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4.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Would the Proposed Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation 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?				✓
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				✓
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))?				✓
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓
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?				✓

4.2.0 Introduction

This section describes the agriculture and forestry resources in the vicinity of the proposed San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) TL674A Reconfiguration & TL666D Removal Project (Proposed Project) and analyzes potential impacts to these resources from construction, operation, and maintenance of the Proposed Project. The California Department of Conservation’s (DOC’s) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) has not designated any farmland within three miles of the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project will not cross any land that is under a Williamson Act contract or that is designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Farmland of Local Importance. The Proposed Project will cross approximately 1.2 miles of agricultural land use

designations; however, none of this land is currently under active crop cultivation or used for livestock grazing. The Proposed Project is not located on nor does it span any land zoned for forest or timberland use. Thus, no impacts to agriculture and forestry resources will occur.

4.2.1 Methodology

Research involved the review of the City of San Diego General Plan, its municipal code, and the General Plan Amendments. A review was also conducted of the Community Plan for the City of Del Mar, its amendments, resolution, and municipal code. In addition, the California DOC's FMMP, the San Diego Geographic Information Source, and general plan and zoning maps for the Proposed Project area were reviewed.

4.2.2 Existing Conditions

The regulatory requirements and overall existing agricultural conditions of the Proposed Project are described in the following subsections.

Regulatory Background

Federal

No federal regulatory requirements related to agriculture and forestry resources are relevant to the assessment of Proposed Project impacts.

State

California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The California DOC's Division of Land Resource Protection generates maps depicting farmlands. These farmlands are categorized according to specific criteria, including soil quality and irrigation conditions. Approximately 94 percent of the FMMP study area is based on the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service soil classification system, which evaluates both physical and chemical conditions, including soil temperature, moisture regime, pH, flooding, groundwater depth, erodibility, permeability, and sodium content. FMMP maps are updated every two years using an aerial imagery review, field reconnaissance, computer mapping analyses, and public input. The minimum land use mapping unit is 10 acres, and smaller units of land are generally incorporated into surrounding map classifications.

The DOC has established the following eight land use classifications:

- **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 four 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. Similar to Prime Farmlands, Farmlands of

Statewide Importance must have been used for irrigated production within four years of the mapping date.

- **Unique Farmland:** Unique Farmland has lower-quality soils and is 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 four years of the mapping date.
- **Farmland of Local Importance:** Farmlands of Local Importance 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 occupied by buildings or other structures at a minimum density of one unit to 1.5 acres (or approximately six structures to 10 acres). These lands are 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 waterbodies 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:** Water includes all perennial waterbodies that are a minimum of 40 acres.

Williamson Act Land Designations

The Williamson Act, also known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (California Government Code [CGC] § 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 landholdings 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 percent to 75 percent higher. Williamson Act contracts are valid for a minimum of 10 years and are automatically renewed each year for an additional 10-year term in the absence of a notice of nonrenewal.

The Williamson Act also allows local governments to establish Agricultural Preserves, which are 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 where public utility improvements and associated land acquisitions may be necessary (CGC § 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 § 51220.5).

Forest Land

Forest land is defined by Section 12220(g) of the California Public Resources Code (PRC) as “land that can support 10-percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits.” PRC Section 4526 defines timberland as “land, other than land owned by the federal government and land designated by the State Board of Forestry as experimental forest land, which is available for, and capable of, growing a crop of trees of any commercial species used to produce lumber and other forest products, including Christmas trees.”

“Timberland production zone” (TPZ) is defined in PRC Section 51104(g) as an area that has been zoned pursuant to California Government Code (CGC) Section 51112 or 51113 and is devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber and compatible uses. In this context, “compatible uses” include any use that “does not significantly detract from the use of the property for, or inhibit, growing and harvesting timber” (CGC §51104[h]).

Local

The Proposed Project is not subject to local discretionary regulations because the California Public Utilities Commission has exclusive jurisdiction over the siting, design, and construction of the Proposed Project. The following discussion of the local regulations relating to agriculture and forestry resources is provided for informational purposes.

City of San Diego General Plan

The City of San Diego’s 2008 General Plan and General Plan Amendments were reviewed for agricultural resource policies that are relevant to the Proposed Project. None were identified within these plans.

Community Plan for the City of Del Mar

Following the review of the Community Plan for the City of Del Mar, as well as its amendments and resolution, no agricultural resource policies that are relevant to the Proposed Project were identified. The Proposed Project does not cross any land designated for agricultural uses in the City of Del Mar.

4.2.3 Agricultural Setting

The Proposed Project is not located on and will not cross any Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, or land under a Williamson Act contract. None of the Proposed Project temporary work areas are under active crop cultivation nor are they used for livestock grazing. With the exception of approximately 0.8 mile of the TL666D removal and 0.4 mile of the TL674A reconfiguration that will cross land zoned as Agricultural-Residential 1-1 in the City of San Diego, the Proposed Project will not cross any agricultural land use designations.

The Agricultural-Residential 1-1 land use designation in the City of San Diego accommodates low-density, single-dwelling-unit homes and a wide range of low-intensity agricultural uses. Residential development is subject to 10-acre minimum lot requirements and is permitted only after acquisition of a Planned Development Permit from the City of San Diego.

4.2.4 Impacts

Significance Criteria

Standards of significance were derived from Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. Impacts to agricultural resources will be considered significant if the Proposed Project:

- Converts Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use
- Conflicts 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 TPZ (as defined by CGC Section 51104[g])
- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use
- Involve other changes in the existing environment, which—due to their location or nature—could result in the conversion of farmland to a non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use

Question 4.2a – Farmland Conversion – *No Impact*

The Proposed Project is not located on nor does it span any land designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance. As a result, no impact will occur.

Question 4.2b – Zoning or Williamson Act Contract Conflicts – *No Impact*

As previously described, the Proposed Project will cross approximately 1.2 miles of land zoned as Agricultural-Residential 1-1. The TL666D removal will cross approximately 0.8 mile of this land designation, most of which is located within Los Peñasquitos Lagoon. The TL674A reconfiguration will cross the remaining 0.4 mile of land zoned as Agricultural-Residential 1-1, which is generally occupied by the Del Mar Substation. Although the Proposed Project will cross land under agricultural zoning, no changes in zoning will be required for the Proposed Project because construction activities will generally involve the removal and/or topping of the 69 kilovolt (kV) poles, removal of overhead 69 kV conductors, as well as installation of new 12 kV underground facilities. Thus, there will be no impact.

With respect to Williamson Act conflicts, the Proposed Project will not be located on nor will it cross any land under a Williamson Act contract. Thus, there will be no conflicts with Williamson Act contracts, and no impact will occur.

Question 4.2c – Conflict with Forest Land Zoning – No Impact

The Proposed Project is not located on and does not cross any land zoned for forest or timberland, or a timberland production zone. Therefore, the Proposed Project will not conflict with or cause the rezoning of forest lands, and there will be no impact.

Question 4.2d – Loss or Conversion of Forest Land – No Impact

The Proposed Project is not located on nor does it span any land zoned for forest or timberland use. Therefore, there will be no conversion of forest land to a non-forest use as a result of the Proposed Project, and there will be no impact.

Question 4.2e – Other Farmland or Forest Land Conversion – No Impact

The Proposed Project involves the modification and removal of existing power line infrastructure within SDG&E's existing rights-of-way and public roadways located within the City of San Diego and the City of Del Mar. The Proposed Project will not cross any land currently used for agricultural or forestry purposes. Because these land uses do not currently exist in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Project, no conversion of farmland to a non-agricultural or non-forestry use will result. Therefore, no impact will occur.

4.2.5 Applicant-Proposed Measures

Because the Proposed Project will have no impact on agriculture and forestry resources, no applicant-proposed measures are proposed.

4.2.6 References

California Resources Agency. 2007. Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3 Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act. CEQA Guidelines.

City of San Diego. 2008. *General Plan*. Online. <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/genplan>. Site visited October 13, 2016.

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California DOC. FMMP. Important Farmland Map Categories. Online. http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/map_categories.aspx. Site visited October 13, 2016.

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