

CHAPTER 5.8

ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES

The initial study did not identify any significant impacts that may be associated with energy and resources. The following section is a compilation of geological information from several sources including, the Final ERI for the Lucia Mar Unified School District High School Number Two, the County's Safety Element, the Department of Water Resources - Water Resources of the Arroyo Grande – Nipomo Mesa Area, and the EIR for the South County Area Plan.

A. Existing Conditions

Energy facilities are not found in the eight Study Areas being considered for the District's Sphere of Influence. Mineral extraction activities such as surface mines are not located in these areas with the exception of the sand and gravel mine in Study Area number four. Energy facilities that are nearby include the Conoco/Phillips Refinery and the Unocal Guadalupe Oil Field.

Mining of sand and gravel is allowed in the Santa Maria River if a Minor Use Permit is approved by the County; consistent with the regulations and policies in the General Plan.

B. Thresholds of Significance

Since no impacts have been found, no thresholds of significance are necessary.

C. Project Impacts

Expanding the District's Sphere of Influence would not significantly impact energy and mineral resources in the Nipomo Area. Although the proposed Sphere of Influence Update and Municipal Service Review does not significantly impact energy and mineral resources, the proposed project could represent the first step in the development of the areas within the SOI. Future development of this property could adversely impact energy and mineral resources in these areas.

It should be noted that the SOI would not cause a change in zoning or an increase in density. An increase in density in the SOI Study Areas would first require review and evaluation through one, or more of the following processes:

- A zoning change in the form of a General Plan Amendment;
- Approval of a Specific Plan;
- Conditional Use Permit (Minor Use Permit/Development Plan approvals);
- Tract/Parcel Map approvals; or
- an Annexation into the District.

The above-listed processes are subject to the California Environmental Quality Act. Inclusion in the SOI does not guarantee service or development of an area, but allows for the jurisdiction to plan serving that area. A General Plan Amendment, Specific Plan, Tract/Parcel Map or Conditional Use Permit would study a variety of land use and environmental issues before being approved or denied including community character and compatibility, existing Land Use policies, traffic and circulation impacts, the provision of public services, etc.

The proposed project would not directly result in any changes in land use for the involved properties. The proposed project could, however, represent the first step in development of undeveloped property in the SOI. The precise nature and extent of future development within the proposed SOI is subject to speculation and cannot be determined at this time. Any future development of the areas within the SOI would require a number of land use planning steps as listed above.

The Program EIR represents the first-tier environmental document for these related actions. Once the Program EIR is prepared, subsequent activities within this program must be evaluated in order to determine the extent of the required additional CEQA documentation.

Expanding the District's Sphere of Influence could have the indirect impact of encouraging a change in land uses in some Study Areas by providing public services (water and sewer). While in this case the NCSO does not control land use decisions (the County does), the provision of public services can affect the intensity and type of land development in a particular area.

Energy project specific impacts will be studied at the time a project is reviewed by the county. The proposed project will have no direct impact on the availability of known mineral resources that would be of future value to the region and the residents of the State. The proposed Sphere of Influence Update and Municipal Services Review does not conflict with adopted energy conservation programs. The proposed project will not require the use of or directly impact any available non-renewable resources.

D. Cumulative Impacts

The CEQA Deskbook defines Cumulative impacts as "two or more individual impacts that, when considered together are considerable or that compound or increase other environmental impacts." The District's SOI is a contributing factor to continued growth and development in the Nipomo area. However, it should be noted that Nipomo has grown significantly over the last two decades without the prior expansion of the District's Sphere of Influence. Typically, development projects were approved by the County for development and then approved by LAFCO and the District for inclusion into the District's SOI and service area. The growth in the area has been driven by approvals at the County level. The approvals usually anticipate the project itself providing public services such as water and sewer. Major development approvals such as this include:

- Black Lake Development-Within the District's SOI/Service Area
- The Woodlands-Outside the District's SOI/Service Area
- Maria Vista-Within the District's SOI/Service Area
- Knollwood-Within the District's SOI/Service Area

The Land Use section of this document contains a listing of the proposed General Plan Amendments being considered by the County as well as a listing of the annexations being proposed for the Nipomo area.

E. Mitigation Measures

The Sphere of Influence will not cause significant adverse impacts to energy resources or facilities and no mitigation measures are required.

F. Residual Impacts

Impacts are less than significant, Class III. Reductions in the Sphere of Influence Study Areas as recommended in the Land Use Section (5.1) of this EIR will further decrease any residual impacts that may be associated with the Sphere of Influence.