
Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration

for:

Grapefruit 92-kV Switching Station Project

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SECTION 1

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

This document is a policy-level, project level Initial Study for evaluation of potential environmental impacts resulting from the proposed construction Grapefruit 92-kV Switching Station Project.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) REQUIREMENTS

As defined by Section 15063 of the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, an **Initial Study** is prepared primarily to provide the Lead Agency with information to use as the basis for determining whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Negative Declaration, or Mitigated Negative Declaration would be appropriate for providing the necessary environmental documentation and clearance for any proposed project.

According to Section 15065, an **EIR** is deemed appropriate for a particular proposal if the following conditions occur:

- The proposal has the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment.
- The proposal has the potential to achieve short-term environmental goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals.
- The proposal has possible environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable.
- The proposal could cause direct or indirect adverse effects on human beings.

According to Section 15070(a), a **Negative Declaration** is deemed appropriate if the proposal would not result in any significant effect on the environment.

According to Section 15070(b), a **Mitigated Negative Declaration** is deemed appropriate if it is determined that though a proposal could result in a significant effect, mitigation measures are available to reduce these significant effects to insignificant levels.

This Initial Study is prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et. seq.); Section 15070 of the State Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000, et. seq.); applicable requirements of the Imperial Irrigation District (IID); and the regulations, requirements, and procedures of any other responsible public agency or an agency with jurisdiction by law.

The IID is designated the Lead Agency, in accordance with Section 15050 of the CEQA Guidelines. The Lead Agency is the public agency which has the principal responsibility for approving the necessary environmental clearances and analyses for the project.

C. INTENDED USES OF INITIAL STUDY

This Initial Study is an informational document which is intended to inform the IID decision makers, other responsible or interested agencies, and the general public of potential environmental effects of the proposed applications. The environmental review process has been established to enable public agencies to evaluate environmental consequences and to examine and implement methods of eliminating or reducing any potentially adverse impacts. While CEQA requires that consideration be given to avoiding environmental damage, the Lead Agency and other responsible public agencies must balance adverse environmental effects against other public objectives, including economic and social goals.

The Initial Study prepared for the project will be circulated for a period of 35 days for public and agency review and comments. At the conclusion, if comments are received, the IID will prepare a document entitled "Responses to Comments" which will be forwarded to any commenting entity and be made part of the record within 10-days of any project consideration.

D. CONTENTS OF INITIAL STUDY

This Initial Study is organized to facilitate a basic understanding of the existing setting and environmental implications of the proposed application.

SECTION 1

I. INTRODUCTION presents an introduction to the entire report. This section discusses the environmental process, scope of environmental review, and incorporation by reference documents.

SECTION 2

II. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM contains the Environmental Checklist Form. The checklist form presents results of the environmental evaluation for the proposed applications and those issue areas that would have either a significant impact, potentially significant impact, or no impact.

PROJECT SUMMARY, LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTINGS describes the proposed project entitlements and required applications. A description of discretionary approvals and permits required for project implementation is also included. It also identifies the location of the project and a general description of the surrounding environmental settings.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS evaluates each response provided in the environmental checklist form. Each response checked in the checklist form is discussed and supported with sufficient data and analysis, as necessary. As appropriate, each response discussion describes and identifies specific impacts anticipated with project implementation.

SECTION 3

III. MANDATORY FINDINGS presents Mandatory Findings of Significance in accordance with Section 15065 of the CEQA Guidelines.

IV. PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED identifies those persons consulted and involved in preparation of this Initial Study and Negative Declaration.

V. REFERENCES lists bibliographical materials used in the preparation of this document.

VI. FINDINGS

SECTION 4

VII. RESPONSE TO COMMENTS (IF ANY)

VIII. MITIGATION MONITORING & REPORTING PROGRAM (MMRP) (IF ANY)

E. SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

For evaluation of environmental impacts, each question from the Environmental Checklist Form is summarized and responses are provided according to the analysis undertaken as part of the Initial Study. Impacts and effects will be evaluated and quantified, when appropriate. To each question, there are four responses, including:

1. **No Impact:** A "No Impact" response is adequately supported if the impact simply does not apply to the proposed applications.

-
2. **Less Than Significant Impact:** The proposed applications will have the potential to impact the environment. These impacts, however, will be less than significant; no additional analysis is required.
 3. **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated:** This applies where incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.”
 4. **Potentially Significant Impact:** The proposed applications could have impacts that are considered significant. Additional analyses and an EIR could be required to identify mitigation measures that could reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

F. POLICY-LEVEL or PROJECT LEVEL ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This Initial Study will be conducted under a policy-level, project level analysis. Regarding mitigation measures, it is not the intent of this document to “overlap” or restate conditions of approval that are commonly established for future known projects or the proposed applications. Additionally, those other standard requirements and regulations that any development must comply with, that are outside the IID’s jurisdiction, are also not considered mitigation measures and therefore, will not be identified in this document.

G. TIERED DOCUMENTS AND INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

Information, findings, and conclusions contained in this document are based on incorporation by reference of tiered documentation, which are discussed in the following section.

1. Tiered Documents

As permitted in Section 15152(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, information and discussions from other documents can be included in this document. Tiering is defined as follows:

“Tiering refers to using the analysis of general matters contained in a broader EIR (such as the one prepared for a general plan or policy statement) with later EIRs and negative declarations on narrower projects; incorporating by reference the general discussions from the broader EIR; and concentrating the later EIR or negative declaration solely on the issues specific to the later project.”

Tiering also allows this document to comply with Section 15152(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, which discourages redundant analyses, as follows:

“Agencies are encouraged to tier the environmental analyses which they prepare for separate but related projects including the general plans, zoning changes, and development projects. This approach can eliminate repetitive discussion of the same issues and focus the later EIR or negative declaration on the actual issues ripe for decision at each level of environmental review. Tiering is appropriate when the sequence of analysis is from an EIR prepared for a general plan, policy, or program to an EIR or negative declaration for another plan, policy, or program of lesser scope, or to a site-specific EIR or negative declaration.”

Further, Section 15152(d) of the CEQA Guidelines states:

“Where an EIR has been prepared and certified for a program, plan, policy, or ordinance consistent with the requirements of this section, any lead agency for a later project pursuant to or consistent with the program, plan, policy, or ordinance should limit the EIR or negative declaration on the later project to effects which:

- (1) Were not examined as significant effects on the environment in the prior EIR; or
- (2) Are susceptible to substantial reduction or avoidance by the choice of specific revisions in the project, by the imposition of conditions, or other means.”

2. Incorporation by Reference

Incorporation by reference is a procedure for reducing the size of EIRs/MND and is most appropriate for including long, descriptive, or technical materials that provide general background information, but do not contribute directly to the specific analysis of the project itself. This procedure is particularly useful when an EIR or Negative Declaration relies on a broadly drafted EIR for its evaluation of cumulative impacts of related projects (*Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation v. County of Los Angeles* [1986, 177 Ca.3d 300]). If an EIR or Negative Declaration relies on information from a supporting study that is available to the public, the EIR or Negative Declaration cannot be deemed unsupported by evidence or analysis (*San Francisco Ecology Center v. City and County of San Francisco* [1975, 48 Ca.3d 584, 595]).

When an EIR or Negative Declaration incorporates a document by reference, the incorporation must comply with Section 15150 of the CEQA Guidelines as follows:

- The incorporated document must be available to the public or be a matter of public record (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[a]). This document must be available for inspection by the public at an office of the lead agency (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[b]).
- These documents must summarize the portion of the document being incorporated by reference or briefly describe information that cannot be summarized. Furthermore, these documents must describe the relationship between the incorporated information and the analysis in the tiered documents (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[c]). As discussed above, the tiered EIRs address the entire project site, provide background, and inventory information and data which apply to the project site. Incorporated information and/or data will be cited in the appropriate sections.
- These documents must include the State identification number of the incorporated documents (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[d]).

The material to be incorporated in this document will include general background information (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[f]). This has been previously discussed in this document.

SECTION 2

II. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

- 1. Project Title:** Grapefruit 92-kV Switching Station Project
- 2. Lead Agency:** Imperial Irrigation District
- 3. Contact person and phone number:** Donald Vargas, Compliance Administrator II
- 4. Address:** 333 E. Barioni Blvd., Imperial, CA
- 5. E-mail:** dvargas@iid.com
- 6. Project location:** 1280 Grapefruit Boulevard, Coachella, CA (Figure 1). The proposed project Grapefruit 92-kV Switching Station Project is located on a 2.2-acre parcel at the northwest corner of Grapefruit Blvd. and Bagdad Ave., in the City of Coachella in Riverside County. The project also includes four off-site poles for an overhead transmission line extending east across State Route (SR) 111/Grapefruit Blvd. to connect to transmission tower T-47.
- 7. Project sponsor's name and address:** Imperial Irrigation District
- 8. General Plan designation:** Downtown Center
- 9. Zoning:** Downtown
- 10. Description of project:** The proposed project Grapefruit 92-kV Switching Station Project (i.e., project) is located within the boundaries of the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) property bounded by 9th St. on the north, Bagdad Ave. on the south, Shady Ln. on the west and State Route (SR) 111/Grapefruit Blvd. on the east. The proposed project will occur in the southeastern portion of the property adjacent to Bagdad Ave. on the south and Grapefruit Blvd. on the east. The existing Coachella Switching Station is in the northwest portion of the property.

The project includes the following components which are described in greater detail below:

a) Demolition of existing building	i) Twenty-four (24) switch support structures.
b) Grade existing site	j) Eight (8) 3-phase PT support structures
c) Four (4) 92-kV bays	k) Two (2) SSVT support structure.
d) Twelve (12) 92-kV, 2000A, 40-kA circuit breakers.	l) Six (6) steel 2-phase bus supports.
e) Twenty-four (24) 92-kV, 2000A, 40-kA disconnect switches, 8 with grounding switch mechanism	m) Eight (8) strain bus structures
f) Thirty (30) potential transformers	n) One (1) control building with relay panels and battery room.
g) Two (2) 100 kVA station service voltage transformer (SSVT)	o) Concrete foundations, as required.
h) Two (2) double A-frame steel structures	p) Grounding, as required

The project involves demolition of the 6,269 square foot J26 Date Growers Building (referred to by employees as the “white house”) and construction of a new 92-kV Switching Station with a breaker and a half configuration. In this configuration, two redundant electrical buses are installed for every two (2) circuits. Three breakers are available with each circuit as they share a common center breaker. In this arrangement, a total of six breakers are required for four circuits.

The 92-kV Grapefruit Switching Station includes installation of four (4) 92-kV bays, one (1) control building including relay panels and a battery room; auxiliary equipment, structures, concrete, conduit, grounding, grading, and replacement of the existing steel fence for a block wall at the site.

Transmission power lines CI, R, K, CL, CN and CM will be relocated from the Coachella Switching Station to the new Grapefruit Switching Station. The transmission connection corridor crosses over Grapefruit Blvd., a roadside ditch, the rail line, and through the interior of an agricultural field that has been in production for several decades to connect to transmission tower T-47. The existing circuit between Coachella Switching Station and Coachella Gas Turbines (GTs) will be intercepted with a 92-kV double circuit tie power line to Grapefruit Switching Station.

The project is being constructed in response to the findings of the IID annual TPL-001 study that identified the need to upgrade the existing Coachella Switching Station. The current configuration is a single bus transfer bus without any redundancy. This configuration makes the system vulnerable as a single bus outage would shut down all four Coachella GT's, six 92-kV lines and multiple loads serving transformers. This means that a fault condition on the bus would cause all of the six lines, two transformers and four gas turbines to go offline. This outage is considered a credible P2 (N-1). A P2 is a contingency category within North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) standard TPL-001 that all bulk electric system elements are required to comply with. Under contingency, IID envisions multiple thermal overloads and voltage issues that could not be mitigated without shedding load. The outcome of such an outage is a potential brownout in the Coachella Valley area.

In response to this potential breakdown of the system, IID is requiring a new 92-kV Switching Station yard to increase electrical grid reliability. This will also enable more flexibility to perform maintenance without disrupting customer service and provide IID to respond accordingly in an emergency to restore power lines more quickly. Based on IID standards, the Engineering/Planning proposes a switching station breaker-and-a-half because it has high reliability, flexible operation and can isolate the main bus for maintenance without disrupting service. Circuit breakers can also be isolated for maintenance and bus fault without interrupting service to any circuit. This upgrade would completely remove the P2 condition from our list of credible contingencies.

The proposed project will allow IID to transfer energy in a bidirectional and reliable condition from one bus to another of the interconnected transmission system by utilizing all available transmission lines between these busses under stressed system operating conditions.

- 11. Surrounding land uses and setting:** The proposed Grapefruit 92-kV Switching Station is within the boundaries of the IID property that includes the Coachella Switching Station as well as other IID facilities. The site is bordered by Bagdad Ave. to the south and residential uses and Grapefruit Blvd. on the west. The project also includes four off-site poles for an overhead transmission line extending east across State Route (SR) 111/Grapefruit Blvd. to connect to transmission tower T-47. The connection corridor crosses over Grapefruit Boulevard, a roadside ditch, the rail line, and through the interior of an agricultural field that has been in production for several decades.
- 12. Other public agencies whose approval is required** (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.): Imperial Irrigation District (IID), Encroachment permits from the City of Coachella and wireline crossing agreement from the Union Pacific Railroad for the CNCL Transmission Line crossing. Additional right-of-way easements may be required to accommodate its realignment within private property identified as APN 778-191-001 east of the railroad tracks.
- 13. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1?**

If so, has consultation begun? Yes. Letters were sent to the following tribes and or agencies on November 16, 2023.

-
- Augustine Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians
 - Fort Yuma Quechen Indian Tribe
 - Historic Preservation Office
 - Ipay Nation of Santa Ysabel
 - Inayu – Cosmet Band of Indians
 - International Tribal Cultural Resources Protection Council
 - Januel Indian Village A Kumeyaay Nation
 - Kumeyaay Cultural Repatriation Committee
 - Kwaaymi Laguan Band of Mission Indians
 - La Jolla Band of Luisena Indians
 - La Posta Band of Mission Indians
 - Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla & Cupeno Indians
 - Manzanita Band of Kumeyaay Nation
 - Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians
 - Morongo Band of Mission Indians
 - Pala Band of Mission Indians
 - Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians
 - Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians
 - San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
 - San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians
 - Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians
 - Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians
 - Viejo Band of Mission Indians

The comment period closed on December 20, 2023. Comments were received from:

- Luz Salazar, Augustine Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians (Requested consultation).
- Geramy Martin, Tribal Secretary Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians (Did not request consultation).
- Elizabeth Portals, Cahuilla Band of Indians (Inquired if project disturbance will be on pre-disturbed soils).
- Laura Chatterton, Cultural Resource Specialist (Did not request consultation; encouraged consultation with tribes more associated with lands upon which the project is located).
- Deneen Pelton, Cultural Resources Department Coordinator, Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians (Did not request consultation; encouraged consultation with tribes more closely associated with lands upon which the project is located).
- Eunice Ambriz, Cultural Resources Technician, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians (Did not request consultation).
- Vanessa Minot, Tribal Administrator, Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians (Did not request consultation).

Note: Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, lead agencies, and project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process. (See Public Resources Code, Section 21083.3.2). Information may also be available from the California Native American Heritage Commission’s Sacred Lands File per Public Resources Code, Section 5097.96 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that the Public Resources Code, Section 21082.3 (c) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.



Photo 1: View north along Grapefruit Blvd. from entrance to Grapefruit Switching Station towards existing poles.



Photo 2: View south along Grapefruit Blvd. from entrance to Grapefruit Switching Station.



Photo 3: View west from Grapefruit Blvd. towards J26 Date Growers Building (i.e., “white house”) to be demolished.



Photo 4: View north from the intersection of Grapefruit Blvd. and Bagdad Ave.



Photo 5: View across Grapefruit Blvd. of pole in corridor.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture/Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards and Hazardous Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |
-

DETERMINATION

After Review of the Initial Study, the IID has:

- Found that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- Found that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- Found that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- Found that the proposed project **MAY** have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- Found that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE DE MINIMIS IMPACT FINDING: Yes No

Vargas, Donald Digitally signed by Vargas, Donald
Date: 2024.06.28 08:24:58 -07'00'

July 1, 2024

Donald Vargas, Compliance Administrator II

Date

PROJECT SUMMARY

A. Project Location: The project is located at the Imperial Irrigation District’s (IID) property at 1280 Grapefruit Blvd. in the City of Coachella, Riverside County, California (Figure 1).

Project Summary: The project is the demolition of the 6,269 square foot J26 Date Growers Building (referred to by employees as the “white house”) and construction of a new Grapefruit 92-kV Switching station. The project also includes several new power poles installed to facilitate the interconnection of the existing neighboring transmission lines with the proposed switching station. The precise locations are still being refined by IID transmission planning and engineering staff. However, the poles would be located within the “footprint” of the project as shown in Figure 3 and 4. The project also includes four off-site poles for an overhead transmission line extending east across State Route (SR) 111/Grapefruit Blvd. to connect to transmission tower T-47. A summary of the project is provided in Table A, below.

**Table A
Project Summary**

a) Demolition of existing building.	i) Twenty-four (24) switch support structures.
b) Grade existing site.	j) Eight (8) 3-phase PT support structures
c) Four (4) 92-kV bays.	k) Two (2) SSVT support structure.
d) Twelve (12) 92-kV, 2000A, 40-kA circuit breakers.	l) Six (6) steel 2-phase bus supports.
e) Twenty-four (24) 92-kV, 2000A, 40-kA disconnect switches, 8 with grounding switch mechanism.	m) Eight (8) strain bus structures.
f) Thirty (30) potential transformers.	n) One (1) control building with relay panels and battery room.
g) Two (2) 100 kVA station service voltage transformer (SSVT).	o) Concrete foundations, as required.
h) Two (2) double A-frame steel structures	p) Grounding, as required.

B. Environmental Setting: The project site has been used by IID as a construction/laydown area/office for several decades and is leveled and compacted. The connection corridor crosses over Grapefruit Blvd., a roadside ditch, the rail line, and through the interior of an agricultural field. See Photos 1 through 5 and Figure 2 and 3.

C. Analysis: The project is the demolition of the existing J26 Date Growers building, grading the site and construction of various switch station components as detailed in the table above.

D. General Plan Consistency: The project is located within the existing boundaries of the IID property at the northwest corner of Grapefruit Blvd. and Bagdad Ave. in the City of Coachella. The project includes connecting to a transmission tower located to the east of the site across Grapefruit Blvd. in an agricultural field.



Base Map Source: Google Earth 2024.

Figure 1
Project Location Map



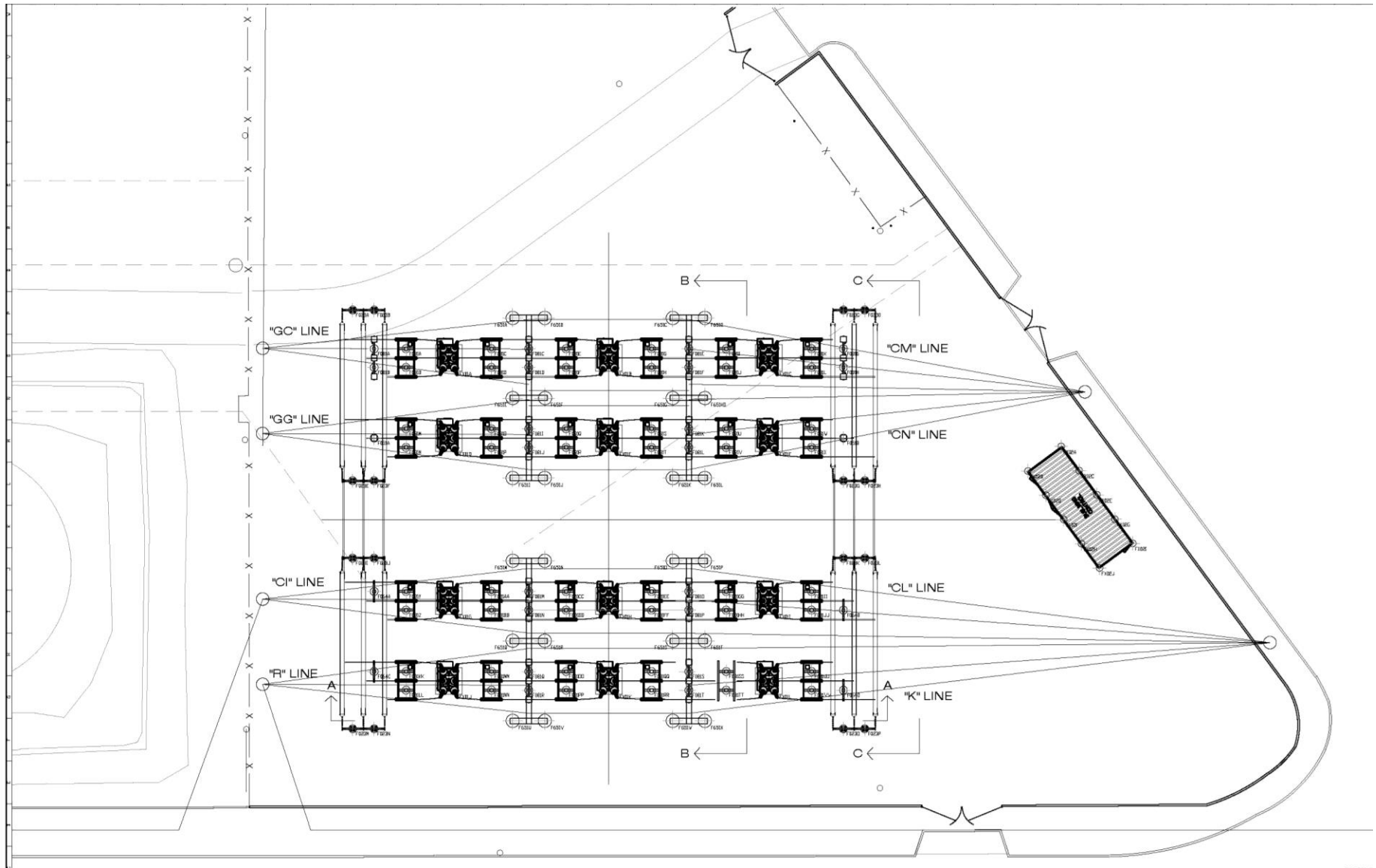
Source: IID 2023.

Figure 2
Project Site Plan



Source: IID 2024.

Figure 3
Grapefruit Switching Station Site Plan



Source: IID 2024.

Figure 4
Overall Grapefruit Switching Station Site Plan



 Study Area

Figure 5
Project Footprint

Source: Argonaut 2024.

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
- 2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
- 5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
- 7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
- 8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
- 9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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I. AESTHETICS *Would the project:*

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista or scenic highway?

No Impact. The proposed project is located within the existing boundaries of the IID property at the northwest corner of the intersection of Bagdad Ave. and Grapefruit Blvd. and includes four off-site poles for an overhead transmission line extending east across State Route (SR) 111/Grapefruit Blvd. to connect to transmission tower T-47. The surrounding area is characterized by flat topography. SR 111/Grapefruit Blvd. borders the eastern boundary of the project site. The segment of SR 111 approximately 9 miles to the south of the site at Mecca is eligible to be designated as a State Scenic Highway (Caltrans 2024). The segment to the east of the site is not eligible. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on a scenic vista or scenic highway.

- b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

No Impact. The proposed project is within the boundaries of IID property and includes four off-site poles for an overhead transmission line extending east across State Route (SR) 111/Grapefruit Blvd. to connect to transmission tower T-47. All areas impacted by these facilities have been previously disturbed and developed with IID infrastructure and buildings or disturbed by historic farming operations. The switching station site and transmission alignment do not contain any scenic resources including trees or rock outcroppings. The existing J26 Date Growers Building which will be demolished is not considered historic and has no unique aesthetic qualities. As described in item “a)” above, the segment of SR 111 to the east of the site is not eligible as a state scenic highway. Therefore, no impact would occur regarding damaging scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

- c) In nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

No Impact. The proposed site is within the City of Coachella in the West Coachella Neighborhoods sub area. The project site and proposed overhead transmission line are visible for travelers along Grapefruit Blvd. on the east as well as Bagdad Ave. on the south. The proposed project includes demolition of the existing “white house” J26 Date Growers Building and adding new infrastructure including circuit breakers, double A-frame steel structures, etc. within the 2.2-acre parcel as well as poles within the transmission line corridor east of the Grapefruit Blvd. The addition of these components would be consistent with other adjacent infrastructure currently on the IID property. Residential uses are located on the south side of Bagdad Ave. as well as to the west but are sufficiently setback (over 100 feet) so as not to be impacted by lighting. The character of the project site is that of an industrial utility facility and would not be adversely impacted by the additional components or other regulations governing scenic quality. The proposed project would add an overhead transmission crossing over Grapefruit Blvd. Overhead transmission and utility lines are

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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currently in place along Grapefruit Blvd. and Bagdad Ave. The addition of the proposed transmission line would not alter existing views. Therefore, no impact is identified for this issue area.

- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Less than Significant Impact. The IID property currently includes overhead and security lights for nighttime illumination and safety. The proposed features of the project include demolition of the J26 Date Growers Building, installation of new circuit breakers, double A-frame steel structures, transmission poles, transmission lines, etc. and would not create new sources of glare. Lighting will be attached to steel structures and buildings for maintenance and personnel safety. All lighting would be directed downward and installed in conformance with City standards to avoid light spillage on to adjacent properties. Therefore, a less than significant impact regarding creating a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day, or nighttime views is considered less than significant.

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

- a) 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?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project is designated as Urban and Built-Up land on the Riverside County Important Farmland 2020 Map prepared by the California Department of Conservation (DOC 2020), Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). The transmission connection corridor extending east through previously disturbed farmland is designated Prime Farmland. Installation of the poles and stringing of the transmission line would not convert farmland beyond the area of the four pole footings which will occupy approximately 50 sq. ft. per pole or approximately 200 sq. ft. (.004 acre). Thus, the project would have a less than significant impact on converting Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to a non-agricultural use.

- b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract?

No Impact. The proposed Grapefruit 92-kV Switching Station project site is on IID property that is developed with IID infrastructure and buildings and has been used as a construction/laydown

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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area/office for several decades. The transmission connection corridor crosses over Grapefruit Blvd. and through the interior of an agricultural field. Neither the IID property nor the existing agricultural field is under a Williamson Act Contract. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the existing Agricultural zoning or surrounding Williamson Act Contracts in non-renewal. The project would have no impact on agricultural zoning or a Williamson Act Contract.

- c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

No Impact. Based on the City of Coachella General Plan Land Use Map, there are no timberland areas within the boundaries of the city. No impact would occur.

- d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

No Impact. There are no existing forest lands either on-site or within the City of Coachella. The proposed project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Therefore, no impact is identified for this issue area.

- e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

No Impact. As previously noted, the proposed Grapefruit 92-kV Switching Station project site is on IID property that is developed with IID infrastructure and buildings while the four off-site poles are located on agricultural land that is designated as Prime Farmland. The transmission connection corridor located in the interior of an agricultural field would only involve minor disturbance for the area occupied by the footings of the four poles which would be approximately 50 sq. ft. per pole or approximately 200 sq. ft. (.004 acre). Given the small area occupied by the pole footings, the project would not result in a substantial conversion of farmland to a non-agricultural use or forest land to a non-forest use. A less than significant impact is identified for this issue.

III. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to the following determinations. Would the Project:

- a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

Less than Significant Impact. The project site is the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The proposed project includes demolition of the existing 6,269 square foot J26 Date Growers building, grading of the site and construction and installation of new switch station infrastructure. Construction activities, including demolition, are anticipated to last 9 months. Short-term air quality emissions would be generated during construction activities in association with tearing the building down, grading the site and operation of heavy equipment to install new facilities. The project would be subject to compliance with SCAQMD Regulation XVI – Mobile Source

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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Offset Programs. Once operational, the project would generate minimal emissions but would be required to comply with SCAQMD Regulation IX Standards of Performance for New Stationary Sources. Equipment includes one Tall-Reach Man-bucket Truck and one 1 Tall Reach Digger Dereck Boom Truck operating for 30 days during construction. The project will comply with all applicable SCAQMD Rules and Regulations as well as with all applicable State and federal requirements for attainment of air quality objectives. Therefore, the project's impact regarding conflicting with or obstructing implementation of an applicable air quality plan is considered less than significant.

- b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

Less than Significant Impact. As noted in item "a)," above, the project site is the SCAQMD. The South Coast Air Basin is classified as an "extreme" nonattainment area and the Coachella Valley is classified as a "severe-15" nonattainment area for the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard. This means that the background levels of ozone are at times higher than the ambient air quality standards. The air quality standards were set to protect the health of sensitive individuals (i.e., elderly, children, and the sick). Therefore, when the concentration of those pollutants exceeds the standard, it is likely that sensitive individuals of the population may experience adverse health effects.

Once demolition and construction are complete, minor emissions would be generated in association with operation of the proposed switch station from vehicle trips. One trip per year would occur in association with operations and maintenance. Table AQ-1 summarizes construction and operational limits for criteria pollutants.

**Table AQ-1
SCAQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds**

Pollutant	Construction	Operation
NOx	100 lbs/day	55 lbs/day
VOC	75 lbs/day	55 lbs/day
PM ₁₀	150 lbs/day	150 lbs/day
PM _{2.5}	55 lbs/day	55 lbs/day
SOx	150 lbs/day	150 lbs/day
CO	550 lbs/day	550 lbs/day
Lead	3 lbs/day	3 lbs/day

Source: SCAQMD CEQA Handbook, 1993.

Equipment used during construction would include boom trucks, bucket trucks, wire pulling trailers, rope pulling trailers, water truck, pickup truck, material handling trailers. The equipment would operate intermittently and continuously over a 30-to-40-day construction period. No localized significance threshold would be exceeded during project operations. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard.

- c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

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Less than Significant Impact. Sensitive receptors include single-family residences to the south across Bagdad Ave. and multi-family housing to the west across Shady Ln. The nearest sensitive receptors to the demolition activities are homes located over 100 feet to the south across Bagdad Ave. The amount of construction emissions generated would be limited and for a short duration as the equipment would operate intermittently and continuously over a 30-to-40-day construction period). Based on the distance to the sensitive receptors, the limited duration of construction, and the fact that Best Management Practices such as watering to control dust, stopping activities when wind speeds exceed 20 mph, etc., sensitive receptors would not be exposed to prolonged or substantial pollutant concentrations. Therefore, the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts regarding exposing sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

- d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

Less than Significant Impact. Potential odor impacts depend on multiple factors including the type of odor generated; the intensity of the source; the sensitivity of the receptor; the intensity of the source; and the direction and speed of the wind. Odors present a nuisance to the public and result in citizen complaints. During demolition and construction, exhaust from equipment (trucks, earthmoving equipment) may produce odors typically resulting from dust and heavy equipment exhaust. Odors produced during construction consist of unburned hydrocarbons from tailpipes of construction equipment. Equipment emission odors typically disperse rapidly and do not affect substantial numbers of people due to the localized area affected. Sensitive receptors are also set back more than 100 feet from where the emissions would be generated. Therefore, odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people is considered less than significant.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES *Would the project:*

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

- a) **Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated.** The following discussion is based on the *Biological Resource Assessment Grapefruit Switching Station, Coachella, California* prepared for the Project Area by Argonaut Ecological Consulting, Inc. (Argonaut 2024). Argonaut conducted a biological resource assessment of the 2.2-acre site and a 1.5-acre connection corridor (i.e., “Study Area”) for a proposed switching station as depicted in Figure 5. The evaluation relied on available literature, aerial photography, historic topographic and aerial maps, and a site visit.

The Study Area lies within the Sonoran Desert. Classification and Assessment with Landsat of Visible Ecological Groupings (CALVEG) maps the Study Area as “barren” which indicates there is no vegetative community present. The Study Area has been graded and compacted from years of use by IID as well as agricultural operations. Wildlife observed included several red-tail hawks (in flight), one perched on a transmission tower, pigeons, and sparrows. No mammals or evidence of mammals was found.

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI) Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI) Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI) No Impact (NI)

A query of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) was performed to determine which special status species could be present within the Study Area. No critical habitat exists for any species within or near the Study Area. The CNDDDB Bios mapping is shown in Figure 4. This map shows the location of known records of special status species near the Study Area, and Table BIO-1 includes a summary of the CNDDDB query result, listing status and the potential impacts and potential for occurrence within the Study Area.

The lack of vegetative cover or suitable nesting substrate severely limits the habitat value of the Study Area. The connection corridor is within an agricultural field (row crops). Only two listed species are near the Study Area: the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard (federally threatened/State endangered) and Coachella Valley milk vetch (federally endangered). There are no known records of these species within or near the Study Area, and suitable habitat for these species is absent.

As shown in Table BIO-1, the Study Area supports potential habitat for two species of bats: Western mastiff bat and Western yellow bat. Neither species is listed, but the Study Area has some potential habitat elements (roosting).

**Table BIO-1
Summary of Special Status Species, Potential Occurrence, and Impact**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Effects¹	Potential Occurrence in the Study Area
Mammals				
Western mastiff bat	<i>Eumops perotis californicus</i>	--/-- SSC	ME	Likely Absent. Suitable habitat consists of extensive open areas with abundant roost locations provided by crevices in rock outcrops and buildings. Nearest known record from 1939.
Western yellow bat	<i>Laslurus xanthinus</i>	--/-- SSC	ME	Likely Absent. Found in valley foothill riparian, desert riparian, desert wash, and palm oasis habitats. Often roosts in palms. The nearest record is from 1981.
Palm Springs pocket mouse	<i>Perognathus longimembris bangsi</i>	--/-- SSC	NE	Absent. Grassland and alkali desert scrub habitat. Suitable habitat is not present.
American badger	<i>Taxidea taxus</i>	--/-- SSC	NE	Absent. No burrowing mammals within the Study Area.
Pam Springs round-tailed ground squirrel	<i>Oerospermophilus tereticaudus chlorus</i>	-/--	NE	Absent. No ground squirrels were observed within the Study Area, and no suitable habitat was present.
Birds				
Burrowing owl	<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	--/-- SSC	NE	Absent. Associated with ground burrowing mammals (i.e., ground squirrels). No ground squirrels or underground burrows (or suitable nesting areas) are found within the Study Area.
Ferruginous hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>	--/--	NE	Absent. Found in open semiarid grasslands and

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI) Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI) Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI) No Impact (NI)

Table BIO-1 Summary of Special Status Species, Potential Occurrence, and Impact				
Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Effects ¹	Potential Occurrence in the Study Area
Mammals				
Le Conte's thrasher	<i>Toxostoma lecontei</i>	--/--	NE	Absent. Typically, nests in dense and thorny shrubs such as the saltbush. No suitable nesting substrate is present.
Crissal thrasher	<i>Taxostoma crissale</i>	--/--	NE	Absent. Found in mesquite thickets, brush arroyos, shrubs within canyons, or pinyon-oak-juniper woodlands.
Vermillion flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>	--/--	NE	Absent. Prefers streamside habitat or desert habitat near water with scattered trees. No suitable habitat present.
Black-tailed gnatcatcher	<i>Polloptila melanura</i>	--/--	NE	Absent. Nests in low shrubs. No suitable nesting habitat is present within or near the Study Area.
Amphibians, Reptiles, and Invertebrates				
Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard	<i>Uma Inornata</i>	FT/CE	NE	Absent. The lizard is restricted to habitats with fine, windblown sand deposits in the sandy plains—present within the Coachella Valley, but suitable habitat does not present within the Study Area or connection corridor.
Desert tortoise ³	<i>Gopherus agassizii</i>	FT/CT	NE	Absent. Suitable soil substrate is unavailable within the Study Area, and the perimeter fencing precludes movement into the site. The connection corridor also does not provide suitable habitat.
Flat-tailed horned lizard	<i>Phrynosoma mcallii</i>	--/-- SSC	NE	Absent. Typical habitat is sandy desert hardpan or gravel flats with scattered, sparse vegetation. Suitable habitat is not present within the Study Area or connection corridor.
Coachella giant sand treader cricket	<i>Macrobaenetes vaigum</i>	--/--	NE	Likely absent. According to the Coachella giant sand treader cricket model, the nearest occurrence is north of the Study Area. No suitable habitat is present in the Study Area.

Source: Argonaut 2024, p. 15.

¹ Status= Listing of special status species, unless otherwise indicated

CE: California listed as Endangered

CT: California listed as Threatened

SSC: California Species of Special Concern

FT: Federally listed as Threatened

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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2 Effects = Effect determination

NE: No Effect

ME: May Effect, not likely to adversely affect

3 Species are not included within the CNDDDB Query but are included in the IPaC data query.

Definition of Occurrence Indicators:

Absent/Likely Absent: Species not recorded in Study Area and suitable or critical habitat components are absent.

The California Wildlife Habitat Relationship (CWHR) Predicted Habitat Suitability, Western Mastiff Bat model shows “low” predicted habitat suitability within and around the Study Area (See Attachment B, Figure B.1 of Appendix A, Biological Resource Assessment). The Western mastiff bat could roost within the J26 Date Growers Building given there is access to the structure’s attic from a vent opening at the south end of the structure. No evidence of occupation was observed during the survey. Western mastiff bats are inactive from December to February but usually resume feeding activity each night, except when temperatures drop below 41 ° F (Argonaut 2024, p. 12).

The CWHR Predicted Habitat Suitability Western Yellow Bat model does not show any predicted habitat for this species within or near the Study Area (Attachment B, Figure B.2 of Appendix A, Biological Resource Assessment). However, predicted habitat is present within the region. However, the palm trees and J26 Date Growers Building could provide roosting habitats for Western Mastiff bat and Western yellow bat. Therefore, the proposed project would have a potentially significant impact on special status species unless mitigation is incorporated.

Special Status Plant Species

The physical components and land use strongly influence the types of plants present. Table BIO-2 provides a summary of special status plants but is not an exhaustive inventory of plants present. As shown, of the five species identified, none were present in the Study Area.

**Table BIO-2
Summary of Special Status Plants, Potential Occurrence, and Impact**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status¹	Effects²	Potential Occurrence in the Study Area
Chaparral sand-verbena	<i>Abronia villosa</i> <i>var. aurita</i>	--/-- 1B.1	NE	Absent. No vegetative habitat exists within the Study Area (except for landscape species immediately surrounding the J26 Date Growers Building” Barren habitat.
Coachella Valley milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus lentiginosus</i> <i>var. coachellae</i>	FE/-- 1B.2		
Gravel milk-vetch	<i>Astagalus sabulorum</i>	--/--		
Glandular ditaxis	<i>Ditaxis claryana</i>	--/-- 2B.2		
Algodones suparagia	<i>Euparagla unidentata</i>	--/--		

Source: Argonaut 2024, p. 15.

¹Status= Listing of special status species, unless otherwise indicated

FE: Federally listed as Endangered

1B.X California Native Plant Society, Rare Plant Ranking

Plants with a California Rare Plant Rank of 1B are rare throughout their range, with most endemic to California. Most of the plants that are ranked 1B have declined significantly over the last century.

California Rare Plant Rank of 2B is rare in California but standard in other states.

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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2Effects = Effect determination

NE: No Effect

Definition of Occurrence Indicators:

Absent/Likely Absent: Species not recorded in Study Area and suitable or critical habitat components are absent.

Source: *CNDDDB = California Natural Diversity Database provided by CDFG and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC). Accessed online on January 20, 2024.*

Given the lack of suitable vegetative habitat, no impacts to special status plants would occur.

Mitigation Measures

BIO-1: A qualified biologist should conduct a bat roosting assessment before any construction activities, demolition, or palm tree removal. The roosting assessment should be performed when evening temperatures (dusk) are above 41 ° F. If no evidence of roosting is observed, no further measures are necessary. If roosting and/or signs of bat use are identified during the assessment, the roosting habitat should be avoided to the extent possible. A Bat Management Plan should be developed and implemented if roosting is confirmed to avoid potential impacts. Avoidance measures may include passive relocation or other measures to protect any bats within roost trees/structures.

Timing/Implementation: Prior to construction.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Imperial Irrigation District.

Following implementation of mitigation measure BIO-1, impacts to special status wildlife would be reduced to less than significant.

- b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

No Impact. As discussed under item “a)” above, the existing J26 Date Growers Building and switch station components and transmission corridor poles are within previously disturbed land. The Study Area has been a construction/laydown area/office for several decades. The transmission connection corridor crosses Grapefruit Blvd., a roadside ditch, the rail line, the interior of an agricultural field that has been in production for several decades. The ditch does not contain riparian habitat and none of the areas involved have sensitive natural communities. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community.

- c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

No Impact. For purposes of the biological resource assessment, wetland habitat includes those areas considered “Waters of the U.S.” by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) or Waters of the State of California. No wetland features exist within the Study Area or along the transmission connection corridor (Argonaut 2024, p. 11). A query of the National Wetland Inventory Mapping was performed with the accuracy of the mapping confirmed in the field (see Figure 3 in Appendix A,

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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Biological Resource Assessment). The ditch between the railroad and Grapefruit Boulevard is not a historic aquatic feature and was excavated within an upland area and would not be considered a water of the U.S./waters of the State (Argonaut 2024, p. 11). No wetland or other aquatic features are mapped by the National Wetland Inventory. Therefore, the project would not have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands.

- d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
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No Impact. Wildlife corridors are linear features that connect large patches of natural open space and provide avenues for the migration of animals. The project site and transmission connection corridor do not provide any wildlife movement or corridor functions due to existing disturbances related to human presence, surrounding roadways, traffic and noise disturbances that preclude or dissuade wildlife from utilizing the Study Area. Many of the species that are commonly found in urban environments, such as those within the Study Area, do not have specific movement corridor requirements but instead use non-specific movement patterns across these urban areas. Based on the lack of migratory corridors in the Study area, no impact would occur.

- e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinance protecting biological resource, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed under item “a)” above, the existing J26 Date Growers Building and switch station components are within previously disturbed land. The Study Area has been a construction/laydown area/office as well as disturbed agricultural land for several decades. The potential for biological resources within the site is low, but potential impacts to Western Mastiff Bat and Yellow Bat on the project site would be reduced to less than significant with mitigation measure BIO-1. With implementation of mitigation measure BIO-1, impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

- f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
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No Impact. The project is in the boundaries of the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). The CVMSHCP identifies specific activities/lands operated/managed by the IID that are covered by the HCP (i.e., subject to the HCP). The Grapefruit Switching Station is not included within the IID “covered activities” identified by the CVHCP. Therefore, no impact would occur.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES *Would the project:*

- a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

No Impact. The proposed project would alter the existing character of the site by demotion the J26 Date Growers Building, moving several utility poles and installing additional switch station

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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equipment and constructing an off-site transmission line corridor. A Cultural Resources Assessment was prepared by Peak & Associates, Inc. evaluate the project site (Appendix B, Cultural Resources Assessment). The assessment included a records search through the Eastern Information Center and a field survey of the parcel conducted on May 21, 2024 using complete coverage. The J26 Date Growers building is said to be formerly owned by the Date Grower’s group and is called the “white house” by IID personnel. No other detail is known or could be found by the firms inspecting the building. Date of construction, any details of use and occupancy are not available. The building appears to have been altered over time to address changing needs for office and storage spaces. The building does not have any of the qualities required to be eligible for the California Register (i.e., no association with important people or events and no identifiable distinct architectural style) (Peak 2024, p. 9). Likewise, the Historic Sites Map and Historic Sites Map Findings of the EDR report (see pp. 66-67 of Appendix C, EDR Report) did not identify the J26 Date Growers building as a historic site. The nearest historic site was the Cabazon Indian Reservation approximately .75 miles north of the project. Therefore, no impact to a historical source would occur.

- b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?

Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated. A field survey of the parcel was conducted of the Study Area on May 21, 2024 by Michael Lawson using complete coverage. The project site has been previously disturbed, leveled and compacted as a construction/laydown area/office for several decades. The connection corridor crosses over Grapefruit Blvd., a roadside ditch, the rail line, and through the interior of an agricultural field that has been in production for several decades. Any archaeology that was present within these areas would have been disturbed and would no longer remain intact. Demolition of the building and grading of the site would not penetrate the surface of the site to any significant depth. However, excavations for concrete foundations will go from 2 feet to 30 feet deep. Based on these depths, the potential to disturb previously unknown archaeological resources is potentially significant unless mitigation is incorporated.

Mitigation Measures

MM CUL-1 Prior to the initiation of any on-site grading, all construction/contractor personnel working on site must complete training through a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) to educate personnel of potential cultural resources that could be exposed during construction. New construction workers engaged in construction activities (e.g., grading, utility installation, etc.) shall complete WEAP training within the first week of deployment on the site. Additionally, operational staff shall complete WEAP training prior to deployment on the site.

Timing/Implementation: Prior to the initiation of any on-site grading.
Enforcement/Monitoring: Project contractor.

MM CUL-2 In the event that archaeological resources (sites, features, or artifacts) are exposed during construction activities for the Project, all construction work occurring within 100 feet of the find shall immediately stop until a qualified archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards can evaluate the significance of the find and determine whether or

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not additional study is warranted. If the discovery is clearly not significant (e.g., an isolate) the archaeologist may simply record the finding and allow work to continue. If the discovery proves potentially significant under CEQA, additional work such as preparation of an archaeological treatment plan, testing, or data recovery may be warranted.

Timing/Implementation: During construction involving drilling or excavations to depths of 3 feet or more.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Archaeological Monitor and Imperial Irrigation District.

- c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated. As described in item a) above, it is not likely that human remains would be found on the project site based on years of disturbance. However, depending on the depth of excavation, there is potential for previously unknown human remains to be present. This impact would be reduced to less than significant with the implementation of mitigation measure CUL-3 below.

Mitigation Measures

CUL-3: Human Remains Discovery. If subsurface deposits believed to be cultural or human in origin are discovered during construction, all work must halt within a 100-foot radius of the discovery. A qualified professional archaeologist, meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards for prehistoric and historic archaeology, shall be retained to evaluate the significance of the find, and shall have the authority to modify the no-work radius as appropriate, using professional judgment. The following notifications shall apply, depending on the nature of the find:

- If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does not represent a cultural resource, work may resume immediately, and no agency notifications are required.
- If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does represent a cultural resource from any period or cultural affiliation, the archaeologist shall immediately notify the lead agencies. The agencies shall consult on a finding of eligibility and implement appropriate treatment measures, if the find is determined to be a Historical Resource under CEQA, as defined in Section 15064.5(a) of the CEQA Guidelines or a historic property under Section 106 NHPA, if applicable. Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the lead agencies, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the site either: 1) is not a Historical Resource under CEQA or a Historic Property under Section 106; or 2) that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.
- If the find includes human remains, or remains that are potentially human, they shall ensure reasonable protection measures are taken to protect the discovery from disturbance (AB 2641). The archaeologist shall notify the Imperial County Medical Examiner (per Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code). The provisions of Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.98 of the California PRC, and AB 2641 will be implemented. If the coroner determines the remains are Native American and not the result of a crime scene, the coroner will notify the NAHC, which then will designate a Native American Most Likely Descendant (MLD) for the project (Section 5097.98 of the PRC). The designated MLD will have 48 hours from the time access to the property is granted to make recommendations concerning treatment of the

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remains. If the landowner does not agree with the recommendations of the MLD, the NAHC can mediate (Section 5097.94 of the PRC). If no agreement is reached, the landowner must rebury the remains where they will not be further disturbed (Section 5097.98 of the PRC). This will also include either recording the site with the NAHC or the appropriate Information Center; using an open space or conservation zoning designation or easement; or recording a reinternment document with the county in which the property is located (AB 2641). Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the lead agencies, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.

Timing/Implementation: As needed during grading and construction.
Enforcement/Monitoring: Imperial Irrigation District.

VI. ENERGY

- a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation.

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project is the demolition of the 6,269 square foot J26 Date Growers Building and construction of the Grapefruit 92-kV Switching Station. Energy would be needed during construction of the project. Energy needs would be limited to diesel fuel and gasoline for trucks and equipment. These materials would not be used in large quantities or in an inefficient or wasteful manner during construction. Once construction is complete, the project would utilize and convey electricity as part of its operation. The end goal of the project is to make the IID electrical system more dependable and less vulnerable to overload and potential blackout. Thus, energy use associated with construction and operation of the project is not considered wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary use of energy resources. This impact is considered less than significant.

- b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

No Impact. The City of Coachella General Plan Land Use Map does not include Renewable Energy Overlay Zone as a land use designation. The proposed project is in an urbanized area and includes the demolition of the existing J26 Date Growers Building and construction and installation of new equipment as part of the Grapefruit 92-kV Switch Station as well as four off-site poles for an overhead transmission line extending east across SR 111/Grapefruit Blvd. to connect to transmission tower T-47. Construction of the proposed project would not conflict with any state or local plan regarding energy efficiency. No impact would occur.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS *Would the project:*

- a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:
- i.) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial

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evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

Less than Significant Impact. According to the Coachella General Plan Update Draft EIR, three designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake fault zones traverse the Planning Area. Additionally, other active or potentially active faults that have not yet been included as Alquist-Priolo Earthquake fault zones also transect the Planning Area. Each of these faults transects the Planning area in a northeast to southwest direction (Raimi & Associates, 2014, p. 4.5-5). Based on Figure 4.5-3, Faults and Fault Zones of the Coachella General Plan Update Draft EIR, all the faults are at least 2 miles to the north or east of the proposed project site and transmission tower on the east side of Grapefruit Blvd. Given the distance, the potential for rupture is not likely.

- ii.) Strong Seismic ground shaking?

Less than Significant Impact. The primary seismic hazard at the project site is the potential for strong ground shaking during earthquakes along the San Andreas Fault. The project site is approximately 2 miles from the San Andreas fault as depicted on Plate 1-1, Faults and Historical (1800 – 2014) Seismicity Map Coachella California (Earth Consultants 2014). The proposed project does not include habitable structures that could be damaged in a seismic event. All IID equipment and transmission infrastructure must be designed in accordance with the most current edition of the Uniform Building Code (UBC) and the California Building Code (CBC) as applicable to withstand seismic hazards. Compliance with these codes is considered sufficient mitigation to address seismic hazards. Thus, impacts resulting from strong seismic shaking are considered less than significant.

- iii.) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated. The project site is in an area identified as having high liquefaction susceptibility according to Figure 4.5-5 Liquefaction Risk of the City of Coachella Draft EIR (Raimi & Associates, 2014, p. 4.5-10). Liquefaction occurs when granular soil below the water table is subjected to vibratory motions, such as those produced by earthquakes. The Geotechnical Report prepared for the project by LandMark (see Appendix D, Geotechnical Report) for the project states “The soils encountered at the points of exploration included saturated silts and silty sands that could liquefy during a Maximum Considered Earthquake. Liquefaction can occur within several isolated silt and sand layers between depths of 10 to 50 feet. The likely triggering mechanism for liquefaction appears to be strong groundshaking associated with the rupture of the San Andreas fault....total induced settlements are estimated to be about 1½ to 2 inches should liquefaction occur. Settlements below 16 feet are estimated at 1 inch. Differential settlement is estimated to be two-thirds of the total potential settlement in accordance with California Special Publication 117. Accordingly, there is a potential for 1 to 1½ inches of liquefaction induced differential settlement at the project site” (LandMark 2020, p. 11). Liquefaction induced lateral spreading is not expected to occur at this site due to the planar topography.

The Geotechnical Report identified various methods to mitigate impacts resulting from liquefaction. These methods reduce the potential effects of liquefaction-induced settlements by making the structures more able to withstand differential settlement. Implementation of these methods will reduce liquefaction impacts to less than significant levels with mitigation incorporated.

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Mitigation Measures

GEO-1 The following ground improvement methods shall be implemented to address potential for liquefaction (LandMark 2020, p. 11):

- Deep soil mixing (cement), vibro-compaction, vibro-replacement, geopiers, stone columns, compaction grouting, or deep dynamic compaction; or
- A deep foundation system or rigid mat foundations and grade-beam reinforced foundations capable of withstanding the differential movement or tilting. Note: these methods will not protect fracturing of buried utilities from damage.

For design of the structure:

- 1) Foundations shall use grade-beam footings to tie floor slabs and isolated columns to continuous footings (conventional or post-tensioned).
- 2) Structural flat-plate mats shall be conventionally reinforced or tied with post-tensioned tendons.

Timing/Implementation: Following ground improvements/as part of project design.
Enforcement/Monitoring: Imperial Irrigation District.

iv.) Landslides?

No Impact. As previously noted, the project is located within the boundaries of the existing IID property that has been leveled and developed while the transmission connection corridor extends east through previously disturbed agricultural land. The project site and surrounding area are all topographically flat. As confirmed by the Geotechnical Report, “The hazard of land sliding is unlikely due to the regional planar topography. No ancient landslides are shown on geologic maps, and no indications of landslides were observed during the site investigation: (LandMark 2020, p. 9). Therefore, no impact would occur regarding landslides.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project is located on IID property that is currently paved while the transmission connection corridor extends east through unpaved previously disturbed agricultural land. Some soil exposure and disturbance would occur during demolition and construction of the proposed project. The amount of soil disturbed would be small as mass grading is not required. Based on the size of the project (2.2-acre parcel and 1.5-acre transmission corridor with approximately 50 sq. ft. disturbed for each of the four pole footing areas for a total of approximately 200 sq. ft.) a substantial loss of soil is not anticipated. Because more than one acre of soil will be disturbed as part of project construction, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be required. The SWPPP will identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) to ensure that exposed soils are responsibly managed to avoid erosion during a rain event. Therefore, impacts regarding substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil are considered less than significant.

c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslides, lateral spreading,

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subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

Less than Significant Impact. Project construction is proposed in a level area within the footprint of the existing IID property while the transmission connection corridor extends east through unpaved previously disturbed agricultural land. Based on these conditions, no potential for landslide is present. According to the site-specific Geotechnical Report prepared for the project “This site is located in the seismically active southern California area and the site structures are subject to strong ground shaking due to potential fault movements along the San Andreas fault. Engineered design and earthquake-resistant construction are the common solutions to increase safety and development of seismic areas.” (LandMark 2020, p. 20). Per the City of Coachella General Plan EIR, “Before a development permit may be granted for a site within a Seismic Hazard Zone, a geotechnical investigation of the site must be conducted, and appropriate mitigation measures incorporated into the project design” (Raimi & Associates 2014, p. 4.5-20). Project design “should comply with the latest edition of the CBC for Site Class D using the seismic coefficients given in Section 3.6 and Table 2 of the Geotechnical Report” (LandMark 2020, p. 20). Additionally, the project must comply with the UBC and CBC to ensure the structures are designed in accordance with geologic and seismic conditions. Concrete and steel structures must follow standard IEEE-693: recommended Practice for Seismic Design of Substations. Compliance with mandatory design and building requirements will reduce potential impacts associated with construction on an unstable geologic unit to less than significant.

- d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

Less than Significant Impact. According to the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), two soil types are mapped within the Study Area. Roughly 75 % of the Study Area comprises Gilman fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes. The remaining soils are Gilman silt loam, wet, and 0- to 2-percent slopes (Argonaut 2024, p. 10). The findings of the Geotechnical Report (LandMark 2020, p. 6) indicate the site is underlain by interbedded of sands, silty sands, silts and clays. The near surface soils are expected to exhibit low to very low expansion potential. The subsurface soils are stiff to dense in nature with a 4-foot-thick loose silt (ML) encountered at 9 to 11 feet below ground surface. The near surface soils at the project site consist of sandy silts, silty sands and sands which are non-expansive (LandMark 2020, p. 10). The site has been previously developed as an IID facility and as such the soil has been engineered to support the existing buildings and structures. The project does not include any habitable structures and the foundations for the proposed equipment will be designed and engineered taking into consideration the soils present. Therefore, direct and indirect risk to life and property are considered less than significant.

- e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

No Impact. The proposed project does not propose new septic tanks or an alternative wastewater disposal system. The facility would continue to operate using the existing septic system. No impact would occur.

- f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique

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geologic feature?

Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation is Incorporated. All areas impacted by demolition and construction on the 2.2-acre parcel and 1.5-acre transmission connection corridor would have been previously disturbed in association with the existing IID facilities. The transmission corridor is located on previously disturbed agricultural land. These areas are flat with no distinguishing geologic features. Thus, no unique aboveground geologic features are present. The poles will be pounded into the ground a depth of 6 to 8 feet. However, as discussed in section V, Cultural Resources, above, excavations for concrete foundations will go from 2 feet to 30 feet deep. Based on these depths, the potential to disturb previously unknown archaeological resources is potentially significant unless mitigation is incorporated. As previously unknown paleontological resources present, the potential exists for damage during construction activities. Therefore, impacts to paleontological resources are considered potentially significant unless mitigation is incorporated.

Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measures CUL-1, CUL-2, and CUL-3.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS *Would the project:*

- a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project would disturb approximately 2.2 acres and take 9 months to complete. Greenhouse gases (GHG) would be generated by heavy equipment used during demolition and construction. Equipment would include boom trucks, bucket trucks, wire pulling trailers, rope pulling trailers, water truck, pickup truck, material handling trailers, installation of 11+ steel poles on concrete foundations, installation of overhead conductors from steel poles to A-frame structures of new substation. Based on the limited duration of the project as well as mandatory compliance with ICAPCD rules (i.e., Rule 900, PROCEDURES FOR ISSUING PERMITS TO OPERATE FOR SOURCES SUBJECT TO TITLE V OF THE FEDERAL CLEAN AIR ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1990), the project is not anticipated to generate substantial GHGs. Therefore, generation of greenhouse gas emissions would be considered a less than significant impact.

- b) Conflict with an applicable plan or policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Less than Significant Impact. The City of Coachella Draft EIR explains that the Coachella General Plan Update (CGPU) includes specific policies that guide the City’s approach to reducing GHG emissions. The Climate Action Plan considers emissions reductions from various policies across several Elements, including Land Use, Mobility, Sustainability and Natural Environment, Safety, and Infrastructure and Public Services. Examples of these include proposed CGPU policies aimed at: improving building energy performance and reducing energy demand; increasing utilization of sources of renewable energy; reducing the number and length of vehicle trips; reducing emissions arising from generation of solid waste; increasing access to parks and open space and planting new trees; and reducing indoor and outdoor water use and incorporating recycled in future water supplies (Raimi & Associates 2014, p. 4.12-14). This project’s intent is to increase the reliability aspect of the load-serving grid and is not specifically intended to increase the renewable energy interconnections or reduce GHGs. Therefore, impacts regarding an applicable plan or policy or regulation adopted

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for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs are considered less than significant.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS *Would the project:*

- a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

No Impact. The project would not use or store any appreciable quantities of hazardous chemicals during demolition or construction. Diesel fuel, oil and hydraulic fluid would be present in association with heavy equipment used and staged on-site. However, the limited quantities of materials and the 9-month duration of construction would result in a less than significant impact regarding the creation of a hazard to the public through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. No impact is identified regarding routine transport, use and disposal of hazardous materials.

- b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. Testing was conducted by MTGL to determine if hazardous materials were present on the project site (see Appendix E, Limited Asbestos Survey Report). An asbestos survey report prepared by MTGL, Inc. on October 30, 2020, states that “the building date of the existing structure [i.e., the J26 Date Growers building] the is unknown. According to the laboratory analysis performed by EMLab P&K, LLC., as reported by MTGL “Asbestos was reported in the roofing felt under the foam roof collected for this project. MTGL recommends that all asbestos containing materials be removed prior to any renovation and/or demolition activities which may impact the materials. In the event suspect asbestos containing materials are discovered during maintenance, renovation and/or demolition that are not identified in this report, disturbance of the materials should be stopped until further assessment of the material for asbestos content can be conducted” (MTGL 2020a, p. 11).

MTGL reports that some areas were inaccessible at the time of inspection and lists the following inaccessible materials presumed to contain asbestos: flooring in Room 101, flooring in Rooms 102, 103, 104, and suspect flooring in vault. MTGL did not conduct testing within interstitial wall cavities, ceiling plenums, Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) ventilation systems, crawlspaces, or other locations of the facility. The report suggests that suspected asbestos containing materials for maintenance, renovation and/or demolition that were not identified in the report should not be removed until further assessment of the material for asbestos content can be conducted.

Potential for release of hazardous materials into the environment is low in relation to construction (e.g., accidental spill of diesel, oil, or hydraulic fluid). No hazardous materials would be used during project operation. Given the protocols required for the transport, handling and storage of these materials, potential for upset and accidental release of hazardous materials is considered less than significant.

- c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

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Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated. The project site is approximately 900 feet west of the Bobby Duke Middle School. Testing for the presence of hazardous materials on the IID property confirmed that hazardous materials were detected on the 2.2-acre project site. An asbestos survey report prepared by MTGL, Inc. on October 30, 2020, states that “the building date of the existing structure is unknown.” According to the laboratory analysis performed by EMLab P&K, LLC., as reported by MTGL, “Asbestos was reported in the roofing felt under the foam roof collected for this project.” (MTGL 2020a, p. 11) (see Appendix F, Limited Lead-Based Paint Survey Report).

A material is considered by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the State of California to be asbestos containing if at least one sample collected from the area shows asbestos present in an amount greater than one percent (> 1%). Because asbestos levels have been identified to exceed California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) standards, specifically 60% Crystolite content found in roofing felt, several sections of the standards defined in Title 8, California Code of Regulation 15 are applicable, including negative exposure assessments and the use of regulated areas.

As noted in item “b”) above, MTGL reports that some areas were inaccessible at the time of inspection, and that that suspected asbestos containing materials that were not identified in their report should not be removed until further assessment of the material for asbestos content can be conducted. MTGL also conducted a lead-based paint assessment (MTGL 2020b). Intact lead-based paint was identified on the accessible components evaluated. Current Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Renovation and Repair Rule and Cal/EPA regulations apply to the demolition component of this Project. Detection of any amount of lead in the paint will trigger numerous requirements from the California Occupations Safety and Health Administration (Cal-OSHA) lead in construction standard (e.g., Title 8, CCR Section 1532.1).

Based on the findings of the materials testing, and proximity to Bobby Duke Middle School, potential for hazardous emissions or managing hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing school is considered potentially significant unless mitigation is incorporated.

Mitigation Measures

HAZ-1 Prior to any renovation and/or demolition activities which may impact asbestos-containing materials, all such materials shall be removed by an Abatement Contractor licensed in the State of California. In the event suspect asbestos containing materials are discovered during maintenance, renovation and/or demolition that are were not previously identified, disturbance of the materials shall be stopped until further assessment of the material for asbestos content can be conducted.

Timing/Implementation: Prior to construction.
Enforcement/Monitoring: Imperial Irrigation District.

HAZ-2 Prior to demolition, all asbestos-containing materials shall be removed in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency and Occupational Safety & Health Act requirements for Federal, State and Local rules and regulations.

Timing/Implementation: Prior to construction.
Enforcement/Monitoring: Imperial Irrigation District.

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Following implementation of mitigation measure HAZ-1 and HAZ-2, impacts of release of hazardous materials would be reduced to less than significant.

- d) Be located on a site, which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

No Impact. A search of the State Water Resources Control Board’s GeoTracker website identified 11 LUST Clean-up sites and one Clean-up program site within one mile of the project site. All the LUST sites were closed. The one Clean-up program at Kinder Morgan Energy at 85980 Avenue 52 is an open site assessment (GeoTracker 2024). No hazardous materials sites were identified on the proposed project site. Therefore, no impact is identified.

- e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact. The Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport is located approximately 2.5 miles south of the project site. The site is within Compatibility Zone E Conical Surface. Zone is defined as that conical surface that extends upward and outward from the periphery of the horizontal surface at a slope of 20 feet horizontally for every one foot vertically (20:1) for 4,000 feet. It is the outermost zone of the overlay areas and has the least number of land use restriction considerations (FAA 2021, p. F-2). Basic Utility Uses (including substations) are identified as “compatible” with Zone E (FAA 2021, p. F-4). The project site is within the general traffic pattern envelope for airport noise exposure which is outside the 55 dB CNEL noise contour (Riverside County ALUCP 2004, Exhibit JC-7) Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise exposure. Thus, no impact is identified for these issue areas.

- f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact. The proposed project includes extending a transmission line connection across Grapefruit Blvd. to a tower to the east. The project would temporarily disrupt traffic along Grapefruit Blvd. while the transmission line is being extended. However, this disruption would be temporary, and Grapefruit Blvd. would remain unobstructed as the crossing involves an overhead crossing. In anticipation of a major earthquake, the Coachella Valley Water District has a comprehensive Emergency Response Plan in place that includes the canal system (Raimi & Associates 2015, p. 03-31). The proposed project would not interfere with the implementation of this plan as none of the Water District’s infrastructure would be impacted by the project. Thus, the proposed project would not impair the implementation of, or physically interfere with, any adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plans. No impact would occur.

- g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

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Less than Significant Impact. Fire protection and emergency medical services in the area are provided by the of the Riverside County Fire Department Station 79. According to the Riverside County State Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones map prepared by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire 2023), the proposed project is in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA). The proposed project site is not identified as a Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The closest wildland fire area is more than 15 miles to the west. Therefore, the potential to expose people or structures to significant risk of loss, injury of death involving wildland fires is considered less than significant.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY *Would the project:*

- a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

No Impact. The proposed project includes demolition of the existing J26 Date Growers Building and construction and operation of new switch station equipment. The project also includes four off-site poles for an overhead transmission line extending east across State Route (SR) 111/Grapefruit Blvd. to connect to transmission tower T-47. The existing site is currently paved with impervious surfaces while the connection corridor extends through previously disturbed agricultural land. Neither demolition nor construction activities are anticipated to violate waste discharge requirements or degrade water quality. Because more than one acre of soil would be disturbed as part of project construction, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be required. The SWPPP will identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) to ensure that no material is discharged or transported off-site during a rain event. The SWPPP would include measures such as silt fencing, fiber rolls, street sweeping, etc. to avoid impacts to water quality. Implementation of the SWPPP and compliance with BMPs will ensure that the project would not violate any water quality standards. No impact would occur.

- b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

No Impact. The proposed project is a new switching station and transmission lines within an existing paved IID facility and previously disturbed agricultural land. The project itself would have minimal water demand during demolition and construction limited to dust control. The amount of additional impervious area created by the project would be limited to footings for the four poles outside of the IID property footprint located on previously disturbed agricultural land. The four pole footings will occupy approximately 50 sq. ft. per pole or approximately 200 sq. ft. (.004 acre). Once operational, the project would not require a water supply. Therefore, the project is anticipated to have a less than significant impact on groundwater supplies.

- c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river through the addition of impervious surfaces in a manner which would:

- i) Result in a substantial erosion or siltation

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on- or off-site.

No Impact. The proposed project site includes the 2.2-acre site on IID property which is a developed area with impervious surface. The transmission corridor aligns through 1.5 acres of disturbed agricultural land. The potential for erosion would be limited to exposed soils during construction. Various foundations with diameters varying from 5 ft. to 8 ft. with depths up to 30 ft. and concrete pads of various dimensions with depths of 3 ft. maximum. Soil may be stockpiled during construction but would be temporary and Best Management Practices would be employed including watering of exposed soil and installation of fiber rolls or silt fencing to prevent soil transport. No streams or rivers are adjacent to the project site that could be subject to siltation. No impact would occur regarding substantial erosion or siltation.

- ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project is not anticipated to increase the amount of impervious surfaces as the 2.2-acre project site is currently developed with IID facilities. The project would demolish the J26 Date Growers building and add switch station equipment and relocate several transmission lines within the project site as well as four poles to the east within the transmission corridor. No additional impervious surfaces are proposed on the IID property and the footings for the four poles in the transmission corridor would only introduce 50 sq. ft. per pole or approximately 200 sq. ft. (.004 acre) in previously disturbed agricultural land. As a result, the project would have a less than significant impact regarding increasing the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manager which would result in flooding on- or off-site.

- iii) Create or contribute runoff water, which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

No Impact. The proposed project would not generate substantial amounts of runoff as described in item ii), above. The proposed project is located within the boundaries of the existing IID property which is paved and developed with the J26 Date Growers building and also includes four off-site poles for an overhead transmission line extending east across State Route (SR) 111/Grapefruit Blvd. to connect to transmission tower T-47. The project would demolish the J26 Date Growers building and add switch station equipment and relocate several transmission lines within the project site. The four off-site poles would not result in substantial runoff due to their limited area occupied by their footings (i.e., approximately 200 sq. ft. or .004 acre). The proposed project would not increase or contribute to runoff quantities which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems. Therefore, no impact would occur.

- iv) Impede or redirect flows?

No Impact. As previously noted, the proposed project is within the boundaries of the existing IID facility with the transmission corridor extending east through disturbed agricultural land. The project is not anticipated to impede or redirect surface runoff flows. No impact would occur.

- d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project

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inundation?

No Impact. The proposed project site is approximately 13 miles northwest of the northern tip of the Salton Sea which is the nearest large water body. Due to the distance, the Salton Sea does not pose a significant danger of inundation from tsunami or seiche related to the project site. Thus, no impact is identified for these issues.

- e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

No Impact. As discussed in items “a)” and “b)” above, the proposed project would implement BMPs during demolition and construction to protect water quality. Once operational, the proposed project would not result in the use of groundwater or inhibit the recharge of groundwater. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING *Would the project:*

- a) Physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The project is located within the existing boundaries of the IID property within the City of Coachella. The proposed overhead transmission line corridor extends east across Grapefruit Blvd. through previously disturbed agricultural land. Thus, no impact is identified regarding dividing an established community.

- b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project would demolish the J26 Date Growers building and add switch station equipment and relocate several transmission lines within the project site as well as construct four off-site poles for an overhead transmission line extending east across Grapefruit Blvd. to connect to transmission tower T-47. The project is consistent with the existing uses currently on the site and includes overhead transmission that would connect to existing IID infrastructure. Once completed, the project would improve the reliability of the existing IID electrical system. Therefore, conflicts with an applicable land use plan are considered less than significant.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES *Would the project:*

- a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

No Impact. The project site is in Mineral Resource Zone 1 on Figure 4.5-9 Mineral Resources of the Coachella General Plan Update Draft EIR (Raimi & Associates 2014, p. 4.5-18). Mineral Resource Zone 1 is defined by the California Department of Conservation as “Areas where available geologic information indicates that little likelihood exists for the presence of significant construction aggregate resources.” Thus, no impact is identified regarding mineral resources.

- b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific

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plan, or other land use plan?

No Impact. Refer to item a), above.

XIII. NOISE *Would the project result in:*

- a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Less than Significant Impact. Construction of the proposed project would result in short-term, temporary noise for approximately 9 months with most of the noise occurring during the preliminary stages of demolition and site preparation. Construction activities would create temporary localized increases in noise levels from operation of on-site equipment as well as from delivery trucks hauling materials. The major construction activities for the proposed project would consist of trenching, excavation, Class Road base lay-in, compaction, and equipment installation. Construction noise impacts are the function of several factors including noise generated by equipment; location of the equipment relative to sensitivity of nearby land uses; and the time of day in which the construction activity takes place.

Short-term construction noise generated by equipment would occur with varying intensities and durations. Proposed equipment includes Boom Trucks, Bucket Trucks, Wire Pulling Trailers, Rope Pulling Trailers, Water Truck, Pickup Truck, Material Handling Trailers. Noise levels from construction operations decrease at a rate of approximately 6 dBA per doubling of distance from the source. Noise sensitive uses include residences, schools, churches, hospitals, nursing homes, parks, and recreation areas. The nearest sensitive receptors to the demolition activities are homes located over 100 feet to the south across Bagdad Ave.

Figure 10-1: Coachella Land Use/Noise Compatibility Matrix shows a maximum noise level exposure for single-family residential structures of 70 CNEL.

Once operational, the proposed project equipment would operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Noise levels are not anticipated to increase to a level that would be perceptible to the residents on Bagdad Ave. to the south. Therefore, impacts resulting from generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project are anticipated to be less than significant.

- b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less than Significant Impact. Construction of the proposed project could generate groundborne vibration during demolition of the J26 Date Growers Building and installation of new poles that would be pounded into the ground. The J26 building will be demolished by a contractor using standard Industry demolition equipment following industry practice. Typical demolition equipment used are wheel excavator, skid steer loader, hydraulic hammer, and demolition hand tools. The majority of groundborne vibrations would be felt in close proximity to the demolition and construction activities. The nearest sensitive receptors to the demolition activities are homes located over 100 feet to the south across Bagdad Ave. Demolition activities at the closest point from the J26 Date Growers Building to the nearest residence is approximately 140 feet. Ground vibration velocities can be read

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off any of the diagrams for any distance from 5 to 250 feet from the vibration source (vibrationdamage.com). The expected threshold of perception at the nearest street is around 0.3-0.5 mm/s. Pile driving would be necessary to install and relocate poles. Some jackhammering may be used to break up concrete surfaces. Demolition activities would occur for approximately 5 days. None of these activities would be close enough to any sensitive receptors to be considered excessive. Therefore, this impact is considered less than significant.

- c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?
-

No Impact. The Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport is located approximately 2.5 miles south of the project site. The project site is within the general traffic pattern envelope for airport noise exposure which is outside the 55 dB CNEL noise contour (Riverside County ALUCP 2004, Exhibit JC-7). Workers involved in project construction and equipment installation would not be exposed to excessive noise levels from the airport. No impact would occur.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING Would the project:

- a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and business) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?
-

No Impact. The proposed project is the demolition of the 6,269 square foot J26 Date Growers Building and construction of the Grapefruit 92-kV Switching Station as well as four off-site poles for an overhead transmission line extending east across Grapefruit Blvd. to connect to transmission tower T-47. The project would improve the reliability of the existing IID electrical system. The project does not propose the development of new housing, nor does it propose construction or extension of new roads. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact regarding inducing population growth.

- b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?
-

No Impact. The proposed project is located within the boundaries of IID's property and an existing transmission corridor through a previously disturbed agricultural land. As a result, the proposed project would not displace substantial numbers of existing housing or people requiring construction of replacement housing elsewhere. No impact would occur regarding the need for replacement housing.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

- a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, to maintain acceptable service

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ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

- 1) Fire protection?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project is served by Riverside County Fire Department Station 79. The project is not anticipated to result in a substantial increase in demand for fire protection as the equipment proposed is made of metal and wood poles would be treated with fire retardant. None of the project components are flammable. Therefore, impacts to fire protection are considered less than significant.

- 2) Police Protection?

No Impact. The Riverside County Sheriff's Department is contracted to provide comprehensive law enforcement services through the City of Coachella Police Department. The proposed project is within the fenced boundaries of the IID property at Grapefruit Blvd. and Bagdad Ave. and includes the addition of four poles off-site. The station will be fenced with a block wall around the site with a height of 10 ft. with barbed wire on the inside. An increase in calls for police protection is not anticipated to increase substantially because of the addition of the new equipment. No impact is identified.

- 3) Schools?

No Impact. The proposed project is not anticipated to impact schools because it neither includes a residential component nor would it generate the need for new housing to accommodate the workforce population. Therefore, no impact is identified for this issue area.

- 4) Parks?

No Impact. The proposed project is not anticipated to impact parks because it neither includes a residential component nor would it generate the need for new housing to accommodate workforce population. Therefore, no impact is identified for this issue area.

- 5) Other Public Facilities?

No Impact. The project would enable IID to provide a more reliable service through creating redundancy in its existing electrical system. The project does not include any component that would increase demand for other public facilities such as a new school, park, or other public facility. No impact would occur.

XVI. RECREATION

- a) Would the project increase the use of the existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

No Impact. The proposed project is the demolition of the 6,269 square foot J26 Date Growers Building and construction of the Grapefruit 92-kV Switching Station as well as four off-site poles for an overhead transmission line extending east across Grapefruit Blvd. to connect to transmission tower T-47. The project would not create a demand for neighborhood or regional parks in the City of Coachella. Thus, no impact is identified for these issues.

- b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of

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recreational facilities which might have an adverse effect on the environment?

No Impact. The proposed project is the demolition of the 6,269 square foot J26 Date Growers Building and construction of the Grapefruit 92-kV Switching Station as well as four off-site poles for an overhead transmission line extending east across Grapefruit Blvd. to connect to transmission tower T-47. The project does not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. Therefore, no impact to the environment because of construction and expansion of recreational facilities would occur in association with the proposed project.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION *Would the project:*

- a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

No Impact. Demolition and construction are anticipated to occur Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Because the daily work shift starts at 8:00 a.m. and is anticipated to end at 5:00 p.m. during weekdays, trips generated by construction workers would occur during the AM and PM peak hour. Construction-related vehicles will be routed through Bagdad Ave. and Shady Ln. to minimize impact to traffic on Grapefruit Blvd. Once completed, the project would generate 1 to 4 trips per day in association with daily operations. Given the temporary increase in traffic and minimal long-term operational traffic, the proposed project would have no adverse impact on a program, plan or ordinance addressing the circulation system.

- b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Less than Significant Impact. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b), focuses on Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts. The proposed project is project is the demolition of the 6,269 square foot J26 Date Growers Building and construction of and installation of new circuit breakers, double A-frame steel structures, transmission poles, transmission lines, etc. Demolition and construction would generate temporary construction-related traffic. This project would be categorized under Section 15064.3, subdivision (b), qualitative analysis. Subdivision (b)(3) acknowledges that lead agencies may not be able to quantitatively estimate VMT for every project type. In these cases, Subdivision (b)(3) encourages lead agencies to evaluate factors such as the availability of transit, proximity to other destinations, and other factors that may affect the amount of driving required by the project.

Construction of the proposed project would result in a temporary increase in local traffic in association with demolition and construction-related workforce traffic and material deliveries. Once the project is completed, construction-related traffic would cease, and employee traffic associated with operation of the facility would resume (no new employees would be needed to operate the facility). Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b). Impacts to VMT are considered less than significant.

- c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

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No Impact. The proposed project is within the boundaries of the existing IID property bounded by 9th St. on the north, Bagdad Ave. on the south, Shady Ln. on the west and Grapefruit Blvd. and includes four off-site poles for an overhead transmission line extending east across Grapefruit Blvd. to connect to transmission tower T-47. Construction-related vehicles will be routed through Bagdad Ave. and Shady Ln. to minimize impact to traffic on Grapefruit Blvd. No change in access to the existing facility such as sharp curves or intersections is proposed. No impact would occur regarding a substantial increase in hazards due to a geometric design feature.

- d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

No Impact. The proposed project would result in temporary increases in demolition and construction traffic primarily along Bagdad Ave. and Shady Ln. and to a lesser extent along Grapefruit Blvd. The project would not present any emergency access issues to surrounding residential and agricultural uses. No impact would occur regarding emergency access

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

- a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed project is the demolition of the existing 6,269 square foot J26 Date Growers Building and construction and installation of new circuit breakers, double A-frame steel structures, transmission poles, transmission lines, etc. The project is located within the boundaries of the existing IID property bounded by 9th St. on the north, Bagdad Ave. on the south, Shady Ln. on the west and Grapefruit Blvd. and includes four off-site poles for an overhead transmission line extending east across Grapefruit Blvd. All these areas have been previously disturbed in association with construction of the existing IID facilities or previous agricultural activities in the case of the transmission corridor.

Tribal Consultation was performed as required under AB 52. Tribal letters are included in Appendix G. Seven tribes responded as follows:

- Luz Salazar, Aqua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (Mr. Salazar indicated that the area is sensitive for cultural resources and that a Tribal Cultural Resources is located near the project area. Mr. Salazar provided comments and recommendations which are included as mitigation measures).
- Geramy Martin, Tribal Secretary Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians (Did not request consultation).
- Elizabeth Portals, Cahuilla Band of Indians (Inquired if project disturbance will be on pre-disturbed soils).
- Laura Chatterton, Cultural Resource Specialist (Did not request consultation; encouraged consultation with tribes more strongly associated with lands upon which the project is located).
- Deneen Pelton, Cultural Resources Department Coordinator, Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians (Did not request consultation; encouraged consultation with tribes more strongly

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associated with lands upon which the project is located).

- Eunice Ambriz, Cultural Resources Technician, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians (Did not request consultation).
- Vanessa Minot, Tribal Administrator, Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians (Did not request consultation).

Standard protocols will also be implemented during construction, including a Worker Environmental Awareness Program which trains construction workers to halt work if they identify any resources during excavation and other earthmoving activities. However, based on comments received from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, including concerns regarding the presence of a Tribal Cultural Resource, this impact is considered potentially significant unless mitigation is incorporated.

Mitigation Measures

TRC-1 The following actions shall be taken to address concerns regarding the culturally sensitive area and Tribal Cultural Resource near the project site.

- A Cultural Resource Technical Report shall be prepared by a qualified archaeologist, including a cultural resources inventory of the project area and a cultural records search with associated survey reports and site records from the appropriate information center.
- A copy of the records search with associated survey reports and site records from the information center shall be provided to the Auga Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.
- Copies of any cultural resource documentation (report and site records) generated in connection with this project shall be provided to the Auga Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.
- An approved Cultural Resource Monitor(s) shall be present during any ground disturbing activities (including archaeological testing and surveys). Should buried cultural deposits be encountered, the Monitor may request that destructive construction halt and the Monitor shall notify a Qualified Archaeologist (Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines) to investigate and, if necessary, prepare a mitigation plan for submission to the State Historic Preservation Officer. Formal government to government consultation shall occur as specified under California Assembly Bill No. 52 (AB-52).

Timing/Implementation: Prior to any development activities and during ground disturbing activities.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Imperial Irrigation District in coordination with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.

Following implementation of mitigation measure TRC-1, impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels.

- i.) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as define in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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No Impact. The J26 Date Growers Building to be demolished is not considered eligible for

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. No impact would occur.

- ii.) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth is subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American Tribe.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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No Impact. Refer to item “a,” above.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS *Would the project:*

- a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project is the demolition 6,269 square foot J26 Date Growers Building and construction and installation of new circuit breakers, double A-frame steel structures, transmission poles, transmission lines, etc. The environmental effects of these activities are analyzed in this document. No other new or expanded water or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities are proposed. The proposed project would improve the reliability of IID’s existing electrical system by adding redundancy in the case of a power outage. All impacts can be reduced to less than significant levels with mitigation incorporated.

- b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project would require water during demolition and construction to control dust. According to IID, the project is anticipated to require a minimum of one 4,000-gallon water truck operating continuously during earthwork. Assuming 100,000 gallons of water are used per day for dust control for 10 days during construction, an estimated 23 acre-feet (100,000 gallons x 10 days = 1,000,000 gallons ÷ 43,560 1 acre-foot ≈ 23 acre-feet of water will be required. Once operational, the project will not require any water usage. Therefore, impacts to water supply will be minimal.

- c) Result in a determination by the waste water treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project’s projected demand in addition to the provider’s existing

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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commitments?

No Impact. The proposed project would not produce or increase the amount of wastewater requiring treatment. Portable toilets would be used for workers during construction. No impact would occur regarding wastewater treatment.

- d) Generate solid waste more than state or local standards, or more than the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

No Impact. The proposed project would generate demolition waste well as construction waste. This would be temporary and would be hauled and disposed of at a local landfill licensed to accept demolition and construction waste. Once construction is complete, the project is anticipated to produce minimal waste by the employees operating the facility. No impact to solid waste would occur.

- e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

No Impact. Refer to item d) above.

XX. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project

- a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact. In anticipation of a major earthquake, the Coachella Valley Water District has a comprehensive Emergency Response Plan in place that includes the canal system (Raimi & Associates 2015, p. 03-31). The proposed project would not interfere with the implementation of this plan as none of the Water District's infrastructure would be impacted by the project. The proposed project will be required to maintain emergency access points and allow safe vehicular travel along Grapefruit Blvd. during the construction period. Thus, the proposed project would not impair the implementation of, or physically interfere with, any adopted emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans. No impact is identified for this issue area.

- b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

No Impact. The potential for uncontrolled wildfire is unlikely given topography and existing surrounding uses including irrigation canals. The project does not include habitable structures. Therefore, no impact would occur regarding exposing project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire.

- c) Require the installation or maintenance of

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associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

No Impact. The proposed project would demolish the existing 6,269 square foot J26 Date Growers Building and construction and installation of new circuit breakers, double A-frame steel structures, transmission poles, transmission lines, etc. Because the project is within the boundaries of the existing IID property as well as previously disturbed agricultural land, construction activities associated with the proposed project would be unlikely to exacerbate wildfire risks. Due to the location of the project, new roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities would not be required. Therefore, no impact is identified.

- d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, because of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

No Impact. The proposed project is located on flat land in the City of Coachella. No impact would occur that would result in exposing people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, because of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21083.05, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 65088.4, Gov. Code; Sections 21080(c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21083, 21083.05, 21083.3, 21093, 21094, 21095, and 21151, Public Resources Code; Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino,(1988) 202 Cal.App.3d 296; Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors, (1990) 222 Cal.App.3d 1337; Eureka Citizens for Responsible Govt. v. City of Eureka (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 357; Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th at 1109; San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656.

Revised 2009- CEQA, Revised 2011- ICPDS, Revised 2016 – ICPDS, Revised 2017 - ICPDS

SECTION 3

III. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following are Mandatory Findings of Significance in accordance with Section 15065 of the CEQA Guidelines.

- a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?
-

Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed project would demolish the existing J26 Date Grower’s Building and add switch station equipment and relocate several transmission lines within the project site as well as four poles to the east within the transmission corridor. The area impacted by the demolition and construction is entirely within an area which has been completely disturbed by existing IID facilities as well as previously disturbed agricultural land. As a result, the project would have no impact with regard to degrading the quality of the environment, substantially reducing the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. Mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 have been provided to address potential for bats, Burrowing Owl, and nesting birds. CUL-1 and CUL-2 have been provided to reduce potential impacts to four historic-period built environment items that were observed and noted within the Project Area (an evaporation pond, two large containment tanks, and a lined irrigation lateral). These mitigation measures were provided because items these have not been evaluated yet. Therefore, impacts to the four historic period-built items are considered potentially significant unless mitigation is incorporated.

- b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)
-

No Impact. Due to the short-term and temporary nature of demolition and construction and minimal change in emissions during operation, no significant individual or cumulative impacts to air quality or greenhouse gas emissions are anticipated. No other individual projects would result in a cumulative impact regarding any other resource areas discussed in this document. In conclusion, the proposed project would have no individually or cumulatively considerable impacts.

- c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?
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Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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No Impact. As described in items a and b, the proposed project is in an area that has been previously disturbed. Demotion and construction impacts are short term and would not result in any long-term increases in air emissions which could be harmful to human beings. Once completed, the project would not increase air emissions or any other hazard to human beings. No other significant impacts have been identified in this analysis which could result in adverse impacts to human beings. Therefore, no impact is identified regarding the project having a substantial adverse effect on human beings directly or indirectly.

IV. PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED

This section identifies those people who prepared or contributed to the preparation of this document. This section is prepared in accordance with Section 15129 of the CEQA Guidelines.

A. IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT

Donald Vargas Pinera, Compliance Administrator II

Andres S Avila, Senior Project Manager

B. AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

United States Department of Fish and Wildlife

C. ENGINEER AND TECHNICAL STUDIES

Argonaut Ecological Consulting, Inc. – Biological Study

Peak & Associates, Inc. – Cultural Resources Assessment

EDR – NEPA Search Map Report

LandMark – Geotechnical Report

MTGL, Inc. – Limited Asbestos Survey Report

MTGL, Inc. – Limited Lead-Based Paint Survey Report

(Written or oral comments received on the checklist prior to circulation)

V. REFERENCES

- Argonaut Ecological Consulting Inc. 2024. Grapefruit Switching Station, Coachella, California. Referenced in text as (Argonaut 2024)
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https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca](https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca) Accessed February 18, 2024. Referenced in text as (Caltrans 2024).
- Coachella, City of. 2015. General Plan Update. Adopted April 22, 2015. Referenced in text as (City of Coachella 2015).
- California Department of Conservation. Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. 2020. "Riverside County Important Farmland 2020". Published June 2017. Referenced in Text as (DOC 2020).
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- California Department of Transportation. 2023. List of Eligible and Officially Designated State Scenic Highways (Excel Spreadsheet). Referenced in text as (Caltrans 2023).
- Earth Consultants International, Inc. 2014. Technical Background Report to the Safety Element of The General Plan for the City of Coachella. Referenced in text as (Earth Consultants 2014).
- EDR NEPASearch Map Report. 2024. IID 1280 Grapefruit Blvd Coachella, CA 92236 Inquiry Number: 7575566.1s February 22, 2024 (Referenced in text as EDR 2024).
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- MTGL, Inc. 2020a. Limited Lead-Based Paint Survey Report Grapefruit-J26 Date Growers Building. November 2020. Referenced in text as (MTGL 2020a).
- 2020b. Client Limited Asbestos Survey Report for Demolition/Renovation Grapefruit-J26 Date Growers Building. November 2020. Referenced in text as (MTGL 2020b).
- Peak & Associates, Inc., 2024. Cultural Resource Assessment for the Proposed Grapefruit Project. June 18, 2024. Referenced In Text As (Peak 2024).
- Raimi & Associates, 2014. City of Coachella, California General Plan Update Final EIR. October 2014. Referenced in text as (Raimi & Associates 2014).
2015. City of Coachella, California General Plan Update. Adopted April 22, 2015. Referenced in text as (Raimi & Associates 2015).
- Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission Plan. December 2004. East County Airports Background Data. Referenced in text as (Riverside County ALUCP 2004).
- State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker. Website: [GeoTracker \(ca.gov\)](https://www.water.ca.gov/geo-tracker). Accessed February 25, 2024. Referenced in text as (GeoTracker 2024).