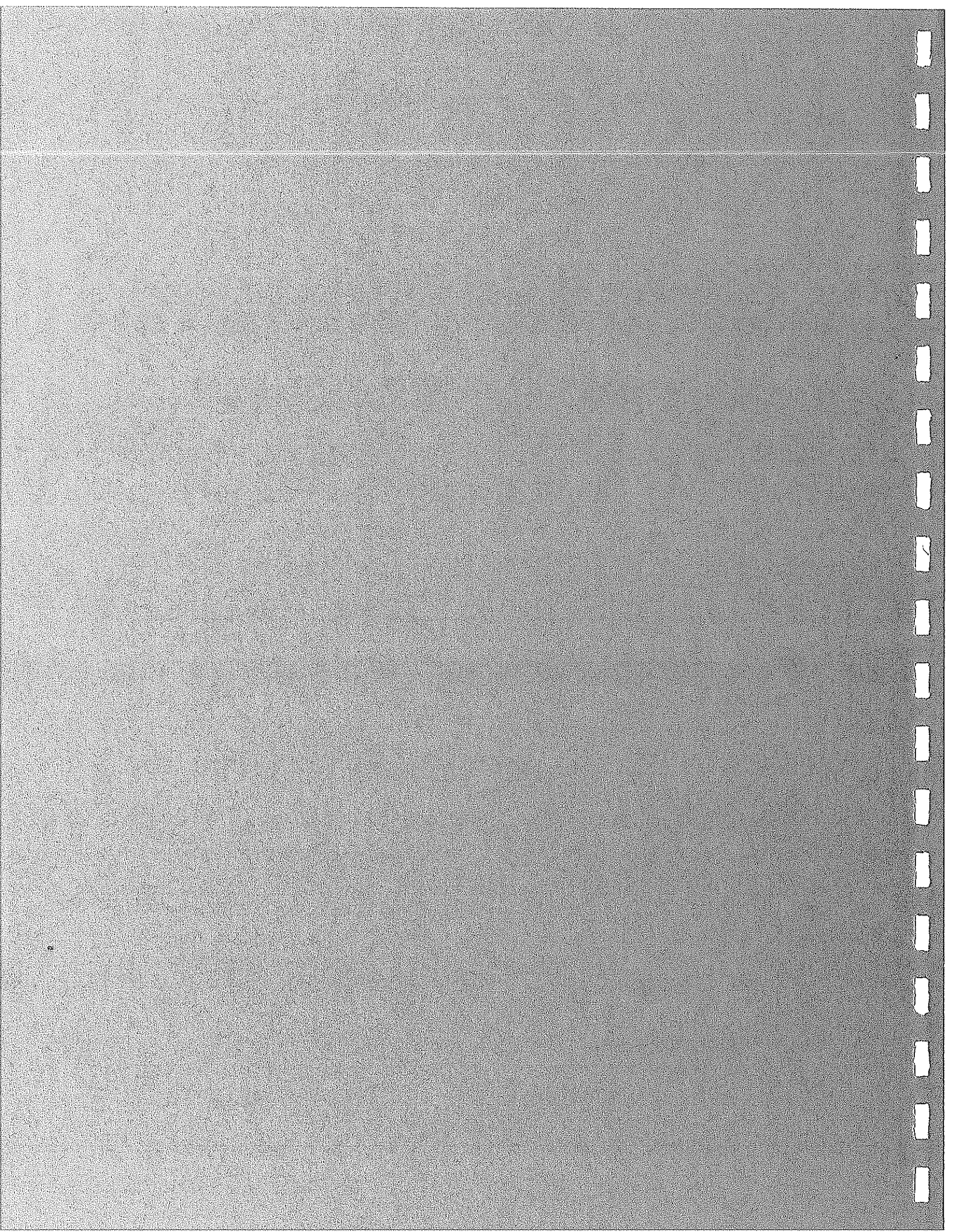


**1.0 INTRODUCTION**



## CHAPTER 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended. The County of Yolo is the "lead agency" for the project evaluated in this DEIR and, as such, has the primary responsibility for approving the project. The proposed project is the adoption of a plan (Off-Channel Mining Plan or OCMP) and ordinances to regulate mining adjacent to Cache Creek, outside the creek channel. The draft OCMP addresses a variety of issues relevant to mining as may occur in an area of approximately 23,174 acres, outside of the creek channel. The Plan allows for off-channel, deep-pit mining under controlled and monitored circumstances, as an alternative to continued in-channel mining. It prescribes standards and regulations for siting of operations in relation to the creek channel, adjoining pits, and other land uses. It identifies protections for groundwater quality and quantity. It allows for multiple reclamation uses including agriculture, habitat, flood control, water storage, groundwater recharge, and recreation. It also establishes the groundwork for the development of a future plan to allow for public recreational activities and uses along the creek. A separate environmental impact report is being prepared for a second plan (the Cache Creek Resources Management Plan or CCRMP) which focuses on resources within the creek channel. The two plans are on file and available for public review at the Yolo County Community Development Agency offices; once completed, they will together comprise the Cache Creek Area Plan.

The County determined that preparation of an EIR was appropriate in light of potentially significant impacts which could be caused by implementing the proposed project. Primary issues of concern identified in the Notice of Preparation included:

Land use and Planning	Geology and Soils
Hydrology and Water Quality	Agriculture
Biological Resources	Air Quality
Traffic and Circulation	Noise
Aesthetics	Cultural Resources
Hazards	Public Services and Utilities

### 1.1 BACKGROUND AND NATURE OF PROJECT

The impetus for the OCMP came from the 1975 report of the Aggregate Resources Advisory Committee (ARAC), the 1984 report of the Aggregate Technical Advisory Committee (AgTAC), and the June 1994 Statement of Goals, Objectives, and Policies regarding the management of aggregate resources in and adjoining Cache Creek. All of these reports suggested a need for the County to expand its efforts beyond sand and gravel, and to take a comprehensive approach in planning for all of the creek's resources.

These documents also recommended that the amount of in-stream mining be reduced, while continuing to maintain 100-year flood protection for adjoining properties.

In a previously approved conceptual workplan for guiding development of the Cache Creek Resources Management Plan (CCRMP), the County outlined a vision to integrate policies for all of the creek's resources within a comprehensive framework. The workplan emphasized a number of goals, including: the restoration of native habitat, the enhancement of open space and recreation opportunities, the coordination of surface water and groundwater, to increase the available water supply, the maintenance of Cache Creek as a dynamic system, and the minimization of flooding.

As presented to, and accepted by, the Board and Planning Commission in a workshop held October 24, 1995, three technical studies regarding various physical components of the Creek have been prepared (they are collectively referred to as the Technical Studies). These studies of creek geomorphology, groundwater resources, and biological resources have been used as the technical basis for the draft OCMP (the subject of this EIR).

In addition to historical documents, previous direction of the Board, and the Technical Studies, the staff also incorporated the following input into the OCMP and ordinances:

- discussions and interaction with interested citizens, technical consultants, other government agency officials, and representatives of the aggregate industry, over the last three years;
- data and analysis from previous studies of Cache Creek, and generally accepted practices for riparian management; and
- relevant plans and programs from other jurisdictions.

In past actions, the Yolo County Board of Supervisors has recognized that although mining is an important consideration, the creek is integrally bound to the environmental and social resources of the County. Therefore, development of the OCMP is based on the key assumption that the creek must be viewed as an integrated system, with an emphasis on the management of all of Cache Creek's resources, rather than a singular focus on the issue of mining. The OCMP has been prepared as a means to assist in this overall management, balancing issues and concerns within the overriding vision of enhancing the variety of resource needs for the region.

The purpose of the OCMP, together with the CCRMP, is to provide the necessary structure and policies for implementing a program to manage the wide variety of resources associated with the creek, including habitat, water resources, aggregate resources, agriculture, and recreation. One of the means for implementing this program is the adoption of new surface mining and reclamation ordinances. The Off-Channel Surface Mining Ordinance and Surface Mining Reclamation Ordinance include specific performance standards for ensuring that the goals and objectives spelled out in the OCMP

are achieved. Provisions are also made for establishing an ongoing Technical Advisory Committee, to continue monitoring and studying Cache Creek as it responds to the programs carried out within the plans and ordinances. The TAC will make recommendations to the County, as appropriate, to ensure that management is responsive to the dynamic nature of the creek.

Performance standards covering an array of issues, including those designed to protect groundwater quality and preclude pit capture, have been developed from the Lower Cache Creek Technical Studies and included in the OCMP, as well as the Off-Channel Mining Ordinance. Guidance regarding appropriate reclamation on various off-channel mining reaches of the Creek are included in the OCMP. Copies of the Technical Studies are available for review at the Yolo County Community Development Agency.

The goal statements, policies, performance standards, and implementation guidance in the OCMP address off-channel mining within the 28,130 acres the Department of Conservation has identified as potentially containing minable aggregate resources. With the exception of resources within the Cache Creek channel, mining anywhere in the 28,130 acres would be subject to the guidance and standards of the OCMP and implementing ordinances. As a practical matter, based on pending and foreseeable applications for surface mining permits, feasibly minable reserves likely occur on less than 2,887 acres of the total. The reserves associated with the 2,887 acres are used as the basis for the cumulative analysis in this DEIR.

## 1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF EIR

As provided for in the CEQA Guidelines, public agencies are charged with the duty to avoid or minimize environmental damage where feasible. In discharging this duty, the public agency has an obligation to balance a variety of public objectives, including economic, environmental, and social (Section 15021 of the CEQA Guidelines). This EIR is an informational document, the purpose of which is to inform public agency decision-makers and the general public of the significant environmental effects of the project. Additionally, the EIR identifies possible means to minimize the significant effects and describes reasonable alternatives to the project. (The proposed project and alternatives have been subjected to equivalent levels of analysis, and an environmentally superior alternative has been designated.) The public agency is required to consider the information in this EIR and previous environmental documentation, along with any other relevant information, in making its decision on the project (Section 15121 of the CEQA Guidelines). Sections 15122 through 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines describe the content requirements for the Draft EIR and Final EIR.

The purpose of this DEIR is to: 1) identify the potential significant effects on the environment resulting in the implementation of the OCMP and to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided; and 2) to identify any unavoidable adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated. The County must consider the

information in this document and respond to each identified significant effect. The CEQA requirement is to provide sufficient information concerning the potential environmental effects resulting from the project, so that decision-makers can make an informed decision regarding the efficiency, feasibility, and relative environmental merits of the project.

The preparation, content, and processing of this document are governed by CEQA Guidelines 15168. Under this section, the following relevant criteria for the preparation of a Program EIR are established:

- geographically;
- as logical parts in a chain of contemplated action;
- in connection with the issuance of rules, regulations, plans or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; or
- as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.

The OCMP constitutes a series of actions affecting properties within the plan boundaries. The study area is related geographically. The Plan includes maps, goals, objectives, actions, and performance standards that are logical parts in a chain of contemplated action. Each of these components comprises rules, regulations, or general criteria governing the implementation of the Plan. These components would be carried out under the authority of the Plan, as enabled by County approval. Specific projects carried out in a manner consistent with the Plan would have similar environmental impacts which could be mitigated in similar ways.

There are several advantages to a Program EIR. It provides a more thorough consideration of regional influences, secondary effects, cumulative impacts, broad alternatives, and other factors that apply to the program as a whole. Program EIRs avoid duplicative reconsideration of basic policy considerations. They allow the Lead Agency to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures at a time when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impacts.

Subsequent projects approved pursuant to a Program EIR still require additional environmental review. However, Program EIRs allow subsequent environmental documents to focus on issues that are unique to the site and that were not specifically addressed in the Program EIR. This allows decision makers and interested parties to focus an EIR for a subsequent project on new effects that have not been considered before. Although they help to streamline the process, Program EIRs and any subsequent focused project-level EIRs do not restrict public participation. They still require circulation of the documents and a comment period, notification of interested parties, and public hearings. At this time, there are five mining permit applications pending before the County; the potential environmental impacts of each of these will be examined in a separate, project-level EIR that will "tier" off this Program EIR.

A second program-level EIR is being prepared for the CCRMP, focusing on in-channel resources (the County's proposed creek improvement program is being addressed at the project level in that EIR). Focused project-level EIRs will be prepared for each long-term, off-channel surface mining permit and reclamation plan application submitted for sites located within the planning area. Therefore, this Program EIR focuses on cumulative environmental impacts, such as air quality, traffic, channel stability, and loss of agricultural land. Site-specific issues, such as aesthetics, groundwater effects, drainage, slope stability, flood protection, and noise will generally be dealt with as part of the project-level EIRs.

### 1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was prepared and circulated for a 30-day period of public review and comment from November 17, 1995 through December 18, 1995. A copy of the NOP and comments received on the NOP are included in this document (Section 7.1). A public scoping meeting was held for the OCMP on November 27, 1995. In preparing this EIR, the County and its consultants considered all written comments on the NOP, as well as the oral comments provided at the scoping meeting. This DEIR was publicly circulated on March 26, 1996 for a 45-day period of review and comment by the public and other interested parties, agencies, and organizations. A special Planning Commission hearing on the DEIR will be held on **Wednesday, April 17, 1996** at the Planning Commission Chambers at 292 West Beamer Street in Woodland, CA 95695, for the purpose of obtaining public comments on this EIR. All comments or questions about the EIR should be addressed to:

Mr. David Morrison, Resource Management Coordinator  
Yolo County Community Development Agency  
292 West Beamer Street  
Woodland, CA 95695  
Tel. (916) 666-8020; Fax: (916) 666-8156

The public review period for the Draft EIR concludes on **May 10, 1996**. Following public review, a final document will be prepared in response to written comments received during the public review period and to oral comments made at the public hearing. The final Response to Comments document will be available for public review a minimum of 10 days prior to its consideration by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. Both the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors will hold one or more public hearings to consider adoption of the OCMP (the dates of these hearings will be publicly noticed). Following their deliberations the Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the Board regarding the adequacy of the EIR and the desirability of the OCMP. The Board must take the final action to certify the EIR as adequate for decision-making purposes, and to approve or deny the OCMP. Specific Findings of Fact pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21081 will be prepared to reflect the final action of the Board.

## 1.4 MITIGATION MONITORING

The CEQA requires that when a public agency makes findings based on an EIR, the public agency must adopt a report or monitoring plan for those measures which it has adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment (Public Resources Code Section 21081.6, AB 3180 [1988]). The reporting or monitoring plan must be designed to ensure compliance during project implementation (Public Resources Code Section 21081.6). A Mitigation Monitoring Plan for the OCMP will be prepared in conjunction with the Response to Comments on this DEIR, and it will be provided to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for consideration in their deliberations.

## 1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE DOCUMENT

This document is organized into the following sections:

### **Chapter 1.0 - Introduction**

This chapter provides an introduction and overview describing intended uses of the DEIR, and the review and certification process.

### **Chapter 2.0 - Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

This chapter summarizes environmental impacts that have been identified as results of implementing the OCMP, describes each of the alternatives to the OCMP, describes proposed mitigation measures, and indicates the projected level of significance of impacts after the proposed mitigation is implemented. It also provides the required monitoring plan for implementation of the adopted mitigation measures.

### **Chapter 3.0 - Description of Project and Alternatives**

This chapter provides a detailed description of the OCMP, including plan area, major objectives, project components and characteristics, and required actions. This section also describes the alternatives examined in the EIR, including the designation of an environmentally superior alternative as determined by the environmental analysis contained in Chapter 4.0.

### **Chapter 4.0 - Environmental Analysis**

This chapter contains a program-level analysis of environmental issue areas. The analysis of each environmental issue contains an introduction and description of the relevant regulatory and physical setting of the planning area, description of impacts of the OCMP and alternatives, and recommendations regarding appropriate mitigation measures.



## **Chapter 5.0 - CEQA Considerations**

This chapter describes the cumulative analysis, growth inducing impacts, and significant irreversible environmental changes.

## **Chapter 6.0 - Report Preparation**

This chapter lists report authors by section, supporting and reference data used in preparation of this document, and County staff and others assisting in preparation and review of the document.

## **Chapter 7.0 - Appendices**

This chapter includes technical and informational appendices to the document.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1.6 SUMMARY OF INITIAL STUDY/NOP CONCLUSIONS; EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT</b></p>
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The County determined that an EIR is clearly required for this project, and therefore opted to conduct no further initial review pursuant to Section 15060(c) of the CEQA Guidelines. Instead the County began work directly on the EIR process as described in Article 7 of the Guidelines, commencing with Section 15080. The NOP identified the following areas of potential impact:

Land Use and Planning	Geology and Soils
Hydrology and Water Quality	Agriculture
Biological Resources	Air Quality
Traffic and Circulation	Noise
Aesthetics	Cultural Resources
Hazards	Public Services and Utilities

The County determined that there was no potential for project impact in the areas of population, housing, or energy (please refer to Section 2.5).