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**DRAFT**

**Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration**  
**Irwin Road Tank and Transmission Main Project**

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April 2021

**Lead Agency:**



State Water Resources Control Board  
PO Box 944212  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2120

**Prepared for:**



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**DRAFT MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION  
IRWIN ROAD TANK AND TRANSMISSION MAIN PROJECT**

<b>Lead Agency:</b>	State Water Resources Control Board
<b>Project Proponent:</b>	Golden State Water Company
<b>Project Location:</b>	The Irwin Road Project site is located within the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute Series Barstow SE Topographic quadrangles, Section 19 and 30 of Township 10 North and Range 1 West.

**Project Description:**

The Project includes the construction, operation, and maintenance of a proposed 1.5 million gallon (MG) welded steel water reservoir and approximately 5,816 linear feet (1.1 miles) of 12-inch diameter ductile iron (DI) water transmission pipeline along the east side of Irwin Road that would connect to existing pipeline located at the intersection of Irwin Road and Gabilan Street. Approximately 4,000 linear feet (0.75 miles) of the Project is located within land owned by the County of San Bernardino and 1,800 linear feet (0.34 miles) of the Project lies within Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-lands. The reservoir would be constructed on a 1.03-acre site that would require permanent right-of-way (ROW) from BLM.

**Mitigation Measures Incorporated into the Project to Avoid Significant Effects:**

**Biological Resources**

**BIO-1 Pre-Construction Survey for Cactus and Succulents:** Within 60 days prior to the start of ground-breaking activities, a qualified biologist with experience identifying cactus and succulent species occurring in the Mojave Desert will conduct an inventory survey in order to document the locations of cactus and succulent species. One beavertail cactus was identified during the special-status plant surveys conducted in 2020, and it is possible that additional germinated specimens may become established in the time between the survey and the start of ground-breaking Project activities. Locations of the cactus and succulents will be documented with a sub-meter global positioning system (GPS) unit and flagged for salvage activities conducted in accordance with the DRECP CMA LUPA-BIO-7 (BLM 2016). Specimens shall be salvaged prior to the start of ground-breaking construction activities. Healthy specimens shall be cared for and, to the maximum extent practicable, replanted at the Project site following completion of the Project. Salvage, care, and replanting of beavertail cactus should be performed by an experienced individual who is familiar with BLM protocols and who will be able to maintain the specimens until Project construction is complete.

**BIO-2 Desert Tortoise Protection<sup>1</sup>:** The following shall be implemented:

- a. The Project proponent shall designate a field contact representative (FCR) who will be responsible for overseeing compliance with protective stipulations for the desert tortoise and for coordination on compliance with the BLM. The FCR must be on-site during all Project activities, including geotechnical borings or vehicle movement. The FCR shall have the authority to halt all Project activities that are in violation of the stipulations. The FCR shall have a copy of all stipulations when work is being conducted on the site. The FCR may be a crew chief or field supervisor, a Project manager, any other employee of the Project proponent, or a contracted biologist.
- b. All employees of the Project proponent who work on-site shall participate in a tortoise education program prior to initiation of field activities. The Project proponent is responsible for ensuring that the education program is developed and presented prior to conducting activities. New employees shall receive formal, approved training prior to working on-site. The worker education program will provide interpretation for non-English speaking workers and provide the same instruction for new workers prior to their working on site. The employee education program must be received, reviewed, and approved by the BLM Resource Area Office at least 15 days prior to the presentation of the program. The program may consist of a class presented by a qualified biologist (BLM or contracted) or a video. Wallet-sized cards or a one-page handout with important information for workers to carry are recommended. The program shall cover the following topics at a minimum:
  - i. distribution of the desert tortoise,
  - ii. general behavior and ecology of the tortoise,
  - iii. sensitivity to human activities,
  - iv. legal protection,
  - v. penalties for violations of State or federal laws,
  - vi. reporting requirements, and
  - vii. Project-protective mitigation measures.
- c. Only biologists authorized by the USFWS, CDFW, and the BLM shall handle desert tortoises. The BLM or Project proponent shall submit the name(s) of proposed authorized biologist(s) to the USFWS for review and approval at least 15 days prior to the onset of activities. No handling activities shall begin until an authorized biologist is approved. Authorization for handling shall be granted under the auspices of the Section 7 consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> The language for this Mitigation Measure was taken directly from the Tortoise Mitigation section in the Project's EA (Section 4.6.3; Albert A. Webb Associates 2020) for consistency.

- d. The area of disturbance shall be confined to the smallest practical area, considering topography, placement of facilities, location of burrows, public health and safety, and other limiting factors. Work area boundaries shall be delineated with flagging or other marking to minimize surface disturbance associated with vehicle straying. Special habitat features, such as burrows, identified by the qualified biologist shall be avoided to the extent possible. To the extent possible, previously disturbed areas within the Project site shall be utilized for the stockpiling of excavated materials, storage of equipment, location of office trailers, and parking of vehicles. The qualified biologist, in consultation with the Project proponent, shall ensure compliance with this measure.
- e. Where practical, no access road shall be bladed to the Project site. Cross-country access shall be the standard for temporary activities. For development activities, a short driveway (no more than 0.3 miles) from the nearest access road may be constructed if necessary. To the extent possible, access to the Project site shall be restricted to designated "open" routes of travel. A qualified biologist shall select and flag the access route, whether cross-country or bladed, to avoid burrows and to minimize disturbance of vegetation. All constructed access roads are to be considered temporary; after Project abandonment (or completion, if a short-term activity), the route shall be rehabilitated using ripping, raking, and other accepted techniques.

Except when absolutely required by the Project and as explicitly stated in the Project permit, cross-country vehicle use by employees is prohibited during work and non-work hours.

- f. Desert tortoises may be handled only by the authorized biologist and only when necessary. In handling desert tortoises, the authorized biologist shall follow the techniques form handling desert tortoises in "Guidelines for Handling Desert Tortoises during Construction Projects" (Desert Tortoise Council 1994<sup>2</sup>).
- g. The authorized biologist shall maintain a record of all desert tortoises handled. This information shall include for each tortoise:
  - i. the locations (narrative and maps) and dates of observations;
  - ii. general condition and health, including injuries and state of healing and whether animals voided their bladders;
  - iii. location moved from and location moved to;
  - iv. diagnostic markings (i.e., identification numbers or marked lateral scutes); and
  - v. slide photograph of each handled desert tortoise as described in a previous measure.
- h. No later than 90 days after completion of construction or termination of activities, the FCR and authorized biologist shall prepare a report for the BLM. The report shall document the

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<sup>2</sup> The *Guidelines for Handling Desert Tortoises During Construction Projects* document was revised in July 1999. Handling of desert tortoises shall also follow the techniques outlined in the USFWS Desert Tortoise Field Manual (2009).

effectiveness and practicality of the mitigation measures, the number of tortoises excavated from burrows, the number of tortoises moved from the site, the number of tortoises killed or injured, and the specific information for each tortoise as described previously. The report may make recommendations for modifying the stipulations to enhance tortoise protection or to make it more workable. The report shall provide an estimate of the actual acreage disturbed by various aspects of the operation.

- i. Upon locating a dead or injured tortoise, the Project proponent or agent is to notify the BLM Resource Area Office. The BLM must then notify the appropriate field office (Carlsbad<sup>3</sup> or Ventura) of the USFWS by telephone within three days of the finding. Written notification must be made within five days of the finding, both to the appropriate USFWS field office and to the USFWS Division of Law Enforcement in Torrance. The information provided must include the date and time of the finding or incident (if known), location of the carcass or injured animal, a photograph, cause of death, if known, and other pertinent information.

An injured animal shall be transported to a qualified veterinarian for treatment at the expense of the Project proponent. If an injured animal recovers, the appropriate field office of USFWS should be contacted for final disposition of the animal.

The BLM shall endeavor to place the remains of intact tortoise carcasses with educational or research institutions holding the appropriate State and federal permits per their instructions. If such institutions are not available or the animal's remains are in poor condition, the information noted above shall be obtained and the carcass left in place. If left in place and sufficient pieces are available, the BLM (or its agent) shall attempt to mark the carcass to ensure that it is not reported again. Arrangements for disposition to a museum shall be made prior to removal of the carcass from the field.

- j. Except on county-maintained roads, vehicle speeds shall not exceed 15 miles per hour through desert tortoise habitat.
- k. Workers shall inspect for tortoises under a vehicle or construction equipment prior to moving it. If a tortoise is present, it may move on its own. If it does not move within 15 minutes, a designated biologist may remove and relocate the animal to a safe location.
- l. All construction materials will be visually checked for the presence of wildlife prior to their movement or use. Any wildlife encountered during the course of these inspections will be allowed to leave the construction area unharmed.
- m. All steep-walled trenches or excavations used during the Project will be covered, except when being actively used, to prevent entrapment of wildlife. If trenches cannot be covered, they will be

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<sup>3</sup> The Project is located within the jurisdiction of the Palm Springs Fish and Wildlife Office, which is a sub-office of the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office.

constructed with escape ramps, following up-to-date design standards to facilitate and allow wildlife to exit, or wildlife exclusion fencing will be installed around the trench(s) or excavation(s). Open trenches or other excavations will be inspected by a designated biologist immediately before backfilling, excavation, or other earthwork.

- n. Domestic pets are prohibited on sites. This prohibition does not apply to the use of domestic animals (e.g., dogs) that may be used to aid in official and approved monitoring procedures/protocols, or service animals (dogs) under Title II and Title III of the American with Disabilities Act.
- o. All activity work areas will be kept free of trash and debris. Particular attention will be paid to "micro-trash" (including such small items as screws, nuts, washers, nails, coins, rags, small electrical components, small pieces of plastic, glass or wire, and any debris or trash that is colorful or shiny) and organic waste that may subsidize predators. All trash will be covered, kept in closed, raven-proof containers, or otherwise removed from the Project site at the end of each day or at regular intervals prior to periods when workers are not present at the site to reduce the attractiveness of the area to ravens and other tortoise predators.
- p. The application of water and/or other palliatives for dust abatement in construction areas and during Project operations and maintenance will be done with the minimum amount of water necessary to meet safety and air quality standards and in a manner that prevents the formation of puddles, which could attract wildlife and wildlife predators.
- q. Feeding of wildlife, leaving of food or trash as an attractive nuisance to wildlife, collection of native plants, or harassing of wildlife on a site is prohibited.
- r. Project proponents shall salvage and relocate any cactus from the site prior to disturbance using BLM protocols. To the maximum extent practicable for short-term disturbed areas, the cactus shall be replanted back to the original site.
- s. Project proponents shall stockpile any vegetation grubbed or bladed from the Project site and access road. Following completion of the Project, the access road and Project site (if a temporary disturbance) shall be recontoured to approximate pre-Project condition and the stockpiled vegetation randomly spread across the recontoured area. [Due to the variation in substrate types, additional revegetation measures (e.g., imprinting, reseeding) shall be considered.]
- t. Compensation for permanent loss of habitat<sup>4</sup> shall be required in the Superior-Cronese critical habitat unit at a 5:1 ratio, according to BLM requirements. Disturbance cap mitigation will be nested with desert tortoise mitigation. The Project proponent shall [choose] either one or a

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<sup>4</sup> Note that there is an acreage discrepancy between this biological reconnaissance survey report and the acreage presented in the EA prepared by Albert A. Webb Associates. ECORP calculated 0.78 acres of impacts based on data received from GSWC in July and August 2020.

combination of the following: 1) acquire the compensation lands and deliver the deed to the BLM; 2) provide adequate funds, to be determined by the BLM, to the BLM for the acquisition of compensation lands or for other activities approved by the USFWS, CDFW,] and the BLM. Lands to be acquired must be within Category I or II of the same tortoise management unit. If acquiring lands (option 1 above), the Project proponent must work closely with the BLM in selecting the lands most benefitting the conservation and recovery efforts. Compensation activities must be initiated or completed within 12 months from the time the resource impact occurs (e.g. ground disturbance, habitat removal, route obliteration, etc. for construction activities; wildlife mortality, visual impacts, etc. due to operations).

- u. Any wildlife encountered during the course of an activity, including construction and operation, shall be allowed to leave the area unharmed.

**BIO-3 Pre-construction Survey for Burrowing Owl:** A pre-construction survey for burrowing owl shall be conducted between 14 and 30 days prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities to determine whether burrowing owls are present on or within 200 meters of the Project site. The survey shall follow the methods described in the CDFW's *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFG 2012). If burrowing owls and/or suitable burrowing owl burrows with sign (e.g., whitewash, pellets, feathers, prey remains) are identified on the Project site during the survey, and Project activities are expected to occur during the burrowing owl nesting period, defined as February 1 through August 31 (CDFG 2012), then activity-specific biological monitoring in accordance with DRECP CMA LUPA-BIO-IFS-12 shall be conducted to ensure occupied burrows and a 200-meter buffer are avoided. and impacts to those features are unavoidable. Coordination with the BLM and/or CDFW may be necessary in order to determine the appropriate level of monitoring the occupied burrows would require. If avoidance of impacts to occupied burrows during the nesting season are unavoidable, then consultation with BLM and/or CDFW shall be performed. If passive relocation and burrow exclusion will be necessary, methods shall follow those described in the CDFW's *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFG 2012) and in CMA LUPA-BIO-IFS-13 shall be followed.

**BIO-4 Mohave Ground Squirrel Protection:** A protocol-level trapping survey for Mohave ground squirrel was conducted in April through July 2020, the results of which were negative. Due to the negative finding, ground-disturbing activities shall commence within one year of the final protocol-level Mohave ground squirrel trapping survey, which was completed on July 14, 2020. If ground-disturbing activities do not occur within one year of the 2020 survey, then another protocol-level trapping survey for Mohave ground squirrel shall be conducted by a qualified biologist in possession of a Memorandum of Understanding with CDFW to perform trapping surveys for the species. The trapping survey shall be conducted at the appropriate survey timing described in the most current and CDFW-accepted survey guidelines. At the time this document was prepared, the Mohave Ground Squirrel Survey Guidelines (CDFG 2003, revised 2010) is the most current protocol survey document. If Mohave ground squirrels are not detected or observed during the trapping survey, then Project activities may commence without implementation of additional mitigation or



avoidance and minimization measure for the species. If Mohave ground squirrels are detected during the trapping survey, or if ground-disturbing Project activities do not start within one year of a protocol-level trapping survey, then additional avoidance and minimization measures such as burrow avoidance, biological monitoring, compensatory mitigation, and pre-construction surveys shall be implemented in accordance with DRECP CMA LUPA-BIO-IFS-39 and -41. Additionally, consultation with CDFW regarding application for an ITP under the California ESA Section 2081 may be necessary. If an ITP is obtained for the Project, then additional avoidance and minimization measures as well as mitigation measures developed in consultation with CDFW may be incorporated as permit conditions.

**BIO-5 Pre-construction Nesting Bird Survey:** If construction or other Project activities are scheduled to occur during the bird breeding season (February 1 through August 31), a pre-construction nesting bird survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist to ensure that active bird nests will not be disturbed or destroyed. The survey shall be completed no more than three days prior to initial ground disturbance. The nesting bird survey shall include the Project site and adjacent areas where Project activities have the potential to affect active nests, either directly or indirectly due to construction activity, noise, or ground disturbance. If an active nest is identified, a qualified avian biologist shall establish an appropriate non-disturbance limit buffer around the nest using flagging or staking. Construction activities shall not occur within any disturbance limit buffer zones until the nest is deemed inactive by the qualified biologist.

**BIO-6 Vegetation Protection and Restoration<sup>5</sup>:** The following measures will be implemented during Project construction:

- a. Clearing will be performed to preserve roots to the extent practicable, stockpile or dispose of vegetation wastes to maintain stability of the site and provide erosion control. Brush will generally be cut with a chain saw or similar equipment. Vegetation cut during clearing operations will be stockpiled on the ROW (brush, etc.). In some cases, trees, stumps, or slash may be scattered back over the ROW after seeding to aid in erosion control.
- b. Cleared vegetation will be disposed of as directed by the BLM's field representative on federal lands. Where feasible and when agreed to by the BLM field representative, the Contractor may use slash for on-site reclamation. Placement of slash shall not interfere with other reclamation activities including seeding and planting.
- c. On private lands, cleared vegetation will be disposed of as requested by the property owner.

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<sup>5</sup> The language for this Mitigation Measure was taken directly from the Vegetation Mitigation section in the Project's Environmental Assessment (EA) (Section 4.3.3; Albert A. Webb Associates 2020) for consistency.

- d. Implement site-specific habitat restoration actions for the areas affected in compliance with the DRECP CMA discussed in Table 1 of the EA (Albert A. Webb Associates 2020), including specifying and using:
  - i. The appropriate seed (e.g., certified weed- free, native, and locally and genetically appropriate seed)
  - ii. Appropriate soils (e.g., topsoil of the same original type on site or that was previously stored by soil type after being salvaged during excavation and construction activities)
  - iii. Equipment
  - iv. Timing (e.g., appropriate season, sufficient rainfall)
  - v. Location
  - vi. Success criteria
  - vii. Monitoring measures
  - viii. Contingency measures, relevant for restoration, which includes seeding that follows BLM policy when on BLM administered lands.
- e. Integrated weed management actions, shall be carried out during all phases of activities in compliance with the DRECP CMA discussed in Table 1 [of the EA], as appropriate, and at a minimum shall include the following
  - i. Thoroughly clean the tires and undercarriage of vehicles entering or re-entering the Project site to remove potential weeds.
  - ii. Store Project vehicles on site in designated areas to minimize the need for multiple washings whenever vehicles re-enter the Project site.
  - iii. Properly maintain vehicle wash and inspection stations to minimize the introduction of invasive weeds or subsidy of invasive weeds.
  - iv. Closely monitor the types of materials brought onto the site to avoid the introduction of invasive weeds and non-native species.
  - v. Reestablish native vegetation quickly on disturbed sites.
  - vi. Monitor and quickly implement control measures to ensure early detection and eradication of weed invasions to avoid the spread of invasive weeds and non-native species on site and to adjacent off-site areas.
  - vii. Use certified weed-free mulch, straw, hay bales, or equivalent fabricated materials for installing sediment barriers.

## **Geology and Soils**

**GEO-1:** If any paleontological resources are exposed during excavation, excavation in the vicinity of the discovery shall be terminated immediately and a qualified paleontologist shall be retained to evaluate the resources. If the find is determined to be significant, avoidance or other appropriate measures as identified by the paleontologist shall be implemented. Appropriate measures include that a qualified paleontologist be permitted to recover, evaluate and curate the find(s) in accordance with current standards and guidelines.

### **Hydrology and Water Quality**

**HYD-1:** A GSWC inspector will be employed in the field during construction to verify compliance with the environmental protection measures listed in HYD-2 through HYD-6 below.

**HYD-2:** Temporary erosion/sediment control devices shall be installed immediately after initial soil disturbance and maintained throughout construction and restoration, as necessary, until replaced by permanent erosion control measures. If possible, cleanup will be completed, and permanent erosion control measures will be installed within 30 days after the trench is backfilled to aid in site stabilization. If circumstances prevent achieving cleanup within 30 days on federal lands, GSWC will apply for a variance from the BLM.

**HYD-3:** Project-related ground disturbance during construction will be limited to the minimum necessary to safely and efficiently complete construction activities.

**HYD-4:** Project-related construction, clean up, and reclamation shall be completed in an expeditious manner to minimize keep the time period between grading, trench excavation, backfilling, and final restoration/reclamation. If weather conditions preclude final reclamation of a site (excluding woody plantings, if applicable) immediately following construction, GSWC will meet with BLM representatives to discuss viable reclamation alternatives.

**HYD-5:** A stockpile of erosion control materials including straw bales, silt fences, erosion control matting and geotextile fabric shall be stored at the Project's staging areas during the entire period that construction-related ground disturbance is taking place. Materials shall be stored for planned use during construction, and additional quantities will be maintained for maintenance and emergency use.

**HYD-6:** All construction personnel, vehicles, and equipment shall be confined to designated roads and parking areas to prevent compaction of outlying areas.

### **Noise**

**NOI-1:** During Project construction, stationary noise-generating equipment shall be located as far as is practicable from any existing structure designed for human occupancy.

**NOI-2:** In locations where construction activities occur within one-quarter mile of any existing structure designed for human occupancy, construction activities shall be limited to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Construction during other periods, including Sundays and holidays, shall be limited to emergencies and activities determined to be in the interest of the general public. If nocturnal construction is planned or required to minimize traffic

interference, and if any occupied structures exist within one-half mile, a requested exemption to the above time constraints shall be submitted to the San Bernardino County Special Districts Department.

**NOI-3:** All construction equipment shall be operated with mandated noise control equipment (i.e., mufflers or silencers).

### **Avoidance and Minimization Measures**

#### **Cultural Resources**

##### **CUL-1:**

- a. In the event that archaeological resources are discovered during project activities, all work in the immediate vicinity of the find (within a 60-foot buffer) shall cease and a qualified archaeologist meeting Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification standards shall be hired to assess the find. Work on the other portions of the project outside of the buffered area may continue during this assessment period. If the find is located on BLM land, the BLM field office archaeologist shall be notified immediately and if the find is on non-federally owned land, the State Water Resources Control Board will be notified. Additionally, the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Cultural Resources Department (SMBMI) shall be contacted, as detailed within TCR-1, regarding any pre-contact and/or historic-era finds and be provided information after the archaeologist makes his/her initial assessment of the nature of the find, so as to provide Tribal input with regards to significance and treatment.
- b. If the find is found eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources, or is a unique archaeological site or tribal cultural resource as defined in CEQA, ( as amended, 2015), and avoidance cannot be ensured, the archaeologist shall develop a Monitoring and Treatment Plan, the drafts of which shall be provided to SMBMI for review and comment, as detailed within **TCR-1**. The archaeologist shall monitor the remainder of the project and implement the Plan accordingly.
- c. If human remains are encountered during project activities , work in the immediate vicinity (within a 100-foot buffer of the find) shall cease and the County Coroner shall be contacted pursuant to State Health and Safety Code §7050.5 and that code enforced for the duration of the project. If the human remains are found on BLM land, and the Coroner determines they are Native American the BLM field office archaeologist shall be notified immediately and NAGPRA shall be implemented.

#### **Tribal Cultural Resources**

**TCR-1:** The SMBMI Cultural Resources Department shall be contacted, as detailed in CUL-1, of any pre-contact and/or historic-era cultural resources discovered during project implementation, and be provided information regarding the nature of the find, so as to provide Tribal input with regards to significance and treatment. Should the find be deemed significant, as defined by CEQA (as amended, 2015), a cultural resources Monitoring and Treatment Plan shall be created by the archaeologist, in coordination with SMBMI, and all subsequent finds shall be subject to this Plan.

This Plan shall allow for a monitor to be present that represents SMBMI for the remainder of the project, should SMBMI elect to place a monitor on-site.

**TCR-2:** Any and all archaeological/cultural documents created as a part of the project (isolate records, site records, survey reports, testing reports, etc.) shall be supplied to the applicant and Lead Agency for dissemination to SMBMI. The Lead Agency and/or applicant shall, in good faith, consult with SMBMI throughout the life of the project.

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AB	Assembly Bill
ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
APE	Area of Potential Effect
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CH <sub>4</sub>	Methane
CMA	Conservation and Management Actions
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon Dioxide
CO <sub>2</sub> e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
CO Plan	Federal Attainment Plan for Carbon Monoxide
CRHR	California Register of Historic Places
CWA	California Water Act
DRECP	Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
EIC	Eastern Information Center
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FEIR	Final Environmental Impact Report
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
GHGs	Greenhouse Gases
LSTs	Localized Significance Thresholds
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MDAB	Mojave Desert Air Basin
MLD	Most Likely Descendent
MMT	Million Metric Tons
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
MSHCP	Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan
MTCO <sub>2</sub> eq	Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
ND	Negative Declaration

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NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
N <sub>2</sub> O	Nitrous Oxide
NO <sub>x</sub>	Nitrogen Oxides
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
OHV	Off-Highway Vehicle
OPR	California Office of Planning and Research
PM <sub>10</sub> and PM <sub>2.5</sub>	Particulate Matter
RCPG	Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide
ROG	Reactive Organic Gases
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SCS	Sustainable Communities Strategy
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SP	Service Population
SoCAB	South Coast Air Basin
SR	State Route
SRA	Sensitive Receptor Area
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
WDR	Waste Discharge Requirement

## SECTION 1.0 BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Summary

<b>Project Title:</b>	Irwin Road Tank and Transmission Main Project
<b>Lead Agency Name and Address:</b>	State Water Resources Control Board PO Box 944212 Sacramento, CA 94244-2120
<b>Contact Person and Phone Number:</b>	Wendy Pierce Senior Environmental Scientist Special Project Review Unit Division of Financial Assistance State Water Resources Control Board (916) 449-5178
<b>Project Proponent:</b> <b>Contact Person and Phone Number:</b>	Golden State Water Company George Zakhari Water Quality Engineer Mountain / Desert District Office: (760) 515-8322 Cell: (442) 800-3327
<b>Project Location:</b>	The Irwin Road Project site is located within the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute Series Barstow SE Topographic quadrangles, Section 19 and 30 of Township 10 North and Range 1 West.
<b>General Plan Designation:</b>	Rural Living (RL-40)
<b>Zoning:</b>	Rural Living (RL-40)

### 1.2 Introduction

The State Water Resources Control Board is the Lead Agency for this Initial Study. The Initial Study has been prepared to identify and assess the anticipated environmental impacts of the Irwin Road Tank and

Transmission Main Project. This document has been prepared to satisfy the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Res. Code, Section 21000 *et seq.*) and State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 *et seq.*). CEQA requires that all state and local government agencies consider the environmental consequences of Projects over which they have discretionary authority before acting on those Projects. A CEQA Initial Study is generally used to determine which CEQA document is appropriate for a Project (Negative Declaration [ND], Mitigated Negative Declaration [MND], or Environmental Impact Report [EIR]).

### **1.3 Surrounding Land Uses/Environmental Setting**

The Irwin Road Project would occur within the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute Series Barstow SE Topographic quadrangles, Section 19 and 30 of Township 10 North and Range 1 West. The Project is located within an unincorporated portion of the County of San Bernardino, just north of the City of Barstow's limits and within the City of Barstow's Sphere of Influence. The area surrounding the Project site consists of rural residential housing to the south and relatively flat alluvial fan with sparse vegetation to the east, north and west.

The entire Project site is designated as Rural Living (RL-40) by the San Bernardino County General Plan. The Proposed Action is an infrastructure project, which is an allowable use that will facilitate implementation of the County General Plan by maintaining water pressure within the Crooks Pressure Zone. The County of San Bernardino Land Use Services Department (CSBLUSD) determined that the proposed Project is exempt from the County planning process ( Albert A. Webb Associates 2020). For these reasons, the proposed Project is considered consistent with the San Bernardino County General Plan.

Approximately 4,000 linear feet (0.75 miles) of the Project is located within land owned by the County of San Bernardino and 1,800 linear feet (0.34 miles) of the Project lies within Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-lands. The reservoir would be constructed on a 1.03 acre site that will require permanent right-of-way from BLM.



Map Date: 4/29/2020

Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

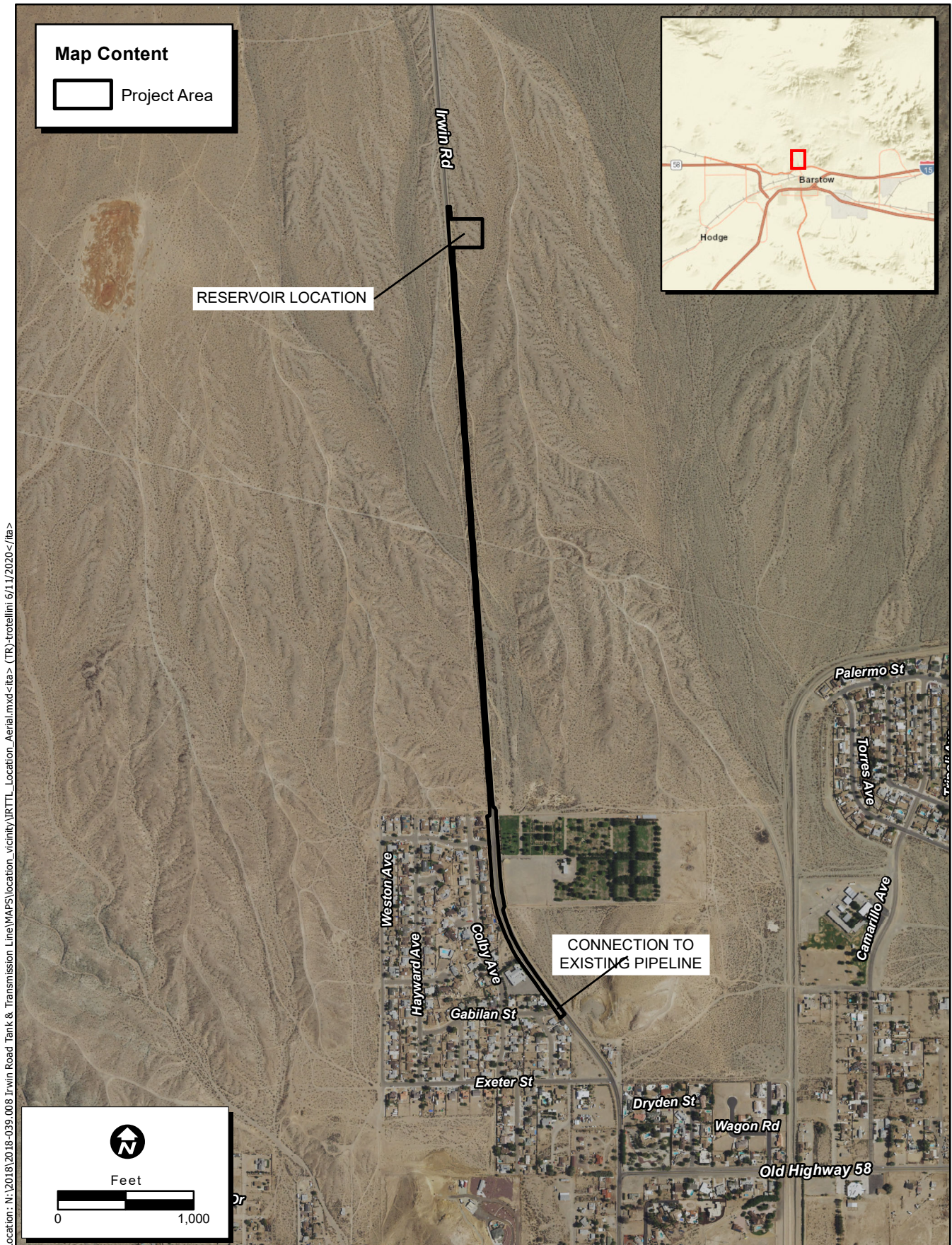


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**Figure 1. Project Vicinity**

2018-039.008 Irwin Road Tank & Transmission Line





**Figure 2. Project Location**

2018-039.008 Irwin Road Tank & Transmission Line

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## **SECTION 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

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### **2.1 Project Background**

The Proposed Project is an expansion of Golden State Water Company (GSWC)'s existing Crooks Pressure Zone, which serves the north end of the City of Barstow. Currently there is no water storage in this pressure zone. The Proposed Project would provide needed water storage within in the Crooks Pressure Zone and stable operating pressures to water customers on the north side of the Mojave River, specifically in the vicinity of Irwin Road and Spadra Street.

### **2.2 Project Purpose and Need**

GSWC delivers drinking and fire suppression water to the City of Barstow, California. The Project will provide needed water storage and stable operating pressures to water customers on the north side of the Mojave River, particularly in the vicinity of Irwin Road and Spadra Street. Currently, these customers are at higher elevations and thus, experience low water pressures during high demand periods. To adequately address this issue, the proposed reservoir will be at a higher elevation north of this existing community; specifically, the proposed tank site would be constructed at an elevation of 2,335 feet above mean sea level, which is approximately 100 feet higher than the residential subdivision and cemetery located south of the intersection of Irwin Road/Spadra Street.

### **2.3 Project Characteristics**

GSWC is proposing the Irwin Road Reservoir and Transmission Main Project (Project) which is the construction of an above-ground 1.5 million gallon (MG), welded steel water reservoir on BLM land as well as a 1.1 mile long 12-inch diameter DI water transmission pipeline that traverses through federal and private lands to provide needed water storage and stable operating pressures to water customers on the north side of the Mojave River (Figure 1 and 2). Construction staging and stockpiling will be located at the proposed reservoir site, approximately 4,600 feet north of the nearest residential units. The Proposed Project, as described below, is the only build alternative evaluated in this MND.

#### *Reservoir*

The proposed reservoir would be constructed by Golden State Water Company on an approximately 1.03 acre site owned by BLM (APN 042-316-141-0000). The reservoir site is currently undeveloped. The reservoir would be approximately 102 feet in diameter and 36.5 feet in height, constructed from welded steel plates. A 10-foot wide excavation stockpile is proposed in the southeast corner of the site that would be up to 10 feet above the proposed grade of the southeast property line. The reservoir site would be secured by an 8-foot chain-link fence and a security gate at the point of entry (Figure 3; Appendix J). Water would be pumped from the Arrowhead Well and Crooks Booster Station (existing GSWC facilities) up to the proposed Irwin Reservoir. The water would be conveyed through the proposed transmission line. No new pumping facilities are needed to serve the proposed Irwin Reservoir.



The reservoir site would require a permanent ROW grant from BLM since it would be located on BLM property. The State Water Resources Control Board would issue an amended domestic water supply permit to allow for the operation of the reservoir.

*Irwin Road Water Transmission Pipeline*

GSWC would also construct a water transmission line as part of the Project. A 12-inch diameter DI water transmission pipeline approximately 5,816 linear feet (1.1 miles) long would be buried between 36- to 42- inches below the surface within the existing Irwin Road right-of-way (ROW) on the east side of the road (Figure 3; Appendix J). The pipeline would be used to convey water to and from the reservoir and would connect the reservoir with an existing water pipeline located at the intersection of Irwin Road and Gabilan Street. The entire pipeline alignment would be within the Irwin Road ROW. Other permanent Project appurtenances include air valves, blow-off valves, fire hydrants, and valves for the pipeline along the pipeline alignment, as indicated on the plans attached as Appendix J. GSWC will have a traffic control plan prepared by a licensed engineer to maintain a safe, uniform flow of traffic through Irwin Road during the construction period.

## **2.4 Project Timing**

Construction of the Project would occur for approximately 12 months beginning in December 2021.



## **2.5 Regulatory Requirements, Permits, and Approvals**

The following approvals and regulatory permits will be required for implementation of the Proposed Project:

### **Federal Agencies**

- Bureau of Land Management: Right-of-Way Grant
- US Fish and Wildlife Service: Section 7 Permit

### **State Agencies**

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife: Section 2081 Permit
- State Water Resources Control Board: Amended Domestic Water Supply Permit

### **Regional Agencies**

- Regional Water Quality Control Board: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System's California General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity

### **City/County Agencies**

- San Bernardino County Department of Public Works: Roadway Encroachment Permit

## **2.6 Consultation With California Native American Tribe(s)**

The following California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area have been notified of the project: the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, the Big Pine Paiute Tribe, and the Colorado River Indian Tribes. The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians have requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1. A summary of the consultation process, including the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, is provided in Section 4.18 of this Initial Study.

## SECTION 3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED AND DETERMINATION

### 3.1 Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

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

The State Water Board has reviewed the Initial Study for this Project and, following public review, has determined from this study that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

- The proposed project would have no impact on: Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Land Use and Planning, Public Services, and Recreation.
- The following resources would have a less than significant impact on: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, Utilities and Service Systems, Wildfire,
- The following resources would have less than significant effects with mitigation measures incorporated: Biological Resources, Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, and Mandatory Findings of Significance.

#### Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation the State Water Board finds that although the 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.

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## SECTION 4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Aesthetics

#### 4.1.1 Environmental Setting

San Bernardino County contains vast undeveloped tracts of land that offer significant scenic vistas. These locations are in danger of deteriorating under growing pressure from urban development and increased recreational activities occurring across the County. Actions have been taken by federal, state, county, and local jurisdictions to ensure that these resources are protected to preserve their aesthetic value (County of San Bernardino 2006).

#### State Scenic Highways

The California Scenic Highway Program protects and enhances the scenic beauty of California's highways and adjacent corridors. A highway can be designated as scenic based on how much natural beauty can be seen by users of the highway, the quality of the scenic landscape, and if development impacts the enjoyment of the view.

Irwin Road is neither a state highway nor an official California scenic highway as shown on the San Bernardino County General Plan Circulation and Transportation Map (County of San Bernardino 2006). Additionally, the Project is not located within one mile of an officially designated as a state scenic highway (Caltrans 2020).

#### 4.1.2 Aesthetics (I) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Project includes a proposed water transmission pipeline and a water storage reservoir. The Project is not located within a scenic corridor as shown in the San Bernardino County General Plan Open Space Element Map (County of San Bernardino 2006). Short-term construction activities could potentially temporarily degrade the existing vacant open space visual character of the site. In all, the project would involve grading activities and construction of the reservoir. During the construction phase, various equipment, vehicles, building materials, stockpiles, disposal receptacles, and related activities could be potentially visible from several vantage points near the project site. However, construction-related activities would be short-term and temporary in nature. Once completed, all general construction activities would cease, along with any construction-related aesthetic impacts.

Upon completion, the Project site would consist of a new water storage reservoir, 102-feet in diameter and 36.5-feet high, which would be a permanent structure visible to the residents located approximately 1.1 miles to the south. The water reservoir would not obstruct any scenic vistas due to the location and

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topographic landscape of the area which is relatively flat. The transmission main alignment would be located below ground within a paved roadway and once construction is complete the surface would be restored to its original condition. Therefore, impacts related to having a substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas are considered to be less than significant.

<b>Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The Project would not significantly damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings on or within one mile of a state scenic highway. Irwin Road is neither a state highway nor an official California scenic highway as shown on the San Bernardino County General Plan Circulation and Transportation Map (County of San Bernardino 2006). Furthermore, the Project is not located within one mile of an officially designated as a state scenic highway (Caltrans 2020). Therefore, no impact would occur.

<b>Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The Project is located in area that has been designated by the County of San Bernardino General Plan as Rural Residential and as such the site is not designated as a natural landform containing hillsides, creeks, greenways, or other significant topography. Additionally, the Project is not within one mile of an officially designated state scenic highway. The site currently consists of vacant land with sparse vegetation. The Project proposes to construct underground facilities and a water storage reservoir. The construction of the underground facilities does have the potential to temporarily result in changes to the area due to the presence of construction equipment but would cease when construction is complete. The water storage reservoir would be 102-feet in diameter and 36.5-feet in height and would be a permanent structure that would be visible to residences located approximately 1.1 miles to the south of the tank site. However, altering the visual character of the site would not result in substantial degradation of the visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. Therefore, impacts are considered to be less than significant.

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<b>Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Would the project 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Project does not include street lighting and would not create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. In addition, construction work would be limited to daytime hours; thereby eliminating the need for construction lighting. Therefore, no impact would occur.

#### **4.1.3 Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

## **4.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources**

### **4.2.1 Environmental Setting**

Agricultural use within the County continues to decline as a result of the effects of urban expansion and economic considerations. Most agricultural development is located in areas with relatively level terrain and stable soil conditions (County of San Bernardino 2007a). Agricultural development in the Desert Region is limited primarily to areas bordering the Mojave River as far north as the community of Harvard-Newberry Springs. Historic alfalfa production occurs on a limited basis in areas that previously had sufficient groundwater for irrigation, such as Lucerne Valley and Harper Dry Lake. Information on the occurrence of Important Farmlands in the Desert Region is limited to the areas near Lenwood, Yermo, and Newberry Springs and Lucerne Valley. Large areas of grazing land are also located in the southwest areas of the Desert Region (County of San Bernardino 2007b).

According to the California Department of Conservation (CDC) San Bernardino County Important Farmland 2016 Map, the majority of the land surrounding the Project site is classified as Urban and Built-Up Land, Grazing Land and Other Land. The site is not located on or near Prime Farmland, nor is it under a Williamson Act Contract (CDC 2017).



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**4.2.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources (II) Environmental Checklist and Discussion**

<b>Would the Project:</b>	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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Project does not include prime or unique farmland or other farmland of statewide or local importance as identified on the San Bernardino County Important Farmland 2008 map prepared by the California Department of Conservation (CDC). Therefore, no impact would occur.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Project site and surrounding areas are not zoned for agricultural use. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with any agricultural land use or Williamson Act land conservation contract. Therefore, no impact would occur.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

Forest land is defined in the Public Resources Code section 12220(g) as "land that can support 10 percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits." Undeveloped habitat adjacent to the Project includes sage scrub, riparian, chaparral, ruderal, and landscaped areas. The Project area does not contain forest land but is located within jurisdictional control of the BLM. However, the Project would not conflict with

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any existing zoning, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timber land production. Therefore, no impact would occur.

<b>Would the project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

As stated above, undeveloped habitat adjacent to the Project includes sage scrub, riparian, chaparral, ruderal, and landscaped areas. The Project area does not contain forest land and would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Therefore, no impact would occur.

<b>Would the project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The majority of the land surrounding the Project site is classified as Urban and Built-Up Land, Grazing Land and Other Land. Some of the land adjacent to the Project to the south is developed with rural single-family structures. There would be no other changes that, due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses or forest land to non-forest use. There are no agricultural uses or forest land currently in the vicinity of the Project. Therefore, no impact would occur.

#### **4.2.3 Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

### **4.3 Air Quality**

#### **4.3.1 Environmental Setting**

The Project is located within the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB), which is overseen by the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD). The 2004 Ozone Attainment Plan for the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB), 2008 Ozone Attainment Plan, and the 1995 Federal Particulate Matter (PM-10) Attainment Plan set forth a comprehensive program that would lead the MDAB into compliance with all federal and state air quality standards. These plans include control measures and related emission reduction estimates that are based upon emissions projections for a future development scenario derived from land use, population, and employment characteristics defined in consultation with local governments.

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**4.3.2 Air Quality (III) Environmental Checklist and Discussion**

<b>Would the Project:</b>	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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Conformance with the attainment plans for development projects is determined by demonstrating compliance with local land use plans. The Project proposes construction, operation, and maintenance of approximately 1.1 miles of underground water transmission pipeline and a 1.5 million-gallon welded steel water reservoir. California Government Code Section 53091 exempts public water facilities from County zoning regulations. Since the proposed reservoir is needed to serve existing customers and future development envisioned in the City of Barstow General Plan, the Project can be considered consistent with the General Plan by providing the services envisioned in it, and therefore considered consistent with the MDAB attainment plans. Therefore, the Project would not obstruct the implementation of the applicable air quality plans and no impacts are anticipated.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The MDAQMD, CEQA, and Federal Conformity Guidelines (2011) state that any Project in the Mojave Desert Air Basin with daily emissions that exceed any of the established significance thresholds should be considered as having an individually and cumulatively significant air quality impact. Air quality impacts can be described in short-term and long-term perspectives. Short-term impacts relate to site grading/preparation and paving. Long-term air quality impacts relate to maintenance of the improvements.

The short-term construction emissions of criteria pollutants from this Project were modeled using the CalEEMod version 2013.2.2 program (Appendix A). Maximum daily emissions are estimated to be 8.68 pounds per day (lbs/day) for volatile organic compounds; 55.13 lbs/day for oxides of nitrogen; 53.70 lbs/day for carbon monoxide; 0.07 lbs/day for sulfur dioxide; 10.28 lbs/day for particulate matter less than 10 microns; and 6.00 lbs/day for particulate matter less than 2.5 microns, which do not exceed the regional thresholds set by the MDAQMD. Therefore, the potential impacts to air quality from construction of this Project would be less than significant.

The long-term operational emissions from this Project are a result of personnel traveling once a day to the reservoir tank for monitoring purposes. As shown above and in Appendix A, emissions from painting

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of the reservoirs would not exceed MDAQMD daily thresholds during construction and would, therefore, not exceed thresholds during touch-up painting. Thus, operational emissions would be negligible and would have a less than significant effect on air quality.

Since the Project does not conflict with any land uses, it is in conformance with the applicable air quality plans, and the Project's short-term and long-term emissions do not exceed the MDAQMD established thresholds of significance; the Project's net increase in criteria pollutant emissions for which the Project region is non-attainment is not cumulatively considerable and impacts are considered less than significant.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MDAQMD defines sensitive receptors as residences, schools, daycare centers, playgrounds and medical facilities. The closest sensitive receptors are the residences located adjacent to the southern portion of the Irwin Road pipeline alignment. The proposed location of the Irwin Road reservoir is surrounded by vacant land and is located approximately 0.8 miles north of the existing residential development. As described above in Item III (b) and as shown in Appendix A, construction-related emissions were found to be below the daily thresholds of significance. In addition, there are no substantial pollutant concentrations resulting from the operation of the Project; therefore, the Project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations and impacts are considered to be less than significant.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 Project presents the potential for generation of objectionable odors in the form of diesel exhaust during construction in the immediate vicinity of the Project site. However, these odors would be of short-term duration and would not result in permanent impacts to surrounding land uses or sensitive receptors in the Project area. Therefore, the Project would result in less than significant impact relating to objectionable odors or other emissions.

#### **4.3.3 Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

## 4.4 Biological Resources

ECORP biologists performed a literature review using the CDFW's California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB; CDFW 2020a) and the California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) Electronic Inventory (CNPSEI; CNPS 2020) on March 26, 2020 to determine the special-status plant and wildlife species that have been documented near the Project site. ECORP also conducted an aquatic resources delineation which describes aquatic resources identified within the Study Area that may be regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) pursuant to Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA), the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) pursuant to Section 1600 of the California Fish and Game Code. In addition, a biological reconnaissance survey was conducted on March 19, 2020 by ECORP biologists who walked the entire Project site to determine the vegetation communities and wildlife habitats on the Project site. Focused (i.e., protocol-level) surveys for special-status plant species, desert tortoise, and Mohave ground squirrel were conducted on the Project site in spring 2020 (Appendices B-F).

### 4.4.1 Regulatory Setting

#### *Federal Endangered Species Act*

The USFWS administers the Federal Endangered Species Act (Federal ESA), 16 U.S.C. §§ 1531–1599. The Federal ESA provides a process for listing species as either threatened or endangered and methods of protecting listed species. The Federal ESA defines "endangered" as any plant or animal species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or through a significant portion of its range. A "threatened" species is a species that is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future. A "proposed" species is one that has been officially proposed by USFWS for addition to the federal threatened and endangered species list (EPA 2021). Section 9 of the Federal ESA prohibits "take" of threatened or endangered species. The term "take" means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in such conduct. Under the regulations of the Federal ESA, the USFWS may authorize "take" when it is incidental to, but not the purpose of, an otherwise lawful act (EPA 2021).

#### *California Endangered Species Act*

California has enacted a similar law at the state level, the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), California Fish and Game Code Section 2050, et seq. CESA emphasizes early consultation to avoid potential impacts to rare, endangered, and threatened species and to develop appropriate planning to offset project-caused losses of listed species populations and their essential habitats. CDFW is the agency responsible for implementing CESA. Section 2080 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits "take" of any species determined to be an endangered species or a threatened species. Take is defined in Section 86 of the California Fish and Game Code as "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill." CESA allows for take incidental to otherwise lawful development projects; for these actions an incidental take permit is issued by CDFW. For species listed under both FESA and CESA requiring a Biological Opinion under Section 7 of FESA, the CDFW may also authorize impacts to CESA species by issuing a Consistency Determination under Section 2080.1 of the California Fish and Game Code.

#### 4.4.2 Environmental Setting

The majority of the Project area consists of undeveloped land adjacent to a heavily used paved road, Irwin Road. Numerous dirt roads cross through the site, including a dirt access road associated with a utility line that runs more or less parallel with the pipeline portion of the Project. The southern portion of the Project is adjacent to existing residential development to the west and a cemetery to the east. Several ephemeral washes are present throughout the Project site, although riparian vegetation was not observed. Soils ranged from sandy to rocky and gravelly; sand dunes or aeolian sand deposits were not present. Disturbances associated with Irwin Road and the nearby residential areas, such as unauthorized trash dumping and off-highway vehicle use, degraded the quality of the habitat on the site. Representative site photographs and lists of plant and wildlife species observed are included in Appendix B.

#### Vegetation Communities

The Creosote Bush – White Bursage Scrub community is characterized by intermediate to tall, widely spaced shrubs typically dominated by creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) and white bursage (*Ambrosia dumosa*). This community is found within well-drained secondary soils with very low available water holding capacity on slopes, fans, and valleys at elevation between 75 meters below mean sea level (msl) to 1,600 meters above msl (Sawyer et al. 2009). Within the Project site, this community is dominated by creosote bush and also consists of white bur-sage, Cooper's box thorn (*Lycium cooperi*), and cheesebush (*Ambrosia salsola*). Annual species consisted of desert heron's bill (*Erodium texanum*) and rigid spiny herb (*Chorizanthe rigida*). This community is located mostly in the northern and mid-portions of the Project site and based on non-native species and anthropogenic causes (e.g., roads, tire tracks) is mildly to moderately disturbed throughout the Project site. There are 1.03 acres of Creosote Bush – White Bursage Scrub within the Project site (Figure 4. Vegetation Communities and Land Cover).

#### Special-Status Plants

There are 12 special-status plant species that appeared in the literature review and database searches for the Project site (CDFW 2020a; CNPS 2020). Descriptions of the CNPS designations are found in Appendix B. Of the 12 special-status plants identified, five have a moderate potential to occur and two have a low potential to occur on the Project site due to the presence of moderately suitable habitat in the disturbed creosote bush – white bursage scrub. The remaining five species identified in the literature review are presumed absent from the Project site.

##### *Moderate Potential to Occur*

- Mojave monkeyflower (*Diplacus mohavensis*), CNPS 1B.2, BLM Sensitive
- Barstow woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum mohavense*), CNPS 1B.2, BLM Sensitive
- Mojave menodora (*Menodora spinescens* var. *mohavensis*), CNPS 1B.2, BLM Sensitive
- Creamy blazing star (*Mentzelia tridentata*), CNPS 1B.3, BLM Sensitive
- Beaver Dam breadroot (*Pediomelum castoreum*), CNPS 1B.3, BLM Sensitive

##### *Low Potential to Occur*

- Spiny-hair blazing star (*Mentzelia tricuspidis*), CNPS 2B.1

- Parish's phacelia (*Phacelia parishii*), CNPS 1B.1, BLM Sensitive

*Presumed Absent*

- California alkali grass (*Puccinellia simplex*), CNPS List 1B.2
- Chaparral sand-verbena (*Abronia villosa* var. *aurita*), CNPS List 1B.1, BLM Sensitive
- Desert cymopterus (*Cymopterus deserticola*), CNPS List 1B.2, BLM Sensitive
- Emory's crucifixion-thorn (*Castela emoryi*), CNPS List 2B.2
- Lane Mountain milk-vetch (*Astragalus jaegerianus*), CNPS List 1B.1

**Special-Status Wildlife**

There were 12 special-status wildlife species that appeared in the literature review and database searches for the Project site (CDFW 2020a). Of the 12 special-status wildlife species identified, one is present on the Project site, three have a moderate potential to occur, and two have a low potential to occur on the Project site due to the presence of moderately suitable habitat in the disturbed creosote bush – white bursage scrub. The remaining six species identified in the literature review are presumed absent from the Project site.

The following species was observed or otherwise detected on the Project site:

- Desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), federal- and State-listed Threatened

*Moderate Potential to Occur*

- Burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), California SSC, BLM Sensitive
- American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), California Species of Special Concern (SSC)
- Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*), State-listed threatened, BLM Sensitive

*Low Potential to Occur*

- Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), California fully protected species, BLM Sensitive
- Mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*), California SSC, BLM Sensitive

*Presumed Absent*

- Arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*), federal-listed endangered, California SSC
- Mohave tui chub (*Siphateles bicolor mohavensis*), federal- and State-listed endangered, California fully protected species
- Mojave fringe-toed lizard (*Uma scoparia*), California SSC, BLM Sensitive
- Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), California SSC, BLM Sensitive
- Western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), federal-listed threatened, State listed endangered, BLM Sensitive
- LeConte's Thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*), California SSC, BLM Sensitive (note that both the SSC and BLM sensitive designations refer to the subspecies *T. l. macmillanorum*, the San Joaquin population [CDFW 2020c])

- Suitable nesting habitat for numerous species of migratory birds protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code is present on the Project site in some of the shrubs, Joshua trees, surrounding buildings and landscaping, and other anthropogenic structures (e.g., telephone poles). Therefore, nesting birds could use the Project site during the nesting bird season (typically February 15 through August 31).

### **Potential Waters of the U.S.**

As part of the aquatic resources delineation, a field survey was conducted on May 29, 2020 by ECORP biologists (Appendix C). The biologists walked accessible areas of the Delineation Area (DA) to determine the location and extent of aquatic resources. The DA consisted of all areas being impacted by the Project, along with a 100-foot buffer.

There are five individual segments of ephemeral drainages mapped on the site, most of which are located along the west side of Irwin Road. The drainages are located within the DA, but outside of known impact limits for the proposed Project. The features all appear to receive runoff from the local landscape and ultimately drain southwards onto Irwin Road.

The ephemeral drainages onsite are not considered to be jurisdictional to the USACE, due to being in the category of features excluded from the definition of waters of the U.S. under the Navigable Waters Protection Rule, which became effective on June 22, 2020. Because the features are considered to be ephemeral, the placement of dredged or fill material into jurisdictional features would not require a permit pursuant to Section 404 of the CWA with the USACE. No impacts to ephemeral drainages are anticipated. Furthermore, there were no suspected wetlands recorded onsite.

### **Waters of the State**

Wetlands and waters are regulated primarily by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The RWQCBs were established under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act to oversee water quality. Discharges under the Porter-Cologne Act are permitted by Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) and may be required even when the discharge is already permitted or exempt under the CWA. In compliance with Section 401 of the CWA, the RWQCBs also issue water quality certifications for activities which may result in a discharge to waters of the U.S. This is most frequently required in tandem with a Section 404 permit request.

### **Wildlife Movement Corridors**

The concept of habitat corridors addresses the linkage between large blocks of habitat that allow the safe movement of mammals and other wildlife species from one habitat area to another. The definition of a corridor varies, but corridors may include such areas as greenbelts, refuge systems, underpasses, and biogeographic land bridges. In general, a corridor is described as a linear habitat, embedded in a dissimilar matrix, which connects two or more large blocks of habitat. Wildlife movement corridors are critical for the survivorship of ecological systems for several reasons. Corridors can connect water, food, and cover sources, spatially linking these three resources with wildlife in different areas. In addition, wildlife movement between habitat areas provides for the potential of genetic exchange between wildlife



species populations, thereby maintaining genetic variability and adaptability to maximize the success of wildlife responses to changing environmental conditions. This is especially critical for small populations subject to loss of variability from genetic drift and effects of inbreeding. The nature of corridor usage and wildlife movement patterns vary greatly among species.

The Project site was assessed for its ability to function as a wildlife corridor. The Project is not located within any designated Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) linkages for desert tortoise or Mohave ground squirrel (see Figure 5). In general, the Project site provides some wildlife movement opportunities because it is open. However, it is not located in an area that would be considered a movement corridor or linkage for wildlife due to its proximity to an existing well-traveled road (Irwin Road) and urban development to the south. While it is possible that the habitat and dirt roads present parallel to and running throughout the Project site are likely utilized by wildlife moving through the area, this area would not be considered a necessary linkage between conserved natural habitat areas and is therefore not considered a wildlife corridor or linkage.

#### **4.4.3 Biological Resources (IV) Environmental Checklist and Discussion**

<b>Would the Project:</b>	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"/>

#### **Special-Status Plant Species**

Focused surveys for special-status plants resulted in no detections or observations of special-status plant species (Appendix E). The disturbances present throughout the Project site likely preclude special-status plant species from occurring on or immediately adjacent to the Project. There are no expected impacts to special-status plant species as a result of the Project.

The Project is located within the Superior-Cronese Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), which encompasses more than 397,000 acres of high-density Desert Tortoise habitat and encompasses designated desert tortoise critical habitat. The Project is therefore subject to the requirements of CMA LUPA-BIO-7, which requires cactus and succulents to be salvaged, stored, and replanted following construction of the Project. One live beavertail cactus and one skeleton of a dead Wiggin's cholla (*Cylindropuntia echinocarpa*) were identified during the plant survey. It is recommended the beavertail cactus be salvaged prior to the start of construction activities in order to maintain compliance with LUPA-BIO-7. The Wiggin's cholla will not need to be salvaged and replanted due to its deceased state. Depending on the time between the plant survey and the start of Project activities, it is possible that cactus or succulent species become established at other locations within or adjacent to the Project site. In

order to identify these potential locations, a pre-construction survey for cactus and succulents is recommended prior to the start of construction to reduce impacts to cactus and succulents to a less than significant level. Implementation of Mitigation Measure **BIO-1** is recommended.

### Desert Tortoise

Despite the presence of disturbances, desert tortoise sign was observed throughout the Project site, and one live desert tortoise was observed in a burrow located in the northern portion of the Project (Appendix D). The Project would result in potential impacts to the desert tortoise. Direct impacts may occur in the form of habitat loss (including the loss of occupied designated Critical Habitat), mortality, injury, and disease. Loss of habitat through development of the reservoir and associated pipeline would affect foraging, reproduction, regional movement, and sheltering activities for desert tortoise. Desert Tortoise is under threatened and under both FESA and CESA, thus compensatory mitigation will be necessary to offset the impacts to habitat loss. Compensatory mitigation is required at a 5:1 ratio, in accordance with LUPA-BIO-COMP-1. Implementation of Mitigation Measure **BIO-2** will reduce these impacts to a less than significant level.

Mortality and injury could also occur to desert tortoises through collisions with vehicles and/or equipment or entrapment in trenches/open holes during construction activities. Desert tortoise exclusion fencing will be required for the Project in accordance with the CMA titled LUPA-BIO-IFS-4 in the DRECP. Furthermore, a biological monitor will be present during ground-disturbing Project activities in accordance with LUPA-BIO-IFS-5 in the DRECP. Implementation of Mitigation Measure **BIO-2** will reduce these impacts to a less than significant level.

Indirect impacts may occur in the form of ground vibrations, increased human activity, visual disturbances, dust, and habitat degradation. These impacts are associated with construction activities and operations and maintenance activities conducted for the tank and associated pipeline. DRECP CMAs that will be implemented during the Project are listed in Appendix B. Implementation of the CMAs and Mitigation Measure **BIO-2** will reduce these indirect impacts to a less than significant level.

The northernmost portion of the Project site at the proposed water storage reservoir is located within a Tortoise Conservation Area (TCA), as designated in the Revised Recovery Plan for the Mojave Population of the Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) (USFWS 2011). TCAs have been incorporated as part of the desert tortoise conservation in the DRECP and are mapped in relation to the DRECP-designated desert tortoise Linkages and High Priority Habitat areas. Three CMAs that specifically address impacts to desert tortoise in TCAs are discussed in the DRECP, CONS-BIO-IFS-1 through -3. However, CONS-BIO-IFS-1 and -2 do not apply to Project because the Project is not large enough to result in the minimum qualifying impacts discussed in these particular CMAs. Adherence with CONS-BIO-IFS-3, limiting disturbance caps in ACECs, will be conducted through implementation of Mitigation Measure **BIO-2**.

Lastly, the Project proponent will initiate consultation with USFWS and CDFW to discuss permitting under the federal and State Endangered Species Acts with regard to potential Project-related "take" of desert tortoise. Permits acquired under the federal and State Endangered Species Acts will contain additional avoidance and minimization measures as well as additional mitigation measures to further reduce impacts to the species.

### Burrowing Owl

Burrowing owls and burrowing owl sign (e.g., whitewash, pellets, feathers, bones of prey items) were not identified during surveys conducted on and adjacent to the Project site. The desert tortoise burrows documented throughout the Project site would be considered potential burrowing owl burrows because owls could use them at any time. Riprap located at the southern portion of the Project site also provides suitable burrow habitat for the species. The species has a moderate potential to occur on the Project site. Although no burrowing owls or sign of burrowing owl presence was documented during the surveys, it is possible that, due to their migratory and highly mobile nature, the species could use and/or occupy the site prior to the start of ground-breaking project activities. If present, Project-related impacts could occur through habitat loss, mortality or injury due to collisions with vehicles and equipment or entombing inside burrows, ground vibrations, noise, and increased human activity. The Project would need to comply with LUPA-BIO-IFS-12, which requires monitoring of occupied burrows within 200 meters of the Project site during the species' nesting period. Implementation of Mitigation Measure **BIO-3** is recommended to reduce impacts to the species to a less than significant level. If active burrowing owl burrows are present on or adjacent to the Project site and impacts are unavoidable, then the Project would be required to comply with LUPA-BIO-IFS-13, passive relocation in coordination with BLM and CDFW.

### Mohave Ground Squirrel

The Project site is not located within any DRECP-designated Linkages or Key Population Centers for Mohave ground squirrel. Protocol-level trapping for Mohave ground squirrel was conducted on the Project site in between April and July 2020, the results of which were negative (Appendix F). If the Project will begin ground-breaking construction activities within one year of the survey, then the species is considered absent from the Project site and Project activities may commence without expected impacts to the species. If ground-breaking Project activities do not occur within one year of the July 14, 2020 trapping survey, then another trapping survey will need to occur or the Project will need to implement mitigation measures to offset potential impacts to the species. If the species is present, direct impacts in the form of habitat loss and injury or mortality due to collision with Project vehicles and equipment could occur. If present, indirect impacts in the form of ground vibrations, noise, and increased human and vehicular presence on the Project site could also occur. The Mohave ground squirrel is a State-listed (threatened) species and also considered a BLM Sensitive species and any impacts would be considered significant. The Project would need to adhere to the following CMAs in the DRECP pertaining to Mohave ground squirrel:

- LUPA-BIO-IFS-39: perform pre-construction clearance surveys for Mohave ground squirrel during the active season (February 1 through August 31) and biological monitoring during construction activities
- LUPA-BIO-IFS-41: flag and avoid all occurrences of Mohave ground squirrel
- LUPA-BIO-IFS-42: prohibit use of rodenticides

If Project activities do not commence within one year of the 2020 Mohave ground squirrel trapping survey, implementation of Mitigation Measure **BIO-4** is recommended. An ITP under Section 2081 of the California Endangered Species Act may be necessary to authorize incidental take to Mohave ground squirrel if the species is detected onsite during future survey efforts. If an ITP is obtained, it is expected

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that additional avoidance and minimization measures as well as mitigation measures will be included as permit conditions.

### Conclusion

Implementation of Mitigation Measures **BIO-1** through **BIO-4** would reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Project site consisted entirely of disturbed creosote bush – white bursage scrub and disturbed or developed areas. The Project site did not contain any riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities that would need to be preserved and no Project-related impacts to these types of resources are anticipated with the development of the Project.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

A total of 2.096 acres of aquatic resources have been mapped within the DA, however, no aquatic resources would be impacted by the construction of the project. These acreages represent a calculated estimation of the extent of aquatic resources within the DA and do not imply jurisdiction; they are subject to modification following agency review and/or the verification process.

### *Ephemeral Drainages*

There are five individual segments of ephemeral drainages mapped on the site, most of which are located along the west side of Irwin Road. The drainages are located within the DA but outside of known impact limits for the proposed Project. The features all appear to receive runoff from the local landscape and ultimately drain southwards onto Irwin Road. Because the features are avoided by the Project, there would not be a need for a permit pursuant to Section 404 of the CWA with the USACE, Section 401 with the SWRCB or Section 1600 with the CDFW. No impacts to ephemeral drainages are anticipated.

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*Wetlands*

There were no suspected wetlands recorded onsite.

As such, the Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands. No impact would occur.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Project site is located within and adjacent to areas containing existing disturbances (e.g., paved and dirt roads, unauthorized trash dumping, and urban developments). Due to its proximity to an existing well-traveled road (Irwin Road) and urban development in the south, the Project site does not provide wildlife movement or travel opportunities that the surrounding undeveloped areas do not already provide. Furthermore, the loss of a minimal amount of habitat (approximately 1.03 acres) would not affect existing wildlife movement activity in the area. Loss of the habitat within the Project site would not result in a significant impact to regional or local wildlife travel. Therefore, no impacts to wildlife corridors are expected to occur during the development of the Project site.

If ground-disturbing activities occur during the nesting bird season, typically from February 1 through August 31, Project activities could directly affect birds and raptors and their nests protected by the California Fish and Game Code and the federal MBTA. Project-related direct impacts to nesting birds could occur through the removal of habitat and indirectly through increased noise, increased human activity, and ground vibrations. In order to reduce impacts to nesting birds and raptors a less than significant level, implementation of Mitigation Measure **BIO-5** is required.

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<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Project is located within the planning area for the DRECP, specifically within the DRECP-designated Superior-Cronese ACEC. A portion of the Project occurs on BLM-managed lands; therefore, compliance with the DRECP as well as the specific goals and management actions designated for the Superior-Cronese ACEC is required. The DRECP has identified CMAs for the Superior-Cronese ACEC to which the Project will be required to adhere. A comprehensive list of CMAs pertinent to the Project can be found in the EA prepared for the Project (Albert A. Webb Associates 2020). The Superior-Cronese ACEC also has designated disturbance cap that has already been exceeded and will require compensatory mitigation at a 5:1 ratio, as discussed in the EA (Albert A. Webb Associates 2020):

"Within the DRECP, the Project site is located within the Superior-Cronese Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and is subject to specific goals, standards, and objectives identified for this area, as well as general practices and uses. The Superior-Cronese ACEC has a disturbance cap of 0.5 percent or 16,533.5 acres. The ground disturbance cap is a limitation on ground disturbing activities and cumulatively considered past, present, and future ground disturbance. At this time, BLM has determined the baseline ground disturbance for this ACEC exceeds the disturbance cap. Thus, ground disturbance mitigation is included in the Proposed Action for the water tank site and pipeline alignment. These impacts will be mitigated at a ratio of 5:1, for a total of eight acres."

The compensatory mitigation as discussed above is specified for the desert tortoise. Nesting of compensatory mitigation requirements for disturbance cap allowances and impacts to occupied desert tortoise habitat is allowable. Compensatory mitigation requirements performed during implementation of Mitigation Measure **BIO-2** will reduce impacts to the Superior-Cronese ACEC disturbance cap designations to a less than significant level.

Although no sensitive vegetation communities as designated by CDFW are present on the Project site, LUPA-BIO-7 in the DRECP requires restoration of Project temporary impact areas within habitat for special-status species. The Project site contains occupied desert tortoise habitat in the creosote bush – white bursage scrub. Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measure **BIO-6** will reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

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<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Project site is not located within an HCP or NCCP. Therefore, development of the Project site will not conflict with the provisions of an adopted HCP, NCCP, or other approved local, regional, or State HCP. No impact would occur.

#### **4.4.4 Mitigation Measures**

**BIO-1 Pre-Construction Survey for Cactus and Succulents:** Within 60 days prior to the start of ground-breaking activities, a qualified biologist with experience identifying cactus and succulent species occurring in the Mojave Desert will conduct an inventory survey in order to document the locations of cactus and succulent species. One beavertail cactus was identified during the special-status plant surveys conducted in 2020, and it is possible that additional germinated specimens may become established in the time between the survey and the start of ground-breaking Project activities. Locations of the cactus and succulents will be documented with a sub-meter global positioning system (GPS) unit and flagged for salvage activities conducted in accordance with the DRECP CMA LUPA-BIO-7. Specimens shall be salvaged prior to the start of ground-breaking construction activities. Healthy specimens shall be cared for and, to the maximum extent practicable, replanted at the Project site following completion of the Project. Salvage, care, and replanting of beavertail cactus shall be performed by an experienced individual who is familiar with BLM protocols and who will be able to maintain the specimens until Project construction is complete.

**BIO-2 Desert Tortoise Protection<sup>6</sup>:** The following shall be implemented:

- a. The Project proponent shall designate a field contact representative (FCR) who will be responsible for overseeing compliance with protective stipulations for the desert tortoise and for coordination on compliance with the BLM. The FCR must be on-site during all Project activities, including geotechnical borings or vehicle movement. The FCR shall have the authority to halt all Project activities that are in violation of the stipulations. The FCR shall have a copy of all stipulations when work is being conducted on the site. The FCR may be a crew chief or field supervisor, a Project manager, any other employee of the Project proponent, or a contracted biologist.

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<sup>6</sup> The language for this Mitigation Measure was taken directly from the Tortoise Mitigation section in the Project's EA (Section 4.6.3; Albert A. Webb Associates 2020) for consistency.

- b. All employees of the Project proponent who work on-site shall participate in a tortoise education program prior to initiation of field activities. The Project proponent is responsible for ensuring that the education program is developed and presented prior to conducting activities. New employees shall receive formal, approved training prior to working on-site. The worker education program shall provide interpretation for non-English speaking workers and provide the same instruction for new workers prior to their working on site. The employee education program must be received, reviewed, and approved by the BLM Resource Area Office at least 15 days prior to the presentation of the program. The program may consist of a class presented by a qualified biologist (BLM or contracted) or a video. Wallet-sized cards or a one-page handout with important information for workers to carry are recommended. The program shall cover the following topics at a minimum:
  - i. distribution of the desert tortoise,
  - ii. general behavior and ecology of the tortoise,
  - iii. sensitivity to human activities,
  - iv. legal protection,
  - v. penalties for violations of State or federal laws,
  - vi. reporting requirements, and
  - vii. Project-protective mitigation measures.
- c. Only biologists authorized by the USFWS, CDFW, and the BLM shall handle desert tortoises. The BLM or Project proponent shall submit the name(s) of proposed authorized biologist(s) to the USFWS for review and approval at least 15 days prior to the onset of activities. No handling activities shall begin until an authorized biologist is approved. Authorization for handling shall be granted under the auspices of the Section 7 consultation.
- d. The area of disturbance shall be confined to the smallest practical area, considering topography, placement of facilities, location of burrows, public health and safety, and other limiting factors. Work area boundaries shall be delineated with flagging or other marking to minimize surface disturbance associated with vehicle straying. Special habitat features, such as burrows, identified by the qualified biologist shall be avoided to the extent possible. To the extent possible, previously disturbed areas within the Project site shall be utilized for the stockpiling of excavated materials, storage of equipment, location of office trailers, and parking of vehicles. The qualified biologist, in consultation with the Project proponent, shall ensure compliance with this measure.
- e. Where practical, no access road shall be bladed to the Project site. Cross-country access shall be the standard for temporary activities. For development activities, a short driveway (no more than 0.3 miles) from the nearest access road may be constructed if necessary. To the extent possible, access to the Project site shall be restricted to designated "open" routes of travel. A qualified biologist shall select and flag the access route, whether cross-country or bladed, to avoid burrows and to minimize disturbance of vegetation. All constructed access roads are to be considered



temporary; after Project abandonment (or completion, if a short-term activity), the route shall be rehabilitated using ripping, raking, and other accepted techniques.

Except when absolutely required by the Project and as explicitly stated in the Project permit, cross-country vehicle use by employees is prohibited during work and non-work hours.

- f. Desert tortoises may be handled only by the authorized biologist and only when necessary. In handling desert tortoises, the authorized biologist shall follow the techniques form handling desert tortoises in "Guidelines for Handling Desert Tortoises during Construction Projects" (Desert Tortoise Council 1994<sup>7</sup>).
- g. The authorized biologist shall maintain a record of all desert tortoises handled. This information shall include for each tortoise:
  - i. the locations (narrative and maps) and dates of observations;
  - ii. general condition and health, including injuries and state of healing and whether animals voided their bladders;
  - iii. location moved from and location moved to;
  - iv. diagnostic markings (i.e., identification numbers or marked lateral scutes); and
  - v. slide photograph of each handled desert tortoise as described in a previous measure.
- h. No later than 90 days after completion of construction or termination of activities, the FCR and authorized biologist shall prepare a report for the BLM. The report shall document the effectiveness and practicality of the mitigation measures, the number of tortoises excavated from burrows, the number of tortoises moved from the site, the number of tortoises killed or injured, and the specific information for each tortoise as described previously. The report may make recommendations for modifying the stipulations to enhance tortoise protection or to make it more workable. The report shall provide an estimate of the actual acreage disturbed by various aspects of the operation.
- i. Upon locating a dead or injured tortoise, the Project proponent or agent is to notify the BLM Resource Area Office. The BLM must then notify the appropriate field office (Carlsbad<sup>8</sup> or Ventura) of the USFWS by telephone within three days of the finding. Written notification must be made within five days of the finding, both to the appropriate USFWS field office and to the USFWS Division of Law Enforcement in Torrance. The information provided must include the date and

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<sup>7</sup> The *Guidelines for Handling Desert Tortoises During Construction Projects* document was revised in July 1999. Handling of desert tortoises shall also follow the techniques outlined in the USFWS Desert Tortoise Field Manual (2009).

<sup>8</sup> The Project is located within the jurisdiction of the Palm Springs Fish and Wildlife Office, which is a sub-office of the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office.

time of the finding or incident (if known), location of the carcass or injured animal, a photograph, cause of death, if known, and other pertinent information.

An injured animal shall be transported to a qualified veterinarian for treatment at the expense of the Project proponent. If an injured animal recovers, the appropriate field office of USFWS should be contacted for final disposition of the animal.

The BLM shall endeavor to place the remains of intact tortoise carcasses with educational or research institutions holding the appropriate State and federal permits per their instructions. If such institutions are not available or the animal's remains are in poor condition, the information noted above shall be obtained and the carcass left in place. If left in place and sufficient pieces are available, the BLM (or its agent) shall attempt to mark the carcass to ensure that it is not reported again. Arrangements for disposition to a museum shall be made prior to removal of the carcass from the field.

- j. Except on county-maintained roads, vehicle speeds shall not exceed 15 miles per hour through desert tortoise habitat.
- k. Workers shall inspect for tortoises under a vehicle or construction equipment prior to moving it. If a tortoise is present, it may move on its own. If it does not move within 15 minutes, a designated biologist may remove and relocate the animal to a safe location.
- l. All construction materials will be visually checked for the presence of wildlife prior to their movement or use. Any wildlife encountered during the course of these inspections will be allowed to leave the construction area unharmed.
- m. All steep-walled trenches or excavations used during the Project will be covered, except when being actively used, to prevent entrapment of wildlife. If trenches cannot be covered, they will be constructed with escape ramps, following up-to-date design standards to facilitate and allow wildlife to exit, or wildlife exclusion fencing will be installed around the trench(s) or excavation(s). Open trenches or other excavations will be inspected by a designated biologist immediately before backfilling, excavation, or other earthwork.
- n. Domestic pets are prohibited on sites. This prohibition does not apply to the use of domestic animals (e.g., dogs) that may be used to aid in official and approved monitoring procedures/protocols, or service animals (dogs) under Title II and Title III of the American with Disabilities Act.
- o. All activity work areas will be kept free of trash and debris. Particular attention will be paid to "micro-trash" (including such small items as screws, nuts, washers, nails, coins, rags, small electrical components, small pieces of plastic, glass or wire, and any debris or trash that is colorful or shiny) and organic waste that may subsidize predators. All trash will be covered, kept in closed, raven-proof containers, or otherwise removed from the Project site at the end of each day or at regular intervals prior to periods when workers are not present at the site to reduce the attractiveness of the area to ravens and other tortoise predators.

- p. The application of water and/or other palliatives for dust abatement in construction areas and during Project operations and maintenance will be done with the minimum amount of water necessary to meet safety and air quality standards and in a manner that prevents the formation of puddles, which could attract wildlife and wildlife predators.
- q. Feeding of wildlife, leaving of food or trash as an attractive nuisance to wildlife, collection of native plants, or harassing of wildlife on a site is prohibited.
- r. Project proponents shall salvage and relocate any cactus from the site prior to disturbance using BLM protocols. To the maximum extent practicable for short-term disturbed areas, the cactus shall be replanted back to the original site.
- s. Project proponents shall stockpile any vegetation grubbed or bladed from the Project site and access road. Following completion of the Project, the access road and Project site (if a temporary disturbance) shall be recontoured to approximate pre-Project condition and the stockpiled vegetation randomly spread across the recontoured area. [Due to the variation in substrate types, additional revegetation measures (e.g., imprinting, reseeding) shall be considered.]
- t. Compensation for permanent loss of habitat<sup>9</sup> shall be required in the Superior-Cronese critical habitat unit at a 5:1 ratio, according to BLM requirements. Disturbance cap mitigation will be nested with desert tortoise mitigation. The Project proponent shall [choose] either one or a combination of the following: 1) acquire the compensation lands and deliver the deed to the BLM; 2) provide adequate funds, to be determined by the BLM, to the BLM for the acquisition of compensation lands or for other activities approved by the USFWS; or 3) make permanent improvements to tortoise habitat upon agreement of the USFWS, CDFW,] and the BLM. Lands to be acquired must be within Category I or II of the same tortoise management unit. If acquiring lands (option 1 above), the Project proponent must work closely with the BLM in selecting the lands most benefitting the conservation and recovery efforts. Compensation activities must be initiated or completed within 12 months from the time the resource impact occurs (e.g. ground disturbance, habitat removal, route obliteration, etc. for construction activities; wildlife mortality, visual impacts, etc. due to operations).
- u. Any wildlife encountered during the course of an activity, including construction and operation, shall be allowed to leave the area unharmed.

**BIO-3 Pre-construction Survey for Burrowing Owl:** A pre-construction survey for burrowing owl shall be conducted between 14 and 30 days prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities to determine whether burrowing owls are present on or within 200 meters of the Project site. The

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<sup>9</sup> Note that there is an acreage discrepancy between this biological reconnaissance survey report and the acreage presented in the EA prepared by Albert A. Webb Associates. ECORP calculated 0.78 acres of impacts based on data received from GSWC in July and August 2020.

survey shall follow the methods described in the CDFW's *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFG 2012). If burrowing owls and/or suitable burrowing owl burrows with sign (e.g., whitewash, pellets, feathers, prey remains) are identified on the Project site during the survey, and Project activities are expected to occur during the burrowing owl nesting period, defined as February 1 through August 31 (CDFG 2012), then activity-specific biological monitoring in accordance with DRECP CMA LUPA-BIO-IFS-12 shall be conducted to ensure occupied burrows and a 200-meter buffer are avoided, and impacts to those features are unavoidable. The Project Biologist shall coordinate with the BLM and/or CDFW, as needed, to determine the appropriate level of monitoring the occupied burrows require. If avoidance of impacts to occupied burrows during the nesting season are unavoidable, then consultation with BLM and/or CDFW shall be performed. If passive relocation and burrow exclusion will be necessary, methods shall follow those described in the CDFW's *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFG 2012) and in CMA LUPA-BIO-IFS-13 shall be followed.

**BIO-4 Mohave Ground Squirrel Protection:** A protocol-level trapping survey for Mohave ground squirrel was conducted in 2020, results of which were negative. Due to the negative finding, ground-disturbing activities shall commence within one year of the protocol-level Mohave ground squirrel trapping survey, which was completed on July 14, 2020. If ground-disturbing activities do not occur within one year of the 2020 survey, then another protocol-level trapping survey for Mohave ground squirrel shall be conducted by a qualified biologist in possession of a Memorandum of Understanding with CDFW to perform trapping surveys for the species. The trapping survey shall be conducted at the appropriate survey timing described in the most current and CDFW-accepted survey guidelines. At the time this document was prepared, the Mohave Ground Squirrel Survey Guidelines (CDFG 2003, revised 2010) is the most current protocol survey document. If Mohave ground squirrels are not detected or observed during the trapping survey, then Project activities may commence without implementation of additional mitigation or avoidance and minimization measure for the species. If Mohave ground squirrels are detected during the trapping survey, or if ground-disturbing Project activities do not start within one year of a protocol-level trapping survey, then additional avoidance and minimization measures such as burrow avoidance, biological monitoring, compensatory mitigation, and pre-construction surveys shall be implemented in accordance with DRECP CMA LUPA-BIO-IFS-39 and -41. Additionally, consultation with CDFW regarding application for an ITP under the California ESA Section 2081 may be necessary. If an ITP is obtained for the Project, then additional avoidance and minimization measures as well as mitigation measures developed in consultation with CDFW may be incorporated as permit conditions.

**BIO-5 Pre-construction Nesting Bird Survey:** If construction or other Project activities are scheduled to occur during the bird breeding season (February 1 through August 31), a pre-construction nesting bird survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist to ensure that active bird nests will not be disturbed or destroyed. The survey shall be completed no more than three days prior to initial ground disturbance. The nesting bird survey shall include the Project site and adjacent areas where Project activities have the potential to affect active nests, either directly or indirectly due to construction activity, noise, or ground disturbance. If an active nest is identified, a qualified avian

biologist shall establish an appropriate non-disturbance limit buffer around the nest using flagging or staking. Construction activities shall not occur within any disturbance limit buffer zones until the nest is deemed inactive by the qualified biologist.

**BIO-6 Vegetation Protection and Restoration**<sup>10</sup>: The following measures will be implemented during Project construction:

- a. Clearing will be performed to preserve roots to the extent practicable, stockpile or dispose of vegetation wastes to maintain stability of the site, and provide erosion control. Brush will generally be cut with a chain saw or similar equipment. Vegetation cut during clearing operations will be stockpiled on the ROW (brush, etc.). In some cases trees, stumps, or slash may be scattered back over the ROW after seeding to aid in erosion control.
- b. Cleared vegetation will be disposed of as directed by the BLM's field representative on federal lands. Where feasible and when agreed to by the BLM field representative, the Contractor may use slash for on-site reclamation. Placement of slash shall not interfere with other reclamation activities including seeding and planting.
- c. On private lands, cleared vegetation will be disposed of as requested by the property owner.
- d. Implement site-specific habitat restoration actions for the areas affected in compliance with the DRECP CMA discussed in Table 1 [of the EA], including specifying and using:
  - i. The appropriate seed (e.g., certified weed- free, native, and locally and genetically appropriate seed)
  - ii. Appropriate soils (e.g., topsoil of the same original type on site or that was previously stored by soil type after being salvaged during excavation and construction activities)
  - iii. Equipment
  - iv. Timing (e.g., appropriate season, sufficient rainfall)
  - v. Location
  - vi. Success criteria
  - vii. Monitoring measures
  - viii. Contingency measures, relevant for restoration, which includes seeding that follows BLM policy when on BLM administered lands.

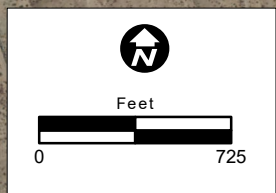
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<sup>10</sup> The language for this Mitigation Measure was taken directly from the Vegetation Mitigation section in the Project's EA (Section 4.3.3; Albert A. Webb Associates 2020) for consistency.

- e. Integrated weed management actions, shall be carried out during all phases of activities in compliance with the DRECP CMA discussed in Table 1 [of the EA], as appropriate, and at a minimum shall include the following
  - i. Thoroughly clean the tires and undercarriage of vehicles entering or re-entering the Project site to remove potential weeds.
  - ii. Store Project vehicles on site in designated areas to minimize the need for multiple washings whenever vehicles re-enter the Project site.
  - iii. Properly maintain vehicle wash and inspection stations to minimize the introduction of invasive weeds or subsidy of invasive weeds.
  - iv. Closely monitor the types of materials brought onto the site to avoid the introduction of invasive weeds and non-native species.
  - v. Reestablish native vegetation quickly on disturbed sites.
  - vi. Monitor and quickly implement control measures to ensure early detection and eradication of weed invasions to avoid the spread of invasive weeds and non-native species on site and to adjacent off-site areas.
  - vii. Use certified weed-free mulch, straw, hay bales, or equivalent fabricated materials for installing sediment barriers.





Location: N:\2018\2018-039.008 Irwin Road Tank & Transmission Line\MAPS\vegetation\_and\_landcover\RTTL\_Vegetation.mxd<ita> (TR) trobellini 6/19/2020</ita>




Map Date: 6/19/2020  
Photo Source: NAIP (2018)


**Map Contents**


 Project Area

 300-ft Buffer

**Vegetation and Land Cover**

 Creosote Bush – White  
Bursage Scrub (1.032 ac.)

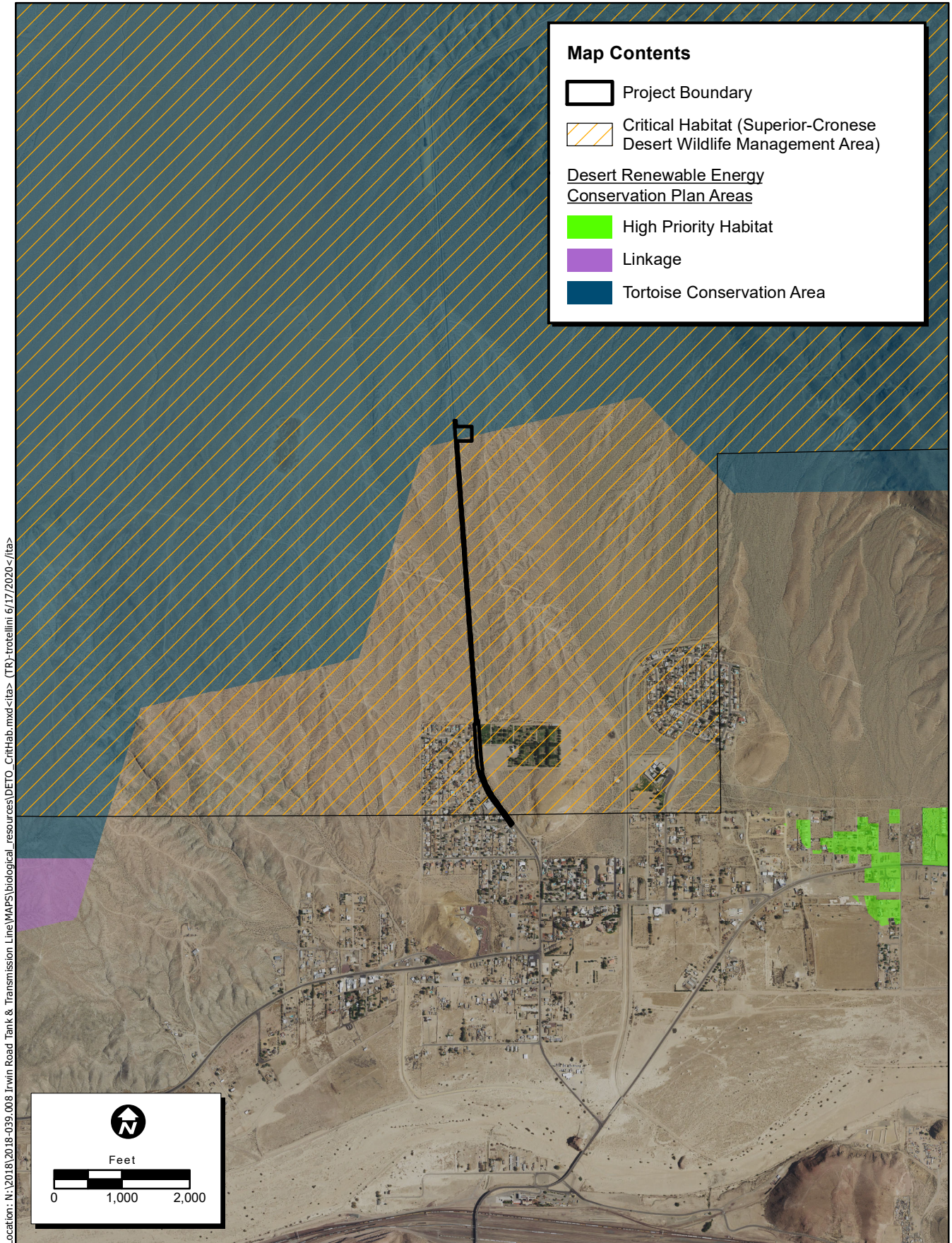
 Disturbed (0.043 ac.)

 Developed (4.344 ac.)



**Figure 4. Vegetation Communities and Land Cover**  
2018-039.008 Irwin Road Tank & Transmission Line





**Figure 5. Desert Tortoise Critical Habitat and DRECP Tortoise Conservation Area**  
2018-039.008 Irwin Road Tank & Transmission Line



## 4.5 Cultural Resources

### 4.5.1 Environmental Setting

An extensive Class III Cultural Resources Survey was conducted on the Project's Area of Potential Effects (APE) during October 2013 by Applied Earthworks, Inc. The report, *Class III Cultural Resources Survey for the Irwin Road Reservoir and Transmission Main Project, San Bernardino County, California*, includes a records search from the San Bernardino Archaeological Information Center (SBAIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System, a Sacred Lands File Search from the Native American Heritage Commission, and a pedestrian survey. The cultural study identified Irwin Road, eight historic-era trash scatters, and one geodetic marker in or near the project area that all exceed 50 years in age. These resources were evaluated for eligibility for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and were found not eligible. They lack historic significance and are not considered historical resources, unique archaeological resources, or tribal cultural resources pursuant to CEQA.

The public version of the cultural resources report can be found in Appendix G.

#### Cultural Resources (V) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

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"/>

The State *CEQA Guidelines* state that the term "historical resources" applies to any such resources listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the CRHR, included in a local register of historical resources, or determined to be historically significant by the Lead Agency. None of the resources identified in the cultural study are historical resources.

While, no historical resources are within or directly adjacent to the Project area, standard avoidance and minimization measure **CUL-1** will be implemented to further reduce the less than significant effects.

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The cultural resources study found and recorded nine historic-era trash dumps at the side of the road. All were evaluated and found ineligible for the CRHR and therefore are not historical or unique archeological resources. The geology of surface is early Pleistocene so any archaeological material would be visible on the surface. Therefore, there is a very low potential for archaeological resources to be discovered during construction. Additionally, a Native American Heritage Commission Sacred Land Search and consultation

with Native American tribes did not identify the presence of Native American archaeological sites in the vicinity of the Project (Appendix G). Therefore, the Project will have a less than significant effect on archaeological resources. In the unlikely event that archaeological resources are unearthed during excavation during Project construction, implementation of avoidance and minimization measure **CUL-1** would further reduce less than significant impacts.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Neither tribal consultation or the NAHC Sacred Lands File search indicated the presence of known Native American cultural resources or sacred sites in the immediate Project area. Nevertheless, the Project is located in close proximity to the Mt. View Memorial Park, located at 37067 Irwin Road, Barstow CA. In the unlikely event that human remains are encountered during Project construction, state and federal laws regarding the treatment of human remains will be followed and avoidance and minimization measure **CUL-1 (c)** would be implemented to further reduce the less than significant impacts.

#### **4.5.2 Avoidance and Minimization Measure**

##### **CUL-1:**

- d. In the event that archaeological resources are discovered during project activities, all work in the immediate vicinity of the find (within a 60-foot buffer) shall cease and a qualified archaeologist meeting Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification standards shall be hired to assess the find. Work on the other portions of the project outside of the buffered area may continue during this assessment period. If the find is located on BLM land, the BLM field office archaeologist shall be notified immediately and if the find is on non-federally owned land, the State Water Resources Control Board will be notified. Additionally, the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Cultural Resources Department (SMBMI) shall be contacted, as detailed within TCR-1, regarding any pre-contact and/or historic-era finds and be provided information after the archaeologist makes his/her initial assessment of the nature of the find, so as to provide Tribal input with regards to significance and treatment.
- e. If the find is found eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources, or is a unique archaeological site or tribal cultural resource as defined in CEQA, ( as amended, 2015), and avoidance cannot be ensured, the archaeologist shall develop a Monitoring and Treatment Plan, the drafts of which shall be provided to SMBMI for review and comment, as detailed within **TCR-1**. The archaeologist shall monitor the remainder of the project and implement the Plan accordingly.
- f. If human remains are encountered during project activities , work in the immediate vicinity (within a 100-foot buffer of the find) shall cease and the County Coroner shall be contacted pursuant to State Health and Safety Code §7050.5 and that code enforced for the duration of the project. If the human remains are found on BLM land, and the Coroner determines they are Native American

the BLM field office archaeologist shall be notified immediately and NAGPRA shall be implemented.

#### Energy

#### 4.5.3 Environmental Setting

##### Electricity Services

Southern California Edison (SCE) provides electrical services to San Bernardino County through State-regulated public utility contracts. SCE, the largest subsidiary of Edison International, is the primary electricity supply company for much of Southern California. It provides 14 million people with electricity across a service territory of approximately 50,000 square miles. The Southern California Gas Company provides natural gas services to the project area. Southern California Gas services approximately 21.6 million customers, spanning roughly 20,000 square miles of California.

##### Energy Consumption

Electricity use is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh), and natural gas use is measured in therms (thm). Vehicle fuel use is typically measured in gallons (e.g. of gasoline or diesel fuel), although energy use for electric vehicles is measured in kWh.

The electricity consumption in San Bernardino County from 2015-2018 is shown in Table 1. As indicated, the demand has increased since 2015.

Table 1. Residential Electricity Consumption in San Bernardino County 2015-2018	
Year	Electricity Consumption (kilowatt hours)
2018	5,443,731,723
2017	5,409,197,320
2016	4,997,544,199
2015	4,953,489,541

Source: ECDMS 2019

The natural gas consumption attributable to San Bernardino County, including Morongo Valley, from 2015-2018 is shown in Table 2. As shown the demand has increased since 2015.

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<b>Table 2. Residential Natural Gas Consumption in San Bernardino County 2015-2018</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Natural Gas Consumption (therms)</b>
2018	231,468,146
2017	235,261,401
2016	234,628,679
2015	223,939,116

Source: ECDMS 2019

Automotive fuel consumption in San Bernardino County from 2015 to 2019 is shown in Table 3. As shown, automotive fuel consumption has slightly decreased since 2015.

<b>Table 3. Automotive Fuel Consumption in San Bernardino County 2015-2019</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Countywide Fuel Consumption (gallons)</b>
2019	3,334,922,526
2018	3,385,160,075
2017	3,427,137,695
2016	3,469,323,122
2015	3,336,730,022

Source: CARB 2019

#### **4.5.4 Energy (VI) Environmental Checklist and Discussion**

<b>Would the Project:</b>	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"/>

The impact analysis focuses on the source of energy that is relevant to the Proposed Project: equipment fuel necessary for project construction. Addressing energy impacts requires an agency to make a determination as to what constitutes a significant impact. There are no established thresholds of significance, statewide or locally, for what constitutes a wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy for a proposed land use project. For the purpose of this analysis, the amount of fuel necessary for project construction and operations is calculated and compared to that consumed in San Bernardino County.

The Project would not require electricity or natural gas during construction or operation. Water would be pumped from the Arrowhead Well and Crooks Booster Station (existing GSWC facilities) up to the proposed Irwin Reservoir. No new pumping facilities are needed to serve the proposed Irwin Reservoir. The Proposed Project's gasoline fuel consumption during the construction period is estimated to be 698,424 gallons of fuel, which would increase the annual gasoline fuel use in the county by 0.021 percent (Appendix H). As such, project construction would have a nominal effect on local and regional energy supplies, especially over the long-term. No unusual project characteristics would necessitate the use of construction equipment that would be less energy efficient than at comparable construction sites in the region or the state. Construction contractors would purchase their own gasoline and diesel fuel from local suppliers and would judiciously use fuel supplies to minimize costs due to waste and subsequently maximize profits. Additionally, construction equipment fleet turnover and increasingly stringent state and federal regulations on engine efficiency combined with state regulations limiting engine idling times and requiring recycling of construction debris, would further reduce the amount of transportation fuel demand during project construction. For these reasons, it is expected that construction fuel consumption associated with the Proposed Project would not be any more inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary than other similar development projects of this nature. Similarly, during operations fuel consumption for infrequent service and maintenance vehicle trips to the reservoir site would not be wasteful, inefficient or unnecessary. Impacts would be less than significant.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

State and local agencies regulate the use and consumption of energy through various regulations. Examples of these regulations at the state level include the California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 6– Energy Efficiency Standards and California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 11– California Green Building Standards (CALGreen). As discussed under 4.6.2 question (a) of the Checklist the energy and fuel consumption related to project construction would be minimal. The Proposed Project is an expansion of Golden State Water Company's existing Crooks Pressure Zone, which serves the north end of the City of Barstow. Thus, the Proposed Project would not conflict or obstruct any local or state plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency. No impact would occur.

#### **4.5.5 Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

## 4.6 Geology and Soils

### 4.6.1 Environmental Setting

#### Regional Seismicity and Fault Zones

An “active fault,” according to California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology, is a fault that has indicated surface displacement within the last 11,000 years. A fault that has not shown geologic evidence of surface displacement in the last 11,000 years is considered “inactive.” Alquist-Priolo earthquake fault zones are regulatory zones surrounding the surface traces of active faults in California. Wherever an active fault exists, if it has the potential for surface rupture, a structure for human occupancy cannot be placed over the fault and must be a minimum distance from the fault (generally fifty feet) (CDC 2020).

According to the San Bernardino County General Plan Geologic Hazard Overlay Map, the Project is not located within an earthquake fault zone boundary (County of San Bernardino 2007a). The site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault and no known earthquake faults traverse the Project site.

#### Site Geology

The site-specific geotechnical report (Appendix I) indicates that the subsurface material below the proposed reservoir is mostly Pleistocene-aged older alluvial deposit defined by loose to moderately consolidated, gray, silt, sand and gravel that is poorly bedded and undeformed. Due to the nature of the soils and topography in this area, it is possible that some of the near surface soils may consist of a significant amount of alluvial sand. Elevation of the ground surface varies within the site and generally slopes to the south from between approximately 2,344 feet above mean sea level (amsl) to approximately 2,335 feet amsl.

#### Soils

The types of soils found in the Project area include the following (NRCS 1978):

**Cajon Sand:** Somewhat excessively drained, deep, sandy soils formed in alluvium. Permeability of this soil type is rapid and runoff is slow. They are subject to water and wind erosion.

**Cajon Gravelly Sand:** Sand: Somewhat excessively drained, deep, sandy soils formed in alluvium. It formed in alluvium derived dominantly from granitic material. Permeability is rapid and runoff slow. As a result this sand unit is slightly susceptible to water erosion.

**Nebona Cuddeback:** This soil type is 60% Nebona sandy loam and 20% Cuddeback sandy loam. This soil type occurs on terraces and old alluvial fans that have a gravel desert pavement. The Nebona soil is shallow and well drained and the permeability is moderately rapid. However, Cuddeback is moderately deep and also well drained, but the permeability is moderately slow with low water capacity. Both soils are susceptible to wind and water erosion.

#### 4.6.2 Geology and Soils (VII) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- i) According to the San Bernardino County General Plan Geologic Hazard Overlay Map, the Project is not located within an earthquake fault zone boundary (County of San Bernardino 2007a). As previously discussed, the Project includes installation of 5,816 linear feet (LF) (1.1 miles) of water transmission pipeline within the existing Irwin Road right-of-way (ROW); construction of a 1.5 million gallon (MG) potable water reservoir tank on an approximately 1.03 acre site approximately 1.1 miles north of residences. Although the Project does propose a structure (tank) the structure is not habitable and would not pose a substantial risk to people or other structures due to not being located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault and no known earthquake faults traverse the Project site. Therefore, the potential for impacts that would expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects associated with the rupture of a known earthquake fault is less than significant.
- ii) In general, Southern California as a whole is a seismically-active region that contains many earthquake faults. However, as stated above the Project site is not located within an area that is subject to strong ground motions due to earthquakes (County of San Bernardino 2007a). As a result the proposed site particularly the water reservoir tank would not be exposed to moderate to strong ground shaking during an earthquake. Therefore, the potential for impacts that would expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects associated with strong seismic ground shaking is less than significant.
- iii) Seismically-induced liquefaction is a phenomenon in which cyclic stresses, produce by earthquake-induced ground motion, create excess pore pressures in soils. According to the

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San Bernardino County General Plan Geologic Hazard Overlay Map, the Project area is not identified as having liquefaction susceptibility (County of San Bernardino 2007a). Therefore, the potential for impacts that would expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects associated with seismic related ground failure including liquefaction is less than significant.

- iv) The surrounding area consists of undisturbed vacant land rural residential housing to the south. According to the San Bernardino County General Plan Geologic Hazard Overlay Map, the Project is not in area that is susceptibility to landslides (County of San Bernardino 2007a). Implementation of the Project would include the installation of 5,816 LF of water transmission pipeline and the construction of a 1.5 MG potable water reservoir tank. Implementation of the Project would not result landslides because the Project is not located within an area that is prone to landslides. Therefore, the potential for impacts that would expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects associated with landslides would be less than significant.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Construction activities have the potential to result in soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. However, soils within the Project area are generally sandy loam that can be found at the bottom of steep hills in valley alluviums. They are derived from indigenous granitic rock or other mixed sources. The types of soils found in the Project area include the following (NRCS 1978):

Cajon Sand: Somewhat excessively drained, deep, sandy soils formed in alluvium. Permeability of this soil type is rapid and runoff is slow. They are subject to water and wind erosion.

Cajon Gravelly Sand: Sand: Somewhat excessively drained, deep, sandy soils formed in alluvium. It formed in alluvium derived dominantly from granitic material. Permeability is rapid and runoff slow. As a result this sand unit is slightly susceptible to water erosion.

Nebona Cuddeback: This soil type is 60% Nebona sandy loam and 20% Cuddeback sandy loam. This soil type occurs on terraces and old alluvial fans that have a gravel desert pavement. The Nebona soil is shallow and well drained and the permeability is moderately rapid. However, Cuddeback is moderately deep and also well drained, but the permeability is moderately slow with low water capacity. Both soils are susceptible to wind and water erosion.

Because soils within the Project area are susceptible to erosion, the Project would need compliance with the California General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activities. Project construction would be mandated to incorporate a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to manage soil disturbance, non-storm water discharges, construction materials, and construction waste during its construction phase. Project-related construction could involve cut and fill during the grading



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phase, however, a substantial loss of topsoil is not anticipated given the short duration of construction time (approximately one month). Thus, the construction phase of the Project would not be exposed to extensive rain during the rainy season. Therefore, impacts related to substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil are considered less than significant.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

Lateral spreading consists of lateral movement of level or near-level ground associated with liquefaction during an earthquake. As discussed above, the surrounding area consists of undisturbed vacant land and hillsides. According to the San Bernardino County General Plan Geologic Hazard Overlay Map, the Project is not located within an area that is susceptible to landslides. In addition, the Project would be required to meet the County's design standards that optimize public safety on its roadways. Implementation of the Project would not contribute to or expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects associated with on-or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse (Converse Consultants 2020; Appendix I). Impacts would be less than significant.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The Project involves improvements to an existing right-of-way and construction of a potable water reservoir tank. The soils that occur within the Project area are not considered to be expansive soils (County of San Bernardino 2007b) and the installation of the road base would eliminate any potential for such soils to adversely impact the roadway. Therefore, potential impacts related to being located on expansive soils that would create substantial risks to life or property, are considered less than significant.

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<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

Septic tanks and/or alternative water supply systems are not proposed as part of the Project. Therefore, no impact would occur.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The proposed water transmission pipeline trench would be excavated approximately 48-to 60 inches deep. The geology underlying the Project site is older Pleistocene alluvium (Geotechnical Investigation Report, Converse Consultants 2020; Appendix I). There is a potential for ground-disturbing activities to expose previously unrecorded paleontological resources dating to the Pleistocene Epoch. The implementation of mitigation measure **GEO-1** will ensure that if any such resources are found during construction of the Project, they would be handled according to the proper regulations and any potential impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels.

#### **4.6.3 Mitigation Measures**

**GEO-1:** If any paleontological resources are exposed during ground excavation disturbance, ground disturbance activities in the vicinity of the discovery shall be terminated immediately and a qualified paleontological resources specialist would be retained to evaluate the resources. If the find is determined to be significant, avoidance or other appropriate measures as identified by the paleontologist shall be implemented. Appropriate measures include that a qualified paleontologist be permitted to recover, evaluate and curate the find(s) in accordance with current standards and guidelines.

## **4.7 Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

### **4.7.1 Environmental Setting**

Certain gases in the earth's atmosphere, classified as GHGs, play a critical role in determining the earth's surface temperature. Solar radiation enters the earth's atmosphere from space. A portion of the radiation is absorbed by the earth's surface and a smaller portion of this radiation is reflected toward space. This absorbed radiation is then emitted from the earth as low-frequency infrared radiation. The frequencies at which bodies emit radiation are proportional to temperature. Because the earth has a much lower

temperature than the sun, it emits lower-frequency radiation. Most solar radiation passes through GHGs; however, infrared radiation is absorbed by these gases. As a result, radiation that otherwise would have escaped back into space is instead trapped, resulting in a warming of the atmosphere. This phenomenon, known as the greenhouse effect, is responsible for maintaining a habitable climate on earth. Without the greenhouse effect, the earth would not be able to support life as we know it.

Prominent GHGs contributing to the greenhouse effect are CO<sub>2</sub>, methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and N<sub>2</sub>O. Fluorinated gases also make up a small fraction of the GHGs that contribute to climate change. Fluorinated gases include chlorofluorocarbons, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and nitrogen trifluoride; however, it is noted that these gases are not associated with typical land use development. Human-caused emissions of these GHGs in excess of natural ambient concentrations are believed to be responsible for intensifying the greenhouse effect and leading to a trend of unnatural warming of the earth's climate, known as global climate change or global warming. It is "extremely likely" that more than half of the observed increase in global average surface temperature from 1951 to 2010 was caused by the anthropogenic increase in GHG concentrations and other anthropogenic factors together (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] 2014).

Each GHG differs in its ability to absorb heat in the atmosphere based on the lifetime, or persistence, of the gas molecule in the atmosphere. CH<sub>4</sub> traps over 25 times more heat per molecule than CO<sub>2</sub>, and N<sub>2</sub>O absorbs 298 times more heat per molecule than CO<sub>2</sub> (IPCC 2014). Often, estimates of GHG emissions are presented in carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>e), which weight each gas by its global warming potential. Expressing GHG emissions in CO<sub>2</sub>e takes the contribution of all GHG emissions to the greenhouse effect and converts them to a single unit equivalent to the effect that would occur if only CO<sub>2</sub> were being emitted.

Climate change is a global problem. GHGs are global pollutants, unlike criteria air pollutants and TACs, which are pollutants of regional and local concern. Whereas pollutants with localized air quality effects have relatively short atmospheric lifetimes (about one day), GHGs have long atmospheric lifetimes (one to several thousand years). GHGs persist in the atmosphere for long enough time periods to be dispersed around the globe. The quantity of GHGs that it takes to ultimately result in climate change is not precisely known; it is sufficient to say the quantity is enormous, and no single project alone would measurably contribute to a noticeable incremental change in the global average temperature or to global, local, or microclimates. From the standpoint of CEQA, GHG impacts to global climate change are inherently cumulative.

#### 4.7.2 Greenhouse Gas Emissions (VIII) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

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"/>

For the purposes of this analysis, the Project's emissions were compared to the MDAQMD's significance threshold for greenhouse gas emissions of 100,000 MT CO<sub>2</sub>E/year. As described in the Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Analysis provided in Appendix B (WEBB 2014), the Project would generate approximately 204.03 MT CO<sub>2</sub>E/year during construction and a negligible level of emissions during operation. Therefore, the Project's emissions are well below the MDAQMD's threshold and impacts are considered less than significant.

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

As discussed above, the Project's GHG emissions are below the MDAQMD's threshold. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with any plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions and impacts are considered less than significant.

#### 4.7.3 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

### 4.8 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials, including hazardous substances and wastes, are regulated by many state and federal laws. Statutes govern the generation, treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous materials, substances, and waste, and also the investigation and mitigation of waste releases, air and water quality, human health, and land use.

California regulates hazardous materials, waste, and substances under the authority of the California Health and Safety Code and is also authorized by the federal government to implement the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) in the state. California law also addresses specific handling, storage, transportation, disposal, treatment, reduction, cleanup, and emergency planning of hazardous waste. The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act also restricts disposal of wastes and requires cleanup of wastes that are below hazardous waste concentrations but could impact ground and surface water quality. California regulations that address waste management and prevention and cleanup of

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contamination include Title 22 Division 4.5 Environmental Health Standards for the Management of Hazardous Waste, Title 23 Waters, and Title 27 Environmental Protection.

Worker and public health and safety are key issues when addressing hazardous materials that may affect human health and the environment. Proper management and disposal of hazardous material is vital if it is found, disturbed, or generated during project construction.

**4.8.1 Hazards and Hazardous Materials (IX) Environmental Checklist and Discussion**

<b>Would the Project:</b>	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"/>

During construction of the Project, some potentially hazardous materials such as fuel would be used. However, multiple Federal, State, and County regulations govern the transport, use and disposal of such materials. Because compliance with these laws are required, potential impacts associated with the creation of a significant hazard to the public of the environment through the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials would be less than significant hazardous to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. Compliance with applicable laws and regulations would ensure impacts associated with the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous material during construction would be less than significant.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The Project would not 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, because the storage, handling, and disposal of any hazardous materials would be done in accordance with applicable BMPs to manage clean-up of potential spills of hazardous materials during construction. The transmission line trenching construction will occur within the Irwin Road ROW. Therefore, the potential for encountering hazardous materials is considered low. Once completed, motorists using the Project's road may transport small quantities of household hazardous materials, such as cleaning supplies, paints, pool chemicals, or pesticides/herbicides for landscape maintenance for home use. If these products are transported in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations, potential

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impacts would be less than significant. For these reasons, with respect to hazards resulting from the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials; or involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment, Project-related impacts are considered less than significant.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The Project is not located within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. The school that is closest to the Project site is Skyline North Elementary, which is approximately 0.5 miles east of the Project site. Therefore, no impact would occur.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Be located on a site which 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"/>

According to the California Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) EnviroStor database there is one disposal site (site Barstow Disposal Site - 80000968) located within one mile of the Project area (DTSC 2020). It is stated that the site was once used by the Department of Defense (DOD) and various artifacts such as tent stakes, food containers, fox holes, tent sites, steel stakes and a camp site were observed which allegedly might suggest that the DOD had occupied the site. However, no records of DOD disposal action for the site have been located. Therefore, site 80000968 cleanup status has been inactive as of July 1, 2005. Furthermore, the site is not on national priorities list and is ineligible for the Defense Environmental Restoration Program.

A search of the State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker online database was conducted for the Proposed Project area (SWRCB 2021). The search revealed no known hazardous materials on the project site or immediate vicinity. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

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<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The closest airport to the Project is the privately owned Depue Airport, which is located approximately two nautical miles southwest of the census designated place of Lenwood, California. Lenwood is located approximately three miles west of Barstow. Thus the Project is not located within two miles of a public airport or public use airport or heliport, which could result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area. Therefore, no impact would occur.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The Project would not interfere with the City's emergency response or evacuation plans since the Project involves the construction of a potable water reservoir tank which would be located approximately 0.8 mile north of existing residential developments and installation of transmission main pipeline within the alignment of the unimproved dirt shoulder of the existing Irwin Road ROW. Temporary construction activities and staging areas would generally be confined to the Project and would not physically impair access to other existing roadways within the Project vicinity. Access to local residences would be maintained at all times. Additionally, the Project does not include the reconfiguration of Irwin Road or nearby roadways that could result in inadequate emergency access. Therefore, the potential for impacts that could impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan is less than significant.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The Project is not within an area designated by the San Bernardino County General Plan Hazard Overlay's Map as Fire Safety Area (County of San Bernardino 2007a). Therefore, the potential for impacts that would

expose people or structures to a significant risk or loss, injury or death involving wildland fires is less than significant.

#### **4.8.2 Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

### **4.9 Hydrology and Water Quality**

#### **4.9.1 Environmental Setting**

The Project is located within the jurisdiction of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (LRWQCB). The LRWQCB sets water quality standards for all ground and surface waters within its region. Water Quality standards are defined under the Clean Water Act (CWA) to include both the beneficial uses of specific water bodies and the levels of water quality that must be met and maintained to protect those uses (water quality objectives). Water quality standards for all ground and surface waters overseen by the LRWQCB are documented in the Lahontan Basin Plan. Water quality standards are attained when designated beneficial uses are achieved and water quality objectives are being met. The regulatory program of the LRWQCB is designed to minimize and control discharges to surface and ground water within the region, largely through permitting, such that water quality standards are effectively attained.

#### **4.9.2 Regulatory Setting**

##### *Porter-Cologne Act*

California's Porter-Cologne Act, enacted in 1969, provides the legal basis for water quality regulation within California. This act requires a "Report of Waste Discharge" for any discharge of waste (liquid, solid, or gaseous) to land or surface waters that may impair beneficial uses for surface and/or groundwater of the state. It predates the CWA and regulates discharges to waters of the state. Waters of the state include more than just waters of the U.S., like groundwater and surface waters not considered waters of the U.S. Additionally, it prohibits discharges of "waste" as defined, and this definition is broader than the CWA definition of "pollutant." Discharges under the Porter-Cologne Act are permitted by Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) and may be required even when the discharge is already permitted or exempt under the CWA.

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and RWQCBs are responsible for establishing the water quality standards (objectives and beneficial uses) required by the CWA and regulating discharges to ensure compliance with the water quality standards. Details about water quality standards in a project area are included in the applicable RWQCB Basin Plan. In California, RWQCBs designate beneficial uses for all water body segments in their jurisdictions and then set criteria necessary to protect those uses. As a result, the water quality standards developed for particular water segments are based on the designated use and vary depending on that use. In addition, the SWRCB identifies waters failing to meet standards for specific pollutants. These waters are then state-listed in accordance with CWA Section 303(d). If a state determines that waters are impaired for one or more constituents and the standards cannot be met through point source or non-point source controls (NPDES permits or WDRs), the CWA requires the



establishment of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). TMDLs specify allowable pollutant loads from all sources (point, non-point, and natural) for a given watershed.

*National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program*

Section 402(p) of the CWA requires the issuance of NPDES permits for five categories of storm water discharges, including Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s). An MS4 is defined as “any conveyance or system of conveyances (roads with drainage systems, municipal streets, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, human-made channels, and storm drains) owned or operated by a state, city, town, county, or other public body having jurisdiction over storm water, that is designed or used for collecting or conveying storm water.” The SWRCB has identified the Department as an owner/operator of an MS4 under federal regulations. The Department’s MS4 permit covers all Department rights-of-way, properties, facilities, and activities in the state. The SWRCB or the RWQCB issues NPDES permits for five years, and permit requirements remain active until a new permit has been adopted.

The Department’s MS4 Permit, Order No. 2012-0011-DWQ (adopted on September 19, 2012 and effective on July 1, 2013), as amended by Order No. 2014-0006-EXEC (effective January 17, 2014), Order No. 2014-0077-DWQ (effective May 20, 2014) and Order No. 2015-0036-EXEC (conformed and effective April 7, 2015) has three basic requirements:

1. The Department must comply with the requirements of the Construction General Permit (see below);
2. The Department must implement a year-round program in all parts of the State to effectively control storm water and non-storm water discharges; and
3. The Department storm water discharges must meet water quality standards through implementation of permanent and temporary (construction) Best Management Practices (BMPs), to the maximum extent practicable, and other measures as the SWRCB determines to be necessary to meet the water quality standards.

To comply with the permit, the Department developed the Statewide Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) to address storm water pollution controls related to highway planning, design, construction, and maintenance activities throughout California. The SWMP assigns responsibilities within the Department for implementing storm water management procedures and practices as well as training, public education and participation, monitoring and research, program evaluation, and reporting activities. The SWMP describes the minimum procedures and practices the Department uses to reduce pollutants in storm water and non-storm water discharges. It outlines procedures and responsibilities for protecting water quality, including the selection and implementation of BMPs. The proposed Project will be programmed to follow the guidelines and procedures outlined in the latest SWMP to address storm water runoff.

*Construction General Permit*

The Construction General Permit regulates storm water discharges from construction sites that result in a disturbed area of one acre or greater, and/or are smaller sites that are part of a larger common plan of development. By law, all storm water discharges associated with construction activity where clearing,

grading, and excavation result in soil disturbance of at least one acre must comply with the provisions of the General Construction Permit. Construction activity that results in soil disturbances of less than one acre is subject to this Construction General Permit if there is potential for significant water quality impairment resulting from the activity as determined by the RWQCB. Operators of regulated construction sites are required to develop Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs); to implement sediment, erosion, and pollution prevention control measures; and to obtain coverage under the Construction General Permit.

#### **4.9.3 Hydrology and Water Quality (X) Environmental Checklist and Discussion**

<b>Would the Project:</b>	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"/>

Since construction of the Project would disturb one acre or more, a SWPPP is required for compliance with the California General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activity. The SWPPP would identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be incorporated during Project construction. Development of the Project would add minimal impervious surfaces surrounding the reservoir tank site. Thus, during Project construction there is a potential for short-term discharge of sediments, hydrocarbons, and other pollutants associated with stormwater runoff from the construction site, but the site proposes a gravel driveway and a 30-foot by 10-foot rip-rap-lined retention basin which would be located southwest of the reservoir and would be connected to the reservoir via drain pipe to catch discharge. With adherence to the BMPS identified in the SWPPP and the construction designs, construction-related impacts with respect to water quality standards and waste discharge requirements would be less than significant.

The focus of a construction SWPPP is to manage soil disturbance, non-storm water discharges, construction materials, and construction wastes during the construction phase of a Project. Since the SWPPP is specifically prepared to manage storm water quality and quantity, and prevent discharge of polluted runoff from the site, adherence to mandated SWPPP requirements would ensure potential impacts that could cause a violation of any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements is less than significant.

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<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The Project site is within the Mojave River Basin, which encompasses an area of approximately 3,400 square miles and is crossed by the Mojave River. The watermaster for the basin is the Mojave Water Agency (MWA). The Mojave River Basin was adjudicated in 1996 (City of Barstow, et al. vs. City of Adelanto, et. al (Riverside Superior Court, Case no. 208568)). The adjudication divided the basin into five subareas which includes: Este, Oeste, Centro, Baja, and Alto. GSWC pumps water from the Mojave River Basin-Centro Sub-Basin. The adjudication resulted in a judgment that allows GSWC to pump 14,407 ac-ft. per year. According to GSWC's Urban Water Management Plan (prepared by Kennedy/Jenks Consultants), GSWC has not over-drafted groundwater from the Mojave River. Basin and the average extraction between 2005 and 2012 was 8,387 ac-ft. per year.

Active groundwater wells in the Barstow System meet all current California Tittle 22 drinking water standards. Groundwater quality in Mojave River Groundwater Basin is characterized by total dissolved solids (TDS) 269 mg/L between 2005 and 2009.

The proposed water transmission pipeline burial depth would be between 36- to 42 inches below ground surface and the depth of a typical trench would be excavated approximately 48-to 60 inches deep. Groundwater levels within the Centro Subarea have been relatively stable with seasonal fluctuations and declines during dry years followed by recovery during wet periods. Therefore, due to the current drought conditions of California it can be anticipated that the water table of the basin is low; thus, eliminating the potential of encountering groundwater during construction of the trenches. The proposed water storage reservoir would require a one-time fill from the GSWC's existing groundwater allocation via the proposed transmission water main. Therefore, the Project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level; thus, impacts would be less than significant.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 that would:				
i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

i) Proposed alterations to existing drainage patterns are not considered substantial and would not alter the course of a stream or river or result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site because once construction is completed, the pipeline alignment would be restored to its original condition and the reservoir footprint would remain as the only impervious surface. However, because the reservoir footprint is small this would not increase flooding potential within the Project area. In accordance with the NPDES and Construction General Permit, the Project would be required to prepare a SWPPP that incorporates BMPs to minimize the potential for construction related runoff. For these reasons, impacts with respect to erosion or siltation are anticipated to be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures **HYD-1** through **HYD-6**.

ii, iii) When compared to existing conditions, runoff water would be minimally increased as a result of the Project's impervious surface around the reservoir; however this increase would be marginalized as a result of the Project's design features (e.g. retention basin) that would be incorporated to address runoff and flooding (Albert A. Webb & Associates 2014). Therefore, potential impacts related to runoff water that could exceed existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff water are considered less than significant.

iv) The Project proposes underground facilities and an above the ground reservoir storage tank. The Project would not place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows, because the Project is not located in a 100-year flood hazard area (County of San Bernardino 2007a). Therefore, no impacts are anticipated with regards to impeding or redirecting flood flows.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The Project is not located in a 100-year flood hazard area (County of San Bernardino 2007a). The Project is not located near the coastline and is therefore not subject to a tsunami. Seiches occur as a series of

standing waves induced by seismic shaking or landsliding into an impounded body of water. Seiches are not considered to be a potential hazard to the Project. As previously discussed, the Project is not located in an area that is susceptible to landslides. Implementation of the Project would include construction of a potable water reservoir tank and installation of underground transmission main pipeline. Therefore, impacts associated with inundation by flood, tsunami or seiche is considered less than significant.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The proposed water storage reservoir would require a one-time fill from the GSWC's existing groundwater allocation via the proposed transmission water main. Therefore, the Project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that it would conflict with a sustainable groundwater management plan. Furthermore, the SWPPP would manage storm water quality and quantity, and prevent discharge of polluted runoff from the site. Adherence to mandated SWPPP requirements would ensure potential impacts that could cause a violation of any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements is less than significant.

#### **4.9.4 Mitigation Measures**

**HYD-1:** A GSWC inspector will be employed in the field during construction to verify compliance with the environmental protection measures.

**HYD-2:** Temporary erosion/sediment control devices shall be installed immediately after initial soil disturbance and maintained throughout construction and restoration, as necessary, until replaced by permanent erosion control measures. If possible, cleanup will be completed, and permanent erosion control measures will be installed within 30 days after the trench is backfilled to aid in site stabilization. If circumstances prevent achieving cleanup within 30 days on federal lands, GSWC will apply for a variance from the BLM.

**HYD-3:** Project-related ground disturbance during construction will be limited to the minimum necessary to safely and efficiently complete construction activities.

**HYD-4:** Project-related construction, clean up, and reclamation shall be completed in an expeditious manner to minimize keep the time period between grading, trench excavation, backfilling, and final restoration/reclamation. If weather conditions preclude final reclamation of a site (excluding woody plantings, if applicable) immediately following construction, GSWC will meet with BLM representatives to discuss viable reclamation alternatives.

**HYD-5:** A stockpile of erosion control materials including straw bales, silt fences, erosion control matting and geotextile fabric shall be stored at the Project's staging areas during the entire period that construction-related ground disturbance is taking place. Materials shall be stored for planned use

during construction, and additional quantities will be maintained for maintenance and emergency use.

**HYD-6:** All construction personnel, vehicles, and equipment shall be confined to designated roads and parking areas to prevent compaction of outlying areas.

## **4.10 Land Use and Planning**

### **4.10.1 Environmental Setting**

The Project is located within an unincorporated portion of the County of San Bernardino, just north of the City of Barstow's limits and within the City of Barstow's Sphere of Influence. The area surrounding the Project site consists of rural residential housing to the south and relatively flat alluvial fan with sparse vegetation to the east, north and west. The site is designated and zoned Rural Living (RL-40) by the San Bernardino County General Plan.

The Proposed Action is an infrastructure project, which is an allowable use that will facilitate implementation of the County General Plan by maintaining water pressure within the Crooks Pressure Zone. The CSBLUSD determined that the proposed Project is exempt from the County planning process (Albert A. Webb Associates 2020). For these reasons, the proposed Project is considered consistent with the San Bernardino County General Plan.

### **4.10.2 Land Use and Planning (XI) Environmental Checklist and Discussion**

<b>Would the Project:</b>	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"/>

The Project would not physically divide an established community, because the Project involves the construction of a potable water reservoir tank and underground transmission main pipelines. Implementation of the Project would potentially provide needed water storage and stable operating pressures to water customers on the north side of the Mojave River, particularly in the vicinity of Irwin Road and Spadra Street because currently these customers are at higher elevations, and thus, experience low water pressures during high demand periods. Furthermore, the Project would not divide an established community since the area is predominantly undeveloped. Therefore, with regards to physically dividing an established community, no impacts are anticipated.

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<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

According to the San Bernardino County General Plan Land Use Map the project site is currently zoned as Rural Residential (County of San Bernardino 2006). The Project proposes the construction of a potable water reservoir tank and underground transmission main pipelines. As such, the Project does not propose to change the General Plan land use designation for the Project site. Therefore, no conflicts with any applicable land use plan, policy or regulation, no impacts are anticipated.

#### **4.10.3 Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

### **4.11 Mineral Resources**

#### **4.11.1 Mineral Resources (XII) Environmental Checklist and Discussion**

<b>Would the Project:</b>	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Project is located within the sphere of influence for the City of Barstow. According to the City of Barstow's 2015-2020 General Plan the only mineral resource zones where significant mineral resources have been determined or inferred to be present are located primarily along the Mojave River and south of U.S. I-40. Furthermore, According to the 1993 Mineral Land Classification of Concrete Aggregate Resources in the Barstow-Victorville Area, The Mojave River resource area includes the alluvium in the active river channel and part of the adjacent floodplain along approximately 70 miles of the Mojave River, from Summit Valley to Daggett. It was reported that the rock types present in the Mojave River stream bed between Victorville and Barstow consisted of 38% volcanic rocks, 36% granitic rocks, and 22% metamorphic rocks. Therefore, sand and gravel have been mined in several places along the Mojave River. The Barstow Sand and Gravel Company began mining small quantities of aggregate material for plaster and sand as early as 1931. Additionally, the Dana Materials Company mined sand and gravel for asphalt aggregate from the south bank of the Mojave River until 1970. Because the Mojave River is suitable for concrete aggregate it is considered to be very important to the Barstow-Victorville area. Nevertheless, the Project consists of the construction of a potable water reservoir tank and the installation of underground transmission main pipeline approximately 1 mile north of the Mojave River; thus, would not 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, because there are no known valuable mineral resources in the vicinity of the Project. Given the linear alignment of the Project, the small size of the Project, and that the Project is primarily within existing rights-of-way, it is highly unlikely that any surface mining or mineral recovery operation could feasibly take place on the Project site. Therefore, potential impacts related to the loss of a mineral resource are less than significant.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The Project would not 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, because no mining operations or other resource recovery sites exist on or near the Project site. Therefore, no impact would occur.

#### **4.11.2 Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

#### **4.12 Noise**

Noise is generally defined as sound that is loud, disagreeable, or unexpected. Noise can be generated by a number of sources, including mobile sources, such as automobiles, trucks and airplanes, and stationary sources, such as construction sites, machinery, and industrial operations. Noise-sensitive land uses are generally considered to include those uses where noise exposure could result in health-related risks to individuals, as well as places where quiet is an essential element of their intended purpose. Residential dwellings are of primary concern because of the potential for increased and prolonged exposure of individuals to both interior and exterior noise levels. The nearest noise-sensitive land uses are single family homes located adjacent to the southern portion of the project site.

CEQA requires a strictly baseline versus build analysis to assess whether a proposed project will have a noise impact. If a proposed project is determined to have a significant noise impact under CEQA, then CEQA dictates that mitigation measures must be incorporated into the project unless those measures are not feasible. Under CEQA, a project would result in a significant impact if it would:

- Result in 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;
- Result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels; or



- 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 expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels.

## **County of San Bernardino Development Code**

### *Noise Standard*

The County's Development Code (Division 3, Countywide Development Standards; Chapter 83.01, General Performance Standards, Section 83.01.080, Noise) sets interior and exterior noise standards for specific land uses by type of noise source. Noise standards for stationary noise sources are summarized in Table 3.11-6, Noise Standards for Stationary Noise Sources. The noise standard for residential properties is 55 dBA Leq from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and 45 dBA Leq from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. For industrial properties, the noise standard from stationary noise sources is 70 dBA at any time of the day or night. Areas exposed to noise levels exceeding these standards are considered noise-impacted areas. The County's Development Code exempts noise from construction noise, provided that construction is limited to the hours between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., except on Sundays or federal holidays, when construction is not allowed (County of San Bernardino 2020).

### *Vibration Standard*

Development Code Section 83.01.090, Vibration, establishes standards for acceptable vibration levels. The section states that no ground vibration shall be allowed that can be felt without the aid of instruments at or beyond the lot line, nor shall any vibration be allowed which produces a particle velocity greater than or equal to two-tenths (0.20) inches per second measured at or beyond the lot line. Temporary construction, maintenance, repair, or demolition activities between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. are exempt from this vibration limit, except on Sundays and federal holidays, when construction is prohibited (County of San Bernardino 2020).

#### **4.12.1 Noise (XIII) Environmental Checklist and Discussion**

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in 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"/>

Construction-related noise is temporary in nature. The construction of a project like this one is not considered a stationary noise source; however, the center point of the noise generation will vary according to construction activities and progress made along the Project alignment, as portions are completed. The total duration for the Project's construction is estimated at 18 to 20 weeks. Aside from

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periodic maintenance, on-going operation of the Project does not involve activities that would permanently increase noise levels in the Project vicinity.

Existing sensitive receivers along the Project are located directly adjacent to where construction activities are likely to take place. However, according to Section 83.01.080 (G) of the County Development Code, all temporary construction, maintenance, repair, or demolition activities between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., except Sundays and Federal holidays are exempt from the provisions of Section 83.01.080, which relates to noise; therefore, since no established noise standard exists to limit noise impacts associated with the Project's proposed construction activities, impacts are considered less than significant (County of San Bernardino 2020). However, the potential for noise levels to exceed established standards within potentially affected land uses that are located in the Project's vicinity is discussed in item 13.d, below.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Groundborne vibration is not a common environmental problem. It is unusual for vibration from sources such as buses and trucks to be perceptible, even in locations close to major roads. Some common sources of groundborne vibrations are trains, buses on rough roads, and heavy construction activities such as blasting, pile driving, and extensive grading and heavy earth moving equipment. The Project proposes the construction of a potable water reservoir tank and the installation of underground transmission main pipeline within the existing dirt Irwin Road ROW.

Construction of the project would include clearing and grading to remove the topsoil and surface rock and stockpile it within the edge of the ROW, all clearing and grading would be limited to the minimum area required for safe construction operations within the approved ROW and extra workspaces. Where rock is encountered, tractor mounted mechanical rippers or rock trenching equipment would be utilized to facilitate excavation. Additionally, pipeline materials would be shipped directly from the manufacturer by trucks to the reservoir site for storage and staging. Construction equipment staging and stockpiling would be located at the proposed reservoir site, approximately 4,600 feet north of the nearest residential units. Furthermore, during construction, pipeline materials would be transported from the reservoir site and placed along the pipeline alignment for pipe assembly and installation and unloaded by cranes or tractors. According to the FHWA Roadway Construction Noise Model User's Guide's CA/T Noise Emission Reference Levels and Usage Factors table, none of the equipment associated with construction of the Project would result in significant noise impacts. Therefore, the potential for impacts resulting from the exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or noise levels is considered less than significant.

Although no residential areas are directly affected by the Project, the proposed improvements would increase noise and groundborne vibration in the Project vicinity during the construction phase that would be short-term. Construction activities would be temporary in nature and would occur during the hours of 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday to Saturday, in accordance with the San Bernardino County Noise Ordinance.

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With implementation of MM **NOI-1** through **NOI-3** below, potential impacts related to excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels during the construction phase are considered less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The Project is not located in the vicinity of a public airport or public use airport land use plan. Additionally, the Project does not propose any habitable structures that would expose people, whether working or residing, in the Project area to excessive noise levels. Therefore, regarding the exposure of people to excessive noise levels sourced from airports, no impacts are anticipated.

#### **4.12.2 Mitigation Measures**

**NOI-1:** During Project construction, stationary noise-generating equipment shall be located as far as is practicable from any existing structure designed for human occupancy.

**NOI-2:** In locations where construction activities occur within one-quarter mile of any existing structure designed for human occupancy, construction activities shall be limited to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Construction during other periods, including Sundays and holidays, shall be limited to emergencies and activities determined to be in the interest of the general public. If nocturnal construction is planned or required to minimize traffic interference, and if any occupied structures exist within one-half mile, a requested exemption to the above time constraints shall be submitted to the San Bernardino County Special Districts Department.

**NOI-3:** All construction equipment shall be operated with mandated noise control equipment (i.e., mufflers or silencers).

## 4.13 Population and Housing

### 4.13.1 Population and Housing (XIV) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Project does not include the construction of new homes or businesses and therefore would not directly induce substantial population growth in the area. The Project however may indirectly contribute to population growth in the project area by providing the needed water storage and stable operating pressures to water customers on the north side of the Mojave River, particularly in the vicinity of Irwin Road and Spadra Street because currently these customers are at higher elevations, and thus, are experiencing low water pressures during high demand periods.

A project could indirectly induce growth by removing barriers to growth, by creating a condition that attracts additional population or new economic activity, or by providing a catalyst for future unrelated growth in an area. While a project may have a potential to induce growth, it does not automatically result in growth. Growth can only happen through capital investment in new economic opportunities by the public or private sectors. The land use policies established by the County of San Bernardino would regulate growth in the County. According to the County of San Bernardino General Plan Housing Element Policy D/H-1.2, the County discourages urban-scale infrastructure improvements (e.g. such as curbs, gutters, and street lighting) for different communities in the Desert Region. Therefore, it can be assumed that this area would remain rural and the promotion of growth is not warranted. As stated above, the implementation of this project is specifically for existing residents in the vicinity of Irwin Road and Spadra Street who are experiencing low water pressures during high demand periods. Thus, the needs of existing and projected population, as anticipated by the General Plan, would be partially met via Project implementation. Since the Project serves existing and forecasted needs, potential impacts related to the inducement of a substantial population growth are considered less than significant.

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Displace substantial numbers of people or existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Project proposes the construction of potable water reservoir tank and installation of transmission main pipeline within the existing dirt Irwin Road ROW. The Project would not necessitate the demolition

or relocation of existing housing units. Since no housing or people would be displaced as a result of Project implementation; no impacts are anticipated in this regard.

#### **4.13.2 Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

### **4.14 Public Services**

#### **4.14.1 Public Services (XV) Environmental Checklist and Discussion**

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police Protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>

#### **Fire Protection**

The Project would not require additional services or extended response times for fire protection services. The Project is an expansion of GSWC's existing Crooks Pressure Zone, which serves the north end of the City of Barstow and is in the northern edge of GSWC's water distribution system. Currently there is no water storage within this zone. Localized water storage is necessary for equalization of water demands which fluctuate throughout a day and season, and for emergencies such as fires. Therefore, when constructed, the proposed facilities should reduce the need for fire department resources. Thus, no impacts relating to fire protection are anticipated.

#### **Police Protection**

The Project would not require police protection, would not necessitate the construction of new facilities or increase the demand on police protection services, or result in extended response times for police protection services. Therefore, no impact is anticipated.

### Schools

The Project is not located within one-quarter mile of a school or proposed school. The closest school to the Project site is Skyline North Elementary, which is approximately 0.5 miles east of the Project site.. No school facilities would be displaced as a result of Project implementation. Therefore, with regards to potential substantial adverse physical impacts related to a need for additional schools or increased school capacity resulting from Project implementation, no impacts are anticipated.

### Parks

Construction of the Project would not displace any existing or known proposed recreational facilities. Therefore, with regards to potential substantial adverse physical impacts related to a need for additional parks, recreational facilities or the expansion of existing parks or recreational facilities resulting from Project implementation, no impacts are anticipated.

### Other Public Facilities

There are no other public facilities that would be adversely impacted by implementation of the Project. Therefore, with regards to potential substantial adverse physical impacts related to a need for additional public facilities or the expansion of existing public facilities resulting from Project implementation, no impacts are anticipated.

#### 4.14.2 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

### 4.15 Recreation

#### 4.15.1 Recreation (XVI) Materials Checklist

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) 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"/>

No public or private recreation facilities currently exist within the Project's vicinity. The closest park is Skyline North Park which is approximately 0.5 mile east of the Project site. Additionally, the Project would not develop or impact any areas potentially planned for recreational uses. Therefore, there would be no impact with regard for the potential for adverse impacts related to an increase in the use of existing parks or other recreational facilities as a result of Project implementation.

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<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) 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"/>

The Project proposes the construction of a potable water reservoir tank and the installation of water transmission pipelines within a dirt road. The Project would not include the development of recreational facilities, or create the increase for demand for new recreational facilities or parks. Therefore, there would be no impact with regard to the potential for adverse impacts related to the development of or need for expansion of recreational facilities as a result of Project implementation.

#### **4.15.2 Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

### **4.16 Transportation**

#### **4.16.1 Transportation (XVII) Environmental Checklist and Discussion**

<b>Would the Project:</b>	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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

To measure the effectiveness of the County circulation system, the San Bernardino County General Plan defines five categories of Level of Service (LOS). The categories range from A to F, with A representing the highest level of service, as follows:

**Level of Service A:** Indicates a relatively free flow of traffic, with little or no limitation on vehicle movement or speed.

**Level of Service B:** Describes a steady flow of traffic, with only slight delays in vehicle movement and speed. All queues clear in a single signal cycle.

**Level of Service C:** Denotes a reasonably steady, high-volume flow of traffic, with some limitations on movement and speed, and occasional backups on critical approaches.

**Level of Service D:** Denotes the level where traffic nears an unstable flow. Intersections still function, but short queues develop and cars may have to wait through one cycle during short peaks.

**Level of Service E:** Describes traffic characterized by slow movement and frequent (although momentary) stoppages. This type of congestion is considered severe, but is not uncommon at peak traffic hours, with frequent stopping, long-standing queues, and blocked intersections.

**Level of Service F:** Describes unsatisfactory stop-and-go traffic characterized by "traffic jams" and stoppages of long duration. Vehicles at signalized intersections usually have to wait through one or more signal changes, and "upstream" intersections may be blocked by the long queues.

Only the water transmission main pipeline would be constructed within the shoulder of the Irwin Road ROW, which is a dirt road. In its current condition, the pipeline alignment where the installation of the transmission main pipeline would be placed is not used to provide access to the rural residential lots that are located south of the Project. This road would be used as an access road from Irwin Road to the proposed water reservoir tank. As stated before, the purpose of the Project is to provide needed water storage and stable operating pressures to water customers on the north side of the Mojave River, particularly in the vicinity of Irwin Road and Spadra Street. Impacts to traffic from the project would consist of minor, short-term increases in vehicle trips as a result of construction activities. When analyzing the Project in relation to the County LOS categories, it is reasonable to assume that the Project would operate at LOS A, given the small quantities of traffic that the Project would generate.

According to the City of Barstow General Plan, Irwin Road serves as a bike route and bus route for the Victor Valley Transit Authority. The Project contractor would prepare a site-specific Traffic Control Plan to be implemented during construction, which would be reviewed and approved by the City. If lane closure is required, the contractor would implement measures to ensure safe vehicle passage through the construction area on Irwin Road. When construction is complete, Irwin Road would return to its existing condition. Therefore, the Project does not include any factor that would cause a conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system. This includes all modes of transportation, taking into account mass transit and non-motorized methods of travel; no impacts are anticipated.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b) details the use of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) to assess the significance of transportation impacts. As detailed in CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (c), a lead agency may elect to be governed by the provisions of this section immediately. Beginning on July 1, 2020, the provisions of this section shall apply statewide. As of the preparation of this document (September 2020), VMT analysis has not been adopted by the County of San Bernardino, and therefore this question does not apply to the proposed Project.



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<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Project does not include any component that would alter existing roadway design features. The Project does not include any component that would introduce new hazards since the Project does not propose any new roadways. The Project is not proposing a new use that could introduce incompatible elements to area roadways. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Except for potential temporary road closures of short duration, at least one lane for vehicular access along Irwin Road would be maintained during project construction. Once construction is complete Irwin Road would be returned to its original condition. Operation and maintenance of the Project would not result in inadequate emergency access.

If road closure is needed for construction, the project proponent would coordinate with the City of Barstow. The Project contractor would prepare a site-specific Traffic Control Plan to be implemented during construction, which would be reviewed and approved by the City. If lane closure is required, the contractor would implement measures to ensure adequate emergency access. When construction is complete, Irwin Road would return to its existing condition. Therefore, impacts are considered to be less than significant.

#### **4.16.2 Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

### **4.17 Tribal Cultural Resources**

#### **4.17.1 Environmental Setting**

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was contacted by the consultant, Applied Earthworks Inc., regarding sacred lands within the project area. The NAHC conducted a search of the Sacred Lands File and reported on September 30, 2013 that they have no records of Native American cultural resources within the project area.

Project notification letters and invitations to consult on the Proposed Project were sent by email on October 13, 2020 to the three tribes who are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area and

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who have requested project notifications from the SWRCB: the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT), the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians (SMBMI), and the Big Pine Paiute Tribe of Owens Valley.

The SWRCB received a response from the SMBMI on October 13, 2020 requesting copies of the cultural resources and geotechnical reports. The tribe stated they did not know of any tribal cultural resources in the project footprint, but made a request regarding treatment and notification procedures in the event of unplanned discoveries during Project construction. The requested reports were sent to the SMBMI.

**Tribal Cultural Resources (XVIII) Environmental Checklist and Discussion**

<b>Would the Project:</b>	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 Resources 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"/>

No known tribal cultural resources have been identified in the Project footprint and no impacts are expected. However, the SMBMI requested the following avoidance and minimization measure be included in the document to further reduce any less than significant impacts.

**Avoidance and Minimization Measure**

**TCR-1:** The SMBMI Cultural Resources Department shall be contacted, as detailed in CUL-1, of any pre-contact and/or historic-era cultural resources discovered during project implementation, and be provided information regarding the nature of the find, so as to provide Tribal input with regards

to significance and treatment. Should the find be deemed significant, as defined by CEQA (as amended, 2015), a cultural resources Monitoring and Treatment Plan shall be created by the archaeologist, in coordination with SMBMI, and all subsequent finds shall be subject to this Plan. This Plan shall allow for a monitor to be present that represents SMBMI for the remainder of the project, should SMBMI elect to place a monitor on-site.

**TCR-2:** Any and all archaeological/cultural documents created as a part of the project (isolate records, site records, survey reports, testing reports, etc.) shall be supplied to the applicant and Lead Agency for dissemination to SMBMI. The Lead Agency and/or applicant shall, in good faith, consult with SMBMI throughout the life of the project.

## **4.18 Utilities and Service Systems**

### **4.18.1 Utilities and Service Systems (XIX) Environmental Checklist and Discussion**

<b>Would the Project:</b>	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"/>

#### *Water*

The Project involves the construction of a potable water reservoir tank and installation of water transmission main pipeline within an unpaved roadway. Implementation of the Project would not result in any significant direct or indirect increase in population, or in any use that would generate wastewater or require water supply beyond what was already evaluated and planned for in the General Plan. For these reasons, there would be no impacts with respect to water use and supply and wastewater generation and treatment capacity.

#### *Wastewater*

The Project involves the construction of a potable water reservoir tank and installation of water transmission main pipelines within an unpaved roadway. The Project would not result in the need for wastewater treatment or additional facilities. No impact would occur.

#### *Storm Drainage*

The Project involves the construction of a potable water reservoir tank and installation of water transmission main pipelines within an unpaved roadway. Included in the design of the Project is a 30-foot by 10-foot rip-rap lined retention basin that would be connected to the reservoir via a drainpipe. Thus, the Project would not generate a need for new or expanded storm water drainage facilities. Therefore,

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potential impacts with respect to the construction or expansion of drainage facilities are less than significant.

*Electric Power, Natural Gas and Telecommunications*

The Project would not cause substantial unplanned population growth (see Section 4.14, Population and Housing), would not result in wasteful or inefficient use of energy (see Section 4.6, Energy), and would not require or result in the construction of new electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities or expansion of existing facilities. As such, this impact would be less than significant.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Project is an infrastructure project and would not create a demand for water. The purpose of the Project is to correct low water pressure problems in the Project area. No new or expanded water supply entitlements would be required, thus, no impact would occur.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Project is not required to have a determination from the wastewater treatment provider serving the Project because operation of the reservoir tank and transmission pipeline would not generate wastewater or demand for wastewater treatment. No impact would occur.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The Project involves the construction of a potable water reservoir tank and water transmission main pipeline within an unpaved roadway. Any solid waste debris as a result of construction would be minimal

and would be disposed of at a permitted landfill. The County of San Bernardino Solid Waste Management Division is responsible for the operation and management of the solid waste services to the Project site and has the option of hauling waste to any one of two landfills in San Bernardino County high desert region (Barstow Landfill and Victorville Landfills). According the San Bernardino County General Plan, permitted disposal capacity is available at both landfills and the County would be expanded both landfills, which would provide the County with an additional 59.7 million tons of solid waste disposal capacity. Thus, the limited quantity of waste generated by the Project would not contribute significantly to the exceedance of landfill capacity, or breach statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Thus, the potential for adverse impacts related to landfill capacity and regulations for solid waste are considered less than significant.

<b>Would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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"/>

The waste that could be generated from construction of the Project, which would be hauled off and disposed of in an appropriately licensed facility by the construction contractor, would be to the satisfaction of the Project engineer. For these reasons, the potential for adverse impacts related to landfill capacity and regulations for solid waste are considered less than significant.

#### **4.18.2 Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

### **4.19 Wildfire**

#### **4.19.1 Environmental Setting**

Government Code 51175-89 directs the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE) to identify areas of very high fire hazard severity zones within Local Responsibility Areas (LRA). Mapping of the areas, referred to as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ), is based on data and models of potential fuels over a 30 to 50-year time horizon and their associated expected fire behavior, and expected burn probabilities to quantify the likelihood and nature of vegetation fire exposure to buildings.

According to CALFIRE, the Project site is not located on land designated as VHFHSZ (CALFIRE 2007). The Project is not within an area designated by the San Bernardino County General Plan Hazard Overlay's Map as Fire Safety Area (County of San Bernardino 2007a).

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**4.19.2 Wildfire (XX) Environmental Checklist and Discussion**

<b>If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the Project:</b>	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Project would not interfere with the City's emergency response or evacuation plans since the Project involves the construction of a potable water reservoir tank which would be located approximately 0.8 mile north of existing residential developments and installation of transmission main pipeline within the alignment of the unimproved dirt shoulder of the existing Irwin Road ROW. Temporary construction activities and staging areas would be confined to the Project area and would not physically impair access to other existing roadways within the Project vicinity. Access to local residences would be maintained at all times. Additionally, the Project does not include the reconfiguration of Irwin Road or nearby roadways that could result in inadequate emergency access. Therefore, the potential for impacts that could impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan is less than significant.

<b>If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Project would not exacerbate wildfire risks. The Project would not substantially alter slope, wind patterns, or other factors that could exacerbate wildfire risks. According to the County General Plan Hazard Overlay Map, the Project site is not located in a fire hazard zone (County of San Bernardino 2007a). The Project is not located in or near land classified as VHFHSZ, therefore the Project is unlikely to expose occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. No impact is anticipated.

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<b>If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Project involves the construction of a potable water reservoir tank which would be located approximately 0.8 mile north of existing residential developments and installation of transmission main pipeline within the alignment of the unimproved dirt shoulder of the existing Irwin Road ROW. The proposed Project is not located in or near land classified as VHFHSZ, therefore the proposed Project would not exacerbate fire risk resulting in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. No impact would occur.

<b>If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Project is not located in or near a VHFHSZ. The Project ranges in elevation from approximately 2180 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) at the southern part of the site to 2300 feet AMSL at the northern portion. Construction of the Project would not require substantial grading of slopes or creation of manufactured slopes. Accordingly, the Project is not likely to expose people or structures to landslides or downstream flooding as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. No impact would occur.

#### **4.19.3 Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

## 4.20 Mandatory Findings of Significance

### 4.20.1 Mandatory Findings of Significance (XXI) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Does the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have the potential to substantially 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, substantially 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"/>

The Project does not have the potential to substantially 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. The Project has the potential to significantly impact desert tortoise habitat, and incorporates mitigation measures **BIO-1** through **BIO-6** to reduce potentially significant impacts to this species and other special status species to less than significant levels. Therefore, with implementation of the mitigation measures discussed above, potential Project-related impacts, either direct or indirect, on biological resources would be less than significant.

The Project does not have the potential to eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory, because no historical, archaeological, or tribal cultural resources were identified in the Project area. The Project incorporates mitigation measures **GEO-1** to reduce any impacts to paleontological resources discovered during construction to a less than significant level. Through implementation of these potential Project-related impacts, either direct or indirect, on paleontological resources would be less than significant.



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<b>Does the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) 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"/>

The Project does not have any impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable. The Project is in conformance with the relevant air quality management plans, and the Project's short-term and long-term air quality emissions do not exceed the MDAQMD established thresholds of significance; the Project's net increase in criteria pollutant emissions for which the Project region is non-attainment is not cumulatively considerable. Also, the Project would not exceed either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established for designated roads or highways. The impact is considered less than significant.

<b>Does the Project:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Have environmental effects that 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"/>

The Project would generate temporary noise impacts during construction, which would be mitigated to less than significant levels with implementation of mitigation measures **NOI-1** through **NOI-3**. Direct and indirect impacts to human beings would be less than significant with the implementation of mitigation measures listed in this Initial Study.

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## **SECTION 7.0 LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix A – CalEEMod Output

Appendix B – Biological Reconnaissance Report

Appendix C – Aquatic Resources Delineation Report

Appendix D – Desert Tortoise Survey

Appendix E – Special-Status Plant Survey Report

Appendix F – Mohave Ground Squirrel Report

Appendix G – Cultural Resources Assessment

Appendix H – Construction Fuel Consumption

Appendix I – Geotechnical Investigation

Appendix J – Project Plan Details