

### 4.3 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

#### 4.3.1 Overview

This section of the PEA identifies existing agricultural resources within the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP) area and assesses potential impacts that may result from Project construction and operation. This section also summarizes federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies associated with the protection and management of agricultural resources. For the purposes of this assessment, agricultural resources include Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance, and Grazing Land, as defined and mapped by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the California Department of Conservation (CDOC). Agricultural resources addressed in this assessment also include lands conserved through contracts established in accordance with the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act).

#### 4.3.2 Technical Methodology

Maps of Important Farmlands prepared by the CDOC as part of its Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) were downloaded and electronically overlain with geo-referenced locations of project components such as transmission lines (T/Ls), new substations, and substation expansion areas. Impacts were assessed by estimating the potential number of acres of agricultural land (by type) that could be disturbed either temporarily or permanently by construction and operation of the TRTP. These estimates were derived from Project Description data for each segment, including segment length, number of transmission structures (i.e., lattice steel towers [LSTs] and tubular steel poles [TSPs]) locations, and quantifications of disturbed acres that would be restored after construction (temporary disturbance), and number of acres that would not be restored (permanent disturbance). These data were used to:

- Determine average amount (acres) of temporary disturbance and permanent disturbance per tower/pole location
- Determine the average distance between tower/pole locations
- Plot T/L segments on Important Farmland maps and calculate the number of miles each agricultural land type is traversed
- Estimate the number of tower/pole locations per each land type and multiply by the average disturbance values to estimate total acreage (by type) that would be disturbed during construction (temporary impact) and operations (permanent impact)

The significance of impacts is assessed in accordance with criteria presented in Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines.

### **4.3.3 Regulations, Plans, and Standards**

#### **4.3.3.1 Federal Authorities and Administering Agencies**

##### **4.3.3.1.1 National Environmental Policy Act and the Farmland Protection Policy Act.**

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), 7 USC 4201-4209; and its regulations, 7 CFR Part 658) require and/or encourage federal agencies like the United States Forest Service (USFS), which has jurisdiction over the Angeles National Forest (ANF), to coordinate with the NRCS if their activities may irreversibly convert farmland (directly or indirectly) to nonagricultural use. Farmland protected under the FPPA includes Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance, as defined below.

##### **4.3.3.2 State Authorities and Administering Agencies**

CEQA Appendix G Guidelines require consideration of a project's influence on temporary and permanent impacts on: 1) farmlands defined and mapped by the California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program; and 2) farmlands conserved through contracts established in accordance with the California Land Conservation Act of 1965.

##### **4.3.3.2.1 California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.**

The CDOC established the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) to help assess the location and quantity of agricultural lands and their conversion to non-agricultural uses. The FMMP uses NRCS soil classifications, land inventories, and monitoring criteria to prepare digitized maps of important farmlands in California. These maps and associated statistical data are updated every two years and used in general plans, regional studies of agricultural land conversion, and in assessing project impacts on farmland (CDOC, 2007a). The FMMP maps eight categories of lands, five of which relate to agricultural uses (CDOC, 2007b):

- **Prime Farmland**, as defined by the California Department of Conservation, has two main components: Land Use and Soil. Land use has to have been irrigated at some time during the four years prior to the survey of the Important Farmland Map date and must be verified. Soil must meet the physical and chemical criteria for Prime Farmland as determined by the USDA NRCS. Soil characteristics include: water moisture regimes, available water-holding capacity and developed irrigation supply, soil temperature regime, soil pH, depth to impeding water table, sodium content, potential for flooding, potential for erosion, permeability rate, rock fragment content, and rooting depth. These

soil characteristics have quantifiable values in many cases that provide criteria for classification as Prime Farmland, Prime Farmland does not include publicly owned lands for which there is an adopted policy preventing agricultural use.

- **Farmland of Statewide Importance**, as defined by the California Department of Conservation, has two main components: Land Use and Soil. Land use has to have been irrigated at some time during the four years prior to the survey of the Important Farmland Map date and must be verified. The soil characteristics are generally more restrictive in nature than that of Prime Farmland, are quantifiable and used as criteria in classification of land into this category. The characteristics include: water moisture regimes, available water holding capacity and developed irrigation supply, soil temperature regime, soil pH, depth to impeding water table, sodium content, potential for flooding, potential for erosion, permeability rate, rock fragment content, and rooting depth. Farmland of Statewide Importance does not include publicly owned lands for which there is an adopted policy preventing agricultural use.
- **Unique Farmland** is defined by the United States Department of Agriculture as farmland that does not meet criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance yet has been used for production of specific high economic value crops (e.g., avocados and vineyards) at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date. It does not include publicly owned lands for which there is an adopted policy preventing agricultural use.
- **Farmland of Local Importance** is either currently producing crops, has the capability of producing crops, or is used for the production of confined livestock. These lands are important to the local economy, as determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory committee.
- **Grazing Land** is defined in many capacities, however, generally consists of land on which the existing vegetation is suited for grazing or browsing of livestock. The vast majority of this land in California is usually not irrigated.

Although grazing land is often described as important farmland because it is one of the categories used in preparing the FMMP maps, it is not defined as Important Farmland under CEQA or under the FPPA.

**4.3.3.2.2 California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act).** The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly known as the Williamson Act, was enacted to encourage preservation of agricultural lands. The main purposes of the Williamson Act are to preserve agricultural land and to encourage open space preservation and efficient urban growth. The Williamson Act provides incentives to landowners through reduced property taxes to create an agricultural preserve and agree to keep their land in agricultural production

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(or another compatible use) for at least 10 years. Section 51238 of the Williamson Act indicates that, unless local organizations declare otherwise, the erection, construction, alteration, or maintenance of gas, electric, water, or communication facilities are compatible with Williamson Act contracts. Maps, statistics, and reports on Williamson Act lands are available online (CDOC, 2007c, d, e).

**4.3.3.3 Local Authorities and Administering Agencies<sup>1</sup>**

Agricultural resources traversed by the TRTP are located in unincorporated portions of Kern and Los Angeles counties and within the cities of Lancaster, Palmdale, Ontario, Chino, and Chino Hills. While these jurisdictions are responsible for regulating most land uses within their boundaries, California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) General Order (GO) No. 131-D, Section XIV B states that “Local jurisdictions acting pursuant to local authority are preempted from regulating electric power line projects, distribution lines, substations, or electric facilities constructed by public utilities subject to the Commission’s jurisdiction. However in locating such projects, the public utilities shall consult with local agencies regarding land use matters.” SCE strives to be consistent with local requirements wherever practical and, in January 2007, initiated contact with pertinent local jurisdictions to apprise them of the Project and to request relevant land use and planning data. Local zoning maps and ordinances were reviewed during preparation of this PEA to determine whether the proposed Project would be a permitted use under existing agricultural zoning in Kern County, Los Angeles County, and the cities of Lancaster, Palmdale, Chino, Chino Hills, and Ontario. Data summarized in Appendix L (Table L-1) indicates that the proposed Project would be considered a compatible or permitted use in these jurisdictions.

**4.3.4 Significance Criteria**

The significance of potential impacts is assessed in accordance with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq.) which indicate that a project could have a significant impact on agricultural resources if it would:

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<sup>1</sup> The CPUC has primary jurisdiction over the TRTP because it authorizes the construction, operation, and maintenance of public utility facilities in the State of California. Although such projects are exempt from local land use and zoning regulations and permitting, General Order (GO) No. 131-D, Section III C requires “the utility to communicate with, and obtain the input of, local authorities regarding land use matters and obtain any non-discretionary local permits.” Nonetheless, the TRTP appears consistent with local agricultural zoning; however, any conflicts with local zoning would be less than significant due to the CPUC’s jurisdiction over electric power line projects and substations and the exempt status of such projects by GO 131-D.

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Preserve contract
- Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use

#### 4.3.5 Applicant Proposed Measures

SCE has developed a set of procedures to coordinate construction activities with landowners to avoid and minimize loss of agricultural productivity and interference with agricultural operations. These procedures include the following:

**APM AG-1: Coordinate with Landowner.** Prior to construction and as a part of acquisition of new easements on agricultural lands, SCE would coordinate with agricultural landowners and identify feasible site-specific measures to minimize impacts to ongoing agricultural operations, including, but not limited to, financial consideration for crop loss. General measures that would be implemented to the extent feasible are detailed below.

**APM AG-2: Locate Project Activities to Minimize Impacts to Active Agricultural Operations.** For example, to the extent practical, SCE would:

- Locate new towers adjacent to existing towers in order to consolidate obstructions to the movement of agricultural machinery
- Locate access roads, spur roads, staging areas, and pulling/splicing locations in areas that minimize impacts to agricultural operations
- Minimize removal of perennial crops

**APM AG-3: Avoid Harvest Season.** To the extent feasible, construction in agricultural fields would be scheduled after the end of harvest season.

#### 4.3.6 Proposed Project

##### 4.3.6.1 Project-wide Summary

Agricultural resources traversed by the TRTP occur in Segments 4, 5, 8 (including subsegments 8A, 8B, and 8C), and 10, and Alternatives 10A and 10B. These concentrate north of the ANF in southern Kern County and northern Los Angeles County and south of

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the ANF in San Bernardino County. Recent statistics regarding farmland inventories and trends in farmland conversion are presented in Table 4.3-1.

The proposed TRTP T/L segments traverse 6.8 miles of Prime Farmland, 0.2 mile of Farmland of Statewide Importance, 0.3 mile of Unique Farmland, 0.2 mile of Farmland of Local Importance, and 1.4 miles of Williamson Act land. An additional 30 miles of the proposed TRTP traverses Grazing Land (Table 4.3-2). As detailed below in the discussion of individual Project segments, maximum Project-wide impacts would include the temporary conversion of approximately 68 acres of Important Farmland, 15 acres of Williamson Act land, and 266 acres of Grazing Land to non-agricultural use. Such temporary impacts would not conflict with zoning or Williamson Act contracts and implementation of SCE's standard construction procedures would avoid or minimize conflicts with irrigation and other agricultural operations. These temporary impacts are considered less than significant. Maximum permanent impacts associated with LSTs and TSPs, access roads, and other areas needed for operations and maintenance include a total of approximately 8.3 acres of Important Farmland, 3.3 acres of Williamson Act land, and 62 acres of Grazing Land (note: these figures are not intended to correlate with Table 4.3-2, which does not tabulate acreage for the T/Ls). These losses represent a negligible proportion of existing inventories (2004) (Table 4.3-1) and would be compatible with Williamson Act contracts. Construction of the new Whirlwind Substation would result in the permanent conversion of approximately 66 acres of Prime Farmland if Site A were selected, and no impacts to agricultural resources if sites B or C were selected. The permanent conversion of 66 acres of Important Farmland out of the more than 755,000 acres available within the three-county region is considered adverse, but a less-than-significant impact. Expansion of the Antelope Substation would affect approximately 18 acres of Grazing Land and is considered a less than significant impact. There would be no impacts to agricultural resources from expansion and/or modification at the remaining substations. The remainder of this section provides segment-by-segment discussions of potential Project impacts to agricultural resources.

**4.3.6.2 Segment 4**

**4.3.6.2.1 Environmental Setting.** The approximately 19.6 mile-long Segment 4 would be constructed within a new 200-foot-wide R-O-W and would run south from the Cottonwind Substation to the newly proposed Whirlwind Substation in southern Kern County, and then continue southeast to the Antelope Substation in northern Los Angeles County. As shown in Table 4.3-3 and Figure 4.3-1 (Sheets 2-3), most of the agricultural land traversed by Segment 4 consists of Grazing Land, with smaller areas of Prime Farmland and Williamson Act lands being crossed between S4 MP 4.7 and S4 MP 9.9 (refer to Figure 4.3-1). This area lies within

**TABLE 4.3-1  
AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES IN KERN, LOS ANGELES, AND  
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTIES: 2002 – 2004 LAND USE CONVERSION<sup>1</sup>**

Land Use Category	Total Acreage Inventoried		Net Acreage Changed
	2002	2004	
<b>Kern County</b>			
Prime Farmland	526,524	518,804	-7,720
Farmland of Statewide Importance	108,338	106,326	-2,012
Unique Farmland	54,753	51,095	-3,658
Farmland of Local Importance	0	0	0
Important Farmland Subtotal	689,615	676,225	-13,390
Grazing Land	904,760	911,708	6,948
Agricultural Land Total	1,594,375	1,587,933	-6,442
<b>Los Angeles County</b>			
Prime Farmland	32,187	33,218	1,031
Farmland of Statewide Importance	939	1,029	90
Unique Farmland	1,155	1,119	-36
Farmland of Local Importance	8,171	8,685	514
Important Farmland Subtotal	42,452	44,051	1,599
Grazing Land	233,399	228,826	-4,573
Agricultural Land Total	275,851	272,877	-2,974
<b>San Bernardino County</b>			
Prime Farmland	21,648	20,315	-1,333
Farmland of Statewide Importance	9,706	8,777	-929
Unique Farmland	3,412	2,654	-758
Farmland of Local Importance	3,314	2,928	-386
Important Farmland Subtotal	38,080	34,674	-3,406
Grazing Land	919,331	915,548	-3,783
<b>Agricultural Land Total</b>	<b>957,411</b>	<b>950,222</b>	<b>-7,189</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection (CDOC, 2007f-h).

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**TABLE 4.3-2  
OVERVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS WITHIN THE TRTP**

Project Component	Prime Farmland	Farmland of Statewide Importance	Unique Farmland	Farmland of Local Importance	Total Important Farmland	Grazing Land	Williamson Act Land
<b>Substations (Segment 9)<sup>1</sup></b>							
Whirlwind Alt. A	66.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Whirlwind Alt. B	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Whirlwind Alt. C	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Antelope Expansion (acres)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.0	0.0
Vincent Expansion (acres)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Acreage<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>66.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Transmission Lines<sup>2</sup></b>							
Segment 4 T/L	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	3.2	12.8	0.9
Segment 5 T/L	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	4.6	0.0
Segment 6 T/L	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Segment 7 T/L	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Segment 8A T/L	1.7	0.1	0.1	0.0	1.9	1.1	0.0
Segment 8B T/L	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0
Segment 8C T/L	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0
Segment 10 T/L	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.9	0.0
Segment 10A Alt. T/L	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
Segment 10B Alt. T/L	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.7	0.0
Segment 11 T/L	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Distance<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>1.4</b>

<sup>1</sup> Acreage refers to the amount of agricultural land needed to construct the substation at that location.

<sup>2</sup> Distance refers to the number of linear miles of agricultural lands crossed by TRTP T/Ls.

**4.3.6.2.2 Impact Analysis.**

**Construction.**

**Would construction activities convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use?**

Segment 4 would require construction of a total of an estimated 165 new transmission towers, including 88 220 kV towers between the Cottonwind and Whirlwind substations and

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**TABLE 4.3-3  
AGRICULTURAL LANDS TRAVERSED BY SEGMENT 4**

Agricultural Land Type	Distance Traversed (miles)	Approximate No. of Towers	Jurisdiction
Prime Farmland	2.95	25	Unincorporated Kern County, Unincorporated Los Angeles County
Farmland of Local Importance	0.15	1	Unincorporated Los Angeles County
Williamson Act Lands	0.92	8	Unincorporated Kern County
Grazing Land	12.76	107	Unincorporated Kern County, Lancaster, Unincorporated Los Angeles County
Grand Total	16.78	141	

77 500 kV towers between the Whirlwind and Antelope substations. Construction would also require an estimated 34 new pulling locations, 34 tensioner locations, 19 new splicing locations, approximately 33 miles of existing access roads and approximately 7.2 miles of new spur roads. An estimated 317 acres would be disturbed during construction (see Tables 3.3-1 and 3.3-2). More than 80 percent of the disturbance would be temporary as approximately 265 acres would be restored following construction.

Temporary impacts along Segment 4 average 1.6 acres per tower location. Based on data in Table 4.3-3, construction impacts are estimated to include a temporary conversion of almost 42 acres of Important Farmland to non-agricultural uses, including 40 acres of Prime Farmland and 1.6 acres of Farmland of Local Importance. These impacts represent a very small proportion of the 755,000 acres of Important Farmland in the three-county region of influence (see Table 4.3-1) and temporary conversion of Important Farmland to non-agricultural uses is considered a less-than-significant impact. Moreover, impacts would be minimized by APMs AG-1 through AG-3.

Grazing Land is not considered Important Farmland but it is an agricultural resource, and construction would temporarily convert approximately 171 acres of Grazing Land to non-agricultural uses. Recent inventories (see Table 4.3-1) indicate that the three-county region contains more than 2,000,000 acres of Grazing Land and the temporary conversion of Grazing Land along Segment 4 is considered a less-than-significant impact.

**Would construction conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use and Williamson Act contracts?**

Agricultural land in Segment 4 occurs within unincorporated Kern County, unincorporated Los Angeles County, and the City of Lancaster. Zoning for Segment 4 is discussed in more detail in Land Use Section 4.10.6.1 and no conflicts with agricultural zoning were identified.

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While SCE is not required to comply with local zoning per GO 131-D, the TRTP nonetheless appears consistent. Any conflicts with local zoning would be less than significant due to the CPUC's jurisdiction over electric power line projects and substations and the exempt status of such projects by General Order No. 131-D.

Construction of Segment 4 would temporarily affect three parcels of land in Kern County enrolled in Williamson Act contracts, which are a compatible use with electric transmission lines. These parcels are 118.1, 154.9 and 197.1 acres in size and total 470.1 acres. Construction of Segment 4 would temporarily convert 12.8 of these acres to non-agricultural uses. As Kern County considers electric utilities a compatible use with Williamson Act lands, and given the small size of the affected area and the temporary nature of the conversion, construction of Segment 4 would have no effect on Williamson Act contracts per se and a less-than-significant impact on agricultural operations of Williamson Act lands.

**Would the Project involve other construction-related changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?**

In addition to temporary conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, construction activities along access roads and spur roads also would cause a temporary increase in vehicular traffic that may result in short-duration disruptions of farming and grazing activities. Such impacts would be avoided and/or minimized by implementation of APMs AG-1 through AG-3, and, regardless, vehicular travel would not cause any additional conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use. Thus, no impact is expected to occur.

**Operations.**

**Would operations permanently convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use?**

Of the 317 acres that would be disturbed during Segment 4 construction, an estimated 42 acres (13 percent) would be permanently disturbed by tower footings, access roads, spur roads, and stringing areas needed for operations and maintenance. Permanent impacts would average an estimated 0.3 acre per tower location and result in the permanent conversion of 6.6 acres of Important Farmland, including 6.3 acres of Prime Farmland and 0.3 acre of Farmland of Local Importance. Approximately 32.1 acres of Grazing Land would also be permanently converted to non-agricultural uses. The scale of these losses can be measured in light of existing (2004) inventories which indicate that approximately 755,000 acres of Important Farmland and more than 2,000,000 acres of Grazing Land are located in the region of influence (see Table 4.3-1). The permanent conversion of minute amounts of agricultural land along Segment 4 is considered a less-than-significant impact. Moreover, impacts would be minimized by APMs AG-1 through AG-3.

**Would operations conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use and Williamson Act contracts?**

The TRTP appears consistent with local zoning.

Segment 4 would result in the permanent conversion of 2.4 acres of land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts. Individual parcels must be at least 10 acres in size to be enrolled in Williamson Act contracts and the three affected parcels at 118.1, 154.9 and 197.1 acres. The permanent conversion of 2.4 acres to non-agricultural use would not reduce any parcel below the 10-acre threshold, and thus Segment 4 would have no adverse effect on Williamson Act contracts. As a result of a minor loss of acreage, there would be a negligible reduction in the agricultural yield of Williamson Act lands. This reduction is considered a less-than-significant impact.

**Would the Project involve other operations-related changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?**

This segment would require no new permanent access or spur roads and periodic use of existing roads for operations and maintenance would not result in a change in the environment that would result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. Thus, no significant impacts would be expected to occur.

**4.3.6.2.3 Mitigation Measures.** Segment 4 would not result in any significant impacts to agricultural resources and mitigation measures are not required.

**4.3.6.2.4 Impact Significance After Mitigation Measures.** No mitigation measures are required due to a lack of significant impacts along this segment.

**4.3.6.3 Segment 5**

**4.3.6.3.1 Environmental Setting.** Segment 5 is approximately 18 miles long and would extend from the existing Antelope Substation to the existing Vincent Substation. Agricultural resources traversed by this segment include 0.1 mile of Prime Farmland in unincorporated Los Angeles County and 4.6 miles of Grazing Land within the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale (see Table 4.3-2; and Figure 4.3-1, Sheets 3-5). No other agricultural resources are present along Segment 5.

**4.3.6.3.2 Impact Analysis.**

**Construction.**

**Would construction activities temporarily convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use?**

Segment 5 would remove two existing 220 kV lines with an estimated 64 towers and replace them with a new 500 kV T/L with 67 towers. Construction would also require 14 new pulling locations, 16 tensioner locations, 7 splicing locations, 2 new staging areas, and existing access and spur roads. An estimated 165 acres of land would be disturbed during construction. Most disturbances (93 percent) would be temporary as approximately 153 acres would be restored after construction (see Appendix P, Table 3.3-3).

Temporary impacts along Segment 5 average approximately 2.4 acres per tower location. Based on the estimated number of towers that would be constructed on agricultural land (see Table 4.3-4), temporary impacts along Segment 5 include the conversion of approximately 2.34 acres of Prime Farmland and 38.4 acres of Grazing Land to non-agricultural use. These values represent a very small proportion of the existing agricultural resources in the region of influence (see Table 4.3-1) and the conversion would be temporary. Moreover, impacts would be minimized by APMs AG-1 through AG-3. Thus, no significant impacts would be expected to occur.

**TABLE 4.3-4  
AGRICULTURAL LANDS TRAVERSED BY SEGMENT 5**

Agricultural Land Type	Distance Traversed (miles)	Approximate No. of Towers	Jurisdiction
Prime Farmland	0.10	1	Unincorporated Los Angeles County
Grazing Land	4.55	16	Lancaster, Palmdale
Grand Total	4.65	17	

**Would construction conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use and Williamson Act contracts?**

Agricultural land in Segment 5 occurs within unincorporated Los Angeles County and the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale. Zoning for Segment 5 is discussed in more detail in Land Use Section 4.10.6.2 and no conflicts with agricultural zoning were identified. While SCE is not required to comply with local zoning, the TRTP nonetheless appears consistent. Any conflicts with local zoning would be less than significant due to the CPUC's jurisdiction over

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electric power line projects and substations and the exempt status of such projects by GO 131-D.

There are no Williamson Act lands along or near Segment 5. Consequently, construction of Segment 5 would have no impact on such resources.

**Would the Project involve other construction-related changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?**

In addition to temporary conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, construction activities along access roads and spur roads also would cause a temporary increase in vehicular traffic that may result in short-duration disruptions of farming and grazing activities. Such impacts would be avoided and minimized by implementation of APM AG-1 and, regardless, would not cause the conversion of any farmland operation to non-agricultural use. Thus, no significant impacts would be expected to occur.

**Operations.**

**Would operations permanently convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use?**

Of the estimated 165 acres that would be disturbed during construction of Segment 5, 12 acres (7.0 percent) would be permanently disturbed by towers, access roads, and stringing areas needed for operations and maintenance. Permanent impacts are expected to average approximately 0.2 acre per tower location. Based on the number of towers that would be constructed in each type of agricultural land (Table 4.3-4), approximately 0.2 acre of Prime Farmland and 3.2 acres of Grazing Land along Segment 5 would be permanently converted to non-agricultural use. In light of existing inventories (see Table 4.3-1), these losses are negligible and are considered a less-than-significant impact. Moreover, impacts would be minimized by APMs AG-1 through AG-3.

**Would operations conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use and Williamson Act contracts?**

As noted above, the TRTP appears consistent with existing zoning.

There would be no permanent loss of Williamson Act lands as none are located within or near Segment 5.

**Would the Project involve other operations-related changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?**

Access roads and spur roads would be used periodically for operations and maintenance. The use of those roads would not result in a change in the environment that would result in the additional conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. Thus, no significant impacts would be expected to occur.

**4.3.6.3.3 Mitigation Measures.** Segment 5 of the TRTP would not result in any significant impacts to agricultural resources and mitigation measures are not required.

**4.3.6.3.4 Impact Significance After Mitigation Measures.** No mitigation measures are required due to a lack of significant impacts.

**4.3.6.4 Segment 6**

**4.3.6.4.1 Environmental Setting.** There are no agricultural resources along or near Segment 6 (see Table 4.3-2; Figure 4.3-1, Sheets 5-7).

**4.3.6.4.2 Impact Analysis.** There are no agricultural resources in Segment 6; therefore, no impacts to agricultural resources would occur in this portion of the proposed Project.

**4.3.6.4.3 Mitigation Measures.** There would be no impacts along this segment, and thus no mitigation measures are required.

**4.3.6.4.4 Impact Significance After Mitigation Measures.** Not applicable; there would be no impacts along this segment.

**4.3.6.5 Segment 7**

**4.3.6.5.1 Environmental Setting.** There are no agricultural resources along or near Segment 7 (see Table 4.3-2; Figure 4.3-1, Sheets 7-8).

**4.3.6.5.2 Impact Analysis.** There are no agricultural resources in Segment 7; therefore, no impacts to agricultural resources would occur in this portion of the proposed Project.

**4.3.6.5.3 Mitigation Measures.** There would be no impacts along this segment, and thus no mitigation measures are required.

**4.3.6.5.4 Impact Significance After Mitigation Measures.** Not applicable; there would be no impacts along this segment.

**4.3.6.6 Segment 8**

**4.3.6.6.1 Environmental Setting.** Segment 8, which has three subsegments 8A, 8B, and 8C, consists of 35.2 miles of new 500 kV T/L that would extend from near the Mesa Substation east to the Mira Loma Substation. Further subsegment details are presented below in the discussion of construction impacts. Much of the setting is either urbanized or lacks agricultural resources, but a considerable amount of Farmland and Grazing Land occurs in the extreme southwestern corner of San Bernardino County near the cities of Ontario, Chino, and Chino Hills (Table 4.3-5; Figure 4.3-1, Sheet 9). These lands once represented one of the nation’s largest concentrations of dairy farms, but between 2004 and 2006 more than 80 percent of the area’s dairies were sold to real estate developers (Los Angeles Times, 2006).

**TABLE 4.3-5  
AGRICULTURAL LANDS TRAVERSED BY SEGMENT 8**

Agricultural Land Type	Distance Traversed (miles)	Approximate No. of Towers/TSPs	Jurisdiction
Prime Farmland	2.58	13	Chino, Ontario
Farmland of Statewide Import	0.1	1	Ontario
Unique Farmland	0.13	1	Ontario
Grazing Land	1.09	6	Chino Hills
Grand Total	3.90	21	

**4.3.6.6.2 Impact Analysis.**

**Construction.**

**Would construction activities temporarily convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use?**

Segment 8, as noted above, includes three subsegments (see Figure 4.3-1, Sheets 8-9). Segment 8A involves replacement of an existing 220 kV T/L with a new 500 kV T/L that would run east from the Mesa Substation past the Chino Substation to its end point at the Mira Loma Substation. To make room for this subsegment, an existing 220 kV T/L would be removed. Segments 8B and 8C are new 220 kV T/Ls that would both run east from the Chino Substation to the Mira Loma Substation. Segment 8B would be constructed in an existing R-O-W currently occupied by an older T/L. The older line would be removed to make way for the new construction. No such removal would be needed for Segment 8C because it would be attached to a vacant position on the 500 kV towers constructed as part of Segment 8A. Just east of the Mira Loma Substation, Segments 8A and 8C would deviate and follow

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different routes into the substation. Segment 8 would also include undergrounding of approximately 1.3 miles of existing 66 kV distribution lines adjacent to the Chino Substation between S8A MP 27.6 – 28.75 (see Figure 4.3-1, Sheet 9).

Construction of the three subsegments would require approximately 226 LSTs and TSPs, 33 pulling locations, 33 tensioner locations, 33 new splicing locations, 6.1 miles of new spur roads, use of 41 miles of existing access roads, and 2 to 3 new staging areas. Total disturbance during construction is estimated at approximately 350 acres (see Table 3.3-6). Almost 96 percent (335 acres) of the disturbed area would be restored after construction was completed. An estimated 15 acres would be permanently disturbed.

Based on a combined total of 226 tower and pole locations, construction impacts would average approximately 1.6 acres per location. This average disturbance factor and data presented in Table 4.3-5 suggest that construction of Segment 8 would temporarily affect approximately 21 acres of Prime Farmland, 1.6 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, 1.6 acres of Unique Farmland, and 9.6 acres of Grazing Land. These impacts represent a negligible proportion of existing inventories (see Table 4.3-1) and temporary conversion of these lands to non-agricultural uses is considered a less-than-significant impact. Also, much of the lands that would be disturbed are dairies that would not experience crop losses or other impacts typically associated with cultivated lands. Finally, any impacts that may occur would be minimized by APMs AG-1 through AG-3. Thus, no significant impacts would be expected to occur.

**Would construction conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use and Williamson Act contracts?**

Agricultural land traversed by Subsegments 8A-C is located within the cities of Chino, Chino Hills and Ontario. Zoning for Segment 8 is discussed in more detail in Land Use Section 4.10.6.5 and no conflicts with agricultural zoning were identified. Any conflicts with local zoning would be less than significant due to the CPUC's jurisdiction over electric power line projects and substations and the exempt status of such projects by General Order No. 131-D. Thus, no significant impacts would be expected to occur.

There are no Williamson Act lands along or near Segment 8 and there would be no construction impacts on such resources.

**Would the Project involve other construction-related changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?**

In addition to temporary conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, construction activities along access roads and spur roads also would cause a temporary increase in

vehicular traffic that may result in short-duration disruptions of farming and grazing activities. Such impacts would be avoided and/or minimized by implementation of APMs AG-1 through AG-3, and, regardless, would not cause the conversion of any Farmland to non-agricultural use. Thus, no significant impacts would be expected to occur.

**Operations.**

**Would operations permanently convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use?**

Of the estimated 350 acres that would be disturbed during construction of Segment 8, only 15 acres would be disturbed permanently. Almost all of these permanent impacts are associated with new spur roads that lead to each tower and pole location. Permanent impacts are estimated to average approximately 0.07 acre per tower/road location (rounded to 0.1). Based on data presented in Table 4.3-5, Segment 8 would result in the permanent conversion of approximately 1.3 acres of Prime Farmland, 0.1 acre of Farmland of State Importance, 0.1 acre of Unique Farmland, and 0.6 acre of Grazing Land. Compared to existing inventories (see Table 4.3-1), these impacts represent negligible losses and are considered a less-than-significant impact. Moreover, impacts would be minimized by implementation of APMs AG-1 through AG-3. Thus, no significant impacts would be expected to occur.

**Would operations conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use and Williamson Act contracts?**

As noted above, no conflicts with agricultural zoning have been identified.

There would be no permanent loss of Williamson Act lands as none are located within or near this segment.

**Would the Project involve other operations-related changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?**

Access roads and spur roads would be used periodically for operations and maintenance. The use of those roads would not result in a change in the environment that would result in additional conversion of Important Farmland to non-agricultural use. Therefore, no impacts are expected to occur.

**4.3.6.6.3 Mitigation Measures.** Segment 8 of the TRTP would not result in any significant impacts to agricultural resources and mitigation measures are not required.

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**4.3.6.6.4 Impact Significance After Mitigation Measures.** No mitigation measures are required and impacts would be less than significant.

**4.3.6.7 Segment 9**

**4.3.6.7.1 Environmental Setting.** Segment 9 includes construction of a new substation (Whirlwind) in Kern County and expansion of two existing substations (Antelope and Vincent) in Los Angeles County. Minor additional modifications to accommodate new equipment also would occur within the fence lines of three existing substations: Mesa, Gould, and Mira Loma. Agricultural lands at the new and expanded substation locations are summarized in Table 4.3-6 and discussed below. Three alternative sites (A, B, and C) are under evaluation for construction of the 65- to 67-acre Whirlwind Substation in southern Kern County (see Figure 4.3-1, Sheet 2). Site A is wholly located on Prime Farmland. Site B includes a small portion of a parcel enrolled in a Williamson Act contract. Site C contains no agricultural land/Important Farmland.

**TABLE 4.3-6  
AGRICULTURAL LANDS WITHIN NEW  
AND EXPANDED SUBSTATIONS IN SEGMENT 9**

Agricultural Land Type	Whirlwind	Whirlwind	Whirlwind	Antelope	Vincent
	Alt A	Alt B	Alt C	Expansion	Expansion
Prime Farmland (acres)	66.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Williamson Act Lands	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grazing Land (acres)	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.0	0.0
Grand Total (acres)	66.0	1.0	0.0	18.0	0.0

The Antelope Substation would be expanded and upgraded to accommodate new 500 kV transmission connections. It is surrounded by Grazing Land. The Vincent Substation would also need to be expanded and an existing and unpaved residential access road relocated. It is surrounded by non-agricultural lands. Other substations that would be affected by the TRTP include Gould, Mesa, and Mira Loma. Project activities at these locations are wholly within existing substation fence lines and no agricultural lands would be affected.

**4.3.6.7.2 Impact Analysis.**

**Construction.** All impacts for Segment 9 would be permanent and are described below.

**Operation.**

**Would operations permanently convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use?**

**Whirlwind Substation.** The new Whirlwind Substation would require constructing a 56-acre pad, cut-and-fill grading of another 8 acres to blend the new pad with the surrounding terrain, installation of a chain link perimeter fence, and grading and paving one primary and one secondary access road. Prior to construction, existing vegetation would be mechanically removed and the land leveled. Permanent disturbance would vary from 65 to 67 acres of land, depending on which site is developed.

Construction of the new Whirlwind Substation at Site A would permanently disturb approximately 66 acres of Prime Farmland. Although this would be the Project's largest single impact to Prime Farmland, it represents 0.01 percent of the region's 560,799 acres of Prime Farmland and the permanent conversion of this acreage to non-agricultural use is considered a less-than-significant impact. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

Construction of either Site B or C would not result in any impacts to Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance because they lack such resources.

**Antelope Substation Expansion.** Expansion of the Antelope Substation would permanently take approximately 18 acres of Grazing Land out of production. This represents a negligible reduction of the more than 2,000,000 acres of Grazing Land that currently (2004) exist in Kern, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino counties (see Table 4.3-1). Thus, no significant impacts would be expected to occur.

**Other Substations.** No agricultural resources are present at the other substations (Vincent, Gould, Mesa, and Mira Loma) and there would be no project impact at these locations.

**Would operations conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use and Williamson Act contracts?**

New substations occur in unincorporated Kern County, the City of Lancaster and unincorporated Los Angeles County. Zoning for Segment 9 is discussed in more detail in Land Use Section 4.10.6.6 and no conflicts with agricultural zoning were identified. Any conflicts with local zoning would be less than significant due to the CPUC's jurisdiction over electric power line projects and substations and the exempt status of such projects by General Order No. 131-D.

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The edge of Whirlwind Site B encompasses a small corner of a parcel enrolled in a Williamson Act contract. Site B is the only Segment 9 component that includes Williamson Act land. Impacts to this parcel are not considered likely because Site B could accommodate the substation and road system without affecting the Williamson Act land. Due to the small size of the Williamson Act land within Site B, impacts, should they occur, would be less than significant.

**Would the Project involve other operations-related changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?**

Other than permanent impacts described above, substation operations would not result in the conversion of Farmland as defined by FMMP to non-agricultural use.

**4.3.6.7.3 Mitigation Measures.** Segment 9 would not result in any significant impacts to agricultural resources and mitigation measures are not required.

**4.3.6.7.4 Impact Significance After Mitigation Measures.** No mitigation measures are required and impacts would be less than significant.

**4.3.6.8 Segment 10**

**4.3.6.8.1 Environmental Setting.** Segment 10 would be constructed within a new 330-foot-wide R-O-W that would extend southwest from the Windhub Substation to the proposed Whirlwind Substation in southern Kern County. The only agricultural resources traversed by Segment 10 are Grazing Lands (Table 4.3-7, Figure 4.3-1, Sheets 1-2).

**TABLE 4.3-7  
AGRICULTURAL LANDS TRAVERSED BY  
SEGMENT 10 AND ALTERNATIVES 10A AND 10B**

Agricultural Land Type	Distance Traversed (miles)	Approximate No. of Towers	Jurisdiction
Segment 10 (proposed)			
Grazing Land	6.94	40	Unincorporated Kern County
Segment 10A Alternative			
Williamson Act Lands	0.50	3	Unincorporated Kern County
Segment 10B Alternative			
Grazing Land	4.66	27	Unincorporated Kern County

Two alternative alignments have been proposed for portions of Segment 10 (Figure 4.3-1, Sheets 1-2). Alternative Segment 10A would deviate from Segment 10 at S10 MP 7 and reconnect at S10 MP 15.8. Alternative Segment 10A crosses a 125-acre parcel enrolled in a Williamson Act contract. Alternative Segment 10B is a variant of Alternative Segment 10A and would deviate from Alternative Segment 10A at S10A MP 2.3 and reconnect at S10A MP 6. Alternative Segment 10B would eliminate the crossing of the Williamson Act land, but increase the amount of Grazing Land crossed.

**4.3.6.8.2 Impact Analysis.**

**Construction.**

**Would construction activities temporarily convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use?**

Segment 10 would require acquisition of a new R-O-W that would be 330 feet wide and approximately 17 miles long, and the construction of approximately 96 new single-circuit 500 kV tower sites, 96 associated laydown areas, 16 pull sites, 4.85 miles of new access roads, 2.25 miles of new spur roads, five staging areas each measuring 3 to 5 acres in size and use of 8.25 miles of existing roads. Collectively, construction of Segment 10 would disturb an estimated total of 90.7 acres, 67.0 acres of which would be restored after construction was completed. This figure yields an average temporary loss of approximately 0.7 acre per tower site and, based on the estimated number of towers that would be constructed on agricultural lands (Table 4.3-7), approximately 28 acres of Grazing Land would be temporarily affected during construction of Segment 10. These impacts would not be reduced by selecting either 10A or 10B because they replace a portion of Segment 10 that does not traverse agricultural lands. If Segment 10A was selected, an additional 2.1 acres of Williamson Act land would be affected. If Segment 10B was selected, impacts to Williamson Act lands would be avoided but an additional 19 acres of Grazing Land would be affected, yielding a total temporary disturbance of 47 acres of Grazing Land. Therefore, selection of Segment 10 would result in the least disturbance to agricultural resources. These temporary impacts are considered less than significant.

**Would construction conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use and Williamson Act contracts?**

Agricultural land traversed by Segment 10 and its Alternatives 10A and 10B occur in unincorporated Kern County. Zoning for Segment 10 is discussed in more detail in Land Use Section 4.10.6.7 and no conflicts with agricultural zoning were identified. While SCE does not have to comply with local zoning, the TRTP nonetheless appears consistent. Any conflicts with local zoning would be less than significant due to the CPUC's jurisdiction over

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electric power line projects and substations and the exempt status of such projects by GO 131-D.

**Would the Project involve other construction-related changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?**

In addition to temporary conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, construction activities along access roads and spur roads also would cause a temporary increase in vehicular traffic that may result in short-duration disruptions of farming and grazing activities. Such impacts would be avoided and minimized by implementation of APM AG-1 and, regardless, would not cause the conversion of any Farmland to non-agricultural use. Thus, no significant impacts would be expected to occur.

**Operations.**

**Would operations permanently convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use?**

Approximately 25 acres would be permanently disturbed along proposed Segment 10. This translates to a permanent loss of approximately 0.3 acre per tower location. Applying this figure to data in Table 4.3-7 suggests that operation of Segment 10 would result in the loss of approximately 12 acres of Grazing Land. Segment variants 10A and 10B would also affect these lands. In addition, Alternative Segment 10A would permanently disturb an additional 0.9 acre of Williamson Act land and Alternative Segment 10B would permanently disturb an additional 8.1 acres of Grazing Land. Due to the small scale of these impacts, they are considered less than significant.

**Would operations conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use and Williamson Act contracts?**

As noted above, no conflicts with agricultural zoning have been identified.

Only Alternative Segment 10A would cross Williamson Act land and would permanently reduce the number of enrolled acres from 125.1 to 124.2, a net loss of less than an acre. The small scale of this loss would not conflict with the contract. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**Would the Project involve other operations-related changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?**

Access roads and spur roads would be used periodically for operations and maintenance. Permanent impacts associated with creation of the roads have been addressed above. Use of those roads would not result in any change in the environment that would result in additional conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. Thus, no significant impacts would be expected to occur.

**4.3.6.8.3 Mitigation Measures.** Segment 10 would not result in any significant impacts to agricultural resources and mitigation measures are not required.

**4.3.6.8.4 Impact Significance After Mitigation Measures.** Mitigation measures are not required and impacts would be less than significant.

**4.3.6.9 Segment 11**

**4.3.6.9.1 Environmental Setting.** There are no agricultural resources along or near Segment 11 (see Table 4.3-2, Figure 4.3-1, Sheets 5-8).

**4.3.6.9.2 Impact Analysis.** There are no agricultural resources in Segment 11; therefore, no impacts to agricultural resources would occur due to construction and operation of this segment.

**4.3.6.9.3 Mitigation Measures.** There would be no impacts along this segment, and thus no mitigation measures are required.

**4.3.6.9.4 Impact Significance After Mitigation Measures.** Not applicable; there would be no impacts to agricultural resources along this segment.

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