

**7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the analysis of a proposed project's potential to induce growth. Specifically, Section 15126.2(d) requires that environmental documents "...discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment..." Growth-inducing impacts can occur if a project would induce growth either directly or indirectly in the surrounding environment. Section 15126.2 (d) also states that it must not be assumed that growth in an area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

A project could be considered to have growth-inducing effects if it: 1) either directly or indirectly fosters economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing in the surrounding area; 2) removes obstacles to population growth; 3) requires the construction of new community facilities that could cause significant environmental effects; or 4) encourages and facilitates other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. Growth-related impacts are those that occur later in time or are farther removed in distance, but which are still reasonably foreseeable.

A project's potential to induce growth does not automatically mean that it will result in growth. This potential growth-inducing effect is regulated by local governments in California through the development, adoption, and implementation of land use plans and policies intended to avoid or minimize the growth inducing potential or pressure created by projects, both individually or cumulatively. Growth occurs through capital investment in new economic opportunities from both public and private entities. Development occurs as a result of economic investment in a particular region. New economic (i.e., employment) opportunities will naturally create the need for infrastructure to support an increased population.

**7.2 BACKGROUND**

Growth typically is the result of numerous factors that affect the location, size, direction, timing, type, and rate of population increase and does not necessarily result from a single project or factor. Such factors include local government planning, availability of public services; natural resources, the economic climate, and political and environmental concerns. Local planning agencies adopt and administer general and specific plans, zoning maps and ordinances, and other planning documents that contain policies and maps to identify the intensity and type of development allowed in specific locations.

Although local governments play a major role in growth management, the location and timing of growth also depends on economic factors such as the availability and cost of

developable land, regional and national economic cycles, and mortgage interest rates and the demand for new housing. Political factors that affect growth include state and local laws that mandate businesses to comply with certain rules and regulations, permitting requirements that address environmental and community concerns, and tax incentives designed to attract businesses.

Quality of life issues are also important factors influencing the timing and location of population growth. These include: the incidence of crime; air quality; traffic congestion; and the availability, cost, and quality of community services such as schools, transportation facilities, recreational facilities, and fire and law enforcement services.

### **7.3 IMPACTS**

Development of a new transmission project is often in response to an increase in demand. Therefore, electric utility infrastructure does not induce growth, but rather follows it and is necessary to accommodate both existing and forecast load demand. As an example, the Antelope Valley has long been a magnet for development even though a transmission project has not been implemented in the area in over 50 years. An article in the Los Angeles Times dated July 18, 2006<sup>1</sup> states that the City of Lancaster is the fastest-growing city in Los Angeles County and the City of Palmdale is a close second. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) forecasts that the population in the Antelope Valley will increase from approximately 290,000 to nearly 500,000 in the next 15 to 20 years. Currently, there are several planned communities that will be located to the west and south of the Lancaster/Palmdale area, which will add more than 100,000 residents.

Since the 1990 Census, the Southern California population has grown from approximately 14.6 million to 16.5 million<sup>2</sup>. This change in population represents an increase of 12.8 percent. During this period of high population growth, no new high-voltage transmission lines have been constructed in SCE's service territory.

As discussed in Section 1.0 of this PEA, one of the purposes of the proposed Project is to interconnect and deliver energy from planned alternative energy projects (owned by independent power producers) to SCE's load centers. While the proposed Project improves the overall system capability to adequately serve the existing and forecasted load demand, it is not intended to supply power related to potential growth for any one particular development.

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<sup>1</sup> Los Angeles Times Article 07-18-2006: Antelope Valley Is Upscale Bound by Sharon Bernstein and Ashley Surdin

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scag.ca.gov/census/>

Therefore, the proposed expansion and upgrade of SCE's transmission system associated with the proposed Project would result in no growth-inducing impacts.

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