

6 SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS AND GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

6.1 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Section 21100(b)(2)(A) of the Public Resource Code (PRC) provides that an EIR shall include a detailed statement setting forth “in a separate section: any significant effect on the environment that cannot be avoided if the project is implemented.” Accordingly, this section provides a summary of significant environmental impacts of the project that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level.

Chapter 4, “Affected Environment, Effects and Mitigations,” provides a description of the potential environmental impacts of the project and recommends various mitigation measures to reduce impacts, to the extent feasible. Chapter 5, “Cumulative Effects Analysis,” determines whether the incremental effects of this project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects. After implementation of the recommended mitigation measures, the impacts associated with implementation the proposed program would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

No reasonably foreseeable significant irreversible environmental changes have been identified that would result from implementation of the proposed program or the alternatives to the proposed program. While the proposed program will provide access to firefighting personnel to previously inaccessible areas, this is only to allow for initial fuels modification, periodic maintenance of treatments, and access for fire suppression equipment and personnel, all of which occur infrequently. This infrequency of entry would make irreversible damage from environmental accidents unlikely. The proposed program does not commit future generations to similar uses.

6.2 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

CEQA specifies that growth-inducing impacts of a project must be addressed in an EIR (PRC § 21100[b][5]). Specifically, Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines states that the EIR shall:

Discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion of a wastewater treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Also, discuss the characteristics of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

Direct growth inducement would result if a project involved construction of new housing, which would facilitate new population to an area. Indirect growth inducement would result, for instance, if implementing a project resulted in any of the following:

- Substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial, or governmental enterprises)
- Substantial short-term employment opportunities (e.g., construction employment) that indirectly stimulates the need for additional housing and services to support the new temporary employment demand)
- Removal of an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint on a required public utility or service (e.g., construction of a major sewer line with excess capacity through an undeveloped area)

The State CEQA Guidelines do not distinguish between planned and unplanned growth for purposes of considering whether a project would foster additional growth. Therefore, for purposes of this EIR, to reach the conclusion that a project is growth inducing as defined by CEQA, the EIR must find that it would foster (i.e., promote, encourage, allow) additional growth in economic activity, population, or housing, regardless of whether the growth is already approved by and consistent with local plans. The conclusion does not determine that induced growth is beneficial or detrimental, consistent with Section 15126.2(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

The proposed program will not have any growth-inducing impacts because it will not foster growth or result in new housing or construction of facilities. The project is a vegetation management project intended to better manage the State's resources and protect people and sensitive natural communities from the effects of catastrophic wildfires. No reasonably foreseeable growth-inducing impacts have been identified that would result from implementation of the proposed program or the alternatives to the proposed program.