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4.11 MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the Proposed Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact 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?				✓
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?				✓

4.11.0 Introduction

This section discusses the existing conditions and potential impacts to mineral resources resulting from the San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) Tie Line (TL) 649 Wood-to-Steel Replacement Project (Proposed Project). The Proposed Project will not cross any active mining operations, nor will it have any impact on local or regional mineral resource sites. Further, no impacts to mineral resources will result from either the construction or operation and maintenance activities required for the Proposed Project.

4.11.1 Methodology

Mineral resource data were obtained from the United States Geological Survey (USGS), California Geological Survey (CGS), and the State of California Department of Conservation (DOC), as well as from the San Diego County General Plan, City of San Diego General Plan, and City of Chula Vista General Plan.

4.11.2 Existing Conditions

Regulatory Background

Federal, state, and local regulations were reviewed for relevancy to the Proposed Project.

Federal

No federal regulations pertaining to mineral resources are applicable to the Proposed Project.

State

Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975

The CGS designates mineral resource zones where access to important mineral resources may be threatened, according to provisions of the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975. The SMARA requires that all jurisdictions incorporate mapped mineral

resource designations approved by the State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) into their general plans. The SMGB and the DOC's Office of Mine Reclamation (OMR) are jointly charged with ensuring proper administration of the SMARA's requirements. The SMGB promulgates regulations to clarify and interpret the SMARA's provisions, as well as to serve as a policy and appeals board. The OMR provides an ongoing technical assistance program for lead agencies and operators, maintains a database of mine locations and operational information statewide, and is responsible for compliance-related matters.

Local

Because the California Public Utilities Commission has sole and exclusive jurisdiction over the siting, design, and construction of the Proposed Project, the Proposed Project is not subject to local discretionary land use regulations. The following discussion of the local regulations relating to mineral resources is provided for informational purposes only. As outlined in the following subsections, the construction and operation of the Proposed Project will not conflict with any environmental plans, policies, or regulations related to mineral resources.

San Diego County General Plan

The San Diego Department of Planning and Land Use maintains and implements the San Diego County General Plan and ensures regulatory compliance with applicable County codes and regulations. The San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances, Title 8, Division 7 includes regulations related to grading, excavation, clearing, and mining in San Diego County. Additionally, the Land Use section of the San Diego County General Plan contains a special Extractive designation. The Extractive designation is applied only to areas containing economically or potential economically extractable mineral resources—including construction materials (e.g., sand, gravel, and crushed rock), industrial and chemical mineral materials, and metallic and rare minerals found within the County. The designation promotes extraction as the principal and dominant use. Uses other than extraction and processing of mineral resources are allowed only when they will not interfere with present or future extraction. Uses such as processing, agriculture, and open space that are supportive of or compatible with mining are also allowed. Interim uses that are not compatible, but that will be removed, may also be allowed.

City of San Diego General Plan

The City of San Diego General Plan includes the following policies aimed at preserving access to mineral resources, reducing the need for new construction materials, and allowing for certain limited mineral extraction:

1. Promote the recycling and reclamation of construction materials to provide for the City of San Diego's current and future growth and development needs.
2. Permit new or expanding mining operations within the Multiple-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) in accordance with Multiple Species Conservation Program Preserve (MSCP) policies and guidelines.
3. Produce sand and gravel with minimal harm and disturbance to adjacent property and communities.

4. Plan rehabilitation of depleted mineral areas to facilitate reuse consistent with state requirements, the SMARA, and local planning goals and policies, including the MSCP.
5. Consider local evaporative salt production for future economic value, open space use, and important ecological habitat.

City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program Preserve

In general, the MSCP provides for the continuation of existing mining operations. However, new or expanded mining operations on lands conserved as part of the MHPA are incompatible with MSCP preserve goals for covered species and their habitats, unless otherwise agreed to by the wildlife agencies at the time the parcel is conserved. New operations may be permitted in the MHPA if the following occurs:

- impacts have been assessed and conditions incorporated to mitigate biological impacts and restore mined areas;
- adverse impacts to covered species in the MHPA have been mitigated consistent with the Subarea Plan; and
- requirements of other City of San Diego land use policies and regulations have been satisfied.

The MSCP requires that existing and new mining operations adjacent to or within the MHPA adequately protect adjacent preserved areas and covered species.

City of Chula Vista General Plan

The Environmental Element of the Chula Vista General Plan contains Objective - E5 and supporting policies to support the efficient extraction of regionally significant mineral resources, and requires the appropriate reclamation of mined areas for suitable future development, recreation, open space, and/or habitat restoration.

Environmental Setting

The Proposed Project is located in a primarily undeveloped area that encompasses parts of the County of San Diego, City of San Diego, and City of Chula Vista. The Otay River Valley contains significant deposits of construction-quality sand reserves. Otay Valley Quarry, situated immediately north of the Otay River at Heritage Road and Wiley Road, is currently mining Rock Mountain for boulders that are processed into crushed rock. The crushed rock meets the quality specifications for Portland cement concrete grade aggregate. Although historical sand and gravel mining operations have occurred in the Otay River Valley, most of this area is now within the Chula Vista MSCP where new or expanded mining operations are impermissible. In addition, Jamul Quarry is an active mine located approximately 4.5 miles northeast of the Proposed Project, and 27 sites with either mineral occurrences, prospects, or past mining activities are located within five miles of the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project is located within an area designated as Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ-) 2, areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood exists for their presence. Within the MRZ-2 area, the Proposed Project crosses designated Sector R, channel and floodplain deposits of the Otay River from Interstate 805 to near the head of Otay

Valley, and is located approximately 0.1 mile south of designated Sector S, metavolcanic rock deposits of Rock Mountain on the north side of upper Otay Valley. There is no active well drilling in the Proposed Project area.

4.11.3 Impacts

The following subsections describe the criteria of significance used to assess potential impacts to mineral resources that may result from implementation of the Proposed Project, and examine those potential impacts

Significance Criteria

Under the California Environmental Quality Act, impacts to mineral resources would be considered significant if the Proposed Project:

- Results in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state
- Results 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

Question 4.11a – Loss of Regional- or State-Valued Mineral Resources

Construction – No Impact

The nearest mining site to the Proposed Project is the Otay Mesa Quarry, which is a crushed stone quarry owned and operated by Otay Valley Quarry LLC and Rimrock CA LLC. The Otay Mesa Quarry is located approximately 0.2 mile north of the Proposed Project. The Otay Mesa Quarry mining site will not be affected by construction due to its distance from the Proposed Project. Further, although the Proposed Project is located in an area designated as MRZ-2, the replacement poles will be installed within existing SDG&E rights-of-way (ROWs). Future extraction of aggregate resources is not permitted in ROWs, so there will be no change in the availability of mineral resources. The wood-to-steel replacement of the existing power line will not prevent the mineral resources in the surrounding areas from being extracted. Therefore, there will be no loss of availability of regionally valuable aggregate resources, and no impact will occur.

Operation and Maintenance – No Impact

Operation and maintenance activities for the Proposed Project will be conducted in the same manner as the existing facilities. Operation and maintenance activities are expected to decrease slightly as a result of the Proposed Project due to the lower maintenance requirements of the replacement steel poles relative to the existing wood poles. Routine operation and maintenance activities will continue to occur within SDG&E ROWs and will not reduce the availability of known mineral resources. Therefore, no impact will occur as a result of operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project.

Question 4.11b – Loss of Locally Important Mineral Resources – No Impact

The San Diego County, City of San Diego, and City of Chula Vista general plans do not identify any important mineral resource recovery sites that will be crossed by the Proposed Project, and

the Proposed Project does not cross any lands designated as Extractive by the San Diego County Zoning Ordinance. Construction and operation and maintenance activities for the Proposed Project will generally be conducted within SDG&E ROWs and will not reduce the availability of any locally important mineral resources. Therefore, no impact will occur.

4.11.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures

Because the Proposed Project will not result in any significant impacts to mineral resources, no applicant-proposed measures have been proposed.

4.11.5 References

California DOC Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources. 2014. Regional Wildcat Map W1-7. Online. <ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/oil/maps/dist1/w1-7/Mapw1-7.pdf>. Site visited July 6, 2015.

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