unit to 1.5 acres (or approximately 6 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:** Perennial water bodies with an extent of at least 40 acres.

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

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As shown in Table 4.2-1, there are no Unique Farmlands or Farmlands of Statewide Importance within the City of Chula Vista General Plan area. There is approximately 51 acres of Farmland of Local Importance and approximately 19 acres of grazing land in the entire Proposed Project area. Figure 4.2-1 depicts the farmlands within the area.

Table 4.2-1: Farmland Inventory

	County of San Diego (acres)	City of Chula Vista General Plan Area (acres)	Salt Creek Substation (acres)	TL 6965 and TL 6910 loop-in (acres)	Existing Substation Modifications (acres)	Staging Yards (acres)
Prime Farmland	7,753	34	0	0	0	0
Farmland of Statewide Importance	10,411	0	0	0	0	0
Unique Farmland	51,975	0	0	0	0	0
Farmland of Local Importance	153,187	7,511	1	23	0	24 ¹
IMPORTANT FARMLAND SUBTOTAL	223,326	7,545	1	23	0	24
Grazing Land	126,870	20,426	11	7	0	0

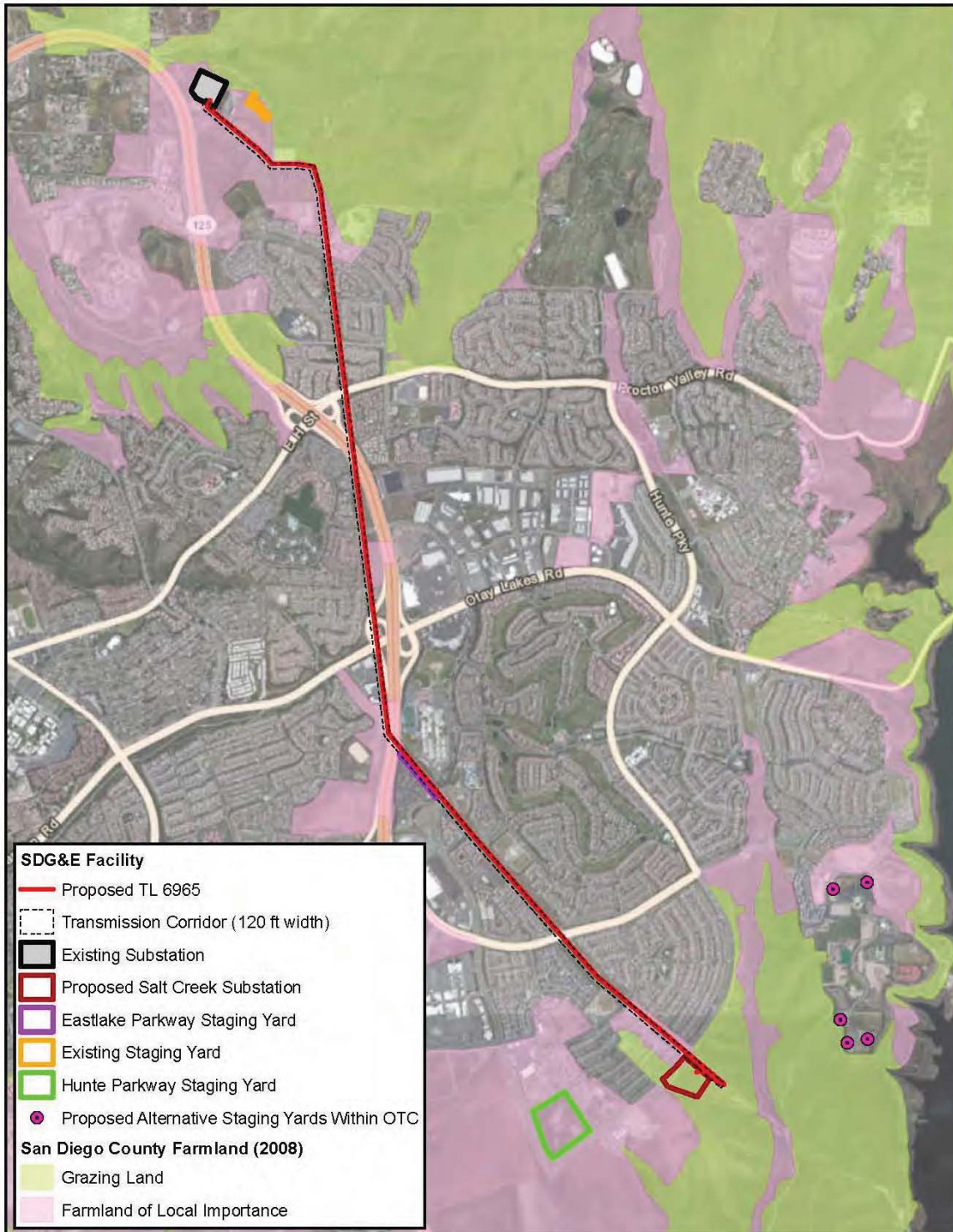
Sources: CDC 2012b; City of Chula Vista 2005a

¹Hunte Parkway staging yard is 22 acres, the Existing staging yard is 2 acres, and Eastlake Parkway staging yard is 1.7 acres. However, SDG&E is proposing to use only 8 acres at Hunte Parkway for staging, for a total of 11.7 acres for staging purposes.

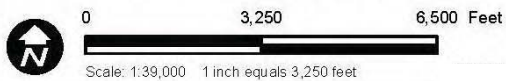
California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act)

The Williamson Act, also known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (California Government Code [CGC] Section 51200 et seq.), preserves agricultural and open space lands from conversion to urban land uses by establishing a contract between local 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 to 75% higher. Williamson Act contracts are valid for a minimum of 10 years and are automatically renewable after each 10-year term.

Figure 4.2-1: Farmlands in the Proposed Project Area



Note: Basemap image is dated 2011 and does not reflect recent development near Hunte Parkway.
 Sources: GeomorphIS LLC, AECOM, SDG&E, 2013; Esri Basemaps, 2013; County Farmland: CA Department of Conservation, 2008



Note: SDG&E is providing this map with the understanding that the map is not survey grade.

CHAPTER 4.2 – AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

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 Section 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 Section 51220.5).

The Williamson Act authorizes the County of San Diego to establish Agricultural Preserves and enter into contracts with property owners. The County of San Diego has designated approximately 402,100 acres as Agricultural Preserves. More than 100 contracts within these Agricultural Preserves exist, totaling approximately 80,500 acres (County of San Diego 2010). There are no active Williamson Act contract properties within the City of Chula Vista General Plan area.

County of San Diego

General Plan and Zoning Ordinance

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 recommend changes to the category of Farmland of Local Importance rests with the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors.

The northern portion of the Proposed Project area, located within the County of San Diego, has a General Plan designation of Public/Semi-Public Facilities, which allows for major facilities to be built and maintained for public use. The zoning designation is Holding Area (S90), which allows for limited agricultural activities.

City of Chula Vista

General Plan and Zoning Ordinance

The City of Chula Vista Vision 2020 General Plan (City of Chula Vista 2005c) and Municipal Code (City of Chula Vista 2010) were reviewed for agricultural resource policies that are relevant to the Proposed Project. Agricultural activities in the city are allowed on lands zoned for Agriculture (A-8, A-X) and, on an interim basis, Planned Community (P-C). These zones are "intended to preserve in agricultural use land which may be suited for eventual development in urban uses and which will encourage proper timing for the economical provision of utilities, major streets and other facilities, so that orderly development will occur," per Section 19.20.010 of the Municipal Code (City of Chula Vista 2010).

4.2.3.2 Agricultural and Forestry Setting

No forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production exists on-site or in the surrounding area of the Proposed Project. The closest forest land is the Cleveland National Forest, located approximately 13 miles east of the proposed TL 6965. In addition, no Williamson Act contract exists for the Proposed Project area.

Salt Creek Substation

According to the CDC, the proposed Salt Creek Substation site is currently designated as Grazing Land (11 acres), as shown in Figure 4.2-1 (CDC 2012a). The proposed substation site is zoned Planned Community (P-C), which allows for agricultural activities on an interim basis. Less than 1 acre of the substation pad along Hunte Parkway is located on Farmland of Local Importance; however, no agricultural activities occur on this site.

TL 6965 and TL 6910 Loop-In

The majority of the proposed TL 6965 route is zoned Planned Community (P-C) and located adjacent to existing residential, education, recreation, undeveloped, and open space land uses. A total of 23 acres of Farmland of Local Importance and 7 acres of Grazing Land are located within the TL 6965 project area, as shown in Table 4.2-1. The northern limits of the proposed TL 6965 route, extending from the Existing Substation through San Diego County land and including a small portion of City of Chula Vista land, is located on Farmland of Local Importance. The San Diego County land is zoned Holding Area (S90), which allows for limited agricultural activities, and the city land is zoned Planned Community (P-C), which allows for interim agricultural use. Agricultural activity currently does not occur in this area.

The central portion of the proposed TL 6965 traverses two parcels of land designated as Farmland of Local Importance. These parcels are zoned Planned Community (P-C), and agricultural activity currently does not occur in this area.

The southern limits of the proposed power lines are located on Farmland of Local Importance and Grazing Land. This land, zoned Planned Community (P-C), is currently undeveloped. Agricultural activity currently does not occur in this area, but does occur to the south of this area.

Existing Substation Modifications

The Existing Substation is not located on any farmland; however, it is surrounded by Farmland of Local Importance. The Existing Substation is located in the northern portion of the Proposed Project on land zoned Holding Area (S90), which allows for limited agricultural activities (County of San Diego 2012). Agricultural activity currently does not occur in this area.

Staging Yards

Three temporary staging yards would be used for the Proposed Project: the Existing Substation staging yard at the Existing Substation on SDG&E fee-owned property; the Eastlake Parkway staging yard on the west side of Eastlake Parkway between SR-125 and Eastlake Parkway; and the Hunte Parkway staging yard on the north side of Hunte Parkway between Discovery Falls, Eastlake Parkway, and Crossroads Street. In addition, an alternative Olympic Training Center

(OTC) staging yard is proposed, located on Olympic Parkway to the east of Hunte Parkway. The Existing Substation staging yard is located on land zoned Holding Area (S90), which allows for limited agricultural activities. The Hunte Parkway and Eastlake Parkway staging yards would be located on land zoned Planned Community (P-C), which allows for agricultural activities on an interim basis. The OTC staging yard would be located on land zoned Recreation. Agricultural activity currently does not occur on any of the proposed staging yards. Per Table 4.2-1, 24 acres of Farmland of Local Importance exists at the Existing Substation staging yard and Hunte Parkway staging yard.

4.2.4 Impacts

4.2.4.1 Significance Criteria

Determination of impacts was derived from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Impacts to agriculture and forestry resources would be considered potentially significant if the Proposed Project would do any of the following:

- convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the FMMP, to non-agricultural use;
- conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract;
- conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in PRC Section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by PRC section 4526), or timberland zoned as Timberland Production (as defined by CGC section 51104[g]);
- result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or
- involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

4.2.4.2 Impact Analysis

Question 4.2(a) – Conversion of Farmland

Construction – Less-than-Significant Impact

Salt Creek Substation

Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance does not occur in the Proposed Project area; however, the proposed Salt Creek Substation site is located on Grazing Land (CDC 2012a). Less than 1 acre of the substation pad along Hunte Parkway is located on Farmland of Local Importance; however, no agricultural activities occur on this site. The proposed substation site currently consists of vacant, undeveloped land previously used for farming, and is not currently used for agricultural purposes. The Proposed Project would not change existing agricultural use or create additional impacts related to conversion of Farmland; therefore, no impact would occur.

TL 6965 and TL 6910 Loop-In

Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance does not occur in the Proposed Project area; however, the proposed TL 6965 traverses Farmland of Local Importance. Currently, no active agricultural lands occur within the route proposed for TL 6965 or the TL 6910 loop-in. Although the Proposed Project would be developed on land that is either owned by SDG&E or within existing SDG&E easements, these inactive farmlands may be temporarily disturbed during construction due to the installation of new poles and the use of construction equipment in the vicinity. However, the ability to use the land as farmlands would not be impeded or diminished. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Existing Substation Modifications

The Existing Substation is not located on any Farmland, and no agricultural activity currently occurs in this area. Modifications to the Existing Substation would occur within the current substation site; therefore, no impact would occur.

Staging Yards

Agricultural activity currently does not occur on any of the areas proposed for staging yards. Up to 11.7 acres of land within the proposed staging yards (8 acres at Hunte Parkway, 1.7 acres at Eastlake Parkway, and 2 acres at the Existing Substation) would be used temporarily during construction and would not involve conversion of any Farmland; therefore, no impact would occur.

Operation and Maintenance – No Impact

The proposed Salt Creek Substation would be located on vacant, undeveloped land that is not currently used for agricultural activities. Operation and maintenance of the proposed substation would not result in temporary or permanent conversion of Farmland. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Operation and maintenance of the proposed TL 6965 and TL 6910 loop-in would include regular inspection, repair work, and vegetation removal activities, as needed. These activities would not result in temporary or permanent conversion of Farmland. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Question 4.2(b) – Conflict with zoning or Williamson Act Contracts

Construction – No Impact

Salt Creek Substation

The proposed Salt Creek Substation site would not be located on land that is currently zoned for agricultural use or under a Williamson Act contract. The proposed substation site is zoned Planned Community (P-C), which allows for agricultural activity on an interim basis. However, agricultural activities do not occur on the proposed site. The CPUC maintains jurisdiction to regulate the design, siting, installation, operation, maintenance, and repair of electric transmission facilities associated with the Proposed Project; therefore, SDG&E is not specifically subject to local planning or zoning ordinances. No impact would occur.

TL 6965 and TL 6910 Loop-In

Portions of the proposed power line are zoned Holding Area (S90) and Planned Community (P-C), which allow for agricultural activity on an interim basis and utility uses. Construction of the proposed power line would be temporary and would not conflict with existing zoning. No impact would occur.

Existing Substation Modifications

The Existing Substation site is zoned Holding Area (S90), which allows for limited agricultural activities. Agricultural activity currently does not occur in this area. No impact would occur.

Staging Yards

The Existing Substation staging yard is zoned Holding Area (S90), the Hunte Parkway and Eastlake Parkway staging yards are zoned Planned Community (P-C), and the OTC staging yard is zoned Recreation. Up to 11.7 acres of land within the staging yards would be used temporarily during construction and would not conflict with existing zoning; therefore, no impact would occur.

Operation and Maintenance – No Impact

The Proposed Project would be developed on land that is either owned by SDG&E or within existing SDG&E easements and is currently zoned for utilities. No impact would occur.

Question 4.2(c) – Loss or conversion of forest land; conflict with zoning of forest land

Construction – No Impact

The proposed Salt Creek Substation site, proposed TL 6965 and TL 6910 loop-in, Existing Substation, and staging yards would not be located on or near forest land, nor are they zoned for forest land use. No impact would occur.

Operation and Maintenance – No Impact

No forest land would be lost due to Proposed Project operation. No impact would occur.

4.2.5 Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operations Restrictions

There are no specific policies, standards, regulations, or design features that are necessary to minimize impacts from the Proposed Project. Impacts to agricultural and forestry resources with Proposed Project implementation would be less than significant.

4.2.6 Applicant-Proposed Measures

The Proposed Project’s impacts on agricultural and forestry resources would be less than significant; therefore, no APMs are required or proposed.

4.2.7 Detailed Discussion of Significant Impacts

Based on the analyses presented above, no significant impacts were identified for the Proposed Project, and no APMs are required or proposed.

4.2.8 References

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