

**IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE  
COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES**

**SECTION 9.0**

---

*Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project*

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Section 15126.2[c]) require identification of significant irreversible and irretrievable environmental changes that would be caused by a proposed project. These changes include, for example, uses of nonrenewable resources during construction and operation, changes that may occur as a result of providing long-term access to previously inaccessible areas, and irreversible damages that may result from project-related accidents.

The construction phase of the TRTP would require an irretrievable commitment of natural resources from direct consumption of fossil fuels and the manufacture of new equipment and supplies that generally cannot be recycled. Commitment of these resources would not substantially deplete existing supplies. Project materials, however, are expected to be largely recyclable at the end of the proposed Project's useful lifetime.

The proposed Project would result in the commitment of approximately 147 acres of land, most of which would be occupied by a new substation, structure footings, and access and spur roads. This commitment would be long-term, although not necessarily irreversible, as Project components could be demolished and land restored, altered, or converted for other uses by future generations.

The proposed Project would result in permanent loss of small acreages of sensitive vegetation communities, and small numbers of some sensitive plant and animal species as noted in Section 4.5 (Biological Resources). Permanent loss of habitat may result from permanent project features (e.g., new transmission towers and substations) that would remain throughout the life of the Project. Construction of the transmission line (T/L) would require direct disturbance of almost 1,450 acres of land, approximately 90 percent of which would be restored after construction. The ratio of native habitat to previously disturbed habitat would vary within each T/L segment. Within these habitats, construction activities would result in potential impacts on listed and special-status plant species shown in Tables 4.5-2 and 4.5-3 and special-status wildlife shown in Tables 4.5-4 and 4.5-5. With implementation of Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs) BIO-1 through BIO-9 and Mitigation Measures BIO MIT-1 through BIO MIT-11 as recommended in Table 4.5-6, permanent loss of biological resources would be confined to small areas at each structure location and impacts would be less than significant. That is, the proposed Project would not result in significant irretrievable and irreversible commitments of sensitive biological resources.

Construction activities associated with the proposed Project could result in damage or destruction of up to 34 archaeological and historical sites, as described in Section 4.6. Although implementation of APMs is expected to result in avoidance of most if not all of these sites, any direct impacts that would occur would represent an irretrievable and irreversible commitment of a nonrenewable resource. Similarly, the proposed Project may

## **SECTION 9.0**

## **IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES**

### *Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project*

disturb or destroy paleontological resources. Implementation of APMs would avoid and reduce potentially significant impacts to cultural and paleontological resources to less-than-significant levels.

Implementation of the proposed TRTP would result in the long-term or permanent conversion of an estimated 8.3 acres of Important Farmland, 3.3 acres of Williamson Act land, and 62 acres of Grazing Land to non-agricultural uses. In addition, construction of the Whirlwind Substation would result in conversion of 66 acres of Prime Farmland to non-agricultural uses if Alternative Site A were selected (no additional impacts would occur to Prime Farmland if Alternative Sites B or C were selected). These losses represent a negligible proportion of existing inventories and are considered less-than-significant impacts.

As described in Section 4.7, Geology and Soils, the proposed Project would result in soil erosion in disturbed areas and could destabilize steep slopes and result in landslides that could be irreversible, although implementation of APMs would be expected to reduce such impacts to less-than-significant levels.

Section 4.8, Hydrology and Water Quality, indicates that surface water and groundwater quality could be impacted through the accidental release of hazardous materials at pole or tower installation locations, staging areas, substation sites, and other locations where Project activities would occur. With the implementation of APMs, however, permanent impacts to these resources would be less than significant.

Section 4.2, Aesthetic Resources, indicates that the proposed T/L would cause significant and unmitigable visual impacts at several locations (see Table 4.2-1). These impacts represent long-term commitments that are not necessarily irreversible, as Project components could be demolished and land restored, altered, or converted for other uses by future generations.