



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION**

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**DATE:** May 25, 2016  
**TO:** Interested Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals  
**SUBJECT:** Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report  
**PROJECT TITLE:** San Bernardino County Route 66 Bridge Replacement Project  
**APPLICANT:** San Bernardino County Department of Public Works

The County of San Bernardino (County) intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the San Bernardino County Route 66 Bridge Replacement Project (project). The EIR is required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to analyze and disclose the environmental issues associated with the project. As discussed in the attached Initial Study Checklist, the County has determined that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, and therefore, an EIR is the required level of environmental review under CEQA. The County is the CEQA lead agency, and as such, is responsible for preparing the EIR and coordinating with responsible agencies, trustee agencies, federal, state, and local agencies, and the public.

Before preparing the EIR, the County is required under CEQA to conduct a scoping process, which includes early coordination with responsible agencies, trustee agencies, federal, state, and local agencies, and individuals to allow them to formally provide their views on the range and breadth of issues to be addressed in the EIR. The Notice of Preparation (NOP) begins the scoping process by notifying agencies, organizations, and individuals that the County plans to prepare the EIR, and requests input on the scope of the environmental analysis to be performed. This NOP provides a description of the project, and also includes an initial determination of potentially significant impacts that will be discussed in depth in the EIR. The process for making the initial determination on environmental impacts is described in the Initial Study Checklist attached to this NOP.

Federal, state, and local agencies are encouraged to submit comments on the scope and content of the environmental analysis that are relevant to each agency's statutory responsibilities over the project. We are also requesting input from individuals and/or organizations on the scope of the environmental document.

**Written responses and comments on the scope of the San Bernardino County Route 66 Bridge Replacement Project EIR will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on June 24, 2016. Please send written comments to:**

San Bernardino County  
Department of Public Works  
Attention: Nancy Sansonetti, AICP  
825 East Third Street, Room 123  
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0835

Your comments may also be sent by email to [nancy.sansonetti@dpw.sbcounty.gov](mailto:nancy.sansonetti@dpw.sbcounty.gov). Please include the "San Bernardino County Route 66 Bridge Replacement Project" in the subject heading. Please contact Nancy Sansonetti at (909) 387-8109 or at [nancy.sansonetti@dpw.sbcounty.gov](mailto:nancy.sansonetti@dpw.sbcounty.gov) with any questions.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **Introduction**

The County, in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), proposes to replace 32 existing bridges and rehabilitate one bridge along the 111-mile segment of the National Trails Highway (NTH), also known as California Route 66 (Route 66) between Daggett to the west and the Mountain Springs Road Exit on Interstate 40 (I-40) to the east. **Figure 1**, Regional Location Map and **Figure 2**, Project Location Map are on page 3. Thirty-one of the bridges along Route 66 in the project area were built between 1929 and 1935, and two bridges were built in 1953 and 1997, respectively; many of the bridges have been in service beyond their design life and are showing signs of degradation. The purpose of the project is to improve safety and correct the structurally deficient bridges.

### **Proposed Project**

The proposed structures would be glulam timber stringer bridges with a transverse glulam deck. Bridge railings (approximately three feet, four inches tall from the deck surface) would consist of a modified timber guardrail system, attached to the transverse glulam deck and extended onto the roadway approaches. Deck seal would be applied to the bridges to protect the timber deck and stringers from water damage.

For abutment construction, timber or concrete piles would be driven in the ground approximately 50 feet deep, which would support the abutments and wingwalls. Timber lagging between the piles would be used to retain the embankment soils. A concrete deadman anchorage system, approximately one foot, six inches wide and one foot, six inches deep, would be constructed behind the abutments to restrain the abutment system. The concrete deadman would be buried in the soil approximately four to six feet deep from the roadway surface, behind the abutments, and connected to the piles with steel threaded rods. In addition, some bridges may require span additions to accommodate larger anticipated hydraulic flows, and to eliminate the current channel constrictions at bridge locations.

### **Construction Phasing and Staging**

Construction is expected to last approximately three months for each bridge and would be completed in phases. The County is considering one of two options for phasing during construction. The first option includes full closure of the bridges with traffic detoured away from the construction area via an alternate route, or by using a temporary bypass detour into the wash. Temporary signage and traffic control devices would be installed during construction to safely control traffic around the sites. The second option would require one lane on the NTH to remain open at all times, while one half of the bridge is constructed. Temporary signage and traffic control devices would be installed during construction to safely control traffic. Following construction, the temporary detours would be removed.

The exact locations of equipment staging areas are not known at this time; however, it is anticipated that equipment staging would occur along the existing roadway.



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**POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

As discussed in the Initial Study Checklist, the lead agency has determined that the project may have potentially significant impacts in the following areas, and these potential impacts will be analyzed in depth in the EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources

For each environmental area, the EIR will consider both temporary construction and permanent impacts. The EIR will also include a cumulative impact analysis of the project's impacts, in combination with other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. The EIR will include a discussion of alternatives and feasible mitigation measures to reduce or avoid potentially significant impacts.

Sincerely,



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Harold Zamora, P.E., Chief  
San Bernardino County Department of Public Works  
Environmental Management Division

**Attachment: Initial Study Checklist for the San Bernardino County Route 66 Bridge Replacement Project**

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**SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY**  
**INITIAL STUDY ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM**

This form and the description information in the application package constitute the contents of an Initial Study pursuant to County Guidelines under Ordinance 3040 and Section 15063 of the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

**PROJECT LABEL**

<b>APN:</b> Various
<b>Applicant:</b> San Bernardino County Department of Public Works
<b>Community:</b> Town of Daggett and Community of Essex
<b>Location:</b> 111-Mile Segment of California Route 66 (Route 66) Between Daggett and the Mountain Springs Road Exit on Interstate 40 (I-40)
<b>Project No:</b> FPN: RSTPL-5954(143), Advantage ID (0816000163)
<b>Staff:</b> Nancy Sansonetti, AICP
<b>Rep:</b> Same as Applicant
<b>Proposal:</b> Replace 32 Existing Bridges (including the Lengthening of 24 Bridges) and Rehabilitate One Existing Bridge

<b>USGS Quad:</b> Various
<b>T, R, Section:</b> Various
<b>Planning Area:</b> Desert Planning Region
<b>LUZD:</b> Various
<b>Overlays:</b> Airport Safety Review Area 3 (AR3) for the Barstow/Daggett County Airport, Wilderness Area, USFWS-Designated Desert Tortoise Critical Habitat, Desert Tortoise – Dense and Medium Populations

**PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Lead Agency:** San Bernardino County  
Department of Public Works  
825 East Third Street, Room 123  
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0835

**Contact Person:** Nancy Sansonetti

**Phone No:** (909) 387-8109      **Fax No:** (909) 387-7876

**Email:** [nancy.sansonetti@dpw.sbcounty.gov](mailto:nancy.sansonetti@dpw.sbcounty.gov)

**Project Sponsor:** San Bernardino County, Department of Public Works (Mervat Mikhail, Project Manager)

**Phone No:** (909) 387-7938      **Fax No:** (909) 387-8130

**Email:** [mmikhail@dpw.sbcounty.gov](mailto:mmikhail@dpw.sbcounty.gov)

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Introduction

The County of San Bernardino (County), in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), proposes to replace 32 existing bridges and rehabilitate one bridge along the 111-mile segment of the National Trails Highway (NTH), also known as California Route 66 (Route 66) between Daggett to the west and the Mountain Springs Road Exit on Interstate 40 (I-40) to the east (project). **Figure 1**, Regional Location Map is on page 9; and **Figure 2**, Project Location Map, is on page 11. The purpose of the project is to improve safety and correct structurally deficient bridges along Route 66.

### Existing Conditions

In the late 1800s, Route 66 was a dirt road used by wagons for exploration, prospecting, and mining ventures across the Mojave Desert (ECORP Consulting, Inc., 2015). In 1911, the County made improvements to the road, which opened the way for tourists traveling by automobile to use the roadway for visiting San Diego and San Francisco. Over the following years, traffic along the roadway (known then as National Old Trails Road) dramatically increased. In 1926, Route 66 was built along the National Old Trails Road alignment when the Bureau of Public Roads launched a numbered highway system in the United States (U.S.). In 1928, the State of California launched a major realignment and rebuilding program for Route 66. Many of the 33 bridges along Route 66 in the project area were built between 1929 and 1931 as part of this program.

The bridges are of various lengths and were constructed of timber trestle, with the exception of two bridges: Signal Ditch is a steel pipe culvert, and Blossom Ditch is a concrete slab bridge. Many of the bridges have been in service beyond their design life and are showing signs of degradation. The term, “bridges,” used in this report also applies to those structures under 20 feet, since they behave like a bridge structure and not like a culvert, which is typically assigned to pipes and box structures.

### Proposed Project

The project includes the replacement of up to 32 existing bridges and the rehabilitation of one bridge along the 111-mile segment of the NTH in San Bernardino County between Daggett to the west and the Mountain Springs Road Exit on I-40 to the east (see **Table 1**). Some bridges may also require span additions to accommodate larger anticipated hydraulic flows, and to eliminate the current channel constrictions at bridge locations. The area with the largest potential for disturbance has been used for the purpose of environmental analysis.

**Table 1: List of Bridges**

Bridge Name	Location	State Bridge Number	Local Bridge Number	Year Built	Bridge Type	Existing Structure	Maximum Proposed Structure	Creek Improvements
Signal Ditch	0.6 mile east of Daggett-Yermo Road	54C0117	4	1997	Pipe Culvert	9.5-foot long by 80-foot wide (1 span)	41-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Green Ditch	0.21 mile east of Rock Camp Road	54C0118	5	1929	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28.5-foot wide (1 span)	38-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Blue Ditch	0.70 mile east of Rock Camp Road	54C0119	6	1929	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 27.6-foot wide (1 span)	23-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Crest Ditch	1.04 miles east of Rock Camp Road	54C0120	7	1929	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 27.5-foot wide (1 span)	40-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Crimp Ditch	1.31 miles east of Rock Camp Road	54C0121	8	1929	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 27.5-foot wide (1 span)	23-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Ant Ditch	1.53 miles east of Rock Camp Road	54C0122	9	1929	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 27.2-foot wide (1 span)	23-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Powerline Ditch	1.74 miles east of Rock Camp Road	54C0123	10	1929	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 27.9-foot wide (1 span)	40-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Bloom Ditch	0.75 mile west of Hidden Springs Road	54C0145	11	1935	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28.3-foot wide (1 span)	23-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Blossom Ditch	0.32 mile west of Hidden Springs Road	54C0146	12	1953	Concrete Slab	20-foot long by 36-foot wide (1 span)	Rehabilitate Existing Bridge	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge

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Bridge Name	Location	State Bridge Number	Local Bridge Number	Year Built	Bridge Type	Existing Structure	Maximum Proposed Structure	Creek Improvements
Lake Ditch	1.0 mile west of Fort Cady Road	54C0147	13	1929	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28.3-foot wide (1 span)	23-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Palm Ditch	2.45 miles west of Fort Cady Road	54C0148	14	1929	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28.0-foot wide (1 span)	40-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Camp Ditch	6.40 miles west of Fort Cady Road	54C0149	15	1929	Timber Trestle	20-foot long by 28.5-foot wide (1 span)	40-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Lava Ditch	1.07 miles west of Hector Road	54C0138	16	1929	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 29.3-foot wide (1 span)	154-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Hector Wash	0.18 mile west of Hector Road	54C0139	17	1929	Timber Trestle	20-foot long by 28.8-foot wide (1 span)	41-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
East Hector Wash	0.68 mile east of Hector Road	54C0140	18	1929	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28.8-foot wide (1 span)	23-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Cloud Ditch	1.12 miles east of Hector Road	54C0141	19	1929	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 29.0-foot wide (1 span)	59-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Mountain Wash	8.5 miles east of Hector Road	54C0142	20	1929	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28-foot wide (1 span)	23-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Circle Ditch	2.16 miles east of Crucero Road	54C0156	28	1930	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28-foot wide (1 span)	59-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge

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Bridge Name	Location	State Bridge Number	Local Bridge Number	Year Built	Bridge Type	Existing Structure	Maximum Proposed Structure	Creek Improvements
Smoke Ditch	3.36 miles east of Crucero Road	54C0232	30	1930	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28-foot wide (1 span)	23-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Leaf Ditch	3.48 miles east of Crucero Road	54C0233	31	1930	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28-foot wide (1 span)	40-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Olive Ditch	3.99 miles east of Crucero Road	54C0235	33	1930	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28-foot wide (1 span)	60-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Travelers Wash	6.8 miles east of Crucero Road	54C0238	36	1930	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 26.1-foot wide (1 span)	40-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Retiro Ditch	17.77 miles east of Crucero Road	54C0253	50	1930	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28-foot wide (1 span)	59-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Cereza Ditch	18.67 miles east of Crucero Road	54C0255	52	1930	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28.1-foot wide (1 span)	59-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Banta Ditch	18.89 miles east of Crucero Road	54C0256	53	1930	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28-foot wide (1 span)	40-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Ballona Ditch	19.41 miles east of Crucero Road	54C0257	54	1930	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28-foot wide (1 span)	78-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Emden Ditch	19.95 miles east of Crucero Road	54C0258	55	1930	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28-foot wide (1 span)	59-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge

## SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY Route 66 Bridge Replacement Project

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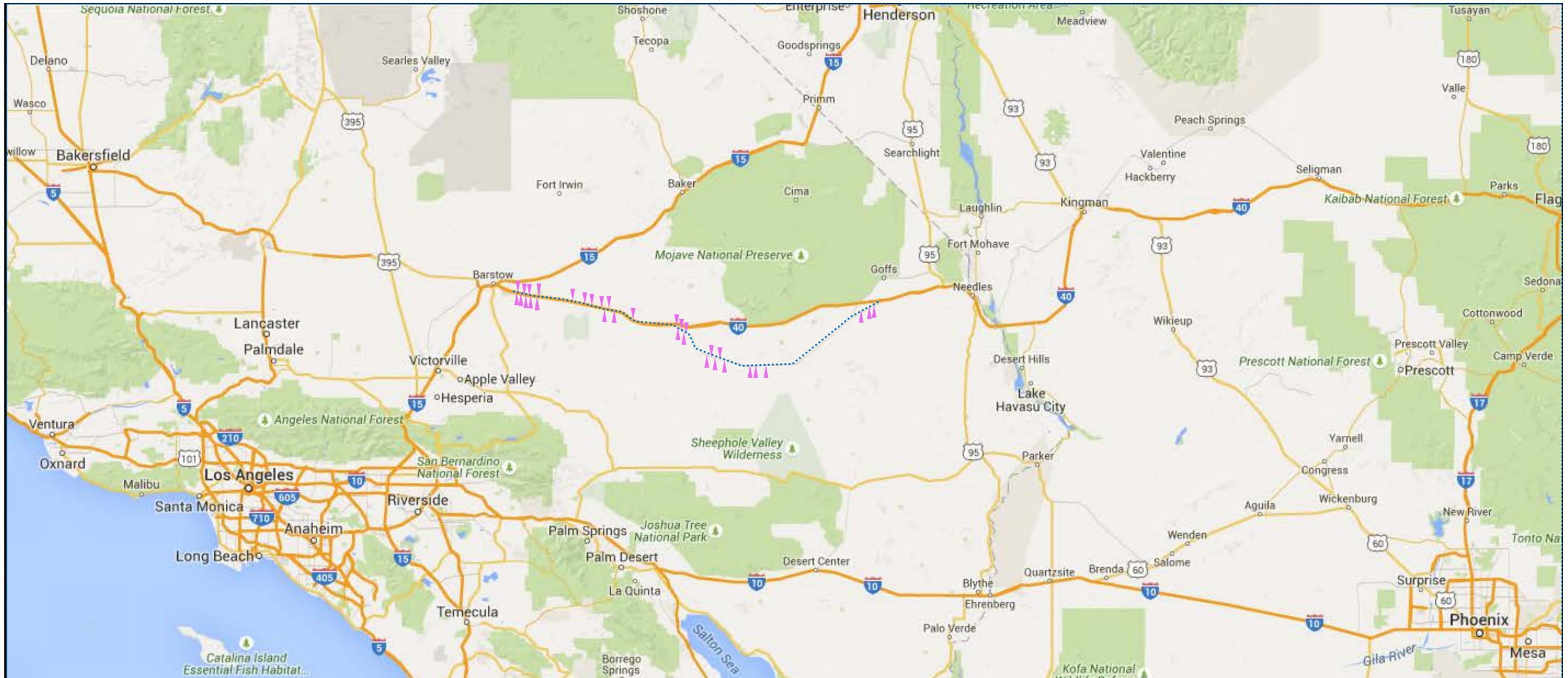
May 2016

Bridge Name	Location	State Bridge Number	Local Bridge Number	Year Built	Bridge Type	Existing Structure	Maximum Proposed Structure	Creek Improvements
Amboy Ditch	0.97 miles east of Amboy Road	54C0274	70	1930	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 27.9-foot wide (1 span)	59-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Saltworks Ditch	2.62 miles east of Amboy Road	54C0278	74	1930	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28-foot wide (1 span)	59-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Mound Ditch	0.55 mile east of Kelbaker Road	54C0283	79	1930	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 27.2-foot wide (1 span)	40-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Arillo Wash	3.28 miles east of Goffs Road	54C0334	130	1931	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28-foot wide (1 span)	40-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Falkirk Ditch	9.88 miles east of Goffs Road	54C0341	137	1931	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28-foot wide (1 span)	40-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge
Exline Ditch	9.82 miles east of Goffs Road	54C0342	138	1931	Timber Trestle	21-foot long by 28.2-foot wide (1 span)	59-feet by 37-foot wide	RSP at both abutments and entire length of creek under the bridge

Source: BCA Structural Engineering, Inc., 2015

Notes: RSP = Rock Slope Protection

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**Legend**



**Project Location**



**Project Length**

Source: Google Maps, 2015

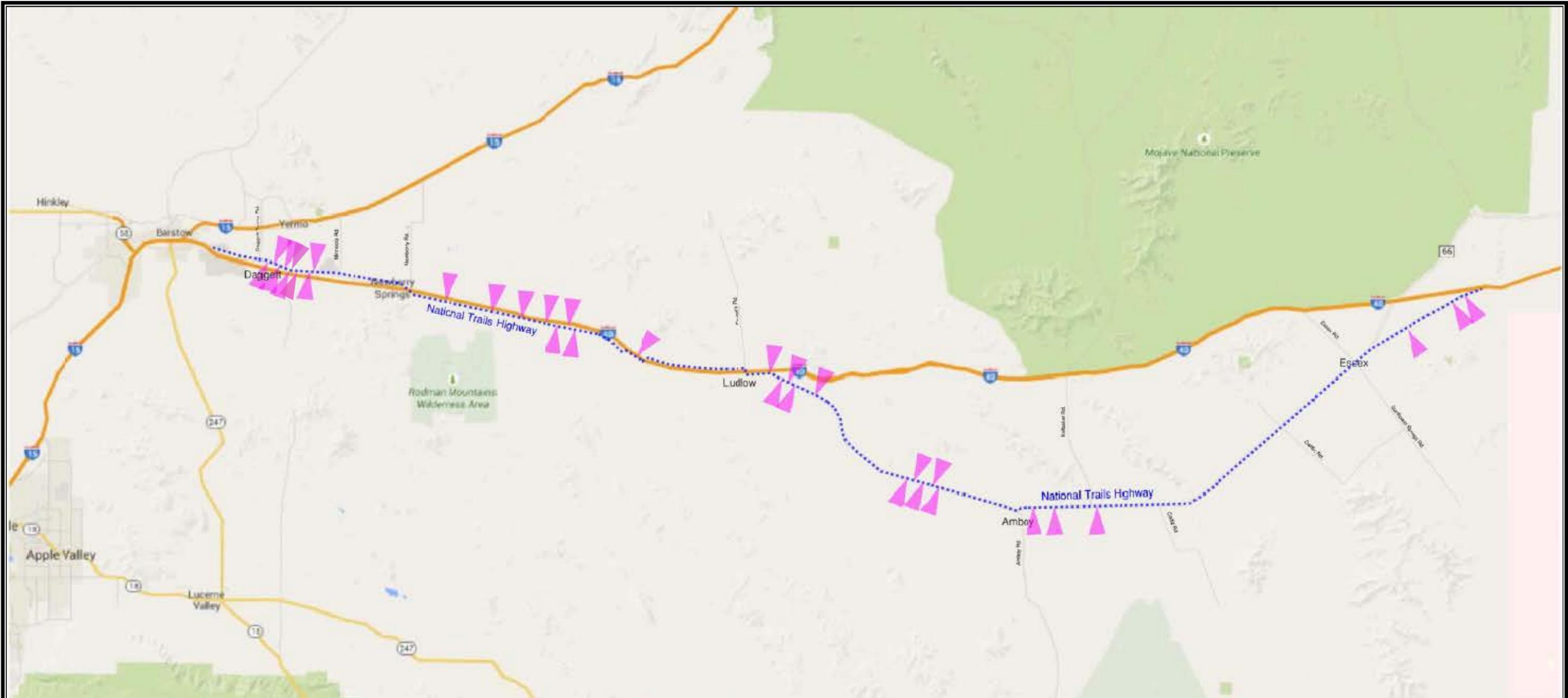
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**FIGURE 1. REGIONAL LOCATION MAP**  
**San Bernardino County Route 66 Bridge Replacement Project**



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**Legend**

 Project Location

 Project Length



**FIGURE 2. PROJECT LOCATION MAP**  
**San Bernardino County Route 66 Bridge Replacement Project**



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The proposed structures would be glulam timber stringer bridges with a transverse glulam deck. Bridge railings, proposed at approximately three feet, four inches tall from the deck surface, would consist of a modified timber guardrail system attached to the transverse glulam deck, and extended onto the roadway approaches. Deck seal would be applied to the bridges to protect the timber deck and stringers (i.e., longitudinal support members) from water damage. Some utilities may be relocated prior to construction; however, utility services in the project would continue during construction. The County may assume operations of the utilities in a franchise agreement with Caltrans.

All construction methods and design plans for the project would be implemented in accordance with the NTH Programmatic Agreement (PA). The PA is anticipated to be finalized and accepted by Fall 2016.

### **Construction Methods**

Construction is expected to last approximately three months for each bridge and would be completed in phases. It is not clear at this time how the bridges would be grouped for construction; therefore, construction timing is unknown. The bridge replacement schedule and order will be determined by the County at a later date.

For abutment construction, timber or concrete piles would be driven in the ground approximately 50 feet deep, which would support the abutments and wingwalls. Timber lagging between the piles would be used to retain the embankment soils. A concrete deadman anchorage system, approximately one foot, six inches wide and one foot, six inches deep, would be constructed behind the abutments to restrain the abutment system. The concrete deadman would be buried in the soil approximately four to six feet deep from the roadway surface, behind the abutments, and connected to the piles with steel threaded rods.

Covered Rock Slope Protection (RSP) would be constructed along both abutments, and would extend approximately 50 feet upstream and 50 feet downstream of the bridge. Excavation required to place the rock would be approximately 10 feet below the existing finished grade. Creek material would be removed and replaced with RSP to maintain the hydraulic profile.

The County is considering one of two options for phasing during construction. The first option includes full closure of the bridges with traffic detoured away from the construction area via an alternate route, or by using a temporary bypass detour into the wash. Temporary signage and traffic control devices would be installed during construction to safely control traffic around the sites. The second option would require one lane on the NTH to remain open at all times, while one half of the bridge is constructed. Temporary signage and traffic control devices would be installed during construction to safely control traffic. Following construction, the temporary detours would be removed.

The exact locations of equipment staging areas are not known at this time; however, it is anticipated that equipment staging would occur along the existing roadway.

**ENVIRONMENTAL/EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS**

Existing land use and zoning designations for the project area and surrounding areas are included in **Table 2**. The project includes the replacement and/or rehabilitation of existing bridges along a remote 111-mile segment of the NTH in San Bernardino County. This segment of the NTH includes very few residential and commercial land uses. The primary population centers along the NTH include the town of Daggett (total population of 632), the community of Newberry Springs (population of 2,895), and the community of Essex (total population of 65).

**Table 2: Existing Land Use and Zoning**

Area	Existing Land Use	Zoning District/Overlay
Project Area	Undeveloped Land, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional (Barstow-Daggett Airport)	RC (Resource Conservation) RL (Rural Living) RL-5 (Rural Living-5 Acre Minimum) RM (Multiple Residential) CG (General Commercial) CH (Highway Commercial) CN (Neighborhood Commercial) IR (Regional Industrial) IC (Community Industrial) IN (Institutional) AG (Agriculture) FW (Floodway)
North	Undeveloped Land, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional (Barstow-Daggett Airport)	RC (Resource Conservation) RL (Rural Living) RL-5 (Rural Living-5 Acre Minimum) RM (Multiple Residential) CG (General Commercial) CH (Highway Commercial) CN (Neighborhood Commercial) IR (Regional Industrial) IC (Community Industrial) IN (Institutional) AG (Agriculture) FW (Floodway)
South	Undeveloped Land, Residential, Commercial, and Industrial	RC (Resource Conservation) RL (Rural Living) RL-5 (Rural Living-5 Acre Minimum)

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		RM (Multiple Residential) CG (General Commercial) CH (Highway Commercial) CN (Neighborhood Commercial) IR (Regional Industrial) IC (Community Industrial) FW (Floodway)
East	Undeveloped Land, Residential, Commercial, and Industrial	RC (Resource Conservation) RL (Rural Living) RL-5 (Rural Living-5 Acre Minimum) RM (Multiple Residential) CG (General Commercial) CH (Highway Commercial) CN (Neighborhood Commercial) IR (Regional Industrial) IC (Community Industrial)
West	Undeveloped Land, Residential, Commercial, and Industrial	RC (Resource Conservation) RL (Rural Living) RL-5 (Rural Living-5 Acre Minimum) RM (Multiple Residential) CG (General Commercial) CH (Highway Commercial) CN (Neighborhood Commercial) IR (Regional Industrial) IC (Community Industrial)

**OTHER PERMITS AND APPROVALS**

Federal:

- Clean Water Act (CWA), Section 404 Permit, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- CWA, Section 401 Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirement, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and Colorado River RWQCB
- CWA, Section 402 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit and Caltrans Statewide Permit
- Federal Endangered Species Act, Section 7 Consultation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Section 106 Compliance, State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)

State of California:

- California Department of Fish and Game Code, Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

Local:

- Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD), Rule 403.2, Dust Control Plan (if construction/demolition would require disturbance of 100 or more acres)

## EVALUATION FORMAT

This Initial Study has been prepared in compliance with CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq., and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Title 14 Section 15000, et seq.). Specifically, the preparation of this Initial Study has been guided by Section 15063 of the State CEQA Guidelines. As discussed in the following Initial Study Checklist, the project has been evaluated based upon its effects on 18 major categories of environmental factors. Each environmental factor is reviewed by responding to a series of questions regarding the impact of the project. For each question, the effect of the project is categorized into one of the following four categories of possible determinations:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Substantiation is then provided to justify each determination. One of the following four impact conclusions is then provided as a summary of the analysis for each of the major environmental factors.

1. **No Impacts.** No impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.
2. **Less Than Significant Impacts.** No significant impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.
3. **Less Than Significant Impacts with Mitigation.** Potentially significant impacts have been identified or anticipated; however, with the incorporation of mitigation measures, potential impacts would be reduced to a level that is less than significant. The EIR will propose appropriate mitigation measures and will evaluate the expected effectiveness of the measures in reducing the potential significance of the impact.
4. **Potentially Significant Impacts.** Potentially significant impacts have been identified or anticipated, and will be evaluated in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

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May 2016

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### ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by the project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

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

### DETERMINATION (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation, the following finding is made:

- The proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions to the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- The proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- The proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (Harold Zamora, P.E., Chief)

5/19/2016  
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Date

**I. AESTHETICS**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION** (Check  if the project is located within the view-shed of any Scenic Route listed in the General Plan)

**I a) *Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** A scenic vista is a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape for the benefit of the general public. A substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista is one that would degrade the view from a designated view spot. Scenic vistas that are visible from within the project area include expansive views of undeveloped land with rolling hills in the distance. The project area is located along Route 66, which is a Scenic Route listed in the County’s General Plan. According to the County’s General Plan, a “Scenic Route” is a roadway that has scenic vistas and other scenic and aesthetic qualities that over time have been found to add beauty to the county.

The bridge replacements and rehabilitation would be designed to maintain or complement the aesthetic appearance of the surroundings, and would not be expected to result in noticeable visual changes during project operation. Any impacts on scenic vistas would be expected to be minimal because the project does not include the construction of new structures or any tall, vertical elements that could block existing views. Though some of the bridges may be lengthened, it is not anticipated that the lengthening would be visible the roadway. During construction, vehicles, equipment, and materials may be staged adjacent to the project area, and may temporarily block views of scenic vistas; however, these

impacts would be short-term and temporary, and would not be expected to be substantial because views would be restored to existing conditions following construction. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**I b) *Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Many state highways are located in areas of outstanding natural beauty. California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the Legislature in 1963; the purpose of the program is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. A highway may be designated scenic depending upon how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view.

The project area includes trees and other scenic resources (such as expansive views of open space and distant hills); in addition, Route 66 could be considered a scenic resource because it is eligible for listing in the NRHP and is a Scenic Route listed in the County's General Plan. However, Route 66 is not a state scenic highway. Although the project would require vegetation removal, no tree removal would be required. The bridge replacements and rehabilitation would be designed to maintain or complement the aesthetic appearance of the surroundings, and would not be expected to result in noticeable visual changes during project operation. Any impacts on scenic resources would be expected to be minimal because the project does not include the construction of new structures or any tall, vertical elements that could block existing views. Though some of the bridges may be lengthened, it is not anticipated that the lengthening would be visible from the roadway. During construction, vehicles, equipment, and materials may be staged adjacent to the project area, and may temporarily block views of scenic resources; however, these impacts would be short-term and temporary, and would not be expected to be substantial because views would be restored to existing conditions following construction. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**I c) *Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?***

**Potentially Significant Impact.** The project area is located along a remote 111-mile segment of the NTH. The visual character in the project area can generally be described as a rural highway surrounded by mostly open space with a few isolated areas of rural residential, commercial, and industrial development. The visual quality of the project area and its surroundings would generally be considered high because of the wide expanses of open space that provide pleasing views of the natural landscape (which includes a relatively flat, desert environment with scattered shrubs in the forefront, and sparsely vegetated rolling hills in the distance).

Existing viewers in the project area include drivers in vehicles along the roadway, and residents, employees, and visitors in the relatively few residential, commercial, and industrial developments adjacent to the roadway. In general, most of the viewers within and surrounding the project area would

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be expected to be highly sensitive to visual impacts because of the undeveloped nature of the project area, which would make new or altered visual elements highly noticeable.

The project would include rehabilitating and replacing bridges that are considered historical resources under CEQA, and could therefore result in substantial changes to the visual character of the historical resources. During construction, vehicles, equipment, and materials may be staged adjacent to the project area, and may temporarily degrade visual character and quality. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant.

**I d) *Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Existing sources of light and glare in the project area include vehicles on the roadway (from headlights at night, and sun reflecting off vehicles during the day), and nighttime lighting from buildings within the relatively few residential, commercial, and industrial developments adjacent to the roadway. The bridge replacements and rehabilitation would be designed to maintain or complement the aesthetic appearance of the surroundings, and would not result in additional sources of light or glare during project operation. During construction, vehicles, equipment, and materials may be staged adjacent to the project area, and may temporarily result in additional glare. The project would comply with the County's Development Code, which limits construction to the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and prohibits construction on Sundays and federal holidays. Although construction would be limited to the hours specified in the County's Development Code, sunset may occur prior to 7 p.m. depending on the month of construction; therefore, some construction activities may require lighting. Construction impacts would be short-term and temporary, and would not be expected to be substantial because the levels of light and glare would be restored to existing conditions following construction. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**Potentially Significant Impacts.** Potentially significant impacts have been identified or anticipated, and will be evaluated in an EIR.

**II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
<p>In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:</p>				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland) as shown on 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"/>
b) Conflict with an existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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"/>
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"/>

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	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	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 land?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION** (Check  if the project is located in the Important Farmlands Overlay)

**II a) *Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland) as shown on maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?***

**No Impact.** As defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Prime Farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. Unique farmland is land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high-value food and fiber crops, such as citrus, tree nuts, olives, cranberries, and other fruits and vegetables. In some areas, land that does not meet the criteria for Prime or Unique Farmland is considered to be Farmland of Statewide Importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops.

The project is not located in the Important Farmlands Overlay Zone, as shown on the County’s Zoning Map. The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts on California’s agricultural resources. According to the County’s Important Farmland Map produced by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the project area is designated as Urban and Built-Up Land (land occupied by building structures with a building density of at least one unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately six structures to a 10-acre parcel) and Other Land (land not included in any other mapping category; vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as other land) (California Department of Conservation, 2015). There is no Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance in the project area; therefore, there would be no impact.

**II b) *Would the project conflict with an existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?***

**No Impact.** The County’s Zoning Map divides the county into zoning districts with permitted and conditionally permitted land uses in each district. There is one parcel zoned for agricultural use in the project area on the County’s Zoning Map (San Bernardino County, 2015b). However, the project would

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include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges. The project would not require changes in existing land uses or zoning in the project area, and no zoning conflicts would result from the project.

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. There is no land under a Williamson Act contract in the project area (California Department of Conservation, 2015). Therefore, there would be no impact.

**II c) *Would the project 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))?***

**No Impact.** The project area is in a desert environment and is dominated by shrubs and grasses. There are scattered trees in the project area; however, there is no forest land (i.e. land with 10 percent tree coverage, as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)) or timberland (i.e., land that is available for growing a crop of trees intended for commercial use, as defined in Public Resources Code Section 4526); therefore, there would be no impact.

**II d) *Would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?***

**No Impact.** The project area is in a desert environment, and there is no forest land or land set aside for the cultivation of trees in or surrounding the project area. Therefore, there would be no impact.

#### **IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**No Impacts.** No impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

### III. AIR QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions, which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION** (Discuss conformity with the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management Plan, if applicable)

**III a) *Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?***

**Potentially Significant Impact.** The Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA) requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for criteria pollutants, which are ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>), fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), and lead. Under the California Clean Air Act (CCAA), the California Air Resources Board (CARB) requires that each local air district prepare and maintain an air quality management plan to achieve compliance with California Ambient Air Quality

Standards (CAAQS). These standards are generally more stringent and apply to more pollutants than the NAAQS (i.e., visibility reducing particulates, hydrogen sulfide, and sulfates).

California is divided geographically into air basins for the purpose of managing air quality at the regional level. The project area is located in the Mojave Desert Air Basin and is under the jurisdiction of the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD). The U.S. EPA and CARB have designated the MDAQMD as a non-attainment area for the federal and state O<sub>3</sub> and state PM<sub>10</sub> standards (Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District, 2009). For the remaining criteria pollutants, the MDAQMD is either an attainment or unclassified area. In accordance with the FCAA and CCAA, the MDAQMD has adopted a variety of air quality plans to reduce emissions of criteria pollutants and achieve compliance with the NAAQS and CAAQS.

Existing air pollutant sources in the project area include emissions from vehicles on the roadway. During operation, the project would not result in additional pollutant sources because the number of lanes on the bridges would remain the same, which would maintain the capacity of the bridges and the number of vehicles on the roadway. During construction, the principal sources of pollutant emissions would be fugitive dust and engine exhaust from construction equipment. Fugitive dust would be created during site clearing, excavation, and grading; vehicle travel on paved and unpaved surfaces; and material blown from unprotected graded surfaces. Stationary or mobile-powered on-site construction equipment would include trucks, tractors, signal boards, excavators, backhoes, concrete saws, graders, trenchers, pavers, and other paving equipment. Mobile emissions could also result from the additional miles that vehicles may need to travel on temporary detour routes.

Construction emissions would be short-term and intermittent; however, daily thresholds shown in **Table 3** could be exceeded, depending on the amount of construction equipment being used at a given time, and if construction of the bridges would be completed simultaneously. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant.

**Table 3: Air Quality Thresholds of Significance**

Criteria Pollutant	Annual Threshold (tons)	Daily Threshold (pounds)
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	100	548
Oxides of Nitrogen (NO <sub>x</sub> )	25	137
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)	25	137
Oxides of Sulfur (SO <sub>x</sub> )	25	137
Particulate Matter (PM <sub>10</sub> )	15	82
Particulate Matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> )	15	82

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Hydrogen Sulfide (H <sub>2</sub> S)	10	54
Lead (Pb)	0.6	3

Source: Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District, 2009

**III b) *Would the project violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?***

**Potentially Significant Impact.** As stated in Response III a) above, applicable air quality standards in the project area include the NAAQS and CAAQS, and the project area is in a non-attainment area for the federal and state O<sub>3</sub> and state PM<sub>10</sub> standards. In addition to these standards, the MDAQMD has several rules that include standards for visible emissions, nuisance, fugitive dust control, and particulate matter.

Existing air pollutant sources in the project area include emissions from vehicles on the roadway. During operation, the project would not result in additional pollutant sources because the number of lanes on the bridges would remain the same, which would maintain the capacity of the bridges and the number of vehicles on the roadway. During construction, the principal sources of pollutant emissions would be fugitive dust and engine exhaust from construction equipment. Mobile emissions could also result from the additional miles that vehicles may need to travel on temporary detour routes.

Construction emissions would be short-term and intermittent, and would comply with applicable MDAQMD rules and standards, including Rule 401 (Visible Emissions), Rule 402 (Nuisance), Rule 403 (Fugitive dust), and Rule 404 (Particulate Matter – Concentration). However, daily thresholds shown in **Table 3** could be exceeded, depending on the amount of construction equipment being used at a given time, and if construction of the bridges would be completed simultaneously. Therefore, the project could contribute to the existing non-attainment status for the NAAQS and CAAQS, and impacts would be potentially significant.

**III c) *Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions, which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?***

**Potentially Significant Impact.** Cumulative impacts refer to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. For air quality, the cumulative impact study area is the MDAQMD. As stated in Response III a) above, the MDAQMD is a non-attainment area for the federal and state O<sub>3</sub> and state PM<sub>10</sub> standards. Existing air pollutant sources in the MDAQMD include gasoline- and diesel-powered motor vehicles, such as cars, trucks, trains and boats; factories; power plants; and construction activities (e.g., ground disturbance that releases dust). Existing air pollutant sources in the project area include emissions from vehicles on the roadway.

During operation, the project would not result in additional pollutant sources because the number of lanes on the bridges would remain the same, which would maintain the capacity of the bridges and the

number of vehicles on the roadway. During construction, the principal sources of pollutant emissions would be fugitive dust and engine exhaust from construction equipment. Engine exhaust may include the O<sub>3</sub> precursors, volatile organic compounds (VOC) and oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>), which can combine to form O<sub>3</sub> in the presence of sunlight. Mobile emissions could also result from the additional miles that vehicles may need to travel on temporary detour routes.

Construction emissions would be short-term and intermittent, and would comply with applicable MDAQMD rules and standards, including Rule 401 (Visible Emissions), Rule 402 (Nuisance), Rule 403 (Fugitive dust), and Rule 404 (Particulate Matter – Concentration). However, daily thresholds shown in **Table 3** could be exceeded, depending on the amount of construction equipment being used at a given time, and if construction of the bridges would be completed simultaneously. Therefore, the project's contribution to criteria pollutant emissions in the MDAQMD, including O<sub>3</sub> precursors, could be cumulatively considerable. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant.

**III d) *Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Air quality sensitive receptors are those members of the population that are most sensitive to air emissions, including children, the elderly, and the acutely and chronically ill. Sensitive receptors are often found in residences, schools, daycare centers, playgrounds, and medical facilities; therefore, if these land uses are in proximity to the project area, there could be sensitive receptors nearby with potential to be affected by the project. The project area is located along a remote 111-mile segment of the NTH and is surrounded by mostly undeveloped land; however, there are some areas along the highway that are adjacent to residential development, such as the town of Daggett and the communities of Newberry Springs and Essex. In addition, Calico High School and Daggett Middle School are adjacent to Route 66 near the project area. Therefore, there are sensitive receptors in proximity to the project area.

During operation, the project would not result in additional pollutant sources because the number of lanes on the bridges would remain the same, which would maintain the capacity of the bridges and the number of vehicles on the roadway; therefore, project operation would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollution concentrations. Construction emissions would be short-term and intermittent, and with compliance with applicable MDAQMD rules and standards, including Rule 401 (Visible Emissions), Rule 402 (Nuisance), Rule 403 (Fugitive dust), and Rule 404 (Particulate Matter – Concentration), the project would not result in the exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**III e) *Would the project create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The project area is located along a remote 111-mile segment of the NTH; however, there are some areas along the highway that are surrounded by commercial, residential, and industrial development, such as the town of Daggett and the communities of Newberry Springs and Essex. Project construction equipment and activities, including diesel exhaust emissions and paving operations, would generate odors. There could be situations where construction activity odors would be

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noticeable by persons working at or visiting nearby facilities, but these odors would be typical of common construction activities and would not be expected to be objectionable by a substantial number of people. In addition, these odors would be temporary and would dissipate rapidly from the source with an increase in distance. Long-term odors would be the same as for existing conditions; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**Potentially Significant Impacts.** Potentially significant impacts have been identified or anticipated, and will be evaluated in an EIR.

**IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Have substantial adverse effects, 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 United States Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or United States Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (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"/>
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local polices or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION** (Check if the project is located in the Biological Resources Overlay or contains habitat for any species listed in the California Natural Diversity Database )

**IV a) *Would the project have substantial adverse effects, 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 United States Fish and Wildlife Service?***

**Potentially Significant Impact.** Candidate species are species that are under review for protection under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) or the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). Sensitive and special status species include federally or state listed endangered or threatened species protected under FESA and CESA, federal species of concern, state species of special concern, rare plants as defined under the California Native Plant Protection Act, migratory birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), bats protected under the California Fish and Game Code, and other species designated as sensitive by local, state, and federal agencies.

The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) is managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and is a program that inventories sensitive and special status species in California. According to the CNDDDB, there is potential for multiple candidate species, federally and state listed threatened and endangered species, state species of special concern, and rare plants to be in the project area based on geographical range. In addition, a portion of the project area near the community of Essex runs through USFWS-designated critical habitat for the federally and state threatened desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*).

As defined by FESA, critical habitat is a specific geographic area that contains features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management and protection. Critical habitat may include an area that is not currently occupied by the species, but that will be needed for its recovery. Under Section 7 of FESA, federal agencies are required to consult with the USFWS on actions they carry out, fund, or authorize to ensure that their actions will not destroy or adversely modify critical habitat. In this way, a critical habitat designation protects areas that are necessary for the conservation of the species. Because there is critical habitat for the desert tortoise in

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the project area, formal consultation with the USFWS under Section 7 of FESA is anticipated for the project.

There are also trees and vegetation in the project area that could provide habitat for nesting birds. In addition, swallows or other nesting birds could nest in the existing bridges. Some of the bridges in the project area may be tall enough to provide sufficient vertical distance for bats to fly out from below the bridges; therefore, there is potential for bats to be in the project area.

For some of the bridges in the project area, project operation would not be expected to result in substantial impacts on candidate, sensitive, or special status species because the project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have a similar design and would serve the same function. However, some of the bridges may be lengthened, which could result in additional disturbed areas.

Construction activities associated with the project would include demolishing and replacing the existing bridges. Although the project would require vegetation removal, no tree removal would be required. Temporary noise-generating activities, such as demolition of the existing bridges and construction of the new bridges, could result in temporary indirect impacts on candidate, sensitive, or special status species, if the activities are loud enough to cause disturbance. Tree and vegetation removal could result in direct impacts on migratory birds and raptors if these activities are conducted while birds are nesting within or adjacent to the affected areas. Swallows or other nesting birds and bats could be directly impacted if they are on the bridge structures during construction. In addition, equipment staging or other construction activities could result in the direct disturbance of candidate, sensitive, or special status species or their habitats. Construction may require lighting, which could also disturb protected species.

Given the size of the project area, which includes a 111-mile segment of the NTH, the project could result in substantial adverse effects on candidate, sensitive, and special status species. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant.

**IV b) *Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or United States Fish and Wildlife Service?***

**Potentially Significant Impact.** Riparian habitat refers to trees, other vegetation, and physical features normally found on the banks and floodplains of rivers, streams, and other bodies of fresh water. All of the waterways in the project area are seasonal washes that are inundated only briefly during storm events, and do not sustain flows for a sufficient length of time to form the conditions required for riparian vegetation. Therefore, no riparian habitat is expected to be in the project area.

According to the CNDDDB, there are no designated sensitive natural communities in the project area; however, there is potential for multiple candidate species, federally and state listed threatened and endangered species, state species of special concern, and rare plants to be in the project area based on geographical range. In addition, a portion of the project area near the community of Essex runs through USFWS-designated critical habitat for the federally and state threatened desert tortoise. Critical habitat

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generally includes the physical and biological features needed for life processes and successful reproduction of a threatened or endangered species. These features may include:

- Space for individual and population growth and for normal behavior;
- Cover or shelter;
- Food, water, air, light, minerals, or other nutritional or physiological requirements;
- Sites for breeding and rearing offspring; and
- Habitats that are protected from disturbances or are representative of the historic geographical and ecological distributions of a species.

Desert tortoises are found in yucca communities, such as Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia*) and Mojave yucca (*Yucca schidigera*) communities, creosote bush (*Larrea tridentate*) and desert saltbush (*Atriplex polycarpa*) scrub habitats, and in some ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*) and creosote bush habitats (Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, 1993). The project area is located along a remote 111-mile segment of the NTH where there is limited development and where there is critical habitat for the desert tortoise. Therefore, there is potential for sensitive natural communities associated with the desert tortoise to be in the project area.

For some of the bridges in the project area, project operation would not be expected to result in any impacts on sensitive natural communities because the project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have a similar design and would serve the same function. However, some of the bridges may be lengthened, which could result in additional disturbed areas. In addition, construction noise, vegetation removal, equipment staging, or other construction activities could result in the direct disturbance of sensitive natural communities. Given the size of the project area, which includes a 111-mile segment of the NTH, potential effects could be substantial and adverse. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant.

**IV c) *Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?***

**No Impact.** Section 404 of the Clean Water Act defines wetlands as “areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.” The National Wetlands Inventory of the USFWS provides information on the characteristics, extent, and status of wetlands and deepwater habitats in the U.S. The USFWS National Wetlands Inventory Mapper identifies riverine waters within the project area; however, no wetland vegetation was observed during field surveys conducted for the project. In addition, all of the waterways in the project area are seasonal washes that are inundated only briefly during storm events, and do not sustain flows for a sufficient length of time to form hydric soils (i.e., soils formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or

ponding) required for hydrophytic plants (i.e., aquatic plants). The project area does not appear to have the necessary conditions to meet the definition of wetlands under Section 404 of the Clean Water; therefore, there would be no impacts.

**IV d) *Would the project 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?***

**Potentially Significant Impact.** According to the CNDDDB, there is potential for a variety of resident and migratory wildlife species to be in the project area based on geographical range. In addition, a portion of the project area near the community of Essex runs through USFWS-designated critical habitat for the federally and state threatened desert tortoise. There are also trees and vegetation in the project area that could provide habitat for nesting birds. In addition, swallows or other nesting birds could nest in the existing bridges. Some of the bridges in the project area may be tall enough to provide sufficient vertical distance for bats to fly out from below the bridges; therefore, there is potential for bats to be in the project area. The project area is located along a remote 111-mile segment of the NTH, and portions of the project area are designated as a Wilderness Area in the County's General Plan (San Bernardino County, 2007). Given the remote nature of the project area, there is potential for native resident or migratory wildlife movement, and native wildlife nursery sites to be in the project area.

Wildlife corridors are defined as areas that connect suitable wildlife habitat areas in a region otherwise fragmented by rugged terrain, changes in vegetation, or human disturbance. A wildlife corridor is generally represented by a linear patch of habitat that provides a connection between two core areas of the same habitat, allowing for the large-scale movement of species within their native habitats. Natural features such as canyon drainages, ridgelines, or areas with vegetation cover provide corridors for wildlife travel. Wildlife corridors are important because they provide access to mates, food, and water; allow the dispersal of individuals away from high population density areas; and facilitate the exchange of genetic traits between populations. The project area is not identified in the County's General Plan as a Wildlife Corridor (San Bernardino County, 2007). In addition, the project area is in a remote area that is not substantially fragmented by natural or human activities; therefore, while there is potential for wildlife movement in the project area, it is unlikely that there are any wildlife corridors in the project area.

For most of the bridges in the project area, project operation would not be expected to result in any impacts on native resident or migratory wildlife species movement, or native wildlife nursery sites because the project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have a similar design and would serve the same function. However, some of the bridges may be lengthened, which could result in additional disturbed areas. In addition, construction noise, vegetation removal, equipment staging, or other construction activities could interfere with wildlife species movement, or could impede the use of wildlife nursery sites. Given the size of the project area, which includes a 111-mile segment of the NTH, potential impacts could be substantial. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant.

**IV e) *Would the project conflict with any local polices or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Chapter 88.01 (Plant Protection and Management) of the County's Development Code includes provisions to protect native trees and plants and to regulate removal activities (San Bernardino County, 2015a). The chapter includes a list of regulated trees and desert native plants that are prohibited from being removed, except under a Tree or Plant Removal Permit in compliance with Section 88.01.050 (Tree or Plant Removal Permits).

The County's General Plan, Conservation Element also includes policies to preserve the unique environmental features and natural resources of the desert region, including native wildlife and vegetation (San Bernardino County, 2014). The policies require retention of existing native vegetation for development projects, and focused biological resources surveys and a desert tortoise protocol surveys per USFWS requirements for development in areas within the County Biological Resources Overlay for desert tortoise.

According to the CNDDDB, there is potential for desert native plants to be in the project area. In addition, a portion of the project area near the community of Essex runs through USFWS-designated critical habitat for the federally and state threatened desert tortoise; this portion of the project area is designated within the County Biological Resources Overlay as USFWS-designated desert tortoise habitat, and some portions of the project area are designated as having medium and dense populations of desert tortoise.

For some of the bridges in the project area, project operation would not be expected to result in any conflicts with local polices or ordinances protecting biological resources, because the project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have a similar design and would serve the same function. However, some of the bridges may be lengthened, which could result in additional disturbed areas. Project construction may require the removal of desert native plants; therefore, a Tree or Plant Removal Permit would be required in compliance with the County's Development Code. Because project construction would be completed in areas within the County Biological Resources Overlay for desert tortoise, focused biological resources surveys and a desert tortoise protocol surveys per USFWS requirements will be conducted for the project in compliance with the County's General Plan. With compliance with the County's Development Code and General Plan, the project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**IV f) *Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** FESA and CESA prohibit the “take” of listed species through direct harm or habitat destruction.<sup>1</sup> Under Section 10 of FESA and Section 2081 of CESA, incidental take permits may be issued to private, non-federal entities undertaking otherwise lawful projects that might result in the take of listed species, as long as certain conditions are met. A Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is a planning document required as part of an incidental take permit application under FESA to ensure that the anticipated take of a listed species will be minimized or mitigated. A Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) is a planning document under the Natural Community Conservation Planning Act (California Fish and Game Code, Section 2800) to ensure the regional protection of multiple species and their habitats, while allowing compatible and appropriate development and growth.

The project area is located in the planning area for a joint NCCP/HCP, the *Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan* (California Energy Commission, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2014). However, while the plan includes a discussion of maintenance activities along the NTH, this plan is not applicable to the project because the plan applies to the permitting of renewable energy and transmission development projects, which are not elements of the bridge replacements or rehabilitation proposed as part of the project being discussed in this Initial Study Checklist.

The western portion of the project area is located in the planning area for the *West Mojave Plan*, which is an HCP that covers approximately 9 million acres of land in San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Kern, Riverside, and Inyo Counties (U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 2003). The purpose of the *West Mojave Plan* is to develop management strategies for the desert tortoise, Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*), and over 100 other sensitive plants and animals to conserve those species throughout the western Mojave Desert, while at the same time establishing a streamlined program for compliance with the regulatory requirements of FESA and CESA.

The *West Mojave Plan* includes a list of covered species, and minimization and mitigation measures for each species. There may be species in the project area that are covered under the *West Mojave Plan*, and project construction could result in potential impacts on those species and their habitat from construction noise, vegetation removal, equipment staging, and other activities. However, the project would be conducted in compliance with the minimization and mitigation measures in the *West Mojave Plan*, and would not conflict with the plan. Specific measures from the *West Mojave Plan* that are applicable to the project will be determined after further surveys and analysis are conducted during preparation of the EIR. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

## IMPACT CONCLUSION

**Potentially Significant Impacts.** Potentially significant impacts have been identified or anticipated, and will be evaluated in an EIR.

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<sup>1</sup> Under FESA, “take” means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. Under CESA, “take” means to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill.

**V. CULTURAL RESOURCES**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside formal cemeteries?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION** (Check if the project is located in the Cultural  or Paleontological  Resources overlays or cite results of cultural resource review)

***V a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?***

**Potentially Significant Impact.** Section (§) 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines defines a historical resource as a resource that 1) is listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register); 2) is included in a local register of historical resources or identified as significant in an historical resource survey; or 3) is determined by the lead agency to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California. The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register, not included in a local register of historical resources, or identified in an historical resources survey does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be a historical resource.

The California Register includes resources listed in or formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), as well as some California State Landmarks and Points of Historical Interest. In addition, properties of local significance that have been designated under a local

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preservation ordinance (local landmarks or landmark districts) or that have been identified in a local historical resources inventory may be eligible for listing in the California Register and are presumed to be significant resources for purposes of CEQA.

In October 2014, Caltrans determined that the 111-mile segment of the NTH from the town of Daggett to the Mountain Springs Road Exit on I-40, which includes the project area, is eligible for listing in the NRHP. Caltrans received concurrence on this determination from the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on November 25, 2014 (State Historic Preservation Officer, Carol Roland-Nawi, Ph.D., 2014). In addition, many of the bridges in the project area were built between 1929 and 1935 and were identified as eligible for listing in the NRHP as contributing elements to the NTH as an historic property (i.e., any property that is included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the NRHP, as defined in the NHPA). Dikes, drainage ditches, and other features along the roadway that were constructed either during the original construction of the present NTH (1929 to 1931) or within its period of significance, are also considered contributing elements on a case-by-case basis if they maintain sufficient integrity. Therefore, the 111-mile segment of NTH in the project area, the individual bridges, and some of the roadway features (if they maintain significant integrity) have been formally determined eligible for the NRHP and are included in the California Register; these resources meet the definition of an historical resource under §15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines.

The project would include rehabilitating and replacing bridges that are considered historical resources under CEQA, and would also include vegetation removal, equipment staging, and other construction activities along the NTH. Therefore, the project could result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5, and impacts would be potentially significant.

All construction methods and design plans for the project shall be implemented in accordance with the NTH PA. The PA is anticipated to be finalized and accepted by Fall 2016.

***V b) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?***

**Potentially Significant Impact.** An archaeological resource is any material remains of human life or activities that are at least 100 years of age, and that are of archaeological interest (Title 43, Part 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations). Under §15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines, a lead agency is required to determine if an archaeological resource meets the definition of a historical resource described in Response V a), or is a unique archaeological resource as defined in Section 21083.2 of the California Public Resource Code. Under Section 21083.2 of the California Public Resource Code, a unique archaeological resource is an archaeological artifact, object, or site that 1) contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions, and there is a demonstrable public interest in the information, 2) has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type, or 3) is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person. According to §15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines, if an archaeological resource is neither a historical resource nor a unique archaeological resource, the effect

of the project on the archaeological resource would not be considered a significant effect on the environment.

Nearly 12,000 cultural resources have been recorded in the county, which encompasses over 20,000 square miles. With an estimated 15 percent of the county surveyed for cultural resources, this leaves potential for finding previously unknown resources (San Bernardino County, 2014). The County has a Cultural Resources overlay district; however, the County's current maps only cover the Oak Hills, Phelan, and Pinion Hills areas, which are located approximately 70 miles southwest of the project area.

The project area is located along a remote 111-mile segment of the NTH where large portions of the surrounding area have not been previously disturbed by development. Given the undisturbed nature of the project surroundings, there is potential for buried archaeological resources to be in the project area, which could be determined to be a historical resource or a unique archaeological resource by the County. In addition, in October 2014, Caltrans determined that Contextual Refuse Scatters (i.e., discarded items or trash that meet the definition of an archaeological resource) found in the project area contribute to the NTH as a historic property; however, SHPO did not concur with this finding, stating that there is currently not enough information with regards to archaeology and suggesting that Caltrans handle archaeology on a case by case basis (State Historic Preservation Officer, Carol Roland-Nawi, Ph.D., 2014). However, if the County determines that the Contextual Refuse Scatters meet the definition of a historical resource or a unique archaeological resource, the project's effects on the Contextual Refuse Scatters could be a significant effect on the environment.

The project would include excavation activities, as well as grading and other ground disturbance to replace the bridges. These construction activities could extend beyond the existing bridge footprints where there is undisturbed soil that could contain buried archaeological resources. In addition, if the Contextual Refuse Scatters are determined to be a historical resource or a unique archaeological resource by the County, and the project would impact these resources, the project could result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of these resources. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant.

***V c) Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?***

**Potentially Significant Impact.** Paleontological resources include fossils, which are the preserved remains or traces of animals, plants, and other organisms from prehistoric time (i.e., the period before written records). Fossils and traces of fossils are preserved in sedimentary rock units (formed by the deposition of material at the Earth's surface); and are more likely to be preserved subsurface, where they have not been damaged or destroyed by previous ground disturbance or natural causes, such as erosion by wind or water. A field survey for paleontological resources can indicate that sediments likely to contain fossils are present, even if fossils are not observed on the surface. However, excavation is often the only way in which fossils are discovered. Geologic features include rocks or geologic formations that are either exposed at the Earth's surface or beneath the surface.

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The CEQA Guidelines do not provide a definition for a “unique paleontological resource or site” or a “unique geologic feature.” However, §15064.5(a)(3)(D) of the CEQA Guidelines states that “generally, a resource shall be considered historically significant if it has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.”

The County has a Paleontological Resources overlay district; however, the County’s current maps only cover the Oak Hills, Phelan, and Pinon Hills areas, which are located approximately 70 miles southwest of the project area. The project area is located along a remote 111-mile segment of the NTH in areas that have not been previously disturbed by development. Given the undisturbed nature of the project area, there is potential for paleontological resources and unique geologic features to be in the project area. The project would include excavation activities, as well as grading and other ground disturbance, to replace the bridges; these activities could extend beyond the existing bridge footprints where there is undisturbed soil that could contain unique paleontological resources or sites, or unique geologic features. The project has the potential to destroy these resources if they are located in the project area; therefore, impacts would be potentially significant.

***Vd) Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside formal cemeteries?***

**Potentially Significant Impact.** As stated previously, nearly 12,000 cultural resources have been recorded in the county, which encompasses over 20,000 square miles. With an estimated 15 percent of the County surveyed for cultural resources, this leaves a potential for finding previously unknown resources (San Bernardino County, 2014). The County has a Cultural Resources overlay district; however, the County’s current maps only cover the Oak Hills, Phelan, and Pinon Hills areas, which are located approximately 70 miles southwest of the project area.

Native American sites have been identified in the county dating from around 10,000 Before the Common Era (BCE), indicating that the county has been inhabited for at least 12,000 years (San Bernardino County, 2015). Artifacts in the Calico area (approximately 20 miles northwest of the project area) suggest much earlier human occupation, but this has not been confirmed. In the past three thousand years, various Native American tribes have inhabited the county: the Gabrielenos occupied the West Valley; the Serranos lived in the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains; the Vanyumes lived along the Mojave River; the Mohave lived along the Colorado River; and in the 1500s, the Chemehuevi moved into the Mojave Desert.

Federally recognized tribes with a potential interest in the project area include the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, one of several clans of Serrano Indians, and the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, whose main tribal groups are the Cahuilla and Serrano Indians. In accordance with Assembly Bill 52, which added various provisions to the California Public Resources Code that concern Tribal Cultural Resources (as defined in Section 21074), the County sent written letters (dated September 15, 2015) to the points of contact for the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and the Morongo Band of Mission Indians. The letters notified the tribal contacts that the County has initiated CEQA environmental review for the project, and that the tribes have an opportunity to consult with the County regarding the

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potential for the project to impact Tribal Cultural Resources. The tribes were given 30 days from the receipt of the letter to request consultation in writing for the project. No requests for consultation, or other responses, were received within the 30-day period.

The project area is located along a remote 111-mile segment of the NTH where large portions of the surrounding area have not been previously disturbed by development. The project would include excavation activities, as well as grading and other ground disturbance to replace the bridges; these activities could extend beyond the existing bridge footprints where there is undisturbed soil that could contain human remains. The project has the potential to disturb these resources if they are located in the project area; therefore, impacts would be potentially significant.

### **IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**Potentially Significant Impacts.** Potentially significant impacts have been identified or anticipated, and will be evaluated in an EIR.

## VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?				
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				
iv. Landslides?				
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the California Building Code (2001) creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION** (Check  if the project is located in the Geologic Hazards Overlay District)

**VI a) Would the project expose people or structures to potential 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.***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** According to the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the California Geological Survey, there are two fault zones (i.e., areas with several closely-spaced faults) and five active faults (i.e., faults with observed movement or evidence of seismic activity during the last 10,000 years) that cross through the project area, and several faults within two miles of the project area (California Department of Conservation, 1988). The project area is not located in the County's Geologic Hazards Overlay District.

By replacing the existing deficient bridges, the project would result in beneficial impacts on public safety because the new bridges would be constructed in accordance with Caltrans seismic design criteria (Caltrans, 2015). In accordance with these criteria, bridges near Holocene- or latest Pleistocene-active faults (active in the last 15,000 years) must be evaluated for potential fault rupture, and analyses completed to ensure that the bridges can withstand calculated potential fault displacement. Therefore, the project would reduce the exposure of people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death, involving the rupture of a known earthquake fault; and impacts would be less than significant.

- ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** According to the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the California Geological Survey, there are two fault zones and five active faults that cross through the project area, and several faults within two miles of the project area (California Department of Conservation, 1988). According to California Geological Survey maps showing the earthquake shaking potential in California, there is a low to medium intensity of ground shaking and damage in the project area from anticipated future earthquakes (California Geological Survey, 2003).

By replacing the existing deficient bridges, the project would result in beneficial impacts on public safety because the new bridges would be constructed in accordance with Caltrans seismic design criteria, which include consideration of the bridge category and classification, seismic performance criteria, seismic design philosophy and approach, seismic demands and capacities on structural components, and seismic design practices (Caltrans, n.d.). Therefore, the project would reduce the exposure of people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death, involving seismic ground shaking; and impacts would be less than significant.

- iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Soil liquefaction occurs when a saturated or partially saturated soil substantially loses strength and stiffness in response to an applied stress, usually earthquake shaking or other sudden change in stress condition, causing it to behave like a liquid. Other types of ground failure resulting from seismic activities include collapsible soils, subsidence (the gradual caving in or sinking of an area of land), landslides, and lateral spreading (landslides that commonly form on gentle slopes and that have rapid fluid-like flow movement). No geologic hazards, including liquefaction or landslides, have been mapped in the project area, according to the County's Geologic Hazards Maps (San Bernardino County, 2007a). The project area is relatively flat, and would not be considered highly susceptible to subsidence, landslides, or lateral spreading. However, the project area is susceptible to seismic ground shaking (see Response VI a) ii)), and there are seasonal washes in the project area beneath the bridges; therefore, seismic-related ground failure could occur in the project area depending on soil conditions (e.g., level of moisture or saturation), and the steepness of the slopes along the banks of the washes.

By replacing the existing deficient bridges, the project would result in beneficial impacts on the safety of the bridges because the new bridges would be constructed in accordance with Caltrans seismic design criteria, which include consideration of the bridge category and classification, seismic performance criteria, seismic design philosophy and approach, seismic demands and capacities on structural components, and seismic design practices (Caltrans, n.d.). Therefore, the project would reduce the exposure of people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death, involving seismic-related ground failure including liquefaction; and impacts would be less than significant.

***iv. Landslides?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Landslides are the sliding down of a mass of earth or rock from a mountain or cliff. The project area is relatively flat, and there are no mountains or cliffs in the project area. No landslide hazards have been mapped in the project area, according to the County's Geologic Hazards Maps (San Bernardino County, 2007a). However, the bridges cross over seasonal washes, where there could be steep slopes along the banks. Therefore, there is potential that landslides could occur in the project area, depending on soil conditions (e.g., saturation, stability), weather, and seismic stresses.

By replacing the existing deficient bridges, the project would result in beneficial impacts on public safety because the new bridges would be constructed in accordance with Caltrans geotechnical standards, which would include the stabilization of slopes in the project area to minimize landslide potential. In addition, RSP would be constructed along both abutments of the new bridges, across the entire width of the creeks, and would extend 50 feet upstream and 50 feet downstream of the new bridges, totaling approximately 100 feet. Therefore, the project would reduce the exposure of people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death, involving landslides; and impacts would be beneficial and less than significant.

***VI b) Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Erosion is the movement of rocks and soil from the Earth's surface by wind, rain, or running water. Several factors influence erosion, such as the size of soil particles (larger particles are more prone to erosion), and vegetation cover, which prevents erosion. The County's General Plan includes the goal of minimizing damage due to wind and water erosion where possible, and also includes the policy of tailoring grading, land clearance, and grazing to prevent unnatural erosion in erosion susceptible areas (San Bernardino County, 2014). The County's Development Code also requires that each development project, building permit, grading and any other significant land disturbing activity include the installation of erosion control measures in compliance with the Development Code (San Bernardino County, 2015a).

During operation, the project would result in beneficial impacts on erosion because the new bridges would be constructed in accordance with Caltrans geotechnical standards, which would include the stabilization of slopes in the project area to minimize erosion potential. During construction, however, the project would require vegetation removal, grading, and the use of off-road vehicles, which could loosen soils and result in erosion. The project would comply with the County's General Plan and Development Code, which require sediment and erosion control measures, such as restricting off-road vehicles in areas susceptible to erosion, and replanting ground cover. With implementation of these standard measures, erosion and the loss of topsoil would be substantially minimized, and impacts would be less than significant.

**VI c) *Would the project 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?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** See Responses VI a) iii-iv.

**VI d) *Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the California Building Code (2001) creating substantial risks to life or property?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Expansive soil is a soil that is prone to large volume changes (swelling and shrinking) that are directly related to changes in water content; with higher moisture levels, the soils will swell, and with lower moisture levels, the soils will shrink. According to Table 18-1-B of the California Building Code, special foundation design is required if the Expansion Index (which predicts the swelling potential of compacted soils) is higher than 20.

The project would include rehabilitating or replacing existing bridges in areas where no soil expansion problems have been identified since the bridges were constructed. Therefore, the likelihood of expansive soils in the project area is considered low. However, excavation could be required in areas that extend beyond the existing bridge footprints where the expansion of soils has not yet been tested. In accordance with the California Building Code, soils in the project area will be tested to determine their Expansion Index, and appropriate design measures would be incorporated to substantially minimize any risks to life or property if expansive soils are identified. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***VI e) Would the project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?***

**No Impact.** The project does not include the installation of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems, and the capability of soils in the project area to support these facilities is not applicable to the project; therefore, there would be no impact.

#### **IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**Less Than Significant Impacts.** No significant impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

**VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
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"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emission of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION**

***VII a) Would the project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Greenhouse gases are gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. The transportation sector (i.e., the movement of people and goods by cars, trucks, trains, ships, airplanes, and other vehicles) accounts for 37 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions in California (California Air Resources Board, 2015). The majority of greenhouse gas emissions from transportation are carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions resulting from the combustion of petroleum-based products, like gasoline, in internal combustion engines (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2015). The largest sources of transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions include passenger cars and light-duty trucks, including sport utility vehicles, pickup trucks, and minivans; these sources account for over half of the emissions from the sector. The remainder of greenhouse gas emissions comes from other modes of transportation, including freight trucks, commercial aircraft, ships, boats, and trains, as well as pipelines and lubricants.

The project area includes existing bridges along the NTH; therefore, existing sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the project area are the various cars and trucks using the roadway. Because the project would include rehabilitating and replacing the existing bridges with new bridges that have the same roadway capacity, the project would not result in additional vehicles on the roadway; therefore, project operation would not be expected to result in additional sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Project construction would require the use of construction vehicles and equipment that would emit greenhouse gases. Construction emissions would be short-term and intermittent; therefore, greenhouse emissions from project construction would not be expected to have a significant impact on the environment

because air emissions in the project area would return to existing levels following construction. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***VII b) Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emission of greenhouse gases?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The County's General Plan includes the policy of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions within the County boundaries (San Bernardino County, 2014). The County has also adopted a *Regional Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan* that includes actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the county (San Bernardino County, 2013). Because the project would include rehabilitating and replacing the existing bridges with new bridges that have the same roadway capacity, the project would not result in additional vehicles on the roadway; therefore, project operation would not be expected to result in additional sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Project construction would require the use of construction vehicles and equipment that would emit greenhouse gases. Greenhouse gas emissions could also result from the additional miles that vehicles may need to travel on temporary detour routes. Construction emissions would be short-term and intermittent; therefore, the greenhouse emissions from project construction would not substantially conflict with the County's General Plan or *Regional Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan* because air emissions in the project area would return to existing levels following construction. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**Less Than Significant Impacts.** No significant impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

**VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
g) 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"/>
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION**

***VIII a) Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?***

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation.** A hazardous material is any substance or material that could adversely affect the safety of the public, handlers, or transportation carriers. The project area includes bridges along the NTH, and is not used for the routine disposal of hazardous materials. Existing hazardous materials used or transported in the project area include materials used for roadway or bridge maintenance (e.g., paints, sealants, and pesticides), or materials that are transported on vehicles using the roadway. The project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would continue to be used for the same purpose; therefore, project operation would not involve the routine transport or use of hazardous materials beyond existing conditions, and no significant hazards to the public or environment would result from project operation.

Project construction would also require the use of construction materials that could be hazardous, such as paints, sealants, and cement; however, the transport, use, and disposal of these materials would be conducted in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the safe handling, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials, including the Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), which includes requirements for hazardous solid waste management; the DTSC Environmental Health Standards for the Management of Hazardous Waste (California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4.5), which include standards for generators and transporters of hazardous waste; and the provisions of the County’s Fire Department, Hazardous Materials Division, which include requirements for proper handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous substances.

Draft Initial Site Assessments (ISA) were completed for two bridges located in the project area, the Dola Ditch Bridge and the Lanzit Ditch Bridge, providing information on potential hazardous materials that could be encountered during project construction (Geotechnical Consultants, Inc., 2014a; Geotechnical

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Consultants, Inc., 2014b). According to the Draft ISAs, the project area could contain aerially deposited lead (ADL) in soils adjacent to the roadway and bridge, requiring that soils be treated as hazardous depending on the concentration of ADL in the soil. ADL refers to lead deposited on highway shoulders from past leaded fuel vehicle emissions. Although leaded fuel was prohibited in California since the 1980s, ADL may still be present in soils adjacent to highways in use prior to that time. Lead is a hazardous material because adults exposed to lead can suffer from cardiovascular effects, including increased blood pressure and incidence of hypertension; decreased kidney function; and reproductive problems (in both men and women).

During ground disturbance activities required for project construction, soils containing ADL could be inhaled by construction workers or the public, resulting in potential health hazards. According to Caltrans' requirements, contractors must prepare a project-specific Lead Compliance Plan to prevent or minimize worker exposure to lead-impacted soil. The plan should include protocols for environmental and personnel monitoring, requirements for personal protective equipment, and other appropriate health and safety protocols and procedures for the handling of lead-impacted soil.

The bridges may also include lead-based paint in the wooden supports and roadway striping, requiring special provisions for the removal and disposal of these materials. Although lead has been banned from household paints in the United States since 1978, paint used in road markings may still contain lead. Lead-based paint may be disturbed during demolition of the existing bridges, and paint particles could be inhaled by workers or the public, resulting in potential health hazards. The California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) Lead Standard states that work which involves the disturbance of materials containing more than 0.5 percent lead by weight, or if the permissible exposure limit of airborne lead particulate of 50 micrograms per cubic meter of air is exceeded, then the work must be conducted in accordance with the standard.

Most of the bridges are constructed of wood that could be treated with creosote. Creosote is a hazardous material because creosote vapors can irritate the lungs, and exposure to small amounts of creosote over time by direct skin contact or by contact with creosote vapors may cause blistering, peeling, or reddening of the skin; damage to the eyes; and increased sensitivity to sunlight. Creosote-treated wood is designated as Treated Wood Waste and requires special handling and disposal at an approved Treated Wood Waste disposal facility, in accordance with Assembly Bill 1353 and California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) regulations.

Lead and creosote could be disturbed during routine construction activities, and could therefore result in a significant hazard to the public or to the environment. However, with implementation of mitigation measures to be identified in the EIR, requiring the appropriate handling and containment of these materials, potential hazards would be minimized. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

***VIII b) Would the project 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?***

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**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation.** As discussed in Response VIII a), the project area may contain lead (ADL in soils, and lead-based paint in wooden supports and roadway striping) and creosote in treated wood. These hazardous materials could be accidentally released into the environment during ground disturbance and demolition of the existing bridges, resulting in a significant hazard to the public or to the environment. However, with implementation of mitigation measures to be identified in the EIR, requiring the appropriate handling and containment of these materials, potential hazards would be minimized. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

***VIII c) Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?***

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation.** The Calico High School/Silver Valley Adult School is approximately 500 feet south of the project area in the western portion of the project area at 3525 Ponnay Street in Daggett; no other schools are located within one-quarter mile of the project area. As discussed in Response VIII a), the project area may contain lead (ADL in soils, and lead-based paint in wooden supports and roadway striping) and creosote in treated wood. These hazardous materials could be emitted into the environment during ground disturbance and demolition, and could be released within 500 feet of an existing school. However, with implementation of mitigation measures to be identified in the EIR, requiring the appropriate handling and containment of these materials, potential hazards would be minimized. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

***VIII d) Would the project 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 create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?***

**No Impact.** Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the California Environmental Protection Agency to compile the Hazardous Waste and Substances Sites List, also called the Cortese List. The following data sources were reviewed for information on hazardous materials sites in the project area (California Environmental Protection Agency, 2012):

- List of Hazardous Waste and Substances sites from DTSC EnviroStor database.
- List of Leaking Underground Storage Tank Sites by County and Fiscal Year from State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) GeoTracker database.
- List of solid waste disposal sites identified by SWRCB with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit.
- List of "active" cease and desist orders (CDO) and cleanup and abatement orders (CAO) from SWRCB.
- List of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the Health and Safety Code, identified by DTSC.

The project area is not located on any sites included on these lists; therefore, there would be no impact.

***VIII 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 airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The project area is adjacent to the Barstow-Daggett County Airport and is within the planning area of the *Barstow-Daggett Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan* (San Bernardino County, 1992). The project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have a similar profile, size, scale, and materials. No tall structures would be placed on the new bridges that could interfere with air transportation, and no materials or structures would be placed on the bridges that could result in substantial light or glare, interfering with visual clarity for airplanes traveling over the project area. Therefore, no airport safety hazards would result from project operation for people residing or working in the project area.

During project construction, construction vehicles and equipment could create glare that could be visible from airplanes traveling over the project area. However, potential glare would not be expected to substantially affect visual clarity, and would not be expected to pose a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***VIII f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The closest private air strip is the Ludlow Airport, approximately 0.15 mile northeast of the project area. As discussed in Response VIII e), the project would not be expected to pose a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***VIII g) Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The County's *Emergency Operations Plan* describes how the County will respond to emergency or disaster conditions (San Bernardino County, 2013). The project area is not located within a designated evacuation route. According to the Safety Element of the County's General Plan, the nearest evacuation route to the project area is I-40. However, emergency vehicles may need to use the project area if there are no other emergency response or evacuation routes available. The project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would continue to serve as a roadway for emergency vehicles; therefore, project operation would not impair implementation or physical interfere with emergency response or evacuation outlined in the County's *Emergency Operations Plan*.

During project construction, vehicles or equipment along the roadway may temporarily result in traffic congestion, which could delay emergency vehicles. To minimize potential impacts, the County is considering one of two options for phasing during construction. The first option would include full closure of the bridges with traffic detoured away from the construction area via an alternate route, or by using a temporary bypass detour into the wash. Temporary signage and traffic control devices would

be installed during construction to safely control traffic around the sites. The second option would require one lane on the NTH to remain open at all times, while one half of the bridge is constructed. Temporary signage and traffic control devices would be installed during construction to safely control traffic. Following construction, the temporary detours would be removed.

With implementation of a construction phasing plan, potential impacts would be minimized, and project construction would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***VIII h) Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** A wildland fire is an uncontrolled fire in an area of combustible vegetation that occurs in wildlands (i.e., an undeveloped, unoccupied natural area). The project area is in a remote area that is mostly surrounded by wildlands, with shrubs and other weedy vegetation that could be combustible. Therefore, wildland fires could occur in the project area. The project area is also located in an area where there are residences intermixed with wildlands. Mowers and weed eaters may be used in the project area for landscape maintenance, which would continue after project implementation and would not result in increased wildland fire risks. In addition, the project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would be used for the same purpose as existing conditions, and would therefore not result in increased wildland fire risks. Therefore, project operation would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

Project construction would require the use of construction equipment, such as welders and tractors. In wildland areas, spark arresters are required on all portable gasoline-powered equipment, including tractors, harvesters, chainsaws, weed eaters and mowers (California Wildland Fire Coordinating Group, n.d.). Grinding and welding operations in wildland areas require a permit and 10 feet of clearance. Standard fire prevention practices would also be implemented during project construction, such as keeping a fire extinguisher nearby and not driving vehicles onto dry grass or brush. With implementation of these standard practices, the risks of wildland fires would be minimized, and project construction would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**Less Than Significant Impacts with Mitigation.** Potentially significant impacts have been identified or anticipated; however, with the incorporation of mitigation measures, potential impacts would be reduced to a level that is less than significant. The EIR will propose appropriate mitigation measures and will evaluate the expected effectiveness of the measures in reducing the potential significance of the impact.

**IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) 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 (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level, which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of a course of a stream or river, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Create or contribute runoff water, which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a Federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION**

***IX a) Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Water quality standards are provisions approved by the U.S. EPA that describe the desired condition of a water body. These standards include the designated uses of the water body (e.g., recreation, public drinking water supply), criteria to protect designated uses (e.g., maximum pollutant concentration levels permitted in a water body), antidegradation requirements to protect existing uses and high quality waters, and general policies to address implementation issues (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2015). All of the waterways in the project area are seasonal washes that are inundated only briefly during storm events, and there are no water bodies in the project area with water quality standards issued by the U.S. EPA.

Waste discharge requirements are issued by the SWRCB to regulate point source discharges (defined by the U.S. EPA as any single identifiable source of pollution from which pollutants are discharged, such as a pipe or ditch) that are exempt from Title 27, Section 20090 of the California Code of Regulations and are not subject to the CWA; these exempted point source discharges include discharges of domestic sewage or treated effluent, discharges of wastewater to land (e.g., from evaporation or percolation ponds), discharges of waste to wells by injection, cleanup of unintentional or unauthorized releases of waste or pollutants to the environment, discharges of gas condensate units, use of nonhazardous decomposable waste as a soil amendment, discharges of drilling mud and cuttings from well-drilling

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operations, recycling or reuse of materials salvaged from waste or produced by waste treatment, and waste treatment in fully enclosed facilities, such as tanks.

The project area is a roadway that is used for vehicle travel, and is subject to a Statewide NPDES Permit (Order No. 2012-0011-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000003) in accordance with CWA Section 402 and California's Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, requiring Caltrans to control and regulate storm water and non-storm water discharges. There are currently no point source discharges in the project area that are exempt from Title 27, Section 20090 of the California Code of Regulations and are not subject to the CWA; therefore, there are no waste discharge requirements applicable to the project area. The project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have a similar design and function; therefore, no additional point source discharges would result from project operation that would require waste discharge requirements.

Project construction could require dredge or fill activities that may result in a discharge to surface waters. Section 401 and 404 of the CWA requires the USACE and RWQCBs to regulate the discharge of dredge or fill material into waters of the U.S. A CWA Section 404 Permit from the USACE, and a CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirement from the Lahontan and Colorado RWQCBs would be obtained for the project, which would minimize potential impacts and avoid any violations of waste discharge requirements; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***IX b) Would the project 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 (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level, which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The project area is located within the Mojave River Groundwater Basin, which is approximately 1,400 square miles and extends from the San Bernardino and San Gabriel Mountains in the south to north of Harper and Coyote Lakes (U.S. Geological Survey, 2015). The primary sources of groundwater recharge in the Mojave River Groundwater Basin are intermittent streamflow in the Mojave River, usually during January through March, and from sporadic releases of imported water from the California State Water Project (SWP). Water delivery systems bring water from the SWP to groundwater recharge locations, which include the Dagget/Yermo Recharge Site and the Newberry Springs Recharge Site (Mojave Water Agency, 2014).

The project area includes an existing roadway that does not require the use of water. Because the project would include rehabilitating or replacing existing bridges, project operation would not result in any additional uses of water. The project would require that some bridges be lengthened; this would result in additional impervious surface areas where storm water could be prevented from percolating into soils, potentially resulting in interference with groundwater recharge. However, impervious surfaces would be minimized to the extent feasible, and project operation would not be expected to deplete groundwater supplies or substantially interfere with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level. Project

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construction could also require water for typical construction activities, such as cement mixing and watering to control dust and stabilize loose soils. However, construction would be short-term and intermittent, and would not be expected to 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. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***IX c) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of a course of a stream or river, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Alterations in drainage patterns (i.e., the pattern in which storm water flows across the Earth's surface) may result from changes in topography and impervious surfaces (e.g., steeper slopes and an increase in impervious surfaces may increase the velocity of storm water drainage). Erosion is the loosening and transportation of the upper layers of rock and soil from the Earth's surface by wind, rain, or running water. Alterations in drainage patterns that increase the drainage velocity may result in increased erosion or siltation.

All of the waterways in the project area are seasonal washes that are inundated only briefly during storm events, and there are no streams or rivers in the project area. Storm water currently flows directly onto the roadway and drains onto surrounding land. The project would include the replacement of existing bridges, some of which would be lengthened, which could result in changes in topography and impervious surfaces, thereby altering drainage patterns; however, the longer bridges would be designed to accommodate projected drainage flows, so that no substantial erosion or siltation would result on- or off-site during project operation.

During construction, the project would require vegetation removal, grading, and the use of off-road vehicles. These construction activities could alter the topography in the project area, resulting in changes to drainage patterns, which could increase the potential for erosion. The project would comply with the County's General Plan and Development Code, which require sediment and erosion control measures, such as restricting off-road vehicles in areas susceptible to erosion, and replanting ground cover. With implementation of these standard measures, erosion or siltation on- or off-site resulting from changes in drainage patterns would be substantially minimized. The project would also improve existing drainage patterns through the construction of new drainage systems in the project area; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***IX d) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** As discussed in Response IX e), alterations in drainage patterns may result from changes in topography and impervious surfaces (e.g., steeper slopes and an increase in impervious surfaces may increase the velocity of storm water drainage), which could increase the rate or amount of

surface runoff and result in flooding. All of the waterways in the project area are seasonal washes that are inundated only briefly during storm events, and there are no streams or rivers in the project area. Storm water currently flows directly onto the roadway and drains onto surrounding land. The project would include the replacement of existing bridges, some of which would be lengthened, which could result in changes in topography and impervious surfaces, thereby altering drainage patterns; however, the longer bridges would be designed to accommodate projected drainage flows, so that there would be no substantial increases in the rate or amount of surface runoff that could result in flooding on- or off-site during project operation.

During construction, the project would require vegetation removal, grading, and the use of off-road vehicles; these activities could alter the topography, and therefore, the drainage patterns in the project area, resulting in the potential for increased surface runoff and flooding. During project construction, storm water management measures would be implemented in accordance with the County's Development Code, and may include measures to minimize runoff by containing and slowing the rate of storm water flows through the use of filters and berms. With implementation of these standard measures, flooding on- or off-site resulting from changes in drainage patterns and surface runoff would be substantially minimized; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***IX e) Would the project create or contribute runoff water, which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** See Response IX d). After project implementation, operations in the project area would be similar to existing conditions, and bridges that are lengthened would be designed to accommodate projected drainage flows. Overall, the project would improve existing drainage patterns through the construction of new drainage systems in the project area. Therefore, the project would not create or contribute substantial runoff water that could exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems.

Polluted runoff in the project area may currently result from leaks of oil or fuel from vehicles using the roadway. CWA Section 402 and California's Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act require that all municipal, industrial and commercial facilities that discharge wastewater or storm water directly from a point source into a water of the U.S. must obtain a NPDES permit. Caltrans has been issued a Statewide NPDES Permit (Order No. 2012-0011-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000003) by the SWRCB, and is required to control and regulate storm water and non-storm water discharges in the project area. In addition, operations in the project area would be similar to existing conditions, and bridges that are lengthened would be designed to accommodate projected drainage flows. Therefore, project operation would not result in any additional polluted runoff in the project area.

During construction, the project would require vegetation removal, grading, and the use of off-road vehicles; these activities could alter the topography, and therefore, result in increased surface runoff. However, storm water management measures would be implemented in accordance with the County's Development Code, and may include measures to minimize runoff by containing and slowing the rate of

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storm water flows through the use of filters and berms. With implementation of these standard measures, increases in surface runoff would be substantially minimized, and runoff levels would not be expected to exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems. In addition, Caltrans is required to comply with the NPDES Construction General Permit (Order No. 2009-009-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002) issued by the SWRCB under CWA Section 402, which regulates storm water discharges from construction sites with a disturbed soil area (DSA) of one acre or greater, and/or smaller sites that are part of a larger common plan of development. The project would be conducted in compliance with the CWA Section 402 NPDES Construction General Permit.

Project construction would require the use of construction materials that could be hazardous, such as paints, sealants, and cement. Polluted runoff could result from the accidental release of these substances into storm water runoff; however, the transport, use, and disposal of these materials would be conducted in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the safe handling, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials, including RCRA, which includes requirements for hazardous solid waste management; the DTSC Environmental Health Standards for the Management of Hazardous Waste (California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4.5), which include standards for generators and transporters of hazardous waste; and the provisions of the County's Fire Department, Hazardous Materials Division, which include requirements for proper handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous substances. Polluted runoff could also result from trash or debris being carried away by storm water runoff; however, with implementation of best management practices, such as keeping work areas clean and free of trash, potential impacts on runoff would be minimized.

Because the project would comply with standard regulations and permits, and would include implementation of best management practices, potential sources of polluted runoff would be substantially minimized. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***IX f) Would the project otherwise substantially degrade water quality?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** As discussed in Responses IX a) through IX e), project operation would not result in substantial changes to existing water quality because operations in the project area would be similar to existing conditions, and bridges that are lengthened would be designed to accommodate projected drainage flows. In addition, project operation would comply with Caltrans Statewide NPDES Permit (Order No. 2012-0011-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000003), requiring Caltrans to control and regulate storm water and non-storm water discharges in the project area.

Project construction could result in potential impacts on water quality from erosion and polluted runoff; however, these impacts would be substantially minimized through compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the safe handling, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials, and the implementation of standard measures, such as restricting off-road vehicles in areas susceptible to erosion, replanting ground cover, using filters and berms, and keeping work areas clean and free of trash. Project construction could require dredge or fill activities that may result in a discharge to surface waters. However, a CWA Section 404 Permit from the USACE, and a CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirement from the Lahontan and Colorado RWQCBs would be

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obtained for the project, which would substantially minimize potential impacts on water quality. The project would also be conducted in compliance with the CWA Section 402 NPDES Construction General Permit. Compliance with standard measures and permits, the project would not substantially degrade water quality, and impacts would be less than significant.

***IX g) Would the project place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a Federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?***

**No Impact.** A 100-year flood hazard area is an area that will be inundated by a flood event having a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. The project area is located in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) Panel Numbers 06071C4600H, 06071C4625H, 06071C4650H, 06071C4675H, 06071C4700H, 06071C5350H, 06071C5375H, 06071C5400H, 06071C5425H, 06071C6100H, 06071C6125H, 06071C6150H, 06071C6175H, 06071C6200H, 06071C550H, 06071C4925H, and 06071C4975H, effective August 28, 2008 (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2008). These FIRM panels have not been printed because the entire area within these maps are located in Zone D, which is an area where there are possible but undetermined flood hazards due to flood hazard analysis not having been conducted in the area; therefore, the project is not located within an identifiable 100-year flood hazard area. In addition, the project would not include the construction of housing; rather, the project consists of replacing 32 existing bridges and rehabilitating one bridge. Therefore, the project would not place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area, and there would be no impacts.

***IX h) Would the project place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?***

**No Impact.** See Response IX g). The project would not include the construction of additional structures within a 100-year flood hazard area that would impede or redirect flood flows; rather, the project consists of replacing 32 existing bridges and rehabilitating one bridge. Therefore, there would be no impacts.

***IX i) Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?***

**No Impact.** The project area is not located within a levee or dam inundation area, as shown on the County's Hazard Overlay Maps (San Bernardino County, 2010). Because the project consists of replacing 32 existing bridges and rehabilitating one bridge, the project would not expose people or structures to any risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding. Therefore, there would be no impacts.

***IX j) Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?***

**No Impact.** A seiche is a temporary disturbance or oscillation in the water level of a lake or partially enclosed body of water. A tsunami is a long, high ocean wave caused by an earthquake, submarine landslide, or other disturbance. Bristol Lake is adjacent to and south of the project area, as shown on the

USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, n.d.); however, the lake is dry and is used as a salt evaporation operation (DesertUSA, n.d.). The project area is not located near the ocean or other large body of water, and is therefore not susceptible to inundation by seiche or tsunami. A mudflow is a fluid or hardened stream or avalanche of mud; no mudflow risks have been identified in the project area, and none are mapped on the County's Hazard Overlay Maps (San Bernardino County, 2010). In addition, because the project would include rehabilitating or replacing existing bridges, the project would not expose people or structures to any risk of loss, injury, or death involving inundation by mudflow. Therefore, there would be no impacts.

### **IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**Less Than Significant Impacts.** No significant impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

**X. LAND USE AND PLANNING**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with an applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION**

***X a) Would the project physically divide an established community?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The project area is surrounded by mostly undeveloped land; however, there are some areas along the highway that are adjacent to residential development, such as the town of Daggett, and the communities of Newberry Springs and Essex. The town of Daggett has a population of 632, the community of Newberry Springs has a population of 2,895, and the community of Essex has a population of 65. During project construction, vehicles or equipment along the roadway may temporarily result in traffic congestion. To minimize potential impacts, the County is considering one of two options for phasing during construction. The first option would include full closure of the bridges with traffic detoured away from the construction area via an alternate route, or by using a temporary bypass detour into the wash. Temporary signage and traffic control devices would be installed during construction to safely control traffic around the sites. The second option would require one lane on the NTH to remain open at all times, while one half of the bridge is constructed. Temporary signage and traffic control devices would be installed during construction to safely control traffic.

Following construction, the temporary detours would be removed. Traffic movement along the NTH would return to existing conditions once construction is complete. The project area is an existing roadway with bridges, and the project would not change the existing road alignment, nor would it physically divide an established community; rather, the project would be expected to maintain safe,

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long-term access along the 111-mile segment, and would provide a benefit to the surrounding communities along the NTH. Therefore, impacts would be beneficial and less than significant.

**X b) *Would the project conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The project would be conducted in compliance with applicable plans and policies, including the County's General Plan and Development Code. The project would result in beneficial impacts on public safety by rehabilitating and replacing the existing structurally deficient bridges, and would support the County's plans, policies, and regulations. Therefore, impacts would be beneficial and less than significant.

**X c) *Would the project conflict with an applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** FESA and CESA prohibit the "take" of listed species through direct harm or habitat destruction.<sup>2</sup> Under Section 10 of FESA and Section 2081 of CESA, incidental take permits may be issued to private, non-federal entities undertaking otherwise lawful projects that might result in the take of listed species, as long as certain conditions are met. A HCP is a planning document required as part of an incidental take permit application under FESA to ensure that the anticipated take of a listed species will be minimized or mitigated. A NCCP is a planning document under the Natural Community Conservation Planning Act (California Fish and Game Code, Section 2800) to ensure the regional protection of multiple species and their habitats, while allowing compatible and appropriate development and growth.

The project area is located in the planning area for a joint NCCP/HCP, the *Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan* (California Energy Commission, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2014). However, while the plan includes a discussion of maintenance activities along the NTH, this plan is not applicable to the project because the plan applies to the permitting of renewable energy and transmission development projects, which are not elements of the bridge replacements or rehabilitation proposed as part of the project being discussed in this Initial Study Checklist.

The western portion of the project area is located in the planning area for the *West Mojave Plan*, which is an HCP that covers approximately 9 million acres of land in San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Kern, Riverside, and Inyo Counties (U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 2003). The purpose of the *West Mojave Plan* is to develop management strategies for the desert tortoise, Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*), and over 100 other sensitive plants and animals to

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<sup>2</sup> Under FESA, "take" means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. Under CESA, "take" means to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill.

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conserve those species throughout the western Mojave Desert, while at the same time establishing a streamlined program for compliance with the regulatory requirements of FESA and CESA.

The *West Mojave Plan* includes a list of covered species, and minimization and mitigation measures for each species. There may be species in the project area that are covered under the *West Mojave Plan*, and project construction could result in potential impacts on those species and their habitat from construction noise, vegetation removal, equipment staging, and other activities. However, the project would be conducted in compliance with the minimization and mitigation measures in the *West Mojave Plan*, and would not conflict with the plan. Specific measures from the *West Mojave Plan* that are applicable to the project will be determined after further surveys and analysis are conducted during preparation of the EIR. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**Less Than Significant Impacts.** No significant impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

**XI. MINERAL RESOURCES**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION** (Check  if the project is located within the Mineral Resource Zone Overlay)

***XI a) Would the project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and residents of the state?***

**No Impact.** Mineral resources are geological deposits in or on the Earth’s crust that may have economic value, and include fuels (e.g., coal, oil, and natural gas), metals (e.g., iron, copper, and aluminum) and non-metals (e.g., salt, gypsum, clay, sand, and phosphates). The California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) requires the State Geologist to classify land into Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) according to the known or inferred mineral potential of that land. The process is based solely on geology, without regard to existing land use or land ownership. The primary goal of mineral land classification is to ensure that the mineral resource potential of land is recognized by local government decision-makers and considered before land-use decisions that could preclude mining are made. The project area is in MRZ-4, which is an area of unknown mineral resource significance (California Geological Survey, n.d.). The project area does not contain known mineral resources that would be of value to the region or residents of the state; therefore, there would be no impacts.

***IX b) Would the project 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?***

**No Impact.** The project area does not include any important mineral resources recovery sites delineated on the County’s General Plan; therefore, there would be no impacts.

**IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**No Impacts.** No impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

**XII. NOISE**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons or generation of noise levels 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"/>
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) A substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION** (Check if the project is located within the Noise Hazard Overlay District  or is subject to severe noise levels according to the General Plan Noise Element )

**XII a) *Would the project result in exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The project area is located along a remote 111-mile segment of the NTH where there are relatively few people that could be exposed to noise levels in excess of local noise standards. The nearest residential areas are approximately 360 feet from the project area. Existing noise sources within the project area include traffic noise from vehicles traveling along the highway, as well as other natural noise sources. Other noise sources from adjacent or nearby areas include aircraft noise from the nearby Barstow-Daggett County Airport (located adjacent to the project area), and rail noise from a railroad to the north of the project area.

The County’s General Plan does not include specific noise standards, but refers to Chapter 83.01 of the County’s Development Code. **Table 4** includes the noise standards as provided in the County’s Development Code for mobile noise sources that could affect adjacent properties.

**Table 4: Noise Standards for Adjacent Mobile Sources**

Land Use	Interior Noise Limit	Exterior Noise Limit
Residential (single and multi-family, duplex, and mobile homes)	45 A-weighted decibels (dBA)	60
Commercial	45 dBA for most uses; 50 dBA for commercial retail, bank, and restaurant uses	60 dBA for most uses; 65 dBA for commercial retail, bank, and restaurant uses
Institutional/Public (hospital, nursing home, school, classroom, religious institution, library)	45	65
Open Space (Park)	Not Applicable	65

Source: San Bernardino County Development Code (San Bernardino County, 2015a)

Notes: Noise limits are provided as the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL), which is the average sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after the addition of approximately five decibels to the sound levels in the evening from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., and 10 decibels to sound levels in the night from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m.

Temporary construction, maintenance, repair, or demolition activities between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., except Sundays and federal holidays, are exempt from the noise standards in the County’s Development Code.

During project operation, traffic noise would continue to be the primary noise source in the project area. The project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have the same roadway capacity; therefore, the project would not result in additional vehicles on the roadway, and no changes in noise levels would be expected to result from project operation.

Therefore, project operation would not result in the exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of the County’s noise standards.

During project construction, demolition, pile driving, and various other noise-generating construction activities would be required to rehabilitate or replace the bridges. The noise levels for construction equipment that would typically be used for the project are provided in **Table 5**.

**Table 5: Construction Equipment Noise Levels**

Equipment Type	Maximum Noise Level (L <sub>max</sub> ) of Equipment at 50 feet (in dB)
Dump Truck	76
Front End Loader	79
Air Compressor	78
Pneumatic Tools	85
Concrete Mixer Truck	79
Concrete Pump Truck	81
Jackhammer	89
Sand Blasting	96

*Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, 2015*

*Notes: The noise levels are provided in the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration Construction Noise Handbook (U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, 2015), and are actual, measured noise levels based on measurements performed for the Central Artery/Tunnel Project. Noise measurements were averaged to compute the actual emission level.*

The noise levels shown in **Table 5** range from 76 to 96 dBA, and are in excess of the County’s noise standards that include exterior noise limits of 60 to 65 dBA, depending on the land use. However, the projected noise levels from construction are provided as the maximum noise level (L<sub>max</sub>) during a specific noise event, whereas the County’s noise standards are provided as the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL), which is the average sound level during a 24-hour day. Construction activities would be short-term and intermittent, and would not generate noise levels in excess of the County’s noise standards over a 24-hour period. In addition, sound levels for a point source generally decrease by 6 dB for each doubling of distance; therefore, the noise levels at residential areas located 360 feet from the project area would be approximately 15 dB lower than the noise levels shown in **Table 4**. However, there is still potential that the nearest residential areas may be exposed to noise levels in excess of the County’s noise standards.

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In accordance with the County's Development Code, construction activities would be completed between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., and would not be conducted on Sundays and federal holidays; therefore, construction activities would be exempt from the County's noise standards. In addition, the project would comply with the provisions in Section 14-8.02, "Noise Control," of the Caltrans Standard Specifications, which states that construction noise levels must not exceed 86 dBA at 50 feet from job site activities between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., and that internal combustion engines, used for any purpose on the job, or related to the job, must be equipped with a muffler of a type recommended by the manufacturer. With compliance with the County's Development Code and Caltrans Standard Specifications, the exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of the County's standards would be minimized. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***XII b) Would the project result in exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Groundborne vibration is vibration that radiates through the ground, and is typically caused by trains, buses on rough roads, and construction activities, such as blasting, pile-driving, and operating heavy earth-moving equipment. Groundborne noise is the rumbling sound caused by the vibration of structures or buildings. According to Section 83.01.090 of the County's Development Code, no ground vibration shall be allowed that can be felt without the aid of instruments at or beyond a lot line, nor shall any vibration be allowed which produces a particle velocity great than or equal to 0.2 inches per second measured at or beyond the lot line. Temporary construction, maintenance, repair, or demolition activities between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., except Sundays and federal holidays, are exempt from the vibration standards in the County's Development Code.

The project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have the same roadway capacity. The project would not result in additional vehicles on the roadway that could generate groundborne vibration or noise levels above existing conditions, and project operation would not result in the exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.

Project construction would require activities, such as demolition and pile driving that could expose persons to or generate groundborne vibration and noise. There are residential areas approximately 360 feet from the project area that could be affected by groundborne vibration or noise. In accordance with the County's Development Code, construction activities would be completed between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., and would not be conducted on Sundays and federal holidays. In addition, the project would comply with the provisions in Section 14-8.02, "Noise Control," of the Caltrans Standard Specifications, which states that internal combustion engines, used for any purpose on the job, or related to the job, must be equipped with a muffler of a type recommended by the manufacturer. With compliance with the County's Development Code and Caltrans Standard Specifications, the exposure of persons to and generation of groundborne noise and vibration would be minimized. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***XII c) Would the project result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?***

**No Impact.** During long-term operation of the project, vehicles traveling on NTH would continue to be the primary noise source in the project area. The project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have the same roadway capacity; therefore, the project would not result in additional vehicles on the roadway, and no changes in noise levels would be expected to result from project operation. Therefore, the project would not result in any increases in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project; therefore, there would be no impacts.

***XII d) Would the project result in a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** As discussed in Response XII a), project construction could result in a temporary increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project. However, with compliance with the County's Development Code, which limits construction to the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and prohibits construction on Sundays and federal holidays; and with compliance with the provisions in Section 14-8.02, "Noise Control," of the Caltrans Standard Specifications, noise levels would be substantially minimized. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***XII 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 expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The project area is adjacent to the Barstow-Daggett County Airport and is within the planning area of the Barstow-Daggett Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan (San Bernardino County, 1992). The project area is also within the Airport Safety Review Area 3 and is approximately 0.15 mile from a Noise Hazard Overlay District (San Bernardino County, 2014). Areas that are designated within Airport Safety Review Area 3 are within one mile outside of the 65 day-night average sound level (Ldn) noise contour. The Noise Hazard Overlay was established by Sections 82.01.020 (Land Use Plan and Land Use Zoning Districts) and 82.01.030 (Overlays) of the County's Development Code to provide greater public safety by establishing land use review procedures and requirements for land uses in areas with identified high noise levels (San Bernardino County, 2015a).

As discussed in Response XII a), the project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have the same roadway capacity; therefore, the project would not result in additional vehicles on the roadway, and no changes in noise levels would be expected to result from project operation. Project construction could result in excessive noise levels in the project vicinity. However, with compliance with the County's Development Code, which limits construction to the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and prohibits construction on Sundays and federal holidays; and with compliance

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with the provisions in Section 14-8.02, "Noise Control," of the Caltrans Standard Specifications, noise levels would be minimized. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***XII f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The closest private air strip is the Ludlow Airport, approximately 0.15 mile northeast of the project area. As discussed in Response XII a), the project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have the same roadway capacity; therefore, the project would not result in additional vehicles on the roadway, and no changes in noise levels would be expected to result from project operation. Project construction could result in excessive noise levels in the project vicinity. However, with compliance with the County's Development Code, which limits construction to the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and prohibits construction on Sundays and federal holidays; and with compliance with the provisions in Section 14-8.02, "Noise Control," of the Caltrans Standard Specifications, noise levels would be minimized. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**Less Than Significant Impacts.** No significant impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

**XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING**

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

**SUBSTANTIATION**

***XIII a) Would the project induce substantial 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)?***

**No Impact.** According to the County’s General Plan, the population growth rate in the county has exceeded that of California for most of its history, and the U.S. Commerce Department predicts that San Bernardino County will be the fastest growing region in the U.S (San Bernardino County, 2014). According to an economic forecast for the county as provided by the Caltrans Economic Analysis Branch, population growth in the county from 2015 to 2020 is expected to average 1.1 percent per year, which is faster than the previous five years where growth was approximately 0.7 percent per year (Caltrans, 2015). The project area is located in the desert region of the County, along a remote 111-mile segment of the NTH. The desert region in San Bernardino County is expected to grow at a slower pace than other regions in the county (San Bernardino County, 2014).

The project area is surrounded by mostly undeveloped land; however, there are some areas along the highway that are adjacent to residential development, such as the town of Daggett and the communities of Newberry Springs and Essex. The town of Daggett has a population of 632, the community of Newberry Springs has a population of 2,895, and the community of Essex has a population of 65. The

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project would not propose new homes or businesses, and would not include the extension of roads or other infrastructure. Because the project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that have the same roadway capacity as existing conditions, the project would not affect population growth in the area. Therefore, there would be no impacts.

***XIII b) Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?***

**No Impact.** The project would not displace any housing, and the construction of replacement housing would not be required; therefore, there would be no impacts.

***XIII c) Would the project displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?***

**No Impact.** The project would not displace any people, and the construction of replacement housing would not be required; therefore, there would be no impacts.

**IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**No Impacts.** No impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

**XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project 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:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION**

***XIV a) Would the project 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?***

***Police Protection?***

***Schools?***

***Parks?***

***Other Public Facilities?***

**No Impact.** The Circulation and Infrastructure Element of the County's General Plan provides a goal for the desert region to ensure that public services are delivered and maintained at acceptable levels, even in the more rural areas of the desert (San Bernardino County, 2014). A policy to support this goal is to require all new development with the potential for functional impacts on the delivery of public services and infrastructure capacity to prepare a service impact analysis, and to implement mitigation measures to avoid additional burdens on the existing developed areas and to ensure the continued availability of the appropriate levels of service.

The project area is located along a remote 111-mile segment of the NTH; however, there are some areas along the highway that are surrounded by commercial, residential, and industrial development, such as the town of Daggett, the communities of Newberry Springs and Essex, and other nearby communities. The following list includes the closest public facilities to the project area:

- **Fire Station:** The nearest County Fire Station is approximately 9.52 miles north of the project area in Yermo.
- **Police Station:** The nearest police station to the project area is the San Bernardino Sheriff's station, located approximately 28.32 miles south in Lucerne Valley.
- **Schools:** The Yermo Elementary School is approximately 3.86 miles north of the project area in Yermo. The Calico High School/Silver Valley Adult School is approximately 500 feet south of the project area. The Newberry Springs Elementary School is approximately 2.97 miles north of the project area.
- **Parks:** There are no parks within or adjacent to the project area. The Amboy Crater National Natural Landmark is approximately 1.33 mile south of the project area in Amboy.
- **Libraries:** The nearest library to the project area is the Barstow library, located approximately 11 miles west of the project area.
- **Churches:** The Trinity Assembly of God is approximately 1.69 miles west of the project area, and the Apostolic Lighthouse of Barstow is approximately 1.28 miles west of the project area in Daggett. The Newberry Community Church is approximately 1.78 miles north of the project area, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is approximately 3.68 miles north of the project area in Newberry Springs.
- **Hospitals:** The Barstow Community Hospital is approximately 11.93 miles west of the project area.
- **Daycares:** There are no daycare facilities within or adjacent to the project area.
- **Senior Facilities:** There are no senior facilities within or adjacent to the project area.
- **Post Office:** The Daggett Post Office is approximately 3.28 miles to the west of the project area, and the Newberry Springs Post Office is approximately 0.07 mile north of the project area.

The project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have the same roadway capacity as existing conditions. The project would not directly affect the use of or the operations at these public facilities, nor would the project induce population growth that would require the provision of, or need for, new or physically altered governmental facilities. After project implementation, these facilities would continue to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives, and the construction of new or physically altered governmental facilities would not be required as a result of the project. Therefore, there would be no impacts.

**IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**No Impacts.** No impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

**XV. RECREATION**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project 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"/>
b) Does the project 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"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION**

***XV a) Would the project 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?***

**No Impact.** There are no neighborhood or regional parks within or adjacent to the project area. The Newberry Mountains Wilderness Area is approximately four miles south of the project area, and the Amboy Crater National Natural Landmark is approximately 1.17 miles south. Because the project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have the same roadway capacity, the project would not increase the amount of vehicles that are able to access these parks, nor would the project induce population growth that could affect the use of these parks. Therefore, the project would not affect the use of existing parks, and there would be no impacts.

***XV b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?***

**No Impact.** The project does not include recreational facilities, and would not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities because the bridges would have the same roadway capacity, and would not induce population growth that could affect the use or availability of existing facilities; therefore, there would be no impacts.

**IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**No Impacts.** No impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

**XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance, or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation, including mass transit and non-motorized travel, and relevant components of the circulation system, including, but not limited to, streets, highways, and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION**

***XVI a) Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance, or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation, including mass transit and non-motorized travel, and relevant components of***

***the circulation system, including, but not limited to, streets, highways, and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The Circulation and Infrastructure Element of the County's General Plan includes traffic and circulation goals for the desert region, such as ensuring a safe and effective transportation system that provides adequate traffic movement while preserving the rural desert character of the region, and ensuring that infrastructure improvements are compatible with the natural environment of the region. The Circulation and Infrastructure Element also includes a policy to ensure that all new development proposals do not degrade Levels of Service (LOS)<sup>3</sup> on Major Arterials<sup>4</sup> below LOS C in the desert region. LOS C is defined in the County's Road Planning and Design Standards as conditions of stable flow where operations are substantially affected by others in the traffic stream (San Bernardino County, 1993).

According to the County's Circulation and Transportation Map, the NTH is designated as a secondary highway (San Bernardino County, 2012). A secondary highway is defined in the County's Road Planning and Design Standards as a 4-lane highway with intersections at grade and access control, and that is striped for two lanes with shoulders in each direction. The design capacity of a secondary highway is LOS C with 20,000 vehicles per day. However, the NTH is a 2-lane roadway with one lane in each direction. There are no sidewalks or designated bike lanes in the project area; however, there are shoulders on each side of the roadway. The project area does not include any mass transit routes or facilities.

The project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have the same roadway capacity. Although some bridges may be lengthened, traffic circulation in the project area would not change from existing conditions, and project operation would not conflict with measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system in the County's General Plan, or Road Planning and Design Standards.

During project construction, vehicles or equipment along the roadway may temporarily result in traffic congestion. To minimize potential impacts, the County is considering one of two options for staging during construction. The first option would include full closure of the bridges with traffic detoured away from the construction area via an alternate route, or by using a temporary bypass detour into the wash. Temporary signage and traffic control devices would be installed during construction to safely control traffic around the sites. The second option would require one lane on the NTH to remain open at all times, while one half of the bridge is constructed. Temporary signage and traffic control devices would be installed during construction to safely control traffic. Following construction, the temporary detours would be removed.

With implementation of a construction staging plan, potential impacts would be minimized, and project construction would not conflict with measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation

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<sup>3</sup> LOS is a measurement of traffic flow, and ranges from LOS A (free-flow traffic) to LOS F (congestion).

<sup>4</sup> A Major Arterial is a high-capacity urban road with the primary function of delivering traffic from low-to-moderate-capacity roads (i.e., collector roads) to freeways or expressways.

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system in the County's General Plan, or Road Planning and Design Standards. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***XVI b) Would the project exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** See Response XVI a). The project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have the same roadway capacity. Although some bridges may be lengthened, traffic circulation in the project area would not change from existing conditions, and project operation would not exceed the County's LOS standard, which is LOS C for secondary highways.

During project construction, vehicles or equipment along the roadway may temporarily result in traffic congestion. With implementation of a construction staging plan, potential impacts would be minimized, and traffic during project construction would not exceed the County's LOS Standard for secondary highways. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***XVI c) Would the project result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?***

**No Impact.** The project area is adjacent to the Barstow-Daggett County Airport, and is 0.15 mile away from Ludlow Airport, which is a private airport. The project would not result in any changes in air traffic patterns because the project would not affect air traffic levels or change the location of nearby airports or air operations; therefore, the project would not result in any safety risks related to air traffic, and there would be no impact.

***XVI d) Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have the same roadway capacity. Although some bridges may be lengthened, the bridges would be designed in accordance with Caltrans safety standards, and would not include any design features that could pose safety hazards.

During project construction, potential safety hazards could result from construction vehicles and equipment either traveling or being staged along the roadway, which could result in potential collisions with oncoming traffic. To minimize potential impacts, the County is considering one of two options for staging during construction. The first option would include full closure of the bridges with traffic detoured away from the construction area via an alternate route, or by using a temporary bypass detour into the wash. Temporary signage and traffic control devices would be installed during construction to safely control traffic around the sites. The second option requires one lane on the NTH to remain open at all times, while one half of the bridge is constructed. Temporary signage and traffic control devices

would be installed during construction to safely control traffic. Following construction, the temporary detours would be removed.

With implementation of a construction staging plan, potential impacts would be substantially minimized, and project construction would not substantially increase hazards from a design feature or incompatible uses (e.g., construction equipment and vehicles). The project would include the replacement or rehabilitation of the existing bridges to improve safety and correct the structurally deficient bridges. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***XVI e) Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would continue to serve as a roadway for emergency access; therefore, project operation would not result in inadequate emergency access.

During project construction, vehicles or equipment along the roadway may temporarily result in traffic congestion, which could delay emergency vehicles. With implementation of a construction staging plan (as described in Response XVI d)), potential impacts would be minimized, and project construction would not affect the adequacy of emergency access. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***XVI f) Would the project conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?***

**No Impact.** The project area does not include any public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities; and the project would not conflict with any adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding these facilities, or decrease the performance of these facilities. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) developed the Draft California Bicycle Route 66 Concept Plan (Concept Plan) to provide a framework for developing specific on-road segments and off-road paths. The Concept Plan identifies the roadway segment between Needles and Barstow as very degraded with no plans for improvements. Once adopted, the Bicycle Route 66 Concept Plan will serve as a guide for developing bikeways in the region, ultimately providing an interconnected network of regional and local bikeways connecting cities in the region. (SCAG, 2013). The project would not conflict with any adopted plans and there would be no impacts.

**IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**Less Than Significant Impacts.** No significant impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

**XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statues and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## **SUBSTANTIATION**

### ***XVII a) Would the project exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** As described in Section IX, Hydrology and Water Quality, wastewater generated during project operation may include storm water runoff carrying leaks of oil or fuel from vehicles using the roadway. In addition, wastewater generated during construction may also include storm water runoff carrying soil, debris, and other substances from the construction area. Project construction could also require dredge or fill activities that may result in a discharge to surface waters.

CWA Section 402 and California's Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act require that all municipal, industrial and commercial facilities that discharge wastewater or storm water directly from a point source into a water of the U.S. must obtain a NPDES permit. Caltrans adopted a Construction General Permit (Order No. 2009-009-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002), which regulates storm water discharges from construction sites with a DSA of one acre or greater, and/or smaller sites that are part of a larger common plan of development. In addition, Caltrans has been issued a Statewide NPDES Permit (Order No. 2012-0011-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000003) by the SWRCB, and is required to control and regulate storm water and non-storm water discharges. Lastly, Section 401 and 404 of the CWA requires the USACE and RWQCBs to regulate the discharge of dredge or fill material into waters of the U.S. A CWA Section 404 Permit from the USACE, and a CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirement from the Lahontan and Colorado RWQCBs would be obtained for the project.

The project would comply with standard permits and regulations, which would minimize potential impacts and avoid exceeding wastewater treatment requirements of the Lahontan and Colorado RWQCBs; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### ***XVII b) Would the project require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The project area receives water from groundwater wells and from the SWP, which is a water storage and delivery system of reservoirs, aqueducts, power plants, and pumping plants that store and distribute water to 29 urban and agricultural water suppliers in Northern California, the San Francisco Bay Area, the San Joaquin Valley, the Central Coast, and Southern California (Department of Water Resources, 2015). The San Bernardino Water Reclamation Facility is a Regional Secondary Treatment Facility that provides wastewater treatment services for the City of San Bernardino, Loma Linda, East Valley, San Bernardino International Airport, Patton State Hospital, and unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County (City of San Bernardino, 2015).

The project area includes an existing roadway and bridges that do not require the use of water. Because the project would include rehabilitating or replacing existing bridges, project operation would not result in any additional uses of water, and would therefore not require any new or expanded water facilities. Project construction could also require water for typical construction activities, such as cement mixing

and watering to control dust and stabilize loose soils; however, construction would be short-term and intermittent, and would not be expected to result in the need for new or expanded water facilities.

Wastewater is generated in the project area from oil or fuel that may leak from vehicles onto the roadway, and be carried away by storm water runoff. Because the new bridges would have the same roadway capacity, and the project would not result in additional vehicles on the roadway, no additional wastewater would be generated during project operation. In addition, the project would not induce population growth that could require the construction of new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities.

Project construction could generate wastewater from storm water runoff carrying soil, debris, and other substances from the construction area. Project construction could also require dredge or fill activities that may result in a discharge to surface waters. As discussed in Response XVII a), construction would comply with standard permits and regulations, which would minimize the generation of wastewater during project construction and would avoid the need for new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***XVII c) Would the project require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The project would include the replacement of existing bridges, some of which would be lengthened, which could result in changes in storm water drainage during project operation; however, the longer bridges would be designed to accommodate and contain projected drainage flows, so that there would be no substantial increases in surface runoff that could require the construction of new or expanded storm water drainage facilities.

During construction, the project would require vegetation removal, grading, and the use of off-road vehicles; these activities could alter the topography, and therefore, the drainage patterns in the project area, resulting in the potential for increased surface runoff. During project construction, storm water management measures would be implemented in accordance with the County's Development Code, and may include measures to minimize runoff by containing and slowing the rate of storm water flows through the use of filters and berms. With implementation of these standard measures, the generation of additional storm water runoff would be minimized, avoiding the need for new or expanded storm water drainage facilities; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***XVII d) Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The SWP provides supplemental water to the project area to supplement the natural water flows into the ground. Water delivery systems bring water from the SWP to groundwater recharge locations, which include the Daggett/Yermo Recharge Site and the Newberry Springs Recharge Site (Mojave Water Agency, 2014). As discussed in Response XVII b), project operation

and construction would not require large amounts of water, avoiding the need for new or expanded entitlements; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***XVII e) Would the project 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?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The project area would be served by the San Bernardino Water Reclamation Facility, which is a Regional Secondary Treatment Facility providing wastewater treatment services for the City of San Bernardino, Loma Linda, East Valley, San Bernardino International Airport, Patton State Hospital, and unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County (City of San Bernardino, 2015). The treatment facility has a capacity of 33 million gallons per day.

As discussed in Response XVII b), the project would include rehabilitating and replacing existing bridges with new bridges that would have the same roadway capacity; therefore, no additional wastewater would be generated during project operation. In addition, the project would not induce population growth that could require additional wastewater treatment capacity. Project construction would comply with standard permits and regulations, which would minimize the generation of wastewater during project construction and would ensure that the wastewater treatment provider has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demands; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

***XVII f) Would the project be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The Barstow Landfill and Newberry Springs Transfer Station are the nearest landfills to the project area (San Bernardino County, 2007). The Newberry Springs Transfer Station was designed to accommodate seven tons of garbage a day, with the capacity to store up to 140 cubic yards daily (California Integrated Waste Management Board, 1997). The Newberry Springs Transfer Station services the surrounding area and sends material to the Barstow Sanitary Landfill, which is the designated regional landfill. The Barstow Sanitary Landfill was designed to accommodate 48 million tons of solid waste, and currently has approximately 3.6 acres of waste mass area left (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2015).

The project area includes a roadway where no solid waste is currently generated, aside from waste that is illegally discarded from vehicles using the roadway. Project operation would not result in the generation of additional solid waste because operations in the project area would remain the same as existing conditions. Project construction would include the demolition of the existing bridges, which would generate solid waste requiring disposal at nearby landfills or other appropriate hazardous waste disposal facilities. Project construction would be short-term, and the disposal of solid waste would be minimized through the recycling and reuse of materials, as feasible. Therefore, the project would not generate amounts of solid waste that could exceed the capacity of nearby landfills, and impacts would be less than significant.

***XVII g) Would the project comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** As discussed in Response XVII f), project operation would not result in the generation of additional solid waste because operations in the project area would remain the same as existing conditions. Project construction would include the demolition of the existing bridges, which would generate solid waste requiring disposal at nearby landfills. Some of the solid waste may be characterized as hazardous, and may require disposal at appropriate hazardous waste facilities. The project would comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the safe handling, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials, including RCRA, which includes requirements for hazardous solid waste management; the DTSC Environmental Health Standards for the Management of Hazardous Waste (California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4.5), which include standards for generators and transporters of hazardous waste; and the provisions of the County's Fire Department, Hazardous Materials Division, which include requirements for proper handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous substances. The County contractor would be responsible for educating construction workers on the proper classification and disposal of solid waste, which would ensure compliance with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**Less Than Significant Impacts.** No significant impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required.

**XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to 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, 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects which 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"/>

**SUBSTANTIATION**

***XVIII a) Does the project have the potential to 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, 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?***

**Potentially Significant Impact.** As detailed in this Initial Study Checklist, the project has the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, specifically in the areas of biological resources and cultural resources (see Section IV, Biological Resources; and Section V, Cultural Resources). In addition, the project could substantially reduce habitat for wildlife species in the project area, cause wildlife

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populations to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate plant and animal communities, reduce the number or restrict the range of rare or endangered plants and animals, and eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant.

***XVIII b) Does the project 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)?***

**Potentially Significant Impact.** As detailed in this Initial Study Checklist, the project would result in potential impacts on several environmental resources that could be cumulatively considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant.

***XVIII c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?***

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation.** As discussed in Section VIII, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, the project area may contain lead (ADL in soils, and lead-based paint in wooden supports and roadway striping) and creosote in treated wood. These hazardous materials could be accidentally released into the environment during ground disturbance and demolition of the existing bridges, resulting in a significant hazard to the public or to the environment. However, with implementation of mitigation measures to be identified in the EIR, requiring the appropriate handling and containment of these materials, potential hazards would be minimized. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

## **IMPACT CONCLUSION**

**Potentially Significant Impacts.** Potentially significant impacts have been identified or anticipated, and will be evaluated in an EIR.

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