

# CHAPTER 4

---

## Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

This Draft EIR is prepared in accordance with CEQA (California Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.), the *CEQA Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.), and applicable rules and regulations of regional and local entities. This Draft EIR evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery, and Storage Project. This Draft EIR is intended to serve as an informational document for the public agency decision-makers and the public regarding the proposed Project.

### Introduction to the Environmental Analysis

In accordance with Section 15126 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the direct and indirect environmental effects of the proposed Project with respect to existing conditions at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) was published (Appendix A). The physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether an impact is significant are established at the time the NOP is published (*CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15125(a)). The following environmental resources are assessed in this chapter in accordance with Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Public Services and Utilities
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic

The proposed Project would have no impact on Population and Housing, and therefore an assessment of Project impacts on Population and Housing is not included in Chapter 4. The proposed Project does not propose new homes or businesses that would directly induce population growth to the area. The proposed Project would not displace substantial numbers of existing houses or people and would not necessitate construction of replacement housing. The

potential for the proposed Project to induce population growth indirectly is discussed in Chapter 6, Growth Inducement.

## Environmental Setting

According to Section 15125(a) of the *CEQA Guidelines*, an EIR must include a description of the existing physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the proposed Project to provide the “baseline condition” against which Project-related impacts are compared. Normally, the baseline condition is the physical condition that exists when the NOP is published. The NOP for the proposed Project was published in February 2011, which is considered the baseline for the analysis contained in this EIR (Appendix A).

## Regulatory Framework

The Regulatory Framework provides a summary of regulations, plans, policies, and laws that are relevant to each issue area at the federal, state, and local levels.

## Impact and Mitigation Analysis

The Impact and Mitigation Analysis subsection describes the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project and, based upon the thresholds of significance, concludes whether the environmental impacts would be considered significant, potentially significant, or less than significant. Each resource that is analyzed is divided into issues, based on potential impacts. Each issue is addressed in its own subsection and mitigation measures are also included and discussed when applicable.

## Significance Criteria

Significance criteria have been developed for each environmental resource in accordance with Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* and are defined at the beginning of each impact analysis section. Impacts are categorized as follows:

- **Significant and Unavoidable:** mitigation might be recommended but impacts are still significant;
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation:** potentially significant impact but mitigated to a less than significant level;
- **Less than Significant:** mitigation is not required under CEQA but may be recommended; or
- **No Impact:** Mitigation not required or recommended.