

INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

[Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080(c) and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15070-15071]

LEAD AGENCY: San Joaquin County Community Development Department

PROJECT APPLICANT: Van Tassel/North Central Valley Energy Storage, LLC

PROJECT TITLE/FILE NUMBER(S): PA-1700279 (SA)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: A Site Approval Permit has been submitted for the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the North Central Valley Energy Center (Project). The Project use type is classified as "Utility Services-Major" and would consist of a 132-megawatt (MW) battery energy storage system (BESS) on approximately 14.85 acres of a 57.28-acre parcel, which would include up to 300 battery storage containers (totaling up to 45,000 square feet) and associated on-site support facilities including a 11,000-square-foot Project collector substation, up to 50 inverters (totaling up to 6,500 square feet), collector lines, fencing, access roads, an operations and maintenance (O&M) building, a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system, and other ancillary facilities and equipment. Approximately 17 of the proposed inverters would include screening barriers for the purpose of attenuating inverter noise, should all inverters operate at maximum capacity. The screening barriers would be approximately 14-feet tall with respect to grade. The parcel upon which the BESS is proposed is currently under Williamson Act contract. The Project also includes 2 power poles and a 115-kilovolt (kV) overhead generation transmission line (gen-tie line), to connect the BESS to the adjacent Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) Bellota substation. A 1.52-acre expansion of the Bellota Substation footprint would also be required to support grid interconnection of the Project. The Project would include 2 retention ponds to retain stormwater on site (Figure 4). The entire Project area is 16.37-acres. The Project Site is located at 23670 East Flood Road, Linden, California 95236, in unincorporated San Joaquin County, approximately 15 miles east of the City of Stockton, California, and approximately 1.5 miles south of State Route 26. Refer to Appendix A for a full description of the Project. Refer to Figure 1, Project Location; Figure 2, Vicinity Map; Figure 3, Zoning; and Figure 4, Site Plan for additional information. The project description and site plan were provided to County agencies on July 16, 2021, for review during the project application referral period. The project site is under a Williamson Act contract. (Use Type: Utility Services Major)

ASSESSORS PARCEL NO.: 093-100-24, 093-100-20, 093-100-04, 093-100-05, 093-100-16

ACRES: 16.37-acre project area

GENERAL PLAN: A/G (General Agriculture)

ZONING: AG-40 (General Agriculture, 40-acre minimum)

POTENTIAL POPULATION, NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS, OR SQUARE FOOTAGE OF USES:

A battery energy storage facility with up to 300 battery storage containers totaling up to 45,000 square feet, an 11,000 square foot collector substation, up to 50 inverters totaling up to 6,500 square feet, and two power poles with a 115-kilovolt (kV) gen-tie line connecting the battery energy storage facility to the Bellota Substation.

SURROUNDING LAND USES:

NORTH: Agricultural, scattered residences

SOUTH: Agricultural, scattered residences

EAST: Agricultural, scattered residences

WEST: Agricultural, scattered residences

REFERENCES AND SOURCES FOR DETERMINING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

Original source materials are cited throughout this document. See Section 22, References for the complete list of all applicable references and source materials utilized for determining environmental impacts. Copies of these reports can be found by contacting the Community Development Department.

TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

Consultation in Progress.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Does it appear that any environmental feature of the project will generate significant public concern or controversy?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2. Will the project require approval or permits by agencies other than the County?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Agency name(s): The PG&E Bellota substation expansion component of the Project will require a 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and a 401 permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board. No other component of the project outside of the PG&E substation expansion would require additional approval or permits other than the County.

3. Is the project within the Sphere of Influence, or within two miles, of any city?

☐ Yes ☒ No


ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology / Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency) On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.


Signature

11/12/2021
Date

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
- 2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
- 5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
- 7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
- 8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
- 9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

I. AESTHETICS

Would the project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b)	Substantially damage scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c)	In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a)	The Project Site is located in an area predominately characterized by agricultural and grazing lands. The Project Site is surrounded by land zoned for agricultural uses and has limited public access. Views of the Project Site are visible from Flood Road; however, according to the 2035 General Plan, Flood Road does not meet the County's scenic route designation criteria; thus the Project area does not consist of designated scenic resources (San Joaquin County 2016). The Project would have no impact to a designated scenic vista or resource.				
b)	No scenic resources are present within the project vicinity (San Joaquin County 2016). Additionally, the California State Scenic Highway System Map does not identify any designated scenic routes in the Project area (Caltrans 2018). The closest local scenic routes are Interstate 26 and Liberty Road, located approximately 5 miles northeast of the Project Site (San Joaquin County 2016). Therefore, no impact to scenic resources within a state scenic highway would occur. Additionally, no trees on the Project Site are proposed for removal, nor are there other physical features that would be considered scenic resources. No impact would occur.				
c)	The Project Site is located in a non-urbanized area. The Project Site is located on the eastern edge of the San Joaquin Valley, where croplands of the valley floor transition to the rangelands of the inner Sierra Ranges to the west. The site was historically and currently is used for grazing. The Project Site has an agricultural and rural character surrounded by expansive agricultural land, located to the north, east, south, and west. There are two residents located adjacent to the Project Site in the upper north boundary and the mid-west portion of the Project Site; however, public views are not currently afforded to motorists except from Flood Road, which is not considered a widely utilized public roadway where public views may be affected. Additionally, existing views include electrical infrastructure associated with the PG&E Bellota substation. As such, the addition of the proposed battery storage units and associated infrastructure would not alter the regional viewshed. Therefore, impacts to the existing visual character would be less than significant.				
d)	The Project would require lighting similar to that on the existing PG&E Bellota substation; however, lighting would be located only in areas where it is required for safety, security, or operations. Lighting on the Project Site would be in accordance with San Joaquin Development Title Section 9-1025.6 and would be shielded or pointed downward to avoid lighting spillover to adjacent lots (San Joaquin County 1995a). Based on the existing level of lighting at the PG&E Bellota substation and the scale of the Project compared with the existing substation, new lighting associated with the Project would not be expected to adversely affect nighttime views in the area.				

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant 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?	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a, e) According to the Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the Project Site is not designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. However, land designated as Prime Farmland and Unique Farmland is located immediately to the south and west of the Project Site (DOC 2018). The BESS construction site, located on Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 093-100-24 and 093-100-20, is currently used for grazing. Nearby parcels located to the south, east, and west are used for crop productions. Therefore, although the location of the Project Site is located in proximity to Prime Farmland and Unique Farmland, the Project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural uses or significantly compromise the long-term productivity of such farmland. A California Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) analysis was conducted for the Project (Appendix B), which evaluates the quality of the agricultural resources on the Project Site based on a numerical rating system, including factors such as soil type, water availability, and surrounding agricultural land. The LESA analysis rates the site on a scale from 0-100. A score between 0-39 points is not considered a significant agricultural resource. The LESA analysis resulted in a numerical rating score of 38.75 for the Project Site; therefore, per the site-specific LESA analysis conducted for the Project, the Project is not considered a significant agricultural resource. Impacts to agricultural resources would be less than significant. See Appendix B for details.				
b) The five project parcels (APNs 093-100-24, 093-100-20, 093-100-04, 093-100-05, and 093-100-16) are zoned as AG-40, General Agricultural – 40 Acres and designated as Agricultural Preserve (R-69-C1). Of these parcels, the two privately owned parcels (APNs 093-100-24 and 093-100-20), are single lots that are currently under the California Land Conservation Act and subject to Williamson Act Contract No. 73-C1-220. The contract restricts development to uses that are compatible with the Williamson Act and Development Title Section 9-1805. "Compatible use," as defined in the Williamson Act, includes uses determined by the County to be compatible with the agricultural, recreational, or open-space use of land within the preserve and subject to contract (Government Code Section 51201[e]). In addition, Development Title Section 9-1810.3 (b)(7) permits uses that adhere to the Williamson Act Principles of compatibility. Pursuant to Government Code Section 51238.1, uses approved on contracted lands shall be consistent with the following three principles of compatibility:				

1. The use will not significantly compromise the long-term productive agricultural capability of the subject contracted parcel or parcels or on other contracted lands in agricultural preserves.
2. The use will not significantly displace or impair current or reasonably foreseeable agricultural operations on the subject contracted parcel or parcels or on other contracted lands in agricultural preserves. Uses that significantly displace agricultural operations on the subject contracted parcel or parcels may be deemed compatible if they relate directly to the production of commercial agricultural products on the subject contracted parcels or parcels or neighboring lands, including activities such as harvesting, processing, or shipping.
3. The use will not result in the significant removal of adjacent contracted land from agricultural or open-space use. In evaluating compatibility, a board or council shall consider the impacts on non-contracted lands in the agricultural preserve or preserves.

The Principle of Compatibility may be used for the proposed project because the Utility Services-Major use type may be conditionally permitted for properties under a Williamson Act Contract pursuant to Development Title 9-1810.3(b)(1)(z), and as such, a zone change and/or General Plan Amendment land use change would not be required to permanently convert the Project Site to a nonagricultural use, or require the cancellation of the existing Williamson Act contract.

Additionally, the majority of the Project Site would be undeveloped, and only an approximately 7.4-acre segment of the site would comprise the proposed BESS footprint. The Project would adhere to the criteria stated in the Principle of Compatibility, as well as San Joaquin County's local policy LU-7.2, Agricultural Support Uses, which states that new agricultural support development and non-farming activities shall be compatible with surrounding operations and shall not have a detrimental impact on the operation or use of surrounding agricultural properties. Lastly, the Project Site is currently zoned as AG-40 and permits utility services as set forth in Table 9-605.2 of the County's Ordinance Code (San Joaquin County 1995b). Therefore, the Project would be consistent with the site's existing zoning. For the reasons described above, impacts would be less than significant.

- c, d) No Forest Land, Timberland, or Timberland Production areas (as defined in California Public Resources Code, Sections 12220(g), 4526, and 51104(g)) are located within or adjacent to the Project Site. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

III. AIR QUALITY

Would the project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following analysis is based on the North Central Valley Energy Center Project Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) Study (Air Quality and GHG Study) conducted for the Project and included as Appendix C.

- a) The Project would comply with applicable San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) rules and regulations, such as Regulation VIII (Fugitive PM₁₀ Prohibitions) and IX (Mobile and Indirect Sources). The Project would not conflict with existing land uses or result in population growth that may conflict with a local air quality plan. In addition, the Project would not result in a long-term increase in the number of trips or increase the overall vehicle miles traveled in the area. Haul truck, vendor truck, and worker vehicle trips would be generated during the proposed construction activities but would cease after construction is completed. Emissions generated during construction would not exceed the SJVAPCD significance thresholds. During operations, the Project would have routine inspection and maintenance activities that would result in a marginal net increase in emissions although, as discussed in Appendix C, the increase in emissions would not exceed any significance threshold or violate any SJVAPCD rule or regulation. Therefore, the Project would result in a less than significant impact during construction and operation.

b) **Construction Emissions**

Proposed construction activities would result in the temporary addition of pollutants to the local airshed caused by on-site sources (i.e., off-road construction equipment, soil disturbance, and VOC off-gassing) and off-site sources (i.e., on-road vendor trucks, haul trucks, and worker vehicle trips).

Details of the emission calculations are provided in Attachment A of the Air Quality and GHG Study (Appendix C). Table 5 of the Air Quality and GHG Study (Appendix C) presents the annual emissions reported as the highest rolling 12 months estimated during construction and presents the estimated maximum annual construction emissions generated during construction of the Project. Table 6 of the Air Quality and GHG Study (Appendix C) presents the annual emissions reported as the highest rolling 12 months estimated during construction of the PG&E Bellota substation project component and presents the estimated maximum annual construction emissions generated during construction of the PG&E substation.

The Project (including the PG&E substation expansion component) would also comply with SJVAPCD Rule 9510, Indirect Source Review, which requires development projects to reduce exhaust emissions from construction equipment by 20% for oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and 45% for particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀) compared to the statewide average (see Table 5 in Appendix C). The reductions taken in Tables 5 and 6 of the Air Quality and GHG Study are compared to the statewide average fleet, which is calculated using the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District's Construction Mitigation Tool. As shown in Tables 5 and 6 of the Air Quality and GHG Study, the Project construction (including PG&E substation construction) would not exceed SJVAPCD's rolling 12-month thresholds. Therefore, construction impacts associated with criteria air pollutant emissions would be less than significant.

Operational Emissions

Table 7 of the Air Quality and GHG Study (Appendix C) presents the estimated emissions during operation. As shown in Table 7, the Project would not exceed SJVAPCD's significance thresholds during operations. Therefore, operational impacts associated with criteria air pollutant emissions would be less than significant.

For purposes of this air quality analysis and consistent with SJVAPCD guidance documents, actions that exceed criteria pollutant National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) (i.e., primary standards designed to safeguard the health of people considered to be sensitive receptors while outdoors and secondary standards designed to safeguard human welfare) or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Prevention of Significant Deterioration Significant Impact Levels would result in significant impacts. Additionally, actions that violate California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) developed by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) are considered significant.

Determination of whether Project emissions would violate any ambient air quality standard is largely a function of air quality dispersion modeling. The SJVAPCD recommends that an ambient air quality analysis be performed when emissions of any criteria pollutant would equal or exceed any applicable threshold of significance for criteria pollutants or 100 pounds per day of any criteria pollutant. If the impacts resulting from a project's emissions would not exceed the CAAQS and NAAQS at the project's property boundaries, the project would not violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation (SJVAPCD 2015). As described in the Air Quality and GHG Study (Appendix C), the Project did not exceed 100 pounds per day on site during construction when assuming compliance with SJVAPCD Rule 9501, Indirect Source Rule; therefore, the Project does not require an air quality dispersion modeling assessment.

Additionally, as shown in Tables 5 and 7 of the Air Quality and GHG Study (Appendix C), the Project would not exceed the SJVAPCD significance thresholds. Based on these considerations, the Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable increase in emissions of nonattainment pollutants. Impacts would be less than significant.

- c) The Project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, for the reasons described below.

The closest off-site sensitive receptors to the Project are existing residential land uses located adjacent to the Project Site boundary. As discussed, the Project would comply with SJVAPCD Rule 8021, which requires applicants to develop, prepare, submit, obtain approval of, and implement a dust control plan.

Valley Fever Exposure

The Project Site is located in San Joaquin County, which is a county where Valley Fever, caused by the fungus *Coccidioides immitis*, is considered endemic. The San Joaquin County Public Health Services Department, reported 259 cases of Valley Fever in 2018 (San Joaquin County Public Health Services 2019). The Project Site is located in an area where there is a high risk of Valley Fever, a fungal-borne disease. The disease is caused by inhalation of dust containing the *Coccidioides immitis*, a fungal spore. Most individuals who are exposed have no or very mild systems; however, in a small percentage of the population, it can generate more serious systems of meningitis, pneumonia, or chronic fatigue. Construction workers have increased risk of exposure due to the disturbance of soils where fungal spores are found. Therefore, a risk of Valley Fever infection exists for construction personnel working on the project in the peak summer and fall months. However, Valley Fever risk from construction-related dust from the Project will be partially mitigated through implementation of an SJVAPCD-approved dust control plan. However, Mitigation Measure (MM-) AQ-1 and MM-AQ-2 would be implemented to further reduce the risk of Valley Fever exposure. Therefore, with implementation of MM-AQ-1 and MM-AQ-2, impacts to construction workers and nearby sensitive receptors, would be less than significant with mitigation.

Health Impacts of Toxic Air Contaminants

Project construction would result in emissions of diesel particulate from heavy construction equipment and trucks accessing the site. Diesel particulate is characterized as a Toxic Air Contaminant by the State of California. The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment has identified carcinogenic and chronic non-carcinogenic effects from long-term exposure but has not identified health effects due to short-term exposure to diesel exhaust. According to the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, health risk assessments, which determine the exposure of sensitive receptors to toxic emissions, should be based on a 30-year exposure period for the maximally exposed individual resident; however, such assessments should be limited to the period/duration of activities associated with a project. Thus, the duration of the proposed construction activities would only constitute a small percentage of the total 30-year exposure period. Due to this relatively short period of exposure (15 months), distance to the closest sensitive receptors, and minimal particulate emissions on site, Toxic Air

Contaminants generated by the Project would not result in concentrations causing significant health risks. Overall, the Project would not result in substantial TAC exposure to sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the Project, and impacts would be less than significant.

Additionally, the health risk public-notification thresholds adopted by the SJVAPCD Board is 20 excess cancer cases in a million for cancer risk and a hazard index of more than one (1.0) for non-cancer risk. The hazard index of more than 1.0 means that predicted levels of a toxic pollutant are greater than the reference exposure level, which is considered the level below which adverse health effects are not expected. Examples of projects that emit toxic pollutants include oil and gas processing, gasoline dispensing, dry cleaning, electronic and parts manufacturing, medical equipment sterilization, freeways, and rail yards (SJVAPCD 2015). The Project would not result in long-term Toxic Air Contaminant emissions, and toxic contaminants are not anticipated to be present at the Project Site. Accordingly, the Project is not anticipated to result in emissions that would exceed the SJVAPCD Board-adopted health risk notification thresholds.

Health Impacts of Carbon Monoxide

The SJVAPCD Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts states that a quantitative carbon monoxide (CO) hotspots analysis be performed if either of the following two conditions exist: (1) a traffic study for the project indicates that the level of service (LOS) on one or more streets or at one or more intersections in the project vicinity will be reduced to LOS E or F, or (2) a traffic study indicates that the project will substantially worsen an already existing LOS F on one or more streets or at more or more intersections in the project vicinity (SJVAPCD 2015). The Project would cause a temporary increase in traffic during the 15-month construction period. However, the Project would only result in six additional daily trips (three personnel) during operation, plus one water delivery per week. Therefore, the Project would not materially contribute to the local traffic or impact local intersections LOS. As such, impacts to sensitive receptors with regard to potential CO hotspots resulting from the Project's contribution to cumulative traffic-related air quality impacts would be less than significant.

Health Impacts of Other Criteria Air Pollutants

Construction and operation of the Project would not result in emissions that exceed the SJVAPCD's emission thresholds for any criteria air pollutants, including reactive organic gases (ROGs), NO_x, CO, sulfur oxides (SO_x), PM₁₀, or particulate matter less than or equal to 2.45 microns in diameter (PM_{2.5}). Regarding ROGs, some ROGs would be associated with motor vehicles and construction equipment, while others are associated with architectural coatings, the emissions of which would not result in the exceedances of the SJVAPCD's thresholds as shown in Table 3 of the Air Quality and GHG Study (Appendix C). Generally, the ROGs in architectural coatings are of relatively low toxicity. Additionally, SJVAPCD Rule 4601 restricts the ROG content of coatings for both construction and operational applications.

In addition, ROGs and NO_x are precursors to ozone (O₃), for which the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB) is designated as nonattainment with respect to the NAAQS and CAAQS (the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has designated the SJVAB as a nonattainment area for the federal 8-hour O₃ standard, and CARB has designated the SJVAB as a nonattainment area for the state 1-hour and 8-hour O₃ standards). The health effects associated with O₃ are generally associated with reduced lung function. The ROG and NO_x emissions associated with Project construction could minimally contribute to regional O₃ concentrations; however, the Project would not exceed the SJVAPCD threshold for O₃ precursor NO_x during construction or operations. Construction emissions would be generated during a temporary, short-term period, after which time construction emissions would cease. Operational emissions would be limited to approximately three worker trips per day, and potentially one water delivery trip per week; therefore, health impacts associated with O₃ precursors would be minimal, and impacts would be less than significant.

Additionally, construction and operation of the Project would not exceed thresholds for PM₁₀ or PM_{2.5} and would not contribute to exceedances of the NAAQS and CAAQS for particulate matter. The Project would also not result in substantial diesel particulate matter emissions during construction and operation, and therefore, would not result in significant health effects related to diesel particulate matter exposure.

Lastly, according to the construction emissions analysis provided in Appendix C, construction of the Project would not contribute to exceedances of the NAAQS and CAAQS for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) during construction. Emissions from construction of the Project would be short-term in duration, and the long-term operational emissions would not exceed any significance thresholds; therefore, impacts associated with NO₂ would be less than significant.

- d) Odors would be potentially generated from vehicles and equipment exhaust emissions during construction of the Project. Potential odors produced during construction would be attributable to concentrations of unburned hydrocarbons from tailpipes of construction equipment and asphalt pavement application. Such odors would disperse rapidly from the Project Site and generally occur at magnitudes that would not affect substantial numbers of people. Therefore, impacts associated with odors during construction would be less than significant.

Land uses and industrial operations associated with odor complaints include agricultural uses, wastewater treatment plants, food-processing plants, chemical plants, composting operations, refineries, landfills, dairies, and fiberglass molding facilities (SCAQMD 1993). The Project would not create any new sources of odor during operation; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation is provided to reduce the impacts to construction workers and nearby sensitive receptors.

MM-AQ-1 Between June 1 and November 30, when Valley Fever rates of infection are the highest, additional dust suppression measures (such as additional water or the application of additional soil stabilizer) shall be implemented prior to and immediately following ground-disturbing activities if wind speeds exceed 15 mph or temperatures exceed 95°F for 3 consecutive days. The additional dust suppression shall continue until winds are 10 mph or lower and outdoor air temperatures are below 90°F for at least 2 consecutive days. The additional dust suppression measures shall be incorporated into the Dust Control Plan.

MM-AQ-2 Prior to any Project grading activity, the primary Project construction contractor shall prepare and implement a worker training program that describes potential health hazards associated with Valley Fever, common symptoms, proper safety procedures to minimize health hazards, and notification procedures if suspected work-related symptoms are identified during construction. The worker training program shall identify safety measures to be implemented by construction contractors during construction. Safety measures will include the following:

- Provide HEPA-filtered air-conditioned enclosed cabs on heavy equipment. Train workers on proper use of cabs, such as turning on air conditioning prior to using the equipment.
- Provide communication methods, such as two-way radios, for use by workers in enclosed cabs.
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE), such as half-mask and/or full-mask respirators equipped with particulate filtration, to workers active in dusty work areas.
- Provide separate, clean eating areas with hand-washing facilities for construction workers.
- Clean equipment, vehicles, and other items before they are moved off site to other work locations.
- Provide training for construction workers so they can recognize the symptoms of Valley Fever and promptly report suspected symptoms of work-related Valley Fever to a supervisor.
- Direct workers that exhibit Valley Fever symptoms to immediately seek a medical evaluation.
- Prior to initiating any grading, the construction contractor will provide the County program manager with copies of all educational training material.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following discussion is based on the Biological Resources Assessment (BRA) for North Central Energy Storage, prepared by Dudek in July 2021, included as Appendix D. The purpose of this BRA is to identify and characterize existing on-site biological resources, with particular focus on the potential of the site to support special-status plant and wildlife species and other sensitive resources, such as wetlands and other aquatic features, and wildlife movement corridors.

a) Special-Status Plants

Results of U.S. Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database, and California Native Plant Society searches revealed 16 special-status plant species that have potential to occur or that are known to occur in the Project Site region (see Appendix D of Appendix D, BRA). Of these, nine special-status plant species were removed from consideration due to lack of suitable habitat within or adjacent to the Project Site or because the site is outside of the species' known geographic or elevation range. The remaining seven special-status plant species have some potential to occur on the Project Site and including the following: valley brodiaea (*Brodiaea rosea* ssp. *vallicola*), succulent owl's-clover (*Castilleja campestris* var. *succulenta*), recurved larkspur (*Delphinium recurvatum*), Ahart's dwarf rush (*Juncus leiospermus* var. *ahartii*), legenere (*Legenere limosa*), pincushion navarretia (*Navarretia myersii* ssp. *myersii*), and Greene's tuctoria (*Tuctoria greenei*) (see Appendix D, BRA).

The Project applicant intends to avoid impacts to special-status plant species to the maximum extent feasible through careful Project design and extensive avoidance buffers surrounding site wetland features. For those impacts to special-status plant species that cannot be avoided, the Project applicant will mitigate for impacts through the San Joaquin

County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation and Open Space Plan (SJMSCP). When approved by the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG) as a covered activity, the Project applicant shall include Incidental Take Minimization Measures as conditions of Project approval, in accordance with SJMSCP Sections 5.2.3 and 5.2.4, as provided by SJCOG. The applicant will also pay mitigation fees to SJCOG as compensatory mitigation for impacts to biological resources under the federal Endangered Species Act (FESA), California Endangered Species Act (CESA), and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The specific Incidental Take Minimization Measures that would be applied to the project would be determined by SJCOG based on the recommendations of the assigned SJCOG biologist. However, a summary of Incidental Take Minimization Measures that would likely apply to the Project is provided in Table 3 of Appendix D (BRA) and in the detailed descriptions thereafter.

Of the seven special-status plant species with a potential to occur, six species have a low potential to occur (valley brodiaea, succulent owl's-clover, recurved larkspur, Ahart's dwarf rush, pincushion navarretia, and Greene's tuctoria), and one species, legenere, has a moderate potential to occur. Two plant species with federal and state listing status pursuant to FESA or CESA have a potential to occur on the Project Site (succulent owl's-clover and Greene's tuctoria). The SJMSCP does not provide take coverage for three of the seven aforementioned special-status plant species (valley brodiaea, Ahart's dwarf rush, pincushion navarretia); however, these species were not observed on the Project Site during seasonal botanical surveys, these species have a low potential to occur, and potential impacts would be further minimized through careful Project design, extensive avoidance buffers surrounding site wetland features, incidental take minimization measures required under the SJMSCP for similar species, and compensatory mitigation.

For these reasons, impacts to non-covered special-status plant species are unlikely; however, Project implementation could impact special-status plant species if they occur on the Project Site prior to commencement of construction activities. Impacts could include the destruction of individual plants or populations of plants that may become established in the construction footprint prior to ground disturbance. As previously mentioned, the SJMSCP does not provide take coverage for valley brodiaea, Ahart's dwarf rush, or pincushion navarretia, so if these species were found on the Project Site, avoidance would be required. Therefore, mitigation measures MM-BIO-1 and MM-BIO-2 are provided to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to special-status plant species not currently covered under the SJMSCP.

Implementation of the PG&E substation expansion component will result in the permanent loss of waters and wetlands within the proposed substation expansion area. Expansion of existing substations is a covered activity under the PG&E San Joaquin Valley Operations and Maintenance Habitat Conservation Plan ("PG&E HCP"). PG&E intends to avoid impacts to special-status plant species to the maximum extent feasible through careful Project design. PG&E shall include Avoidance and Minimization Measures (AMMs) for covered species and other resource protection as conditions of Project component approval, in accordance with the PG&E HCP. Implementation of AMMs required under the PG&E HCP, including conducting pre-construction surveys for covered species prior to Project activities and where practicable establishing zones around sensitive habitats, will further reduce potential for effects to special-status plants. Through compliance with the PG&E HCP, the Project will also provide compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to biological resources under FESA, CESA, and CEQA. All permanent suitable habitat losses, including wetland habitats, will be compensated for at a 3:1 ratio; temporary losses of suitable habitat will be mitigated at a 0.5:1 ratio. See discussions b) and c) below for additional information on resource agency permitting that would be completed prior to construction for impacts to waters and wetlands.

Three special-status plant species are not covered under the PG&E HCP including valley brodiaea, recurved larkspur, and Ahart's dwarf rush; however, implementation of the AMMs and compensatory mitigation required for covered species would avoid, minimize, and mitigate for potential impacts to species not covered under the PG&E HCP. A summary of PG&E HCP AMMs relevant to the Project is provided in Section 5.5, Appendix F, Biological Resources Technical Report, Pacific Gas & Electric Company – Bellota substation 115 kV Pad Expansion Project, San Joaquin County California of Appendix D, BRA to this IS/MND. Detailed descriptions of applicable AMMs and a summary of PG&E's standard environmental practices are provided thereafter.

Although impacts to non-covered special-status plant species are unlikely, Project implementation could result in impacts to special-status plant species if they occur on the Project Site prior to commencement of construction activities. Impacts could include the destruction of individual plants or populations of plants that may become established in the construction footprint prior to ground disturbance. As previously mentioned, the PG&E HCP does not provide take coverage for valley brodiaea, recurved larkspur, and Ahart's dwarf rush, so if these species were found on the Project Site, avoidance would be required. Therefore, mitigation measures MM-BIO-1 and MM-BIO-2 are provided to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to special-status plant species not currently covered under the PG&E HCP.

Therefore, through coverage under the SJMSCP and PG&E HCP, and implementation of MM-BIO-1 and MM-BIO-2, impacts to special-status plant species would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Special-Status Wildlife

Results of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Natural Diversity Database queries revealed 18 special-status wildlife species as present or potentially present on or adjacent to the Project Site (see Appendix E of Appendix D, BRA). Of these, nine species were removed from consideration due to lack of suitable habitat on or adjacent to the Project Site, or due to the site being outside of the species' known geographic or elevation range. The remaining nine special-status wildlife species have some potential to occur on the Project Site and include the following: California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*), tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*), nesting migratory birds and raptors, and roosting bats (see Appendix D, BRA). Two of those species, the tricolored blackbird and bank swallow, have the potential to forage across the Project Site from time to time but are not anticipated to breed on site. Additionally, these species have not been recorded on the Project Site. However, Project implementation would result in the loss of potential foraging habitat. Potential foraging habitat on the Project Site is not uniquely important for these species, and similar or higher quality foraging habitat is relatively abundant in the region. Moreover, these species are highly mobile while foraging, and would be expected to fly away if disturbed. Therefore, significant impacts to those species would not occur.

The Project applicant intends to avoid impacts to special-status wildlife species to the maximum extent feasible through careful Project design and extensive avoidance buffers surrounding site wetland features. For those impacts to special-status wildlife species that cannot be avoided, the Project applicant will mitigate for impacts to special-status wildlife through the SJMSCP. When approved by the SJCOG as a covered activity, the Project applicant shall include Incidental Take Minimization Measures as conditions of Project approval, in accordance with SJMSCP Sections 5.2.3 and 5.2.4, as provided by SJCOG. The applicant will also pay mitigation fees to SJCOG as compensatory mitigation for impacts to biological resources under FESA, CESA, and CEQA.

SJCOG would determine the specific Incidental Take Minimization Measures that would be applied to the Project based on the recommendations of the assigned SJCOG biologist. However, a summary of Incidental Take Minimization Measures that would likely apply to the Project is provided in Table 3 of Appendix D (BRA) and in the detailed descriptions thereafter. Incidental take minimization measures required under the SJMSCP would reduce potential for impacts to special-status wildlife. If habitat loss cannot be avoided, compensatory mitigation under the SJMSCP would mitigate permanent and temporary loss of habitat value for special-status wildlife species.

Implementation of the PG&E substation expansion component will result in the permanent loss of waters and wetlands within the proposed substation expansion area. Expansion of existing substations is a covered activity under the PG&E HCP. PG&E intends to avoid impacts to special-status wildlife species to the maximum extent feasible through careful Project design. PG&E shall include AMMs for covered species and other resource protection as conditions of project component approval, in accordance with the PG&E HCP. Implementation of AMMs required under the PG&E HCP including conducting pre-construction surveys for covered species prior to Project activities and where practicable establishing zones around sensitive habitats, will further reduce potential for effects to special-status wildlife. Through compliance with the PG&E HCP, the Project will also provide compensatory mitigation for impacts to biological resources under FESA, CESA, and CEQA. All permanent suitable habitat losses, including wetland habitats, will be compensated for at a 3:1 ratio; temporary losses of suitable habitat will be mitigated at a 0.5:1 ratio.

Wildlife species not covered under the PG&E HCP include Western spadefoot, pallid bat, nesting migratory birds and raptors, and roosting bats. However, implementation of the AMMs and compensatory mitigation required for covered species would effectively mitigate for potential impacts to species not currently covered under the PG&E HCP. A summary of PG&E HCP AMMs relevant to the Project is provided in Section 5, Appendix F, Biological Resources Technical Report, Pacific Gas & Electric Company – Bellota substation 115 kV Pad Expansion Project, San Joaquin County California, of Appendix D (BRA) to this IS/MND. Detailed descriptions of applicable AMMs and a summary of PG&E's standard environmental practices are provided thereafter.

Therefore, through coverage under and compliance with the SJMSCP and PG&E HCP, impacts to special-status wildlife would be less than significant.

b, c)

Sensitive Natural Vegetation Communities

One sensitive natural vegetation community occurs within the Project Site: *Eryngium castrense* Association (42.007.06) (CDFW 2019). The Project applicant has designed the Project to avoid impacts to sensitive vegetation communities to the maximum extent feasible through careful Project design and extensive avoidance buffers surrounding site wetland features. Additionally, none of the *E. castrense* populations within the two vernal pools and two seasonal wetland swales on site met the 0.25-acre minimum mapping unit for special vegetation communities (CDFW 2020a). Moreover, coverage under the SJMSCP would provide additional mitigation coverage for this vegetation community. Sensitive natural vegetation communities are absent from the proposed PG&E substation expansion area. Therefore, due to avoidance of sensitive natural vegetation community areas, permit requirements, mitigation under the SJMSCP, and absence of sensitive natural vegetation communities within the substation expansion area, impacts to sensitive vegetation communities would be less than significant.

Wetlands and Other Waters

Dudek identified a total of 1.32 acres of aquatic resources within the Project Site: three types of potential wetlands and three types of non-wetland waters. This includes two vernal pools (0.08 acres), two seasonal wetlands (0.06 acres), seasonal wetland swales (0.69 acres), ephemeral drainages (0.23 acres), one human-made drainage (0.22 acres), and one human-made wetland (0.04 acres).

Of these resources, 1.3 acres of wetlands or other water potentially under the jurisdictional U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), CDFW, and/or the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) were identified on the Project Site. Project implementation resulting in the removal or fill of all or part of these wetland and other waters would be considered a significant impact. The applicant intends to avoid impacts to wetlands and other waters to the maximum extent feasible through careful project design and extensive avoidance buffers surrounding site wetland features. A limited segment of the PG&E substation expansion component of the Project would permanently impact a small portion of on-site aquatic resources; therefore, regulatory permits in the form of a Water Quality Certification from the Central Valley RWQCB, a Nationwide Permit authorization from the ACOE, and a Streambed Alteration Agreement from the CDFW are currently being processed for the Project. Compliance with the requirements of these federal and state authorizations would ensure that any impacts to wetland and other waters would be avoided, minimized, or mitigated. Therefore, with compliance to federal and state authorizations, the Project would result in a less than significant impact to wetlands and other waters.

- d) The California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project, developed by CDFW and the California Department of Transportation, intends to describe and depict a functional network of connected wildlands that is essential to the continued support of California's diverse natural communities in the face of human development and climate change (Caltrans et al. 2010). The Essential Connectivity Map indicates that the eastern half of the Project Site is located within an area that provides connectivity between similar habitat patches, while the western half falls within an area of "Limited Connectivity Opportunity" (CDFW 2020b).

The western portion of the Project Site is not mapped as being part of a habitat linkage, and it is likely that site-specific conditions such as adjacent land uses, fencing, and the existing PG&E Bellota substation limit the value of the Project Site as a habitat linkage. Therefore, the Project would result in a less than significant impact to a wildlife corridor.

- e) The applicant's design is consistent with the 2035 General Plan Natural and Cultural Resource Element policies for protection of biological resources. No tree removal is anticipated as part of Project implementation. Additionally, the Project would be a covered activity under both the SJMSCP and the PG&E HCP. Therefore, because the Project would avoid and mitigate impacts potential biological resources as discussed in analyses a) through d) above, and would be consistent with local plans and policies protecting biological resources, impacts would be less than significant.
- f) San Joaquin County adopted the SJMSCP on November 14, 2004. As stated above in Section IV. a), the proposed project would obtain coverage under the SJMSCP, and incidental take minimization measures required under the SJMSCP would further reduce potential for impacts to special-status plant species and wildlife species. PG&E would maintain coverage for the substation expansion component under PG&E's HCP. In addition to coverage under the SJMSCP and the PG&E HCP, along with the implementation of mitigation measures of MM-BIO-1 and MM-BIO-2, the Project would have a less than significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

- MM-BIO-1: Special-Status Plant Surveys.** Prior to ground disturbance, a qualified botanist familiar with common and rare plant species of the Central Valley region shall conduct pre-construction surveys of all areas of potential Project disturbance during the appropriate blooming period for potentially occurring special-status plant species. The purpose of the survey shall be to delineate and flag populations of special-status plant species for avoidance. If no special-status plants are identified, no further mitigation is necessary. Special-status plant populations identified during the pre-construction survey shall be mapped using a hand-held GPS unit and avoided where possible. Plant individuals or populations plus a 10-foot buffer or per the discretion of a qualified botanist shall be temporarily fenced during construction activities with high-visibility fencing or prominently flagged.
- MM-BIO-2: Rare Plant Salvage and Translocation Plan.** If avoidance of special-status plant species is not feasible, a qualified botanist shall prepare a rare plant salvage and translocation plan prior to Project implementation. The rare plant salvage and translocation plan shall include the following, at a minimum: identification of occupied habitat to be preserved and occupied habitat to be removed; identification of on-site or off-site preservation, restoration, or enhancement locations; methods for preservation, restoration, enhancement, and/or translocation; goals and objectives for preservation, restoration, enhancement, and/or translocation; replacement ratio; a monitoring program to ensure mitigation success; adaptive management and remedial measures in the event that the performance standards are not achieved; and financial assurances for conservation of mitigation lands; and a mechanism for conservation of any mitigation lands required in perpetuity.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following analysis is based on the Cultural Resources Assessment prepared as part of the proposed project and included as Appendix E.

- a) A records search was completed for the Project Site, or the area of potential effect (APE), and a 0.5-mile buffer by staff at the Central California Information Center on July 21, 2020. The records search identified six previous studies that have been performed within the records search area; of these, three have covered a least a portion of the APE (see Table 1 of Appendix E). The records search did not identify any cultural resources present within the APE. Two previously recorded cultural resources have been identified within 0.5 miles of the APE.

Great Western Power Company constructed the PG&E Bellota substation in 1926 to transfer power between Great Western Power Company's Brighton substation and the San Joaquin Light and Power Company's Merced substation. While the substation was important in the growth of California's energy infrastructure, it lacks association with the period of significance for the establishment of electrical transmission and its operating companies, and it has been recommended ineligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and California Register of Historical Resources (Appendix E).

Historical maps and aerial imagery were reviewed to observe previous development on the Project APE. These maps and images indicate that the Project Site consisted of undeveloped grassland savannah prior to the construction of the PG&E Bellota substation in the 1940s. Residential and ranching development on the western half of Project Site began between 1968 and 1982. An additional residence was constructed in the 1990s, along with improvements to the driveway access to both residences. No major alterations to the landscape have occurred since 1993, but the surrounding area has been increasingly developed for agricultural production.

Therefore, because there are no known or designated historical resources on the Project Site as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, impacts would be less than significant.

- b), c) On July 13, 2020, Dudek archaeologists conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of the APE. No cultural resources were identified during the survey (Appendix E). Based on review of the Project setting, the Project has a low potential to impact any known cultural resources; however, based on undisturbed conditions in much of the APE and geoarchaeological suitability, there is a moderate potential for the discovery of unanticipated cultural resources during initial Project-related ground disturbance. Therefore, impacts to archaeological resources and human remains would be potentially significant. Therefore, MM-CUL-1 and MM-CUL-2 would be implemented. Implementation of mitigation would reduce impacts to a level that is less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

MM-CUL-1: Unanticipated Archaeological Resources.

A worker environmental awareness program (WEAP) would be prepared for construction contractors and all on-site personnel. WEAP training would cover the potential sensitive environmental resources that may be found on site and would educate and instruct on-site personnel to avoid any known cultural resources in the area including known off-site resources. All on-site personnel would be required to attend the WEAP training prior to working at the job site. Environmental professionals will conduct WEAP training throughout construction for all Project personnel prior to

working on site. Construction personnel would be provided detailed information about the Project Site including permit conditions, reports, plans, maps, and any other relevant project documents. Information and maps will include cultural resource (including tribal cultural resource) buffers, if applicable.

Although there are no documented or known cultural resources on site, if an inadvertent discovery of cultural or tribal cultural resources (e.g., unusual amounts animal bone, bottle glass, ceramics, structure/building remains) is made during Project-related construction activities, ground disturbances in the area of the find shall be halted; the discovered resource shall be roped off; and San Joaquin County shall be contacted. A qualified specialist, meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, will be assigned to review the unanticipated find, and evaluation efforts of this resource for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and California Register of Historical Resources listing will be initiated in consultation with San Joaquin County. Prehistoric archaeological deposits may be indicated by the presence of discolored or dark soil, fire-affected material, concentrations of fragmented or whole freshwater bivalves shell, burned or complete bone, non-local lithic materials, or the characteristic observed to be atypical of the surrounding area. Common prehistoric artifacts may include modified or battered lithic materials; lithic or bone tools that appeared to have been used for chopping, drilling, or grinding; projectile points; fired clay ceramics or non-functional items; and other items. Historic-age deposits are often indicated by the presence of glass bottles and shards, ceramic material, building or domestic refuse, ferrous metal, or old features such as concrete foundations or privies. Depending upon the significance of the find, the archaeologist may simply record the find and allow work to continue. If the discovery proves significant under the California Environmental Quality Act/NRHP, additional work, such as preparation of an archaeological treatment plan, testing, or data recovery may be warranted.

MM-CUL-2: Unanticipated Human Remains.

Worker environmental awareness program training would cover the unanticipated potential to unearth human remains during construction. Should human remains be discovered, work shall halt in that area and procedures set forth in the California Public Resources Code (Section 5097.98) and State Health and Safety Code (Section 7050.5) will be followed, beginning with notification to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (if applicable) and County Coroner. No further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains shall occur until the County Coroner has determined, within 2 working days of notification of the discovery, the appropriate treatment and disposition of the human remains. If the County Coroner determines that the remains are, or are believed to be, Native American, he or she shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) in Sacramento within 24 hours. In accordance with California Public Resources Code, Section 5097.98, the NAHC must immediately notify those persons it believes to be the most likely descendent from the deceased Native American. The most likely descendent shall complete his/her inspection within 48 hours of being granted access to the site. The designated Native American representative would then determine, in consultation with the property owner, the disposition of the human remains.

VI. ENERGY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a)				

Construction

Electricity. Temporary electric power for as-necessary lighting and electronic equipment would be provided by PG&E. The amount of electricity used during construction would be minimal because typical demand would stem from electric-powered hand tools. The electricity used for construction activities would be temporary and minimal; therefore, Project construction would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of electricity. Impacts would be less than significant.

Natural Gas. Natural gas is not anticipated to be required during construction of the Project. Fuels used for construction equipment would primarily consist of diesel and gasoline, which are discussed under the subsection "Petroleum." Any minor amounts of natural gas that may be consumed as a result of Project construction would be temporary and negligible and would not have an adverse effect; therefore, Project construction would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of natural gas. Impacts would be less than significant.

Petroleum. Petroleum would be consumed throughout construction. Fuel consumed by construction equipment would be the primary energy resource expended over the course of construction. Transportation of construction materials and construction workers would also result in petroleum consumption. Heavy-duty construction equipment, vendor trucks, and haul trucks would use diesel fuel. Construction workers would likely travel to and from the Project area in gasoline-powered vehicles. Construction is expected to take approximately 12 months. Once construction activities cease, petroleum use from off-road equipment and transportation vehicles would end. Because of the short-term nature of construction and relevantly small scale of the Project, petroleum use would be minimal. Impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

The Project would be built in accordance with the current Title 24 standards at the time of construction and the California Green Building Standards, where applicable. Additionally, as a BESS sited to support future renewable energy projects, it would indirectly assist the provision of renewable energy available for use within the state. Therefore, due to the inherent nature of the project as a BESS, the Project would not result in a wasteful use of energy. Impacts would be less than significant.

- b) The Project would assist the state in meeting its Renewables Portfolio Standard goals by developing a BESS sited to support future renewable energy projects, and thereby assisting in the increased supply of renewable solar energy within the state. The Project would also comply with CARB's idling regulations for heavy-duty trucks, which would help to reduce petroleum consumption during construction. Based on the foregoing, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant during construction and operation.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) to Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

a) (i and ii), c)

According to the California Geological Survey Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Zones, the Project Site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Zone (CGS 2017). Because the Project Site is not located within an active fault zone, the likelihood of fault rupture to occur within the Project Site is low. In addition, the design of the Project facilities would conform to all applicable federal, state, and local building codes relative to seismic design criteria, and it would not increase the exposure of people or structures at the site to potential substantial adverse effects from seismic ground shaking. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

a) iii) The Project Site is located in an area susceptible to liquefaction (CGS 1998). However, the Project does not include construction of habitable structures that would expose people to risks associated with liquefaction. In addition, the design of the Project facilities would conform to all applicable federal, state, and local building codes, which would ensure structural integrity regardless of the characteristic of the underlying soils. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

a) iv) The Project Site is relatively flat and is not located at the base on any hillsides, ridgeline, or slopes. In addition, the Project Site has not been mapped as a landslide hazards area. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

- b) Construction of the Project would result in ground surface disturbance during excavation and grading that could create the potential for erosion to occur. Notwithstanding, the provisions of the California State Water Resources Control Board Stormwater Program and Stormwater General Construction Permit BMPs include the preparation of erosion control plans and a SWPPP, which would be employed to control any potential erosion or sedimentation impacts related to the Project construction and operation. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.
- d) The Project area is located within an area underlain by alluvial deposits. These deposits potentially include saturated granular sediments, which may liquefy under strong ground shaking from a large regional earthquake. While it is not possible to eliminate all seismic and geological hazards, the proposed BESS facilities would be constructed to current seismic standards, including standards for construction on soils subject to liquefaction or other instability.

Furthermore, Project design and implementation would conform to all applicable federal, state, and local building codes, which would ensure structural integrity regardless of the characteristic of the underlying soils. In the event that expansive soils are encountered on the Project Site, compliance with these applicable building regulations would ensure that the Project is designed and engineered to withstand on-site soil conditions. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- e) The private residences located adjacent to the Project Site currently maintain septic tanks; therefore, on-site soils support the use of septic tanks. Additionally, construction and operation of the Project would not affect any existing, or hinder future, septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems, or the soils that would adequately support those systems. Therefore, no impacts would occur.
- f) The Project is in the vicinity of three known geologic units that have the potential to contain paleontological resources. The North Merced Gravel (QTnm) deposit is mapped along the eastern portion of the Project Site in proximity to the existing substation (Marchand and Bartow 1979). Because of the coarse-grained nature of this deposit and its relatively young age, significant paleontological resources are not anticipated to be recovered as a result of the Project. The Laguna Formation (TI) is mapped at the surface along the remaining areas of the Project Site. The Laguna Formation contains arkosic gravel, sand, silt, and interbedded volcanic detritus derived from the Mehrten Formation (Marchand and Bartow 1979). The Laguna Formation is known to produce significant paleontological resources (Stirton 1939); however, the Project does not propose excavation within this formation. The Mehrten Formation (Tm), which is known to produce significant paleontological resources, is mapped outside of the Project area along the western portion of the project vicinity (Marchand and Bartow 1979); however, there is the potential that the Mehrten Formation could be encountered at depth within the western portion of the Project Site, depending on the amount of excavation anticipated (Hook and McLeod 2020). Therefore, although impacts to paleontological resources are unlikely, mitigation measure MM-GEO-1 is provided in the event excavation within the Mehrten Formation results in the unanticipated discovery of paleontological resources, and impacts would be reduced to a level that is less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

MM-GEO-1: Unanticipated Paleontological Resources.

A worker environmental awareness program (WEAP) would be prepared for construction contractors and all on-site personnel. WEAP training would cover the potential sensitive environmental resources that may be found on site and would educate and instruct on-site personnel to avoid paleontological resources. All on-site personnel would be required to attend the WEAP training prior to working at the job site. Environmental professionals shall conduct WEAP training throughout construction for all Project personnel prior to working on site. Construction personnel would be provided detailed information about the Project Site including permit conditions, reports, plans, maps, and any other relevant project documents. Information and maps will include sensitive geologic formations including the Mehrten Formation.

If an inadvertent discovery of paleontological materials (e.g., unusual amounts of shell or animal bone) is made during Project-related construction activities, ground disturbances in the area of the find shall be halted; the discovered resource shall be roped off; and San Joaquin County shall be contacted. the qualified professional archaeologist and/or paleontologist shall be notified regarding the discovery. A qualified paleontologist shall be assigned to determine whether the resource is potentially significant as per the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology 2010 guidelines for mitigation and develop appropriate treatment measures.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following analysis is based on the Air Quality and GHG Study conducted for the project and included as Appendix C.

a)

Construction and Decommissioning Emissions

Construction and decommissioning of the Project would result in GHG emissions, which are primarily associated with use of off-road construction equipment, on-road vendor trucks, and worker vehicles. The SJVAPCD recommends that construction emissions be amortized over a 30-year project lifetime; therefore, the total construction and decommissioning GHG emissions were calculated, amortized over 30 years, and then compared to the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association operational GHG significance threshold of 900 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MT CO₂e) per year.

Project construction is anticipated to last up to 15 months and decommissioning 6 months. On-site sources of GHG emissions include off-road equipment, and off-site sources include on-road vehicles (vendor trucks and worker vehicles). Table 8 of the Air Quality and GHG Study (Appendix C) presents construction and decommissioning GHG emissions for the Project from on-site and off-site emission sources. As shown in Table 8, the estimated total GHG emissions during construction and decommissioning of the Project would be approximately 2,104 MT CO₂e. Estimated Project-generated construction and decommissioning emissions amortized over 30 years would be approximately 70 MT CO₂e per year. In addition, Table 10 of the Air Quality and GHG Study (Appendix C) presents construction GHG emissions for the PG&E substation from on-site and off-site emission sources, and the estimated total GHG emissions during construction and decommissioning of the proposed PG&E substation would be approximately 331 MT CO₂e. Estimated PG&E substation-generated construction and decommissioning emissions amortized over 30 years would be approximately 11 MT CO₂e per year.

As with Project-generated construction air quality pollutant emissions, GHG emissions generated during construction of the Project would be short term in nature, lasting only for the duration of the construction period, and would not represent a long-term source of GHG emissions. Because there is no separate GHG threshold for construction, the evaluation of significance is determined by adding the amortized construction emissions to the operational emissions and comparing them to the operational threshold.

Operational Emissions

Table 9 of the Air Quality and GHG Study (Appendix C) shows the estimated operational emissions from the project. As shown in Table 9, the estimated total GHG emissions during operation of the project would be approximately 253 MT CO₂e per year, including amortized construction and decommissioning emissions. The PG&E substation would not increase operational activity beyond what currently takes place. Therefore, the amortized construction emissions of 11 MT CO₂e per year would not exceed the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association threshold of 900 MT CO₂e per year. Projects below this significance criterion are considered to have a minimal contribution to global emissions, and impacts would be less than significant.

- b) The County's 2035 General Plan outlines estimated GHG emissions and sustainability measures to reach the County's GHG reduction goals for 2035 and 2050 (San Joaquin County 2016). Table 11 in the Air Quality and GHG Study (Appendix C) provides an overview of the measures and goals within the General Plan that are applicable to the Project and the Project's consistency with them. As shown in Table 11 of the Air Quality and GHG Study (Appendix C), the Project does not conflict with any of the GHG reducing measures or goals within the General Plan and thus is consistent with the plan. In addition, as described in the Air Quality and GHG Study (Appendix C), the Project would not conflict with the SJCOC's 2018 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy or the CARB Scoping Plan. Therefore, the Project's impact associated with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs would be less than significant.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

a)

Construction

A variety of hazardous substances and wastes would be transported to and stored, used, and handled on the Project Site during construction. These would include fuels for construction equipment and vehicles, motor oils, cleaning solvents, paints, and storage containers and applicators containing such materials. However, construction activities would be short term in nature, and the types of materials that would be routinely involved are not considered acutely hazardous. Furthermore, the handling of these materials would be subject to applicable federal, state, and local health and safety requirements. As such, Project construction would not create a significant hazard to the public through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials during construction. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

Incorporation of the O&M building would also involve routine transport, use, or disposal of minimal hazardous materials, including cleaning chemicals used and stored on site for routine cleaning purposes, motor vehicle fuel, lubricants, antifreeze, coolant, and herbicides. However, hazardous materials are highly regulated in California, including the methods by which they are transported, used, and stored. Further, the application of herbicides for vegetation management, if required, is regulated by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation and would be required to be carried out by a licensed individual.

BESS technology proposed for the Project would be designed so that battery units would not degrade to the point of needing to be routinely replaced during the Project lifetime. However, if transport of new battery units were necessary, these batteries would be classified as universal waste under the Department of Toxic Substances Control regulations and Guidance (DTSC 2018), which are defined as hazardous wastes that are widely produced by households and many different types of businesses. The hazardous waste regulations (22 CCR Div. 4.5, Ch. 11 Section 66261.9) identify seven categories of hazardous wastes that can be managed as universal wastes. Any unwanted item that falls within one of these waste streams can be handled, transported, and recycled following the simple requirements set forth in the universal waste regulations (22 CCR Div. 4.5, Ch. 23) (DTSC 2010).

In addition, transportation of lithium-ion batteries is subject to 49 Code of Federal Regulations 173.185. These regulations include requirements for prevention of a dangerous evolution of heat, prevention of short-circuits, prevention of damage to the terminals, and the requirements that no battery come in contact with other batteries or conductive materials. Adherence to the requirements such as training, safe interim storage, and segregation from other potential waste streams would minimize any public hazard related to the transport, use, or disposal. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant during operation.

b)

Construction

During Project construction, heavy construction equipment would also require the use of small amounts of hazardous materials such as oils, fuels, and other potentially flammable substances that have the potential to leak or spill within the construction area. However, these materials are highly regulated in California to prevent upset and accident. Therefore, compliance with all applicable regulations would ensure construction activities do not result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials from construction equipment.

Operation

The Project would be a passive use that would not use hazardous materials on a regular basis that could result in upset or cause a hazardous condition for the public. Lithium-ion technology is a common energy storage medium and is considered a relatively safe and efficient method of energy storage. The Project would use a lithium-ion technology that has a long lifespan and comprises heavily regulated safety and stability characteristics.

In addition, the Project would be monitored remotely by the applicant through the proposed SCADA system, and personnel would be dispatched to the facility as necessary to resolve any anomalies detected. Personnel would be trained to interact closely with the Project engineering team as needed to achieve resolution of operational issues in a timely manner and with a high level of process discipline. In the unlikely event that an anomaly was to arise, including but not limited to a change in battery temperature, the monitoring system would immediately notify off-site personnel, who would then immediately act on the issue. In addition, several different fail-safes are built into both the hardware and software to ensure safe and efficient operations. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- c) The closest school is Linden Unified School District, located approximately 4 miles west of the Project Site. As such, the Project would not emit hazardous emissions within 0.25 miles of an existing or proposed school. Furthermore, as discussed in thresholds a) and b), the Project would not pose a significant risk of release of hazardous materials. Therefore, no impact would occur.
- d) Government Code Section 65962.5 applies to facilities that may be subject to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Corrective Action program involving the cleanup of improperly managed hazardous wastes. The proposed Project Site is not contained on any lists compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 or on the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (EnviroStor) and State Water Resources Control Board (GeoTracker) databases for contaminated sites (DTSC 2021; SWRCB 2021). Therefore, no impacts would occur.
- e) The proposed Project Site is located approximately 15 miles northeast of Stockton Metropolitan Airport. According to the San Joaquin County Airport Land Use Commission, the Project is not located within the Airport Influence Area or inner safety zones for the Stockton Metropolitan Airport (ALUC 2021).

The Project would not include any facilities that would be of a height that would represent an obstruction to air navigation, change air traffic patterns, or result in substantial safety risks regarding air traffic. Therefore, no impact would occur.

- f) The Project would not hinder emergency access in the area. No permanent or temporary road closures or modifications are proposed as part of the Project. All construction activities and staging would take place within the Project Site. No incompatible uses on public roads would occur from either construction or operation of the Project. Therefore, the Project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Impacts would be less than significant.
- g) Refer to Section 20, Wildfire.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;				
(iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?				
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- a) Construction activities associated with the Project would include earth-moving activities such as grading, which could cause erosion effects; however, construction activities would be subject to RWQCB requirements related to erosion control, sedimentation, and runoff prevention. Additionally, the Project would comply with the San Joaquin County SWPPP, which places emphasis on the implementation of Low Impact Development (LID) design. LID is intended to mimic a site's predevelopment hydrology by using design techniques that infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to its source (San Joaquin County 2021a). San Joaquin County will comply with these requirements and identify site-specific BMPs to control erosion, sediment, and potential runoff. Upon compliance with the RWQCB standards, implementation of a SWPPP and associated LID design features, along with site-specific BMPs, the Project would not violate water quality standards. Additionally, the PG&E Bellota substation expansion portion of the Project would impact on-site aquatic resources subject to the jurisdiction of the ACOE, CDFW and RWQCB. However, PG&E is in the process of securing a 404 permit from the ACOE, a 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement with CDFW, and a 401 permit from the RWQCB. Issuance of these permits would reduce potential impacts to jurisdictional water resources to a level that is less than significant. This Project was designed to accommodate the San Joaquin County Code Development Title 9-1510.5, which requires a natural bank buffer (wetland setback) of any waterway to protect habitat and water quality (San Joaquin County 1995c). As such, a buffer of a minimum width of open space of 100 feet, measured from mean high water level of natural bank or 50 feet back from existing riparian habitat (whichever is greater), will be included in the Project design.

During Project operation, it is anticipated that the Project would not result in off-site discharges, and precipitation would be expected to infiltrate or evaporate on site due to the minimal amount of impervious surface area that would be introduced to the site compared to existing conditions. However, retention basins would be created for hydrologic control, if deemed necessary during final project design, to ensure all potential runoff would be retained on site during precipitation events. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- b) Construction and operational water would be provided by on-site or off-site groundwater through an improved existing well, a new well to be permitted and drilled (if necessary), or through off-site source delivered by truck. In addition, water may be pumped directly into 2,000- to 4,000-gallon water trucks to be stored in up to three temporary 12,000-gallon water storage towers/tanks to assist in the availability of construction water. It is estimated that construction water demand would be approximately 6 acre-feet total, which is considered minimal and could be derived from both on-site and off-site sources. Once operational, water consumption would be minimal, consisting of either imported water to be trucked to the site, well water, or bottled water to be provided for the anticipated three permanent O&M building employees. Therefore, it is possible groundwater would not be used for O&M of the project. As such, in the event that new or expanded groundwater wells would be constructed to service the Project, this construction and/or expansion would not cause significant groundwater drawdown or impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin. Lastly, given that the Project would result in substantial impervious surface area, impacts associated with groundwater recharge would not occur. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- c) (i, ii, and iv)

See analysis provided in thresholds a) and b) above regarding erosion, surface runoff, and flood flow impacts. As previously discussed, it is anticipated that the Project would not result in off-site discharges, and precipitation would be expected to infiltrate or evaporate on site due to the minimal amount of impervious surface; therefore, the Project would not exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage system, and no new stormwater drainage system is proposed.

Impacts would be less than significant.

- c) (iii)

The project would incorporate stormwater detention basins on project site prior to releasing stormwater runoff off at a rate equal to or less than pre-construction conditions (see Figure 4 for location of basins). Under the proposed project, on-site or off-site flooding impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level through proper engineering design and incorporation of stormwater detention basins to assist with stormwater treatment and infiltration.

- d) According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Map for the Project area (Flood Insurance Rate Map No. 06077C0370F), the western portion of the Project Site is located in Flood Hazard Zone A, within the 100-year flood hazard zone, and within Zone X, determined to be outside of the 500-year flood zone (FEMA 2009). However, the development footprint of the Project would take place outside of these flood zones. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.
- e) See analysis provided in thresholds a) through d) above. For the reasons described in the analysis provided, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan, and impacts would be less than significant.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a) The Project area is predominately surrounded by agricultural uses and grazing lands including scattered rural residences. The Project Site surrounds two existing rural residences located in the western portion of the site; however, these existing homes are not part of the Project Site, and implementation of the Project would not displace these homes, nor would the Project fragment access to public roadways from these existing residences. Thus, the Project would not physically divide an established community, and no impact would occur.				
b) Per California Government Code Section 53091(d), "Building ordinances of a county or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water, wastewater, or electrical energy by a local agency." Additionally, California Government Code Section 53091(e) establishes that:				

Zoning ordinances of a county or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water, or for the production or generation of electrical energy, facilities that are subject to Section 12808.5 of the Public Utilities Code, or electrical substations in an electrical transmission system that receives electricity at less than 100,000 volts. Zoning ordinances of a county or city shall apply to the location or construction of facilities for the storage or transmission of electrical energy by a local agency, if the zoning ordinances make provision for those facilities.

In accordance with California Government Code Sections 53091(d) and 53091(e), the Project is exempt from the provisions of the County's Land Use/Zoning/Subdivision Regulations. Nonetheless, the Project has been designed to be harmonious with the character of the existing PG&E Bellota substation and would adhere to all applicable provisions set forth by the County's Zoning Ordinance, where applicable. As such, the Project would be compatible with the adjacent PG&E Bellota substation and is a conditionally allowable use, which would not require a zone change or General Plan land use change.

Finally, the Project is located in an area predominantly characterized by agricultural uses, and two of the five parcels within the Project Site are under the California Land Conservation Act and subject to Williamson Act Contract No. 73-C1-220. Due to the nature of the Project to provide renewable energy integration in association with the PG&E Bellota substation, the Project would meet the criteria pursuant to Government Code Section 51238.1, and cancellation of the Williamson Act contract would not be required. Refer to Section II, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, for further discussion of the Project's adherence to Development Title Section 9-1810.3 (b)(7), which permits uses such as the Project that adhere to the Williamson Act Principles of Compatibility. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, and impacts would be less than significant.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a), b) According to the Department of Conservation Mineral Land Classification, the Project area has not been mapped for mineral resources (DOC 2021). However, the County's General Plan provides goals and policies protecting mineral resources within the County, and specifically those designated as Mineral Resource Zones MRZ-2. MRZ-2 is defined as areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood for their presence exists. The closest area mapped as MRZ-2 is located approximately 12 miles north of the Project Site (DOC 2012). Therefore, there are no known mineral resources located in the Project vicinity, and therefore, no impacts would occur.

XIII.NOISE

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
a) An Operations Noise Technical Memorandum has been prepared for the Project to assess noise impacts associated with Project implementation. The Operations Noise Technical Memorandum is included as Appendix F to this document.				

Construction

Noise levels on the Project Site would increase during construction due to the use of construction equipment and vehicles. Per Title 9, Development Title, Section 9-1025.9, Noise, of the San Joaquin County Ordinance Code, noise sources associated with construction are exempt from otherwise applicable noise standards, provided construction activities occur within the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on any day (San Joaquin County 1995d). Therefore, impacts associated with short-term construction noise would be less than significant.

Operation

Operation of the Project would be required to comply with County noise standards delineated in the Title 9, Development Title, Section 9-1025.9 for stationary noise sources. Accordingly, the sound levels applicable to the Project are hourly energy-equivalent (L_{eq}) values as follows: 50 A-weighted decibels (dBA) during daytime hours (7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.), and 45 dBA at night (10:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.).

Noise modeling was conducted as provided in Appendix F to determine if daytime operation of Project components would exceed the County's Performance Standards. The Project would include screening barriers at approximately 17 of the proposed inverters for the purpose of attenuating inverter noise, should all proposed inverters operate simultaneously. Implementation of screening barriers at selected inverters, and as calculated in Appendix F, Project operational noise would be compliant with the County's noise level thresholds at the receiving property lines of the existing residential land uses. Additionally, as provided in Appendix F, Project nighttime operation noise levels were modeled to be less than 45 dBA hourly L_{eq} at the nearest noise-sensitive property lines.

Moreover, Section 9.1025.9(c)(7) from the San Joaquin County Code provides an exemption from intermittent maintenance activities required during Project operation, which could introduce new noise-producing equipment and activities on site (San Joaquin County 1995d). Therefore, permanent changes in ambient noise levels associated with Project operation would not exceed standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance. Impacts would be less than significant.

- b) See discussion in threshold a) above. Impacts would be less than significant.

Operation of the Project would not result in generation of any groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels. Therefore, impact would be less than significant during Project operation.

- c) The Project site is located approximately 15 miles northeast of Stockton Metropolitan Airport. According to the San Joaquin County Airport Land Use Commission, the Project is not located within the Airport Influence Area, or any safety or noise compatibility zones of the Stockton Metropolitan Airport (ALUC 2021). Therefore, no impact would occur.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
a) The Project would not include construction of any new homes or businesses. In addition, operation of the Project would require a limited number of employees (up to three); therefore, the Project would not directly induce population growth in the area. While the Project would develop new energy system infrastructure, the Project would store and discharge energy derived from renewable sources to support existing energy demand and projected growth to ensure grid reliability. However, the Project would not indirectly encourage new development or induce population growth in the Project area due the development of energy infrastructure. Therefore, no impact would occur.				
b) The Project would not involve removal of existing housing units or necessitate the construction of replacement house as a result of Project implementation. Therefore, no impact would occur.				

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a) **Fire protection?**

The Project Site is served by the Linden-Peters Fire District (Fire District). The Linden-Peter's Fire Station is located at 17725 East Highway 26, Linden, California 95236, which is approximately 4.5 miles west of the Project Site. The Fire District's average response time is 5-6 minutes (San Joaquin County 2014).

According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CAL FIRE) Draft Fire Hazard Severity Zones in LRA for San Joaquin County Map, the Project Site is located in a moderate fire hazard severity zone (CAL FIRE 2007). However, Project implementation would not result in an increase in the local population that would increase the use of or demand for existing public services. Additionally, emergency access roads would be designed in accordance with the Fire District standards for access during construction, and for ongoing maintenance vehicles. Access roads and gates would also comply with California Fire Code and County Fire Chiefs Association, Fire Apparatus Access Road Standards (San Joaquin County 2018). As such, the Project would not generate significant new demand for additional fire protection services beyond the demand that is already generated in the broader Fire District service area. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Police protection?

The Project site is located in the Beat 2 district as identified by the San Joaquin Sheriff's Department. The San Joaquin Sheriff's Department Office is located at 7000 Michael Canlis Boulevard, French Camp, California 95231, approximately 18 miles southwest of the Project Site. The average response time within the County is approximately 15 minutes and increases to 24 minutes for non-emergency calls (San Joaquin County 2014).

Due to the public-utility nature of the Project and because the Project would not induce population growth, Project implementation would not generate significant new demand for additional police protection services beyond the demand that is already generated in the broader San Joaquin County Sheriff's Department service area. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Schools?

The Project would not induce population growth, and thus, would not generate new students in the Project area. As such, the Project would not generate a demand for school services or additional school facilities. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Parks?

The Project would not induce population growth and thus would not result in increased patronage at park and recreational facilities in the area. No impact would occur.

Other public facilities?

The Project would not induce population growth and thus would not result in increased patronage at other public facilities, including library branches and community centers, in the Project area. No impacts would occur.

XVI. RECREATION

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the Project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the Project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
a) The Project would not induce population growth and thus would not result in increased patronage at park and recreational facilities in the Project area. No impacts would occur.				
b) The Project would not include construction of new recreational facilities or the expansion of recreational facilities; therefore, no impact would occur.				

XVII. TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a) Traffic generated by the Project would be primarily associated with temporary construction activities including construction worker trips, and equipment and material deliveries. Construction of the Project would be contained within the Project Site and would not impede circulation along roadways providing access to the Project Site, including Flood Road. Thus, Project construction would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system. Impacts would be less than significant during construction.				

Furthermore, as discussed in Section XIV, Population and Housing, the Project would not induce population growth either directly or indirectly, which could generate additional traffic during operation. Operation of the Project would be primarily associated with intermittent O&M activities, which would include equipment testing, equipment monitoring and repair, and emergency and routine procedures for service continuity and preventative maintenance. The Project would also include an O&M building, which is anticipated to require a maximum of three permanent staff employees for ongoing facility monitoring, equipment storage, and repairs on an as-needed basis and would not generate substantial daily trips. Therefore, Project operation would not conflict with programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system. Impacts would be less than significant.

- b) CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b) focuses on newly adopted criteria vehicle miles traveled for determining the significance of transportation impacts. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, analysis criteria detailed in this CEQA Guidelines section became applicable on July 1, 2020, unless adopted earlier by the lead agency. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research does not require quantitative assessment of temporary construction traffic. As such, construction of the Project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15064.3(b)(1) and 15064.3(b)(3). Impacts would be less than significant.

Upon completion of construction, operational traffic from the Project would be minimal. Operational traffic would be primarily associated with as-needed maintenance activities and daily trips from the three on-site employees traveling to the site on an as-needed basis. Based on the Governor's Office of Planning And Research Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA, December 2018, Screening Threshold for Small Projects, projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per day generally may be assumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact (OPR 2018). Operation of the Project would not generate significant number of trips and thus would not cause substantial amount of vehicle miles traveled. Therefore, operation of the Project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15064.3(b)(1) and 15064.3(b)(3). Impacts would be less than significant.

- c) Construction of the Project would include truck deliveries of materials, components, and supplies to the Project Site. A limited number of oversize loads may be required to deliver large equipment to the Project site at the outset of construction as well as to remove the equipment after construction is completed. If oversize loads are needed, permits specifying route and time limits, as well as any necessary traffic control measures, would be required from federal, state, and local agencies. General construction truck traffic on local roads would not result in incompatible uses.

Access to the Project Site would be provided through an access gate along Flood Road. Access roads would be at least 20 feet wide and designed to meet all applicable regulations and requirements for emergency access, including the California Fire Code and County Fire Chiefs Association, Fire Apparatus Access Road Standards (San

Joaquin County 2018) and requirements specified by the Fire District. The Project does not include construction of new or modification of existing adjacent or off-site public roadways. As such, once operational, the Project would not result in an increased hazard due to a geometric design features or incompatible uses. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- d) Implementation of the Project would not hinder emergency access to the site or surrounding area. No permanent or temporary road closures or modifications are proposed as part of the Project. Additionally, all construction activities and staging would take place within the Project Site. Moreover, no incompatible uses on public roads would occur from either construction or operation of the Project. Finally, as described above, access roads would be at least 20 feet wide and designed to meet all applicable regulations and requirements for emergency access, including the California Fire Code and County Fire Chiefs Association, Fire Apparatus Access Road Standards (San Joaquin County 2018) and requirements specified by the Fire District. Therefore, the Project would not result in inadequate emergency access, and impacts would be less than significant.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i)	Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii)	A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a) i)	As previously discussed in Section 5(a), no cultural resources have been identified on the property either through the records search, literature review, or by pedestrian survey (Appendix E). Further, the PG&E Bellota substation has been completely developed, and only minor improvements to the existing facility would occur as part of the proposed substation expansion effort. In addition, previous recording appropriately documented and evaluated the facility found the substation to be not eligible for the NRHP/California Register of Historical Resources (Stantec Consulting Service 2019). As such, because the substation is not classified as a historical resource or historic property, expansion of the substation would not result in a significant impact. Additionally, the NAHC Sacred Lands File search conducted on July 28, 2020, was negative (Appendix E). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.				
a) ii)	The NAHC Sacred Lands File search conducted for the Project failed to identify any Native American resources in the vicinity of the Project and provided a list of individuals and organizations to contact that may have additional information. A record of the NAHC Sacred Lands File search and tribal outreach is included in Appendix E.				
	All NAHC-listed California Native American Tribal representatives who have requested Project notification pursuant to Assembly Bill 52 (Public Resources Code 21074) were sent letters by the County on July 16, 2021. The letters contained a project description, outline of Assembly Bill 52 timing, request for consultation, and contact information for the appropriate lead agency representative. The Project proponents are in communication with the North Valley Yokuts Tribe regarding Tribal Cultural Resources.				
	Therefore, based on compliance with the various state and federal regulations that govern the treatment of tribal cultural resources, impacts would be less than significant.				

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

There are three active solid waste disposal/landfill facilities in San Joaquin County, as listed in the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery Solid Waste Information System. The Foothill Landfill and North County Landfill are Class III Landfills that are owned and operated by the San Joaquin County Public Works Department. The County also operates Lovelace Materials Recovery Facility and Recycle Center, a Household Hazardous Waste facility. (San Joaquin County 2014). The Foothill Landfill is the closest solid waste facility and is located approximately 4.5 miles northeast of the Project Site.

- a) Construction and operational water would be provided by on-site or off-site groundwater through an improved existing well, a new well to be permitted and drilled (if necessary), or through off-site source delivered by truck. In addition, water may be pumped directly into 2,000- to 4,000-gallon water trucks to be stored in up to three temporary 12,000-gallon water storage towers/tanks to assist in the availability of construction water. It is estimated that construction water demand would be approximately 6 acre-feet total, which is considered minimal and could be derived from both on-site and off-site sources. Once operational, water consumption would be negligible, consisting of either imported water to be trucked to the site, well water, or bottled water to be provided for the anticipated three O&M building employees. The minimal amount of water demand required to support the three O&M employees on an as-needed basis would not result in a substantial increased demand for water and wastewater services. The O&M building would also include a septic system and/or portable toilets to be used for sanitary purposes for employees and would not require construction or expansion of wastewater facilities. Moreover, the Project would not result in the need for new or expanded water or wastewater facilities that would result in significant environmental impacts. Impacts would be less than significant.

As described in Section X, Hydrology and Water Quality, the Project would not generate substantial increased stormwater runoff, such that new stormwater drainage facilities or facility expansion would be required. The minor increase in impervious area would not have a substantial effect on the amount of stormwater runoff that would come from the site. Retention basin(s) and/or perimeter drainage ditches would be created for hydrologic control, if deemed necessary upon final design, to retain potential runoff on site. The Project would prepare a SWPPP and

implement LID features and BMPs to minimize and control post-construction runoff consistent with RWQCB and County standards for stormwater runoff. Thus, the Project would not require the construction or expansion of new stormwater drainage facilities, and impacts would be less than significant.

The Project would include the construction of new electric power facilities; however, these new electric power facilities, including the BESS, gen-tie line, and collector substation are all components of the Project, and the environmental impacts of such components are analyzed in this MND. The Project would not result in the need for new or expanded electric power facilities that could cause significant environmental impacts that are not analyzed and mitigated for herein. Impacts would be less than significant.

Finally, the Project would not require the construction of new or expanded natural gas or telecommunication facilities because the Project would not require the use of such facilities. Impacts would be less than significant.

- b) As described in threshold a) above, the Project would require a minimal amount of water use for construction-related dust suppression and earthwork activities. Operation of the Project would require water solely for the anticipated three permanent O&M building employees on an as-needed basis. Both construction and operational water would be provided by on-site or off-site groundwater through an improved existing well, a new well to be permitted and drilled (if necessary), or through off-site source delivered by truck. Because anticipated water usage at the Project Site would be related to short-term construction activities and a minimal amount of water would be required to support three O&M employees on site, impacts to water supplies would be less than significant.
- c) As described above, the Project would not result in the need for new or expanded wastewater facilities. The proposed O&M building would include a septic system and/or portable toilets to be used for sanitary purposes for employees. The use of a septic tank or portable toilets will not interfere with any wastewater treatment provider's service capacity. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.
- d) Construction activities would generate typical construction waste, such as equipment packaging, construction scrap, and debris. Such wastes would be recycled and disposed of off site. Although the waste is expected to be minimal, the construction contractor would be required to dispose of solid waste in accordance with local solid waste requirements. In compliance with the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 and the California Green Building Code, the Project would be required to divert 50% of its construction waste from landfills. These measures would minimize the amount of construction debris generated by the Project that would need to be disposed of in an area landfill. Any non-recyclable and hazardous construction waste generated would be disposed of at a landfill approved to accept such materials in accordance with state regulations. Upon completion of construction, the Project would not result in continued generation of solid waste throughout the Project lifetime, aside from minimal solid waste generated from the O&M building and anticipated three permanent employees.

During decommissioning of the Project, the BESS and support facilities would be recycled at the expiration of the Project's life. Most parts of the proposed system are recyclable; however, fuel, hydraulic fluids, and oils would be transferred directly to a tanker truck from the respective tanks and vessels and disposed of at a regulated facility that handles such substances. Other items that are not feasible to remove at the point of generation, such as smaller container lubricants, paints, thinners, solvents, cleaners, batteries, and sealants, would be removed for proper disposal and recycling in accordance with state and local regulations. It is anticipated that all oils and batteries would be recycled at an appropriate facility. Transportation of the removed hazardous materials would comply with regulations for transporting hazardous materials, including those set by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Toxic Substances Control, California Highway Patrol, and California State Fire Marshal.

Therefore, the Project would not generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals. Impacts would be less than significant.

- e) Please refer to discussions provided in thresholds a) through d) above. Impacts would be less than significant.

XX. WILDFIRE

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Wildland fires are an annual hazard in the County where natural vegetation on undeveloped lands including rangeland, brush, and grass is considered at risk. Long, hot, and dry summers with temperatures often exceeding 100° F add to the area's fire hazard. Human activities such as smoking, debris burning, campfires, and equipment operation are the major causes of wildland fires. Lightning causes the remaining wildland fires (San Joaquin County 2014).

- a) As discussed above under Sections 9(f) and 17(e), Project implementation would not hinder emergency access in the area. No permanent or temporary road closures or modifications are proposed as part of the Project. Additionally, all construction activities and staging would take place within the Project area. No incompatible uses on public roads would occur from either construction or operation of the Project. Moreover, the San Joaquin County Evacuation Maps do not designate Flood Road as an emergency route, nor does the map designate the Project vicinity as an emergency rally point (a location where the public can meet for assistance during an evacuation) (San Joaquin County 2021b). Therefore, the Project would not conflict with the County's emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. No impact would occur.
- b) According to the CAL FIRE Draft Fire Hazard Severity Zones in LRA for San Joaquin County Map, the Project Site is located in a moderate fire hazard severity zone (CAL FIRE 2007). The Project would not include permanent on-site occupants (such as residents). Aside from the addition of the O&M building, which would result in three employees, the majority of Project components would be unmanned and automated, and all monitoring would be done through the SCADA system. Periodic inspections and minimal maintenance activities would occur by off-site personnel. Therefore, the Project would not expose Project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire, and impacts would be less than significant.
- c) Heat or sparks from construction equipment, vehicles, and the use of flammable hazardous materials have the potential to ignite adjacent vegetation, especially during weather events that include low humidity and high wind speeds. O&M activities associated with the Project would necessitate the use of flammable materials and would introduce new ignition sources to the Project area, including the BESS, overhead transmission line, and collector substation.

To reduce the risk of ignition, the following design features would be incorporated as part of the project:

- During construction, water may be pumped directly into 2,000- to 4,000-gallon tank water trucks or stored in approximately 12,000-gallon water storage towers/tanks to assist in the availability of water for trucks.
- A Knox Box rapid entry system would be installed at the entry gate according to the Fire Prevention Bureau's stipulations. A Knox Box is a small, wall-mounted safe that holds access keys for firefighters and other emergency personnel to retrieve in urgent situations.
- All-weather maintenance and emergency access roads would be constructed for use by emergency first responders. The access roads would be 20 feet wide and designed to meet all applicable regulations and requirements for such access, which include the California Fire Code and County Fire Chiefs Association, Fire Apparatus Access Road Standards (San Joaquin County 2018).
- Continued surveillance of on-site systems and regular inspections and maintenance of all Project components.

Although new ignition sources would be introduced to the site, the Project is required to provide for a level of planning, ignition-resistant construction, access, water availability, fuel modification, and construction materials and methods that have been developed specifically to allow safe development within these areas, in accordance with San Joaquin County standards and regulations. The Project would meet or exceed these requirements. As a result, impacts would be less than significant.

- d) The Project would not include permanent on-site occupants (such as residents) or structures that would be affected by downslope or downstream flooding or landslides. An O&M building would be used by Project employees; however, employees would not reside at the site. All other Project components would be unmanned and automated, and all Project monitoring would be done through the SCADA system. Periodic inspections and maintenance activities would occur by off-site personnel. Therefore, the Project would not expose people or structures to downslope or downstream flooding or landslides.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a) As discussed in Section IV, based on compliance with the SJMSCP for which the applicant would seek coverage, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and all other applicable regulations required for habitat and species protection, as well as mitigation measures MM-BIO-1 and MM-BIO-2 (if needed), the Project would not result in significant impacts to biological resources. In addition, based on compliance with the various state and federal regulations that govern the treatment of cultural resources, and implementation of MM-CUL-1 and MM-CUL-2, impacts to buried, currently unrecorded/unknown archaeological resources would be less than significant. Therefore, the Project would not degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.				
b) As addressed throughout this document, the Project would have a less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated, a less than significant impact without the need for mitigation, or no impact with respect to all environmental impact areas. Cumulative impacts of several resource areas have been specifically addressed in individual resource sections, including Section III, Air Quality; Section VIII, Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Section XIII, Noise; and Section XVII, Transportation and Traffic. The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) was used to assess the air quality and GHG emissions impacts resulting from the Project, concluding that impacts would be less than significant. Noise and traffic assessments conducted as part of this document inherently considered cumulative increases in noise and traffic generation and concluded that cumulative impacts would be less than significant.				
Other resource areas (i.e., Section I, Aesthetics; Section II, Agricultural and Forestry Resources; Section VI, Energy; Section X, Hydrology and Water Quality; Section XI, Land Use and Planning; Section XII, Mineral Resources; Section XIV, Population and Housing; Section XV, Public Services; Section XVI, Recreation; and Section XIX, Utilities and Services Systems) were determined to have a less than significant or no impact in comparison to existing conditions; thus, the Project would not contribute to cumulative impacts related to these environmental topics. Other issue areas (i.e., Section V, Cultural Resources; Section VII, Geology and Soils; Section IX, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, and Section XVIII, Tribal Cultural Resources) are, by their nature, project- and/or site-specific, and impacts at one location do not add to impacts at other locations or create additive impacts.				

For all resource areas analyzed, the Project's individual-level impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels, which would, in turn, reduce the potential for these impacts to be considered a conservable part of any possible cumulative impact. Therefore, the Project would not result in individually limited but cumulatively considerable impacts.

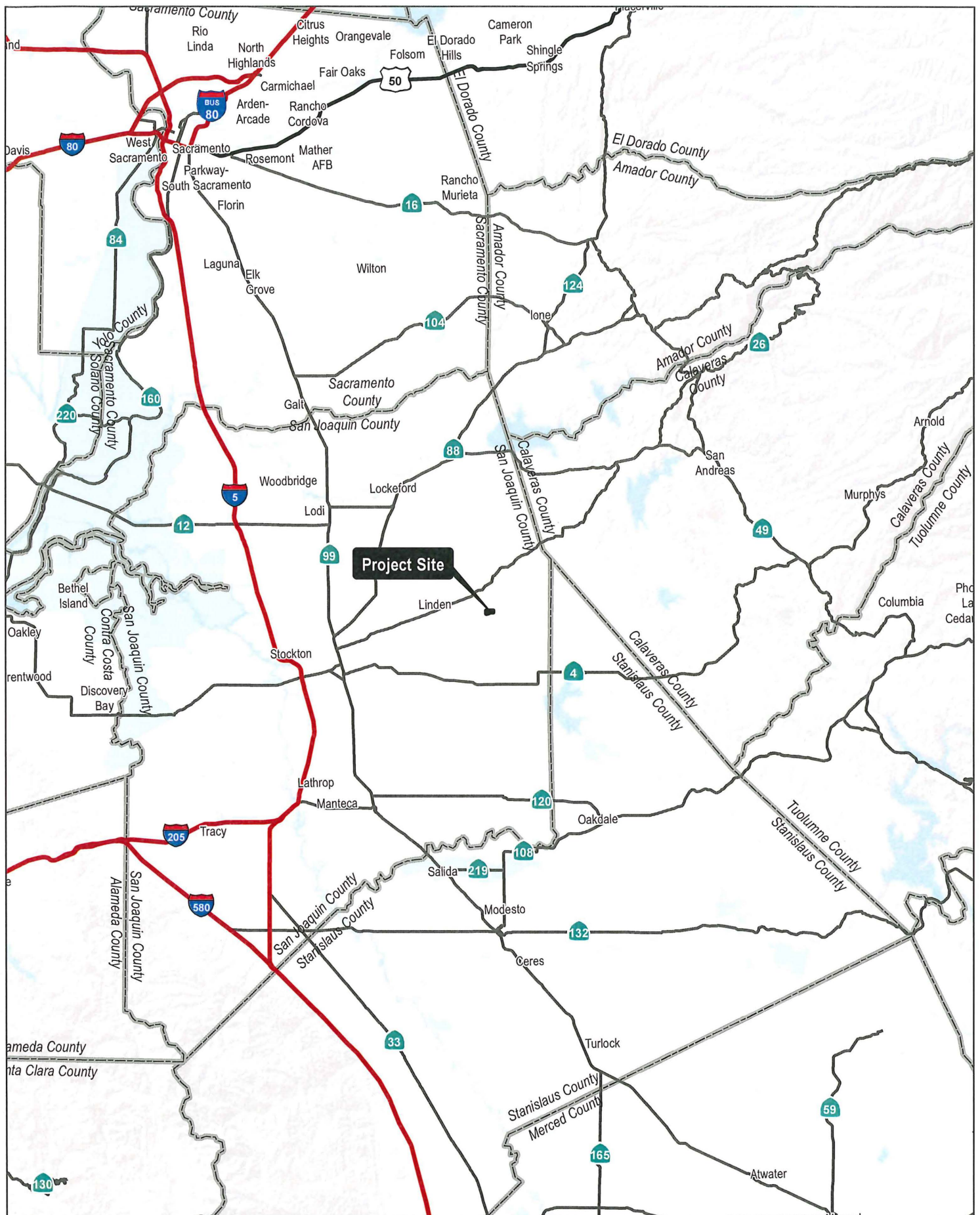
- c) As evaluated throughout this document, with the incorporation of mitigation, environmental impacts associated with the Project would be reduced to less than significant levels. Therefore, with mitigation incorporated, the Project would not directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects on human beings.

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SOURCE: ESRI 2020

DUDEK

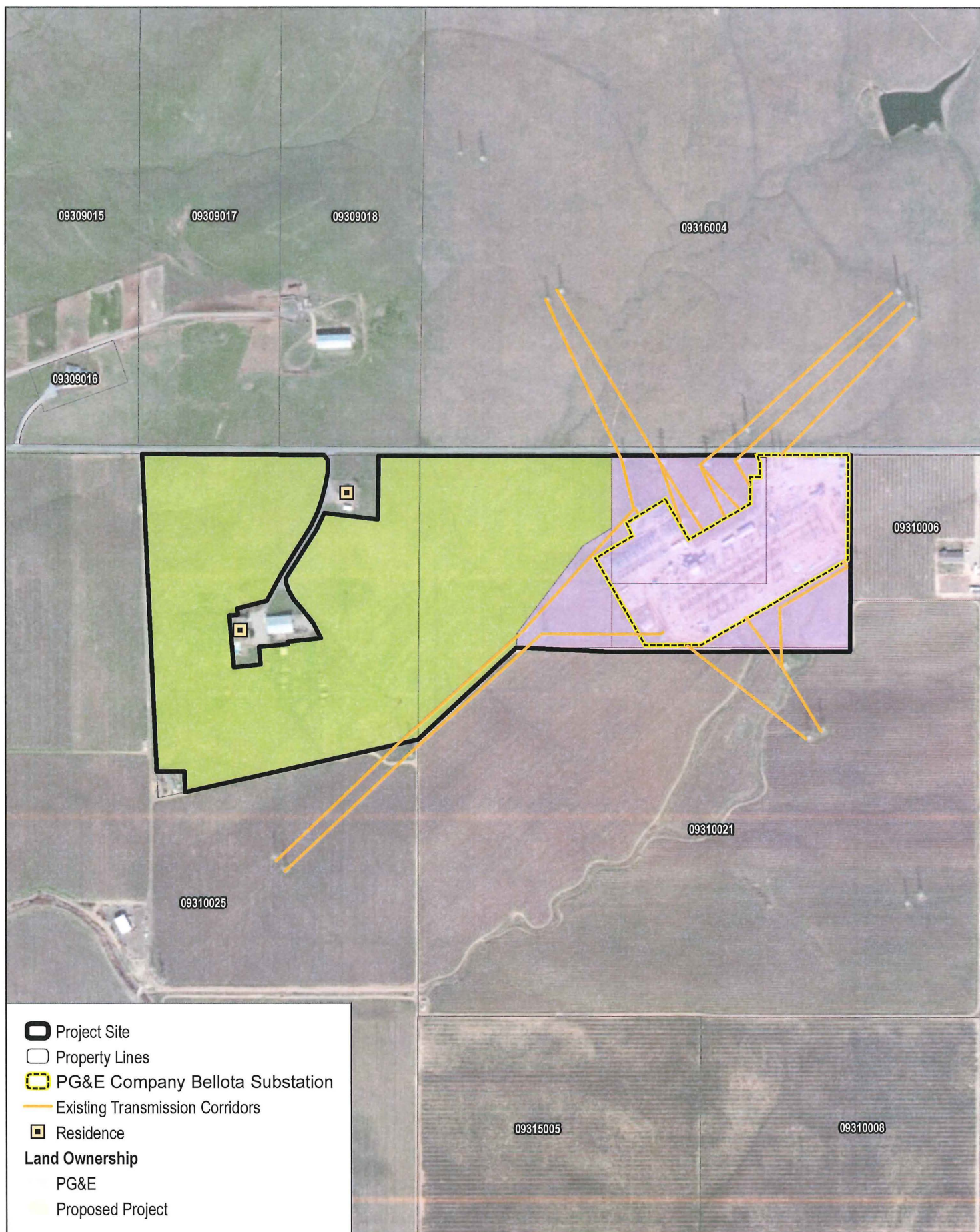


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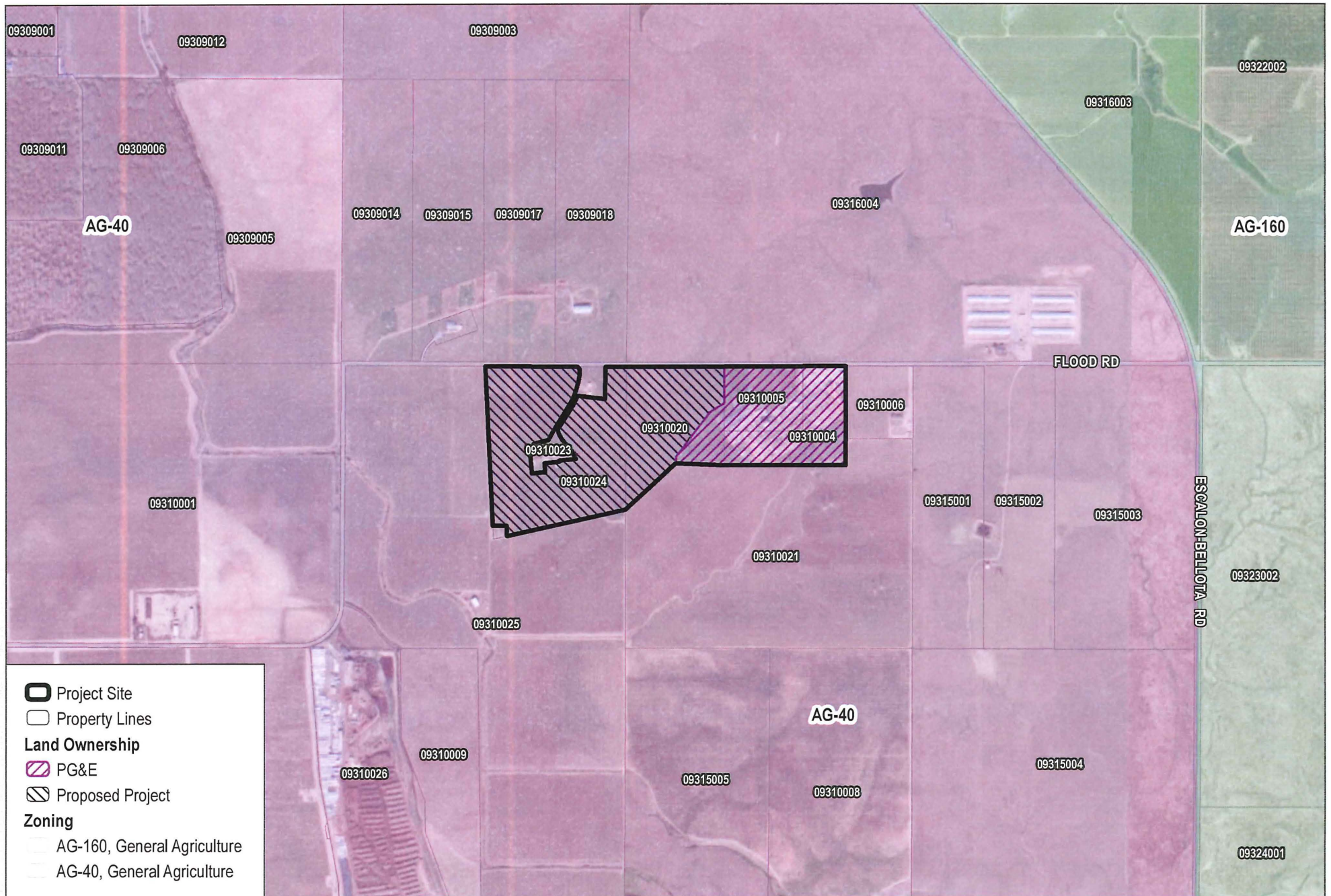
FIGURE 1

Project Location

North Central Valley Energy Center

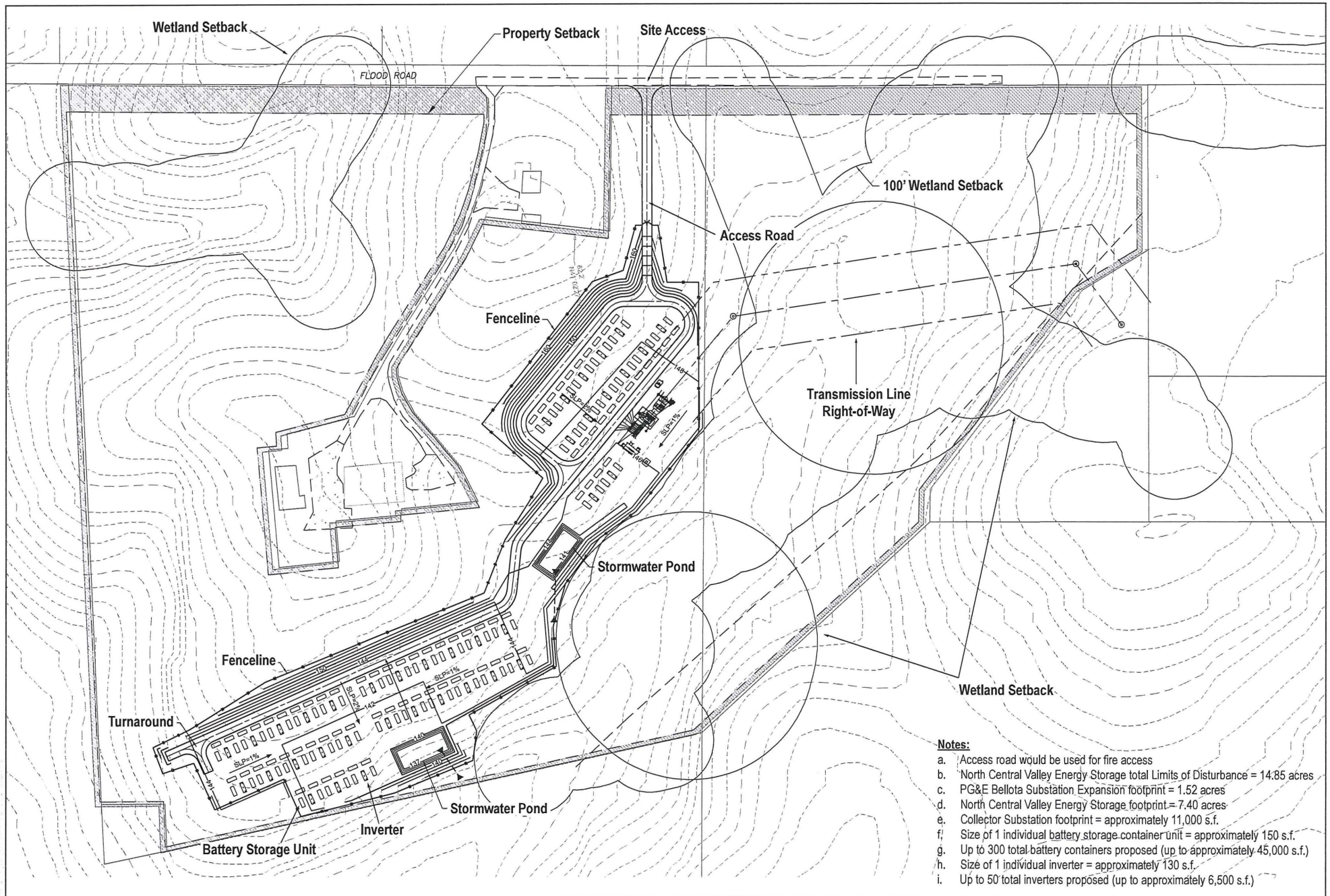


SOURCE: Esri Aerial Imagery 2020



SOURCE: San Joaquin County 2017, DigitalGlobe 2020

FIGURE 3
Zoning Map
North Central Valley Energy Center



SOURCE: Burns McDonnell Engineering 2021



**North Central Valley Energy Center
Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Plan**

Impact	Mitigation Measure/ Condition	Type of Review		Agency for Monitoring and Reporting Compliance	Action Indicating Compliance or Review	Verification of Compliance or Annual Review of Conditions		
		Monitoring	Reporting			By	Date	Remarks
Air Quality								
MM-AQ-1	Between June 1 and November 30, when Valley Fever rates of infection are the highest, additional dust suppression measures (such as additional water or the application of additional soil stabilizer) shall be implemented prior to and immediately following ground-disturbing activities if wind speeds exceed 15 mph or temperatures exceed 95°F for 3 consecutive days. The additional dust suppression shall continue until winds are 10 mph or lower and outdoor air temperatures are below 90°F for at least 2 consecutive days. The additional dust suppression measures shall be incorporated into the Dust Control Plan.	X		Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contractor (monitoring); San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (oversight agency)	1) Review Dust Control Plan 2) EPC/Contractor shall submit a signed letter verifying compliance 3) Field verification			
MM-AQ-2	Prior to any Project grading activity, the primary Project construction contractor shall prepare and implement a worker training program that describes potential health hazards associated with Valley Fever, common symptoms, proper safety procedures to minimize health hazards, and notification procedures if suspected work-related symptoms are identified during construction. The worker training program shall identify safety measures to be implemented by construction contractors during construction. Safety measures will include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide HEPA-filtered air-conditioned enclosed cabs on heavy equipment. Train	X		Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contractor (monitoring and plan implementation)	1) Review plan 2) EPC/Contractor shall submit a signed letter verifying compliance 3) Field verification			



	<p>workers on proper use of cabs, such as turning on air conditioning prior to using the equipment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide communication methods, such as two-way radios, for use by workers in enclosed cabs. • Provide personal protective equipment (PPE), such as half-mask and/or full-mask respirators equipped with particulate filtration, to workers active in dusty work areas. • Provide separate, clean eating areas with hand-washing facilities for construction workers. • Clean equipment, vehicles, and other items before they are moved off site to other work locations. • Provide training for construction workers so they can recognize the symptoms of Valley Fever and promptly report suspected symptoms of work-related Valley Fever to a supervisor. • Direct workers that exhibit Valley Fever symptoms to immediately seek a medical evaluation. • Prior to initiating any grading, the construction contractor will provide the County program manager with copies of all educational training material. 							
Biological Resources								
MM-BIO-1:	<p>Special-Status Plant Surveys. Prior to ground disturbance, a qualified botanist familiar with common and rare plant species of the Central Valley region shall conduct pre-construction surveys of all areas of potential Project disturbance during the appropriate blooming period for potentially occurring special-status plant species. The purpose of the survey shall be to delineate and</p>	X	X	San Joaquin County of Governments	1) EPC/contract or to consult with qualified botanist to verify compliance with requirements			



	flag populations of special-status plant species for avoidance. If no special-status plants are identified, no further mitigation is necessary. Special-status plant populations identified during the pre-construction survey shall be mapped using a hand-held GPS unit and avoided where possible. Plant individuals or populations plus a 10-foot buffer or per the discretion of a qualified botanist shall be temporarily fenced during construction activities with high-visibility fencing or prominently flagged.				2) A qualified botanist to submit report documenting completion of survey			
MM-BIO-2:	Rare Plant Salvage and Translocation Plan. If avoidance of special-status plant species is not feasible, a qualified botanist shall prepare a rare plant salvage and translocation plan prior to Project implementation. The rare plant salvage and translocation plan shall include the following, at a minimum: identification of occupied habitat to be preserved and occupied habitat to be removed; identification of on-site or off-site preservation, restoration, or enhancement locations; methods for preservation, restoration, enhancement, and/or translocation; goals and objectives for preservation, restoration, enhancement, and/or translocation; replacement ratio; a monitoring program to ensure mitigation success; adaptive management and remedial measures in the event that the performance standards are not achieved; and financial assurances for conservation of mitigation lands; and a mechanism for conservation of any mitigation lands required in perpetuity.	X	X	San Joaquin County of Governments	1) A qualified botanist to submit a Rare Plant Salvage Translocation Plan 2) Review of Rare Plant Salvage Translocation Plan 3) Contractor to consult with qualified botanist to verify compliance with requirements			
Cultural Resources								
MM-CUL-1	A worker environmental awareness program (WEAP) would be prepared for construction contractors and all on-site personnel. WEAP training would cover the potential sensitive environmental resources that may be found on site and would educate and instruct on-site personnel to avoid any known cultural resources in the area	X	X	Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contractor (WEAP	1) EPC/General Contractor to notify San Joaquin County Community Development			



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<p>including known off-site resources. All on-site personnel would be required to attend the WEAP training prior to working at the job site. Environmental professionals will conduct WEAP training throughout construction for all Project personnel prior to working on site. Construction personnel would be provided detailed information about the Project Site including permit conditions, reports, plans, maps, and any other relevant project documents. Information and maps will include cultural resource (including tribal cultural resource) buffers, if applicable.</p> <p>Although there are no documented or known cultural resources on site, if an inadvertent discovery of cultural or tribal cultural resources (e.g., unusual amounts animal bone, bottle glass, ceramics, structure/building remains) is made during Project-related construction activities, ground disturbances in the area of the find shall be halted; the discovered resource shall be roped off; and San Joaquin County shall be contacted. A qualified specialist, meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, will be assigned to review the unanticipated find, and evaluation efforts of this resource for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and California Register of Historical Resources listing will be initiated in consultation with San Joaquin County. Prehistoric archaeological deposits may be indicated by the presence of discolored or dark soil, fire-affected material, concentrations of fragmented or whole freshwater bivalves shell, burned or complete bone, non-local lithic materials, or the characteristic observed to be atypical of the surrounding area. Common prehistoric artifacts may include modified or battered lithic materials; lithic or bone tools that appeared to have been used for chopping, drilling, or grinding; projectile points; fired clay ceramics or non-functional items; and other items. Historic-age deposits are often indicated by the presence of glass bottles and</p>				implementation); San Joaquin County, Community Development Department (oversight agency)	Department, if discovery is made, and qualified specialist shall be contacted to inspect the discovery.			
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	shards, ceramic material, building or domestic refuse, ferrous metal, or old features such as concrete foundations or privies. Depending upon the significance of the find, the archaeologist may simply record the find and allow work to continue. If the discovery proves significant under the California Environmental Quality Act/NRHP, additional work, such as preparation of an archaeological treatment plan, testing, or data recovery may be warranted.							
MM-CUL-2	Worker environmental awareness program (WEAP) training would cover the unanticipated potential to unearth human remains during construction. Should human remains be discovered, work shall halt in that area and procedures set forth in the California Public Resources Code (Section 5097.98) and State Health and Safety Code (Section 7050.5) will be followed, beginning with notification to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (if applicable) and County Coroner. No further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains shall occur until the County Coroner has determined, within 2 working days of notification of the discovery, the appropriate treatment and disposition of the human remains. If the County Coroner determines that the remains are, or are believed to be, Native American, he or she shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) in Sacramento within 24 hours. In accordance with California Public Resources Code, Section 5097.98, the NAHC must immediately notify those persons it believes to be the most likely descendent from the deceased Native American. The most likely descendent shall complete his/her inspection within 48 hours of being granted access to the site. The designated Native American representative would then determine, in consultation with the property owner, the disposition of the human remains.	X	X	Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contractor (WEAP implementation); U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (if notification is required); County Coroner (if notification is required)	1) EPC/General Contractor to notify USACE and County Coroner, if discovery is made.			



Geological Resources

MM-GEO-1

A worker environmental awareness program (WEAP) would be prepared for construction contractors and all on-site personnel. WEAP training would cover the potential sensitive environmental resources that may be found on site and would educate and instruct on-site personnel to avoid paleontological resources. All on-site personnel would be required to attend the WEAP training prior to working at the job site. Environmental professionals shall conduct WEAP training throughout construction for all Project personnel prior to working on site. Construction personnel would be provided detailed information about the Project Site including permit conditions, reports, plans, maps, and any other relevant project documents. Information and maps will include sensitive geologic formations including the Mehrten Formation.

If an inadvertent discovery of paleontological materials (e.g., unusual amounts of shell or animal bone) is made during Project-related construction activities, ground disturbances in the area of the find shall be halted; the discovered resource shall be roped off; and San Joaquin County shall be contacted. the qualified professional archaeologist and/or paleontologist shall be notified regarding the discovery. A qualified paleontologist shall be assigned to determine whether the resource is potentially significant as per the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology 2010 guidelines for mitigation and develop appropriate treatment measures.

X

X

Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contractor (WEAP implementation); San Joaquin County, Community Development Department (oversight agency if discovery is made)

- 1) EPC/General Contractor to consult with qualified paleontologist to verify discovery, if applicable
- 2) Qualified environmental professional to submit report documenting discovery, if applicable