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4.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Would the project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless APMs Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				✓
b.	Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				\square
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 Government Code section 51104(g))?				Ø
d.	Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				\square
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?				V

4.2.1 Introduction

This section of the PEA describes the existing conditions and potential project-related impacts to agricultural and forestry resources in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. In addition, this section evaluates the consistency of the Proposed Project with the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) and the Williamson Act, otherwise known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965. The Proposed Project would not convert or otherwise adversely affect any agricultural or forestry resources, and therefore no impacts would result.

4.2.2 Methodology

The agriculture and forestry resources analysis within this section involved a review of various documents, including aerial photographs of the Proposed Project area, the general plans for the cities of San Diego and Poway, and online information sources. The California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection farmland map was reviewed to determine if, and where, Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance were located within the Proposed Project area. Also, Williamson Act property maps from the California Department of Conservation were reviewed.

4.2.3 Existing Conditions

4.2.3.1 Regulatory Setting

State

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The goal of the FMMP, administered by the California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, is to provide consistent and impartial data to decision makers for use in assessing present status, reviewing trends, and planning for the future of California's agricultural land resources. The basis of the mapping program is an agricultural land classification system that combines technical soil ratings based on soil classifications and current land use. The survey defines eight agricultural land categories:

- Prime Farmland: has the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term agricultural production. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to current farming methods. Prime Farmland must have been used for the production of irrigated crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date.
- Farmland of Statewide Importance: is similar to Prime Farmland, but with minor shortcomings such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Farmland of Statewide Importance must have been used for the production of irrigated crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date.
- Unique Farmland: includes areas of lower quality soils that do not meet the criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, but that have been used for the production of specific high economic value crops during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date.
- Farmland of Local Importance: includes areas other than Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland that is either currently producing crops, has the capability of such production, or is used for the production of confined livestock. Farmland of Local Importance may be important to local economies due to its productivity or value, defined by each county's local advisory committee, and adopted by its Board of Supervisors.
- Grazing Land: is land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock and includes, at a minimum, 40 acres.
- Urban and Built-up Land: is occupied by structures with a building density of at least one unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately six structures to a 10-acre parcel. Such lands include residential, industrial, commercial, institutional facilities, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, and water control structures.
- Other Land: land not included in any other mapping category such as low-density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry, or aquaculture facilities; strip mines and borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than 40 acres. Vacant and non-agricultural land greater than

40 acres, and surrounded on all sides by urban development, is also mapped as Other Land.

• Water: includes perennial water bodies with an extent of at least 40 acres.

The California Department of Conservation prepares, updates, and maintains maps and data used for categorizing agricultural potential (as described above) and assessing the location, quality, and quantity of agricultural lands and conversion of these lands over time. The maps are updated every two years based on aerial photograph review, computer mapping analysis, public input, and field reconnaissance. Coverage includes 47.9 million acres (96 percent of the state's private lands) and is based on the extent of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil surveys. Most large government land holdings, including national parks, forests, and United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, are not included in the FMMP's survey area.

The Williamson Act

The California Land Conservation Act, better known as the Williamson Act, has been the State's primary agricultural land protection program since its enactment in 1965. More than 16 million of the State's 30 million acres of farm and ranch land are currently protected under the Williamson Act. The Williamson Act creates an arrangement whereby private landowners agree with counties and cities to voluntarily restrict land to agricultural and open-space uses. In return, the landowner receives property tax assessments that are lower than normal because the assessments are based on farming and/or open space uses rather than full market value. Local governments receive an annual subvention of forgone property tax revenues from the state via the Open Space Subvention Act of 1971. Williamson Act contracts automatically renew each year for a new 10-year period, unless either party files a "notice of non-renewal" to terminate the contract before the end of the current 10-year period. During the ensuing 10-year cancellation period following a "notice of non-renewal," property taxes are gradually raised to the applicable level for developable land.

The Williamson Act also authorizes cities and counties to establish Agricultural Preserves, referred to as Farmland Security Zones. An Agricultural Preserve defines the boundary of an area within which a city or county will enter into Williamson Act contracts with landowners. The boundary is designated by resolution of the board or city council having jurisdiction. Agricultural Preserves must include at least 100 acres. In Farmland Security Zones, the city or county can enter into a special type of contract called a "Farm Security Zone Contract." Farmland Security Zone contracts require a minimum initial term of 20 years and they renew annually unless either party files a "notice of nonrenewal," similar to a Williamson Act contract. To be eligible for a Farmland Security Zone contract, the subject land must be designated on the Important Farmland Series maps as predominantly Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance. Agricultural Preserves are generally intended to avoid areas where public utility improvements and related land acquisitions may be required (Government Code Section 51292).

Public agencies may avoid the requirements of Government Code Section 51292 (limitations on locating public improvements, including utility infrastructure within an agricultural preserve) if the public improvement is exempt from such requirements pursuant to Government Code Section 51293 (special exemptions). The Proposed Project would fall under one such exemption, which

covers the location or construction of any public utility improvement which has been approved by the CPUC (Government Code Section 51293(c)).

Timberland and Timberland Production Zones

Timberland is privately owned land or land acquired for State forest purposes that is devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber, or for growing and harvesting timber and compatible uses, and that is capable of growing an average annual volume of wood fiber of at least 15 cubic feet per acre. A Timberland Production Zone is an area that has been zoned pursuant to Section 51112 or 51113 of the Government Code and is devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber, or for growing and harvesting timber and compatible uses. In California, a county board of supervisors may designate areas of timberland in the county as timberland preserves, which is the same as the state zoning designation of Timberland Production Zone. The land in a Timberland Production Zone is restricted in use to the production of timber for an initial 10-year term. The Proposed Project is not located within timberland or a Timberland Production Zone.

Local

City of San Diego

The *City of San Diego General Plan*, Conservation Element, Section L – Agricultural Resources states City goals and policies relating to Agricultural Resources. The following are a few of the goals stated in the Conservation Element:

- Retention of productive agricultural lands.
- Greater use of sustainable agricultural practices.
- Reduction in land use conflicts between agriculture and other land uses.
- Retention of the rural agricultural character of river valleys.
- Expansion of urban agricultural uses.

City of Poway

The *City of Poway General Plan*, Natural Resources Element, Vegetation/Habitat Types in the City of Poway states that there are 838 acres of actively cultivated lands, fallow lands, and nursery operations currently, which make up three percent of the total vegetation type. Poway began as a farming community over a hundred years ago and some of the agricultural areas still remain. The following are a few of the goals stated in the Introduction, Natural Resources Element, and Community Development Sections:

- Encourage the combination of agricultural and rural residential uses.
- Retention of agricultural production lands.
- Preserve open space to maintain valuable natural resources.
- Reclaim water for agricultural production.

4.2.3.2 **Agricultural and Forestry Setting**

The County of San Diego (County) is consistently ranked among the top 10 agricultural counties (ranked eight for several years) in California. The County has the fourth highest number of farms of any county in the United States and third highest number of farms of any county in California. Agriculture is the fifth largest component of the County's economy.

According to the *City of San Diego General Plan*, Land Use and Community Planning Element, Table LU-1 – Existing Land Uses, Agricultural land makes up approximately 6,055 acres or 2.8 percent of the land area in the City of San Diego. Also, within the same document, Table LU-2 – Adopted Community Plan Land Uses, approximately 3,809 acres or 1.7 percent of the land area in the City of San Diego is designated by Community Plans as Agriculture. Agricultural Lands are mostly located in the extreme northern and southern portion of the City.

As described below, portions of the Proposed Project ROW cross land designated as Farmland of Local Importance and Unique Farmland as well as land that has been zoned for agricultural use.

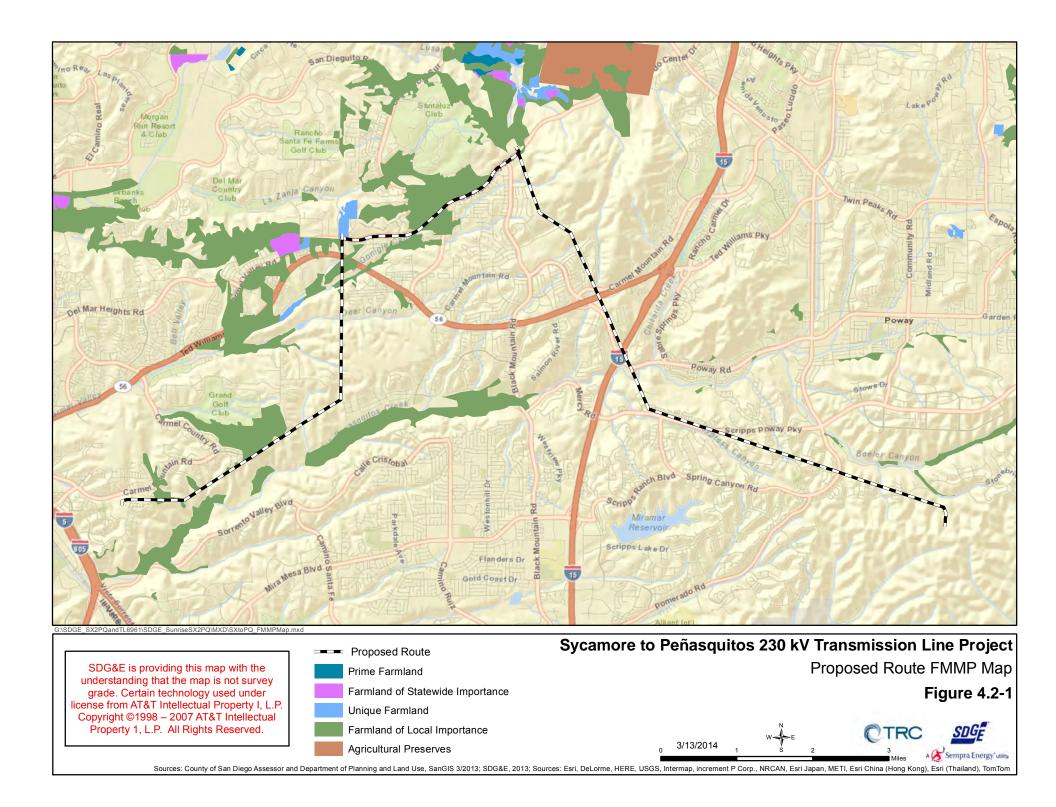
Designated Farmland

A review of California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection maps has shown there are some lands that have been designated as Farmland of Local Importance and Unique Farmland within the vicinity of the Proposed Project ROW (see Figure 4.2-1, Proposed Route FMMP Map).

There is one area within the vicinity of the Proposed Project that is designated as Unique Farmland. This area is immediately north of Carmel Valley Road north of the area where the Proposed Project, Segments B and C meet. The Proposed Project ROW does not actually cross this property; however the existing SDG&E ROW does extend through this property to the north. At the point where the Proposed Project, Segments B and C meet, the transmission line facilities would be approximate 49 feet to the south of the edge of this property. However, the Proposed Project does include a stringing site that would be located within this property. This property is the site of the Evergreen Nursery, an approximately 80-acre property providing wholesale landscape plants and other related supplies. Also, there are several areas within the vicinity of the Proposed Project ROW that are designated as Farmland of Local Importance, including:

- The Proposed Project Segment B has Farmland of Local Importance adjacent to the corridor on both the north and south sides of Carmel Valley Road.
- The Proposed Project Segment C has Farmland of Local Importance adjacent to the corridor between Carmel Valley Road and SR-56, as well as adjacent to the corridor within McGonigle Canyon, to the south of SR-56.
- The Proposed Project Segment D has Farmland of Local Importance adjacent to the corridor, as well as to the north near Carmel Mountain Road and the Del Mar Mesa. There is also Farmland of Local Importance in three locations adjacent to the westernmost (approximate) 1-mile portion of the alignment.

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Agricultural Zoning Designations

A review of City of San Diego zoning maps was conducted to identify properties within the vicinity of the Proposed Project that are zoned for Agricultural use. Within the Proposed Project area, the only zoning classification for Agriculture is the Agricultural Residential (AR) zone. The purpose of the AR zone is to accommodate a wide range of agricultural uses while also permitting the development of single dwelling unit homes at a very low density. According to the City of San Diego zoning maps, each of the Proposed Project alignment segments crosses areas that are within AR zones. Approximately 1.8 miles of AR zones are within the corridor of Proposed Project Segment A, east of Carmel Valley Road and west of Laurentian Drive. Proposed Project Segment A also has approximately 0.7 mile of AR zones within the corridor south of Poway Road and I-15, approximately 0.7 mile of AR zones within the corridor south of Scripps Poway Parkway, and approximately 0.4 mile of AR zones within the corridor south of Stonebridge Parkway.

AR zones are adjacent to all but approximately 0.4 mile of the north side of the Proposed Project Segment B, along Carmel Valley Road. There are also AR zones adjacent to the southern portion of Proposed Project-Segment B, near Camino Del Sur. Approximately 1.3 miles of AR zones are within the corridor of Proposed Project Segment B.

There are AR zones within approximately 1.2 miles of the southern portion of the corridor of Proposed Project Segment C. There are also approximately 0.2 mile of AR zones within the corridor of Proposed Project Segment C.

AR zones are adjacent to the southern portion of the Proposed Project-Segment D, north of Sorrento Valley Boulevard and Calle Cristobal. Approximately 1.4 miles of AR zones are within the corridor, on the far northeast section of Proposed Project Segment D. Based on a review of the City of Poway Zoning Classifications, there is no agricultural zoning within the City of Poway Proposed Project ROW. Within the City of Poway there is no land, either within or adjacent to the Proposed Project ROW, that is in active agricultural use.

Designated Forest Land

According to the California Department of Conservation and *City of San Diego General Plan* Existing Land Use, there is no land designated for forestry purposes within the Proposed Project area

4.2.4 Potential Impacts

4.2.4.1 Significance Criteria

Standards of impact significance were derived from Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*. Under these guidelines, the Proposed Project could have a potentially significant impact to agricultural resources if it would:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use;

- b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract;
- c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g));
- d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or
- e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

4.2.4.2 Question 2a - Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

Construction – No Impact

Proposed Project Segments B, C, and D all cross areas of land that have been designated as Farmland of Local Importance (refer to Figure 4.2-1). Proposed Project Segment A does not cross any areas of land that have been designated as Farmland of Local Importance. Construction of the Proposed Project would be temporary, and would include construction occurring within Carmel Valley Road (Proposed Project Segment B), on existing steel structures (Proposed Project Segment C), and replacing existing wood H-frames with new steel poles in a different position within the corridor (Proposed Project Segment D). It would not convert any Farmland to non-agricultural use. Additionally, Stringing Site No. 11 would be located within land designated as Unique Farmland (existing Evergreen Nursery) at the western end of Proposed Project Segment B. However, this temporary use of this area would not affect the continued use of the property for agricultural operations and, as such, would also not convert any Farmland to non-agricultural use. Therefore, no impact to Farmland of Local Importance would result from construction of the Proposed Project.

Operation & Maintenance – No Impact

The Proposed Project would replace and relocate existing electric transmission and power line facilities and add one new transmission line within existing utility corridors and franchise position within City streets. All proposed new and relocated facilities are located in existing SDG&E ROW that contain similar facilities that are currently operated and maintained, except for the new underground segment of 230 kV transmission line proposed in Segment B, which would have a very marginal effect on SDG&E's existing underground inspection and maintenance program. Operations and maintenance activities would not significantly increase in intensity, frequency, or duration with implementation of the Proposed Project and would be substantially similar to existing operations and maintenance activities. No Farmland would be converted to non-agricultural use. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

4.2.4.3 Question 2b - Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

Construction – No Impact

Williamson Act contract properties maps from the California Department of Conservation were reviewed, and there are no such properties located anywhere near the Proposed Project ROW. All segments of the Proposed Project ROW cross through areas of land that are zoned (by the City of San Diego) for agricultural use (AR zoning designation). Within the small portion of the Proposed Project Segment A that passes through the City of Poway, there is no land either within or adjacent to the Proposed Project ROW that is zoned (by the City of Poway) for agricultural use. Construction of the Proposed Project within the existing ROW where electrical transmission line facilities are already located would not conflict with the requirements under the City of San Diego's zoning ordinance. Therefore, there would be no impacts to existing agricultural uses or a Williamson Act contract.

Operation & Maintenance – No Impact

The Proposed Project would replace and relocate existing electric transmission and power line facilities and add one new transmission line within existing utility corridors and franchise position within City streets. All proposed new and relocated facilities are located in existing SDG&E ROW that contain similar facilities that are currently operated and maintained, except for the new underground segment of 230 kV transmission line proposed in Segment B, which would have a very marginal effect on SDG&E's existing underground inspection and maintenance program. Upon completion of construction activities, the Proposed Project would operate unmanned. Operations and maintenance activities would not significantly increase in intensity, frequency, or duration with implementation of the Proposed Project and would be substantially similar to existing operations and maintenance activities. The Proposed Project would not conflict with agricultural zoning or any Williamson Act contract. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

4.2.4.4 Question 2c - 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))?

Construction & Operation and Maintenance – No Impact

The Proposed Project impact area is not zoned as forest land or timberland, and there are no forests or timber harvest areas in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. Therefore, no impact on forest land or timberland would occur as a result of the construction, operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project.

4.2.4.5 Question 2d - Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Construction – No Impact

There are no forests or similar areas in the vicinity of the Proposed Project and therefore no conversion of forest land to other uses would occur as a result of the construction of proposed facilities and improvements under the Proposed Project. Therefore, no impact on existing forest land or timberland would occur.

Operation & Maintenance – No Impact

There are no forests or similar areas in the vicinity of the Proposed Project and therefore no conversion of forest land to other uses would occur as a result of the operations and maintenance of proposed facilities and improvements under the Proposed Project. Therefore, no impact on existing forest land or timberland would occur.

4.2.4.6 Question 2e - 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?

Construction – No Impact

There is currently no utilized farmland within the Proposed Project impact area. Also, there are no forest lands or similar areas on or near the Proposed Project's physical footprint. Stringing Site No. 11 would be located within land designated as Unique Farmland (existing Evergreen Nursery). However, this temporary use of this area would not affect the continued use of the property for agricultural operations. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in 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. There would be no impacts in this regard.

Operation & Maintenance – No Impact

The entire Proposed Project site, except for the undergrounding in Segment B within Carmel Valley Road, contains existing electric transmission, power, distribution and substation uses, which would be replaced and upgraded. Because operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project would occur in the same or essentially the same locations as they occur today under baseline, existing conditions, there would not be any new impacts resulting from operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project.

4.2.5 Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restrictions

There are no project design features or ordinary construction/operating restrictions related to agriculture or forestry that are applicable to the Proposed Project.

4.2.6 Applicant Proposed Measures

The Proposed Project has no potentially significant impacts relating to agricultural and forestry resources; therefore, no APMs are proposed.

4.2.7 Detailed Discussion of Significant Impacts

Based on the preceding analysis, no significant impacts relating to agriculture and forestry are anticipated from the Proposed Project.

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