

FINAL MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Water Well Replacement Project



Vandenberg Village Community Services District

Prepared By:

Grace Bridges – Project Manager
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MERIDIAN | A TRINITY COMPANY

374 Poli Street
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October 2026

Project R250514.0005

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

This Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) has been prepared for the Vandenberg Village Community Services District (VVCSD or District) Water Well Replacement Project (Project) in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq., and the State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15070 through 15075. VVCSD is the Lead Agency, as defined by CEQA, for the environmental review of the Project.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

VVCSD is an independent special district that provides potable water and wastewater services to the unincorporated community of Vandenberg Village in northern Santa Barbara County. The District's potable water supply is derived entirely from groundwater wells. The District proposes to replace three existing wells, Well 1B (Well Site 1) and Wells 3A and 3B (Well Site 3), which were drilled in the 1970s and 1980s and are approaching the end of their functional lifespan, with three new replacement wells. The expected operational life of the existing wells is estimated to be reached as early as 2027 for Well 3A, 2035 for Well 1B, and 2037 for Well 3B.

The replacement wells would be constructed on an approximately 0.76-acre site identified by the District as Well Site E (Project Site), within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (BMER) in unincorporated Santa Barbara County, southeast of Vandenberg Village and east of State Route 1 (SR-1). Well Site 1 is located approximately 250 feet north of the Project Site and Well Site 3 is located approximately 700 feet south of the Project Site. The maximum expected yield of the new wells is planned to be similar to that of the existing wells, approximately 800 to 1,350 gallons per minute (gpm). Each new well would be equipped with electrical service, metering, monitoring, and security infrastructure and would be connected to the District's existing water distribution system through new lateral connections and replacement pipelines extending to Well Site 1. Construction of the new wells would be phased as the existing wells are taken out of service, and construction is anticipated to occur over approximately 30 months, from July 2027 through December 2029, with temporary staging in the vicinity of Exit 702/704 from SR-1. The Project does not propose an increase in groundwater pumping.

A full description of the Project is provided in Section 2: Project Description of the Proposed MND, which is included as **Appendix A** to this Final MND.

1.3 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

On August 4, 2026, VVCSD issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project (see **Appendix B**). The Proposed MND was made available for a public review period from August 14, 2026, through September 14, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. The Proposed MND was submitted to the State Clearinghouse for circulation to State agencies and was assigned State Clearinghouse (SCH) No. 2026080453. Consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15072 and 15073, public notice of the Proposed MND was provided by publication of the NOI in the Santa Maria Times, a newspaper of general circulation in the Project area; by mailing the NOI to responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and other interested parties by certified mail;

by filing the NOI with the Santa Barbara County Clerk; and by posting the Proposed MND on the District's website.

The Proposed MND was available for review at the VVCSD District Office, 3745 Constellation Road, Lompoc, CA 93436, during regular business hours, and on the District's website at <http://vvcasd.org>. Written comments were directed to Dr. Cynthia Allen, General Manager, at the District Office address or by email to callen@vvcasd.org. The Proposed MND and this Final MND are available for review at the same locations.

In accordance with Assembly Bill (AB) 52 and Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1, VVCSD requested a list of California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project area from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) and mailed AB 52 notification letters to all 11 tribal contacts provided by the NAHC on September 30, 2025. No requests for consultation or other responses were received during the 30-day notification period (Proposed MND, Section 4.18 and Appendix I).

Two comment letters were received during the public review period, both from State agencies: the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water, and the California State Lands Commission. These letters and the responses to them are provided in Section 2.0 of this Final MND.

The Final MND represents the complete environmental review document for the Project to be considered by the VVCSD Board of Directors, as the decision-making body, before it makes a decision on the Project. The NOI identifies that the Board of Directors is scheduled to consider the Project for adoption at a regular Board meeting on October 6, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., in the VVCSD District Office Conference Room, 3745 Constellation Road. State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15074(b)) require that the Lead Agency consider the Proposed MND together with any comments received during the public review process prior to approving a project. State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15073.5(c)) identify circumstances by which the Lead Agency can make revisions in response to comments on the Project's effects which do not identify new avoidable significant effects. Section 2.0 of the Final MND merely clarifies, amplifies, or makes insignificant modifications to the Proposed MND. The decision-making body shall adopt the MND only if it finds, on the basis of the whole record before it (including the Final MND and any comments received), that there is no substantial evidence that the Project will have a significant effect on the environment and that the MND reflects the Lead Agency's independent judgment and analysis. In addition, State CEQA Guidelines Section 15074(d) requires that the Lead Agency adopt a program for reporting on or monitoring the changes that it has required in the project or made a condition of approval to mitigate or avoid significant environmental effects.

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE FINAL MND

As required by the State CEQA Guidelines, the Final MND consists of the following components:

- ▶ Comments received from reviewing agencies on the Proposed MND during the public review process and responses to those comments (see Section 2.0).
- ▶ Revisions to the Proposed MND made in response to the comments (see **Appendix A**). Changes to the Proposed MND for the Project are shown as follows: additions are double underlined, and deletions are shown in strikethrough (~~strikethrough~~) format.
- ▶ A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), which includes a summary of impacts, mitigation measures, and implementation procedures (see Section 3.0).

2. COMMENTS RECEIVED AND RESPONSES

The State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15074(b)) require the decision-making body of the Lead Agency to consider the Proposed MND together with any comments received during the public review process prior to adopting the MND and considering approval of a project. Although the State CEQA Guidelines do not require a lead agency to prepare written responses to comments received on a proposed MND, VVCS D has prepared responses to all comments received in order to provide the Board of Directors and the commenting agencies with a complete record.

Comments on the Proposed MND were received from the following public agencies:

- ▶ State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water, dated September 10, 2026
- ▶ California State Lands Commission, dated September 14, 2026

No comments were received from members of the public, and no other comment letters were received during the public review period. Each comment letter has been assigned a number in the order in which it was received, and each distinct comment or issue within each letter has been bracketed and numbered sequentially in the order in which it appears in that letter (e.g., Comments 1-1 and 1-2). Responses are provided under the same identifiers.

State Water Resources Control Board

September 10, 2026

Dr. Cynthia Allen
Vandenberg Village Community Services District
3745 Constellation Road
Lompoc, CA 93436

VANDENBERG VILLAGE COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT, INITIAL
STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (IS/MND), FOR THE WATER WELL
REPLACEMENT (PROJECT), STATE CLEARINGHOUSE # 2026080453

Dear Dr. Cynthia Allen,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the IS/MND for the proposed Project. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), Division of Drinking Water (DDW), issues domestic water supply permits under the Safe Drinking Water Act. This Project falls under the jurisdiction of DDW's Santa Barbara District. The Santa Barbara District issues permit amendments according to the Title 22, California Code of Regulations (Cal. Code Regs.), chapter 16. Public water systems need a permit amendment for modification of the water supply, including new sources, new reservoirs with 100,000-gallon capacity or greater, service area expansions of twenty percent or more, and treatment design capacity or process changes as per Cal. Code Regs. § 64556. The Lead Agency needs to apply for a water supply permit amendment for the new drinking water source.

1-1

The State Water Board, DDW, as a responsible agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has the following comments on the IS/MND:

- The State Water Board, DDW, was not listed as Responsible Agency in section 2.4 Other Public Agency Required Approvals. Please list the State Water Board, DDW, for obtaining a water supply permit amendment. Application of a water supply permit amendment would have to be submitted to the State Water Board, DDW, for the construction of the three new replacement wells.

When the CEQA process is completed, please forward the following items with the permit application to the State Water Board, DDW Santa Barbara District at DWPDIST06@waterboards.ca.gov:

- The IS/MND, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan, and comments received and the lead agency responses as appropriate;

1-2

- The Resolution or Board Minutes certifying/adopting the environmental document, and approving the Project; and
- The Notice of Determination filed at the County Clerk's Office and the State Clearinghouse.

1-2

Please contact Adrian Dela Calzada of the State Water Board at (916) 341-5167 or Adrian.Delacalzada@waterboards.ca.gov, for questions regarding this comment letter.

Sincerely,

Adrian Dela Calzada

Adrian Dela Calzada
Environmental Scientist
Division of Financial Assistance
Special Project Review Unit
1001 I Street, 16th floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Cc:

State Clearinghouse

Jason Cunningham
District Engineer
Santa Barbara District

Armin Ghavim
Water Resource Control Engineer
Santa Barbara District

2.2 RESPONSES TO COMMENT LETTER 1

Comment 1-1

Thank you for the opportunity to review the IS/MND for the proposed Project. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), Division of Drinking Water (DDW), issues domestic water supply permits under the Safe Drinking Water Act. This Project falls under the jurisdiction of DDW's Santa Barbara District. The Santa Barbara District issues permit amendments according to the Title 22, California Code of Regulations (Cal. Code Regs.), chapter 16. Public water systems need a permit amendment for modification of the water supply, including new sources, new reservoirs with 100,000-gallon capacity or greater, service area expansions of twenty percent or more, and treatment design capacity or process changes as per Cal. Code Regs. § 64556. The Lead Agency needs to apply for a water supply permit amendment for the new drinking water source.

The State Water Board, DDW, as a responsible agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has the following comments on the IS/MND:

- The State Water Board, DDW, was not listed as Responsible Agency in section 2.4 Other Public Agency Required Approvals. Please list the State Water Board, DDW, for obtaining a water supply permit amendment. Application of a water supply permit amendment would have to be submitted to the State Water Board, DDW, for the construction of the three new replacement wells.

Response 1-1

VVCS D acknowledges DDW's authority to issue domestic water supply permit amendments and confirms that the District will submit an application for a water supply permit amendment to the DDW Santa Barbara District for the three new replacement wells. Section 2.4: Other Public Agency Required Approvals of the Proposed MND has been revised to identify the State Water Board, DDW, Santa Barbara District, as a Responsible Agency with approval authority over the domestic water supply permit amendment for the three new replacement wells. The comment does not raise an issue regarding the adequacy of the environmental analysis, and no further revisions to the Proposed MND are required. Identifying an additional Responsible Agency does not change the Project, the environmental analysis, or any impact conclusion reached in the Proposed MND.

Comment 1-2

When the CEQA process is completed, please forward the following items with the permit application to the State Water Board, DDW Santa Barbara District at DWPDIST06@waterboards.ca.gov:

- The IS/MND, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan, and comments received and the lead agency responses as appropriate;
- The Resolution or Board Minutes certifying/adopting the environmental document, and approving the Project; and
- The Notice of Determination filed at the County Clerk's Office and the State Clearinghouse.

Response 1-2

VCSD will forward the requested items to the DDW Santa Barbara District [via](#) the appropriate contact methods when VCSD submits its water supply permit amendment application. No revisions to the Proposed MND are required.



100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100 South
Sacramento, CA 95825-8202

MATTHEW DURLAO, PhD, Executive Officer
Reception: 916.574.1900
TTY: 711

Date September 14, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY (callen@vvcasd.org)

File Ref.: SCH #2026080453

Vandenberg Village Community Services District
Dr. Cynthia Allen
3745 Constellation Road
Lompoc, CA 93436

Subject: Initial Study and Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Vandenberg Village Community Services District Water Well Replacement Project, Santa Barbara County

Dear Dr. Cynthia Allen:

The California State Lands Commission (Commission) staff has reviewed the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Vandenberg Village Community Services District (VVCSD) Water Well Replacement Project (Project), which is being prepared by VVCSD as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.). The Commission is a trustee agency for projects that could directly or indirectly affect State sovereign lands and their accompanying Public Trust resources or uses. Additionally, because the Project involves work on State sovereign land under the Commission's jurisdiction, the Commission will act as a responsible agency.

2-1

Commission Jurisdiction and Public Trust Lands

As general background, the State of California acquired sovereign ownership of all tidelands and submerged lands and beds of navigable lakes and waterways upon its admission to the United States in 1850. The State holds these lands for the benefit of all people of the state for statewide Public Trust purposes, which include but are not limited to waterborne commerce, navigation, fisheries, water-related recreation, habitat preservation, and open space. The State may also take title to land in the legal character of sovereign land, which places the land under the Public Trust. This was the case when the State received the Burton Mesa property in June 1991 from Union Oil Company of California as part of a settlement agreement.

2-2

The proposed Project is located within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (Reserve), which consists of approximately 5,300 acres located north of Lompoc and held as State sovereign land under the Commission's jurisdiction. The land in the Reserve was acquired by the State in a series of transactions from Union Oil Company of California, Santa Barbara County, and the California Department of Parks and Recreation. On December 3, 1999, the Commission authorized Lease 8129, for a term of 49 years, to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the management, operation, and maintenance of the Reserve ([Item 22](#)).

2-2

The proposed Project location for the replacement wells, known as Well Site E, comprises approximately 0.76 acres of State sovereign land within the Reserve. As the proposed project is not currently authorized, VVCSD will need to apply to the Commission for a new lease for any construction activities and uses planned on sovereign land in the Reserve, outside of the existing right-of-way easement for the water pipeline.

As previously described, the Reserve is under management and operation by CDFW. To ensure there are no conflicts with the existing management of the Reserve, VVCSD will be required to obtain and provide to the Commission a letter of concurrence from CDFW acknowledging and agreeing to any proposed construction activities and uses for the proposed Project in the Reserve.

2-3

Information on the Commission's leasing process can be found at www.slc.ca.gov/leases-permits/application-process/, and the application can be submitted online through the Commission's lease portal at oscar.slc.ca.gov. If you have questions specific to jurisdiction, lease provisions, or the application process, please contact Public Land Management Specialist Kelly Connor (contact information below).

2-4

Project Description

The VVCSD proposes to replace three existing water wells, identified as Well 1B, Well 3A, and Well 3B, to maintain VVCSD's existing water supply capacity, as current water supply wells reach the end of their functional lifespan, and to ensure continued reliability of potable water service to the Vandenberg Village community.

2-5

From the Project Description, Commission staff understands that the Project would include the following components that have potential to affect State sovereign land:

- Site Preparation - Activities including removal of approximately 30,000 square feet of brush and debris, grading and excavation, foundation work, and paving for vehicle access to the new well sites.
- New Well Construction - Construction of three new replacement water wells using rotary drilling methods. Construction of the new wells will be phased as existing wells 1B, 3A, and 3B are taken out of production. Each well would be equipped with electrical service, metering, monitoring, and security infrastructure.
- Water System Connections - Connection to VVCSD's existing water distribution system (located approximately 250 feet north of the project site at Well Site 1) through new lateral connections and replacement pipelines constructed in the existing right-of-way.

2-5

Environmental Review

Commission staff requests that VVCSD consider the following comments on the Project's IS/MND to ensure that impacts to State sovereign land are adequately analyzed for the Commission's use of the IS/MND when considering a future lease application for the Project.

2-6

Project Description

1. The IS/MND needs to state whether the existing wells would be removed, abandoned in place, or left intact and taken out of production, as well as provide a detailed description of any proposed methods for decommissioning the existing wells. The IS/MND also needs to provide a more detailed description of the construction methods proposed to connect the new wells to existing infrastructure at Well Site 1. Without this information, the IS/MND cannot adequately assess the potential impacts associated with Project activities, evaluate them, and mitigate those impacts (as applicable). Understanding the disposition of the existing wells and the well connections is necessary both for Commission staff's environmental review and for the Commission's consideration of a proposed lease.

2-7

Biological Resources

2. Vegetation Removal: The environmental setting section for Biological Resources should identify that the Reserve is managed pursuant to the Reserve Land Management Plan (Plan), which is administered by CDFW. Commission staff recommends a brief discussion of the Project area occurring within the Encina

2-8

Management Unit of the Reserve with description of habitats and management objectives for this area as identified in the Plan.

The Reserve supports one of the last significant natural stands of Maritime Chaparral on the California central coast. Given the extent of vegetation removal for proposed construction, access, and staging areas, the Biological Resources section of the MND must identify existing native trees and woody shrubs that would be removed and describe areas of disturbance within the Project footprint, including any riparian species and sensitive natural community vegetation assemblages. Appendix B, Biological Survey Report, does not provide this information or include recommended measures to ensure successful revegetation of impacted species, such as replacement ratios, long-term monitoring for establishment, etc. The MND should be updated to include information on the existing native trees and shrubs that would be impacted as well as revegetation mitigation measures (MMs) to ensure potential impacts are reduced to less than significant. Further, as the Project area lies within public trust land, the loss of native vegetation is a loss of public trust resources for the Reserve. As such, Commission staff will work with CDFW to ensure that any potential impacts from the loss of native vegetation that would be considered less than significant under CEQA are still appropriately addressed (i.e., compensated for) through the Commission's leasing process.

3. Mitigation Measures: The MMs identified in Section 4.4 of the MND (Biological Resources) are not as detailed and/or protective as the Avoidance and Minimization Measures in Appendix B. For example, MM BIO-1 in the MND does not include the full scope of pre-construction survey information for plant and wildlife species, including for nesting bird and bat species. Commission staff note, however, that Appendix B does not include any discussion of consultation with CDFW to support the information in the IS/MND's environmental setting and development of mitigation measures. As CDFW is the Commission's lessee for management of the Reserve, the IS/MND's biological resources section (environmental setting, impact analysis, and mitigation measures) would be considered inadequate if VVCSD fails to develop and finalize the contents in close coordination with CDFW. Consequently, the impact determinations and mitigation measures in the draft IS/MND's Section 4.4 do not include sufficient information to support the less than significant with mitigation determinations.

Cultural Resources

4. Staff requests that the following statement be included in the IS/MND's Cultural Resources section as a new mitigation measure, "The final disposition of

archaeological, historical, and paleontological resources recovered on State lands under the jurisdiction of the California State Lands Commission must be approved by the Commission.”

2-12

Hydrology and Water Quality

5. The Hydrology Section of the IS/MND claims that groundwater extraction production from the new wells will remain the same as the existing wells with less than significant impacts on groundwater supplies and recharge. However, the MND does not include adequate baseline information for the Lompoc Groundwater Basin (LGB) and does not consider that the new wells will be producing from a different location within the LGB and in close proximity to a natural drainage. The regulatory setting should disclose if any entitlements are necessary for extraction of groundwater, and, if so, identify the authorized production volumes of the existing and new wells for the VVCSD service area. The MND must disclose if the existing and new wells operate pursuant to a groundwater management plan for the LGB. The MND must also include a description of the area, depth, volume, and other known groundwater extractors of the LGB to assess the Project's cumulative impact on groundwater resources. Given the proximity of the new wells to a natural drainage, the MND must disclose if the depth of groundwater extraction will have a direct impact on surface water characteristics of the drainage and adjacent riparian resources.

2-13

2-14

Tribal Cultural Resources

6. In the environmental checklist for Section 4.18, Tribal and Cultural Resources (page 4-72), impact a.ii. is listed as Less Than Significant with Mitigation. However, in the Discussion section, impact a.ii. is identified as Less Than Significant without mitigation. Please clarify this discrepancy, and if applicable, state the necessary mitigation measures proposed to protect on-site Tribal Cultural Resources.

2-15

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the IS/MND for the Project. As a responsible and trustee agency, the Commission will rely on the adopted IS/MND when issuing a new lease. Staff requests that you consider these comments before adopting the IS/MND.

2-16

Please send electronic copies of the adopted IS/MND, Mitigation Monitoring Program, Notice of Determination, and approving resolution when they are final. Please note that federal and state laws require all government entities to improve accessibility of information technology and content by complying with established accessibility requirements. (29 U.S.C. § 794d; 36 C.F.R. § 1194.1 et seq.; Gov. Code, § 7405.) California State law prohibits State agencies from publishing on their websites content that does not comply with accessibility requirements. (Gov. Code, § 115467.) Therefore, any documents submitted to Commission staff during the processing of a lease or permit that will be posted online, including relevant CEQA documentation, must meet accessibility requirements for Commission staff to place the application on the Commission agenda.

2-17

2-18

Refer questions concerning environmental review to Christopher Hall, Environmental Scientist, at christopher.hall@slc.ca.gov or (916) 574-1845. For questions concerning Commission leasing jurisdiction, please contact Kelly Connor, Public Land Management Specialist, at kelly.connor@slc.ca.gov or (916) 574-0343.

Sincerely,



Nicole Dobroski, Chief

Division of Environmental Science,
Planning, and Management

cc: Office of Planning and Research
K. Connor, Commission
C. Hall, Commission
L. Calvo, Commission
E. Wilson-Olgin, CDFW
R. Madrid, CDFW
T. Ford, CDFW

2.4 RESPONSES TO COMMENT LETTER 2

Comment 2-1

The California State Lands Commission (Commission) staff has reviewed the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Vandenberg Village Community Services District (VVCSD) Water Well Replacement Project (Project), which is being prepared by VVCSD as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.). The Commission is a trustee agency for projects that could directly or indirectly affect State sovereign lands and their accompanying Public Trust resources or uses. Additionally, because the Project involves work on State sovereign land under the Commission's jurisdiction, the Commission will act as a responsible agency.

Response 2-1

The District acknowledges the Commission's role as both a trustee and a responsible agency. Section 2.4, Other Public Agency Required Approvals, of the Proposed MND has been revised to include the Commission as a Trustee Agency pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15386. Section 2.4 has also been revised to identify the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as a Trustee Agency pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15386, given CDFW's jurisdiction over the fish and wildlife resources of the State that could be affected by the Project.

Comment 2-2

As general background, the State of California acquired sovereign ownership of all tidelands and submerged lands and beds of navigable lakes and waterways upon its admission to the United States in 1850. The State holds these lands for the benefit of all people of the state for statewide Public Trust purposes, which include but are not limited to waterborne commerce, navigation, fisheries, water-related recreation, habitat preservation, and open space. The State may also take title to land in the legal character of sovereign land, which places the land under the Public Trust. This was the case when the State received the Burton Mesa property in June 1991 from Union Oil Company of California as part of a settlement agreement.

The proposed Project is located within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (Reserve), which consists of approximately 5,300 acres located north of Lompoc and held as State sovereign land under the Commission's jurisdiction. The land in the Reserve was acquired by the State in a series of transactions from Union Oil Company of California, Santa Barbara County, and the California Department of Parks and Recreation. On December 3, 1999, the Commission authorized Lease 8129, for a term of 49 years, to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the management, operation, and maintenance of the Reserve (Item 22).

The proposed Project location for the replacement wells, known as Well Site E, comprises approximately 0.76 acres of State sovereign land within the Reserve. As the proposed project is not currently authorized, VVCSD will need to apply to the Commission for a new lease for any construction activities and uses planned on sovereign land in the Reserve, outside of the existing right-of-way easement for the water pipeline.

Response 2-2

The District acknowledges the Commission's jurisdiction over Well Site E and will apply to the Commission for a new lease for construction activities and uses on land outside the existing right-of-way easement. The application will include detailed engineering plans depicting the final locations of the wells and associated infrastructure required to connect to the District's existing infrastructure facilities to the east and north.

Comment 2-3

As previously described, the Reserve is under management and operation by CDFW. To ensure there are no conflicts with the existing management of the Reserve, VVCSD will be required to obtain and provide to the Commission a letter of concurrence from CDFW acknowledging and agreeing to any proposed construction activities and uses for the proposed Project in the Reserve.

Response 2-3

Consistent with the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (BMER) Final Land Management Plan, Administration Element, Goal 3: Easement Management, the District will coordinate with the CDFW prior to submittal of the application for a new lease for any construction activities and uses planned outside of the existing right-of-way easement for the Project. As part of that coordination, the District will obtain a letter of concurrence from CDFW acknowledging and agreeing to the proposed construction activities and uses within the Reserve, and will provide the letter to the Commission with its lease application.

Comment 2-4

Information on the Commission's leasing process can be found at www.slc.ca.gov/leases-permits/application-process/, and the application can be submitted online through the Commission's lease portal at oscar.slc.ca.gov. If you have questions specific to jurisdiction, lease provisions, or the application process, please contact Public Land Management Specialist Kelly Connor (contact information below).

Response 2-4

The comment is noted and will be included as part of the record and made available to the decision makers prior to a final decision on the Project.

Comment 2-5

The VVCSD proposes to replace three existing water wells, identified as Well 1B, Well 3A, and Well 3B, to maintain VVCSD's existing water supply capacity, as current water supply wells reach the end of their functional lifespan, and to ensure continued reliability of potable water service to the Vandenberg Village community.

From the Project Description, Commission staff understands that the Project would include the following components that have potential to affect State sovereign land:

- Site Preparation - Activities including removal of approximately 30,000 square feet of brush and debris, grading and excavation, foundation work, and paving for vehicle access to the new well sites.

- New Well Construction - Construction of three new replacement water wells using rotary drilling methods. Construction of the new wells will be phased as existing wells 1B, 3A, and 3B are taken out of production. Each well would be equipped with electrical service, metering, monitoring, and security infrastructure.
- Water System Connections - Connection to VVCS's existing water distribution system (located approximately 250 feet north of the project site at Well Site 1) through new lateral connections and replacement pipelines constructed in the existing right-of-way.

Response 2-5

The comment summarizes the Project as described in Section 2.3, Project Characteristics, of the Proposed MND. No revisions are required in response to this comment.

Comment 2-6

Environmental Review

Commission staff requests that VVCS consider the following comments on the Project's IS/MND to ensure that impacts to State sovereign land are adequately analyzed for the Commission's use of the IS/MND when considering a future lease application for the Project.

Response 2-6

The comment is introductory. Responses to the specific comments are provided in Responses 2-7 through 2-18.

Comment 2-7

Project Description

1. The IS/MND needs to state whether the existing wells would be removed, abandoned in place, or left intact and taken out of production, as well as provide a detailed description of any proposed methods for decommissioning the existing wells. The IS/MND also needs to provide a more detailed description of the construction methods proposed to connect the new wells to existing infrastructure at Well Site 1. Without this information, the IS/MND cannot adequately assess the potential impacts associated with Project activities, evaluate them, and mitigate those impacts (as applicable). Understanding the disposition of the existing wells and the well connections is necessary both for Commission staff's environmental review and for the Commission's consideration of a proposed lease.

Response 2-7

Section 2.3 of the Final MND has been revised to clarify the anticipated decommissioning activities of existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B. Each existing well would be taken out of production and decommissioned as its replacement well is placed into service. Project design is preliminary at this time, and detailed decommissioning plans have not been prepared. Decommissioning would be performed under a well destruction permit issued by Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services, the administrative authority under Chapter 34A (Wells) of the Santa Barbara County Code, and in accordance with the California

Department of Water Resources Water Well Standards, Bulletin 74-81 (December 1981) and California Well Standards, Bulletin 74-90 (June 1991). The District will provide final decommissioning plans to the Commission when they are available and the level of analysis and the proposed mitigation presented in the Proposed MND is based upon this preliminary review. Because existing Well Sites 1 and 3 are within the Reserve, the Final MND clarifies that the decommissioning activities at these locations have been analyzed, located within previously disturbed areas, and that the proposed biological resources mitigation measure in Section 4.4, as revised (see Response 2-10), would apply.

Section 2.3 of the Final MND has been revised to clarify the preliminary pipeline and electrical connections between the proposed well locations and the existing Well Site 1. The connections would be constructed by open-trench methods west approximately 50 feet to the existing right-of-way easement, and then north for approximately 250 feet to connect to the existing well infrastructure at Well Site 1. Project design is preliminary at this time, and detailed construction plans have not been prepared. The footprint of disturbance associated with the connections is evaluated for potential environmental impacts in the Final MND, and the District will provide final construction plans to the Commission with the application.

Comment 2-8

Biological Resources

2. Vegetation Removal: The environmental setting section for Biological Resources should identify that the Reserve is managed pursuant to the Reserve Land Management Plan (Plan), which is administered by CDFW. Commission staff recommends a brief discussion of the Project area occurring within the Encina Management Unit of the Reserve with description of habitats and management objectives for this area as identified in the Plan.

The Reserve supports one of the last significant natural stands of Maritime Chaparral on the California central coast. Given the extent of vegetation removal for proposed construction, access, and staging areas, the Biological Resources section of the MND must identify existing native trees and woody shrubs that would be removed and describe areas of disturbance within the Project footprint, including any riparian species and sensitive natural community vegetation assemblages. Appendix B, Biological Survey Report, does not provide this information or include recommended measures to ensure successful revegetation of impacted species, such as replacement ratios, long-term monitoring for establishment, etc. The MND should be updated to include information on the existing native trees and shrubs that would be impacted as well as revegetation mitigation measures (MMs) to ensure potential impacts are reduced to less than significant.

Response 2-8

Section 4.4 of the Final MND has been revised to describe the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve Land Management Plan (CDFG, Administrative Final, August 2007), administered by CDFW, and to describe the Project Site's location within the Encina Management Unit. The Plan divides the Reserve into five management units, each roughly 1,000 acres: Vandenberg, Santa Lucia, Purisima Hills, Encina, and La Purisima. In the Encina unit the dominant geologic formation is the Orcutt Formation and the dominant soil series is Marina sand, which the Plan identifies as the most abundant soil on the Reserve, consistent with the Marina sand mapped at the Project Site in Appendix B. The Plan identifies Davis Creek and its tributary Meriam Creek within the Encina unit, a spring north of Burton Mesa Boulevard west of Clubhouse Road, and the State Water pipeline crossing the unit. Management direction for the Encina unit includes

the Plan's trail program, which would reduce trails in the unit from approximately 15.0 miles to approximately 6.6 miles, and the phase-out and restoration of grazing areas in the unit. The analysis under threshold 4.4(f) is also revised to address Project consistency with those objectives, drawing on the Biological Survey Report in Appendix B, which evaluates the Project's continued compatibility with the Land Management Plan for the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve.

Section 4.4 of the Final MND has also been revised to indicate vegetation removal by community and to describe the disturbance footprint, relying on the vegetation mapping, species observations, and Figure 5 from the Biological Survey Report in Appendix B. The Biological Survey Report (Appendix B dated October 17, 2025) updates the 2022 biological resource assessment prepared by Althouse and Meade and documents field surveys conducted across three survey years: February through July 2016, spring 2022, and reconnaissance-level wildlife and focused botanical surveys on April 9 and May 14, 2025. The Biological Survey Report analyzed an area of approximately 0.87-acres (Study Area), which is larger than the 0.76-acre Project Site analyzed area within the Proposed MND. The Survey Area was surveyed on foot, the 2025 botanical surveys were timed to coincide with the bloom periods for special-status plant species and conducted in accordance with applicable US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Native Plant Society (CNPS), and CDFW survey guidelines. The Biological Survey Report also included an examination for wetland and riverine boundaries.

Appendix B (Table 2) maps the 0.87-acre Study Area as follows:

Vegetation Community or Land Use	Study Area (acres)
Black sage – California sagebrush scrub	0.60
Coast live oak woodland and forest	0.17
Developed	0.06
Arroyo willow thickets	0.03
Disturbed	0.01
Total	0.87

The Final MND has been revised to clarify the riparian community, as the sensitive assemblage to be avoided during construction, is avoided through implementation of mitigation. The revised mitigation measures (see Response 2-10) require environmentally sensitive area fencing to protect retained vegetation, including the riparian edge. The revised mitigation measures have been incorporated into Section 3, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), and are considered before the Board for approval. Implementation of the revised mitigation measures would not change the conclusion of less than significant biological resource impacts identified in the Proposed MND.

Comment 2-9

Further, as the Project area lies within public trust land, the loss of native vegetation is a loss of public trust resources for the Reserve. As such, Commission staff will work with CDFW to ensure that any potential impacts from the loss of native vegetation that would be considered less than significant under CEQA are still appropriately addressed (i.e., compensated for) through the Commission's leasing process.

Response 2-9

The District acknowledges that the loss of native vegetation within the Reserve is a loss of public trust resources independent of the CEQA significance determination. The Final MND identifies mitigation measures to avoid impacts to plant and wildlife species. The District will work with Commission staff and CDFW during the lease process to address any potential compensation if the final design of the Project results in the loss of native vegetation. Implementation of mitigation measures MM BIO-1, MM BIO-2, and MM BIO-4 identify CDFW protocol requirements for each individual species determined present during the preconstruction surveys. The District would follow CDFW protocols and requirements for offsets or compensation to identified species potentially affected by the Project.

Comment 2-10

3. Mitigation Measures: The MMs identified in Section 4.4 of the MND (Biological Resources) are not as detailed and/or protective as the Avoidance and Minimization Measures in Appendix B. For example, MM BIO-1 in the MND does not include the full scope of pre-construction survey information for plant and wildlife species, including for nesting bird and bat species.

Response 2-10

Section 4.4 of the Final IS/MND and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program have been revised so that the mitigation measures incorporate the full scope of the corresponding Avoidance and Minimization Measures recommended in Appendix B, including the Worker Environmental Awareness Program training topics (Appendix B BIO-1) and the pre-construction survey requirements for special-status plants (BIO-2), nesting raptors and migratory birds (BIO-3), roosting bats (BIO-4), and herpetofauna (BIO-5), together with the survey timing, buffer distances, and seasonal work windows those measures specify. The measures are stated in mandatory terms so that each is fully enforceable through the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, as required by Public Resources Code Section 21081.6(b). According to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15073.5(c)(1) and 15074.1(b), the revised mitigation measures would be determined to be equivalent or more effective than those identified in the Proposed MND. As discussed above, the District has the authority to identify equivalent or more effective mitigation measures, which are included in the project approval as the MMRP in Section 3. With these revisions, the mitigation measures in Section 4.4 are as detailed and protective as those recommended in Appendix B.

Comment 2-11

Commission staff note, however, that Appendix B does not include any discussion of consultation with CDFW to support the information in the IS/MND's environmental setting and development of mitigation measures. As CDFW is the Commission's lessee for management of the Reserve, the IS/MND's biological resources section (environmental setting, impact analysis, and mitigation measures) would be considered inadequate if VVCS fails to develop and finalize the contents in close coordination with CDFW. Consequently, the impact determinations and mitigation measures in the draft IS/MND's Section 4.4 do not include sufficient information to support the less than significant with mitigation determinations.

Response 2-11

The District has coordinated with CDFW staff, as the Commission's lessee and manager of the Reserve, regarding the Project and the biological resources within the proposed lease area. That coordination included a September 2024 site visit to the proposed lease area by CDFW staff. Project design is preliminary at this time, and detailed construction plans have not been prepared. The footprint of disturbance associated with the connections is evaluated for potential environmental impacts in the Final MND, and the District will provide final construction plans to the Commission with the application. Consistent with BMER Administration Element, Goal 3: Easement Management, the District will coordinate with CDFW staff responsible for the Reserve through the Commission's lease process and will obtain and provide to the Commission a letter of concurrence from CDFW prior to Commission consideration of the lease (see Response 2-3) once final engineering designs are completed. With the vegetation impact quantification described in Response 2-8 and the mitigation measures revised as described in Response 2-10, Section 4.4 of the Final MND supports the less than significant with mitigation impact conclusion identified in the Proposed MND.

Comment 2-12**Cultural Resources**

4. Staff requests that the following statement be included in the IS/MND's Cultural Resources section as a new mitigation measure, "The final disposition of archaeological, historical, and paleontological resources recovered on State lands under the jurisdiction of the California State Lands Commission must be approved by the Commission."

Response 2-12

As described in Section 4.5 of the Proposed MND, the Phase I Archaeological Assessment concluded that no archaeological resources eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) or National Register of Historic Places are present within the Project Site. Section 4.5 further explains that, in the event previously undiscovered archaeological resources are encountered during construction, California Public Resources Code Section 21083.2 requires impacts to unique archaeological resources be avoided or mitigated, as appropriate. In addition, California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that work cease in the vicinity of a discovery until the find has been evaluated by a qualified archaeologist and appropriate treatment measures have been implemented. Compliance with these existing State laws and regulations would ensure that any previously undiscovered archaeological resources are appropriately evaluated and protected.

As described in Section 4.7, Geology and Soils, threshold (f), in the event that paleontological resources are encountered during construction, work in the vicinity of the discovery would cease until the find has been evaluated by a qualified paleontologist. Any discovered paleontological resources would be managed in accordance with California Public Resources Code Section 5097.5 and other applicable State laws to ensure that significant resources are appropriately identified, documented, and treated before construction activities resume. Compliance with these existing regulatory requirements would reduce potential impacts to unique paleontological resources to a less-than-significant level.

Because compliance with these existing State laws and regulations reduces potential impacts to archaeological, historical, and paleontological resources to a less-than-significant level, no mitigation

measure is required according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4. The District will ensure any potential archaeological, historical, and paleontological resources inadvertently discovered during construction follow Commission requirements as part of the lease process.

Comment 2-13

Hydrology and Water Quality

5. The Hydrology Section of the IS/MND claims that groundwater extraction production from the new wells will remain the same as the existing wells with less than significant impacts on groundwater supplies and recharge. However, the MND does not include adequate baseline information for the Lompoc Groundwater Basin (LGB) and does not consider that the new wells will be producing from a different location within the LGB and in close proximity to a natural drainage. The regulatory setting should disclose if any entitlements are necessary for extraction of groundwater, and, if so, identify the authorized production volumes of the existing and new wells for the VVCSD service area. The MND must disclose if the existing and new wells operate pursuant to a groundwater management plan for the LGB. The MND must also include a description of the area, depth, volume, and other known groundwater extractors of the LGB to assess the Project's cumulative impact on groundwater resources.

Response 2-13

Section 4.10 of the Final MND has been revised to add a groundwater setting. The setting identifies the Project Site within the Western Management Area (WMA) of the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin (DWR Bulletin 118 Basin No. 3-015), which includes the Lompoc Upland from which the District's wells produce. As described in Section 4.10 of the Proposed MND, VVCSD obtains groundwater from the Lompoc Groundwater Basin, which consists of the Lompoc Plain, Lompoc Terrace, and Lompoc Upland subbasins, and recharge occurs primarily through infiltration from the Santa Ynez River, local tributaries, precipitation, and subsurface inflow. The District's existing wells draw from the Lompoc Upland Aquifer (VVCSD 2025 Consumer Confidence Report). The revised setting describes the principal aquifers of the Lompoc Upland, including their extent, depth, water bearing formations, groundwater levels, storage, and water quality, as reported in the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Western Management Area¹ including conditions in the vicinity of the Project Site.

The analysis in the Final MND clarifies the change in pumping location. The replacement wells would be located in the immediate vicinity of the existing wells to be decommissioned: as described in Section 1.2, Well Site 1 is approximately 250 feet north of the Project Site and Well Site 3 is approximately 700 feet south. Because the replacement wells would draw from the same Lompoc Upland Aquifer as the wells they replace, production would shift a few hundred feet within the same aquifer system without an increase in the volume extracted. On that basis, Section 4.10 of the Draft IS/MND concluded that the Project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere with recharge, and that impacts would be less than significant.

Regarding entitlements and production volumes, the maximum expected yield of the replacement wells is planned to be similar to that of the existing wells, approximately 800 to 1,350 gallons per minute (Section

¹ Western Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Plan, Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin (DWR Bulletin 118 Basin No. 3-015), Western Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency.

1.2). Groundwater production in the Western Management Area is reported to the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, and VVCSD production is included in the annual reporting prepared for the Basin under SGMA. Because the replacement wells are sized to maintain existing production rather than to increase it, the Project would not change the District's reported production relative to baseline conditions.

Regarding groundwater management, the existing and replacement wells would operate pursuant to the GSA, of which VVCSD is a member agency.²

Section 4.10 of the Final MND has been revised to identify the WMA GSP and to evaluate Project consistency with its sustainable management criteria under threshold 4.10(e), drawing on SGMA Joint Annual Report for Water Year 2025, the joint report of the three Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin GSAs finalized March 20, 2026.

Certain information the comment requests depends on engineering design that has not yet been completed. Final well depths, screened intervals, pump settings, and the alignment of the connecting pipelines will be determined during final design. The analysis in the Proposed MND is based on the preliminary design described in Section 1.2, which reflects District guidance on the anticipated well locations and connection route. The District will provide final well construction details, production volumes by well, and the final pipeline alignment to the Commission with its lease application, and will coordinate with the Commission on any design changes that affect lands under its jurisdiction.

Section 4.10 of the Final MND is revised to describe the WMA's area, aquifers, estimated storage, and water budget, drawing on the WMA GSP basin setting and the SGMA Joint Annual Report for Water Year 2025. It also identifies the principal groundwater users in the WMA. As reported for Water Year 2025, total WMA groundwater extraction was approximately 23,500 acre-feet, comprising approximately 17,500 acre-feet of agricultural use, 5,700 acre-feet of municipal use, and 300 acre-feet of domestic use, of which approximately 18,120 acre-feet was produced from the Upper Aquifer and 5,380 acre-feet from the Lower Aquifer.

Because the Project replaces existing wells without increasing production, its contribution would be limited to the localized effects of the shift in pumping location, which has been addressed in the analysis in the Proposed MND.

Comment 2-14

Given the proximity of the new wells to a natural drainage, the MND must disclose if the depth of groundwater extraction will have a direct impact on surface water characteristics of the drainage and adjacent riparian resources.

Response 2-14

As described in Section 4.10 of the Proposed MND, the Project would replace existing groundwater production facilities on a one-for-one basis, with each replacement well placed into service as the corresponding existing well is decommissioned, maintaining approximately the same combined production capacity. The Project would not increase groundwater extraction or groundwater demand beyond existing conditions, and it does not propose an increase in groundwater pumping. As discussed in Response 2-13, the existing extraction of groundwater has been accounted for in the GSP. Accordingly, no new groundwater

² WMA GSA, Resolution WMA-2022-001, January 5, 2022

would be extracted and the Project would not impede management of the Lompoc basin. Section 4.10 concludes that the Project would not substantially interfere with groundwater recharge or impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin, and that impacts would be less than significant. The Proposed MND further finds that the Project would introduce only limited areas of impervious surface associated with well pads, access improvements, and associated utility infrastructure, that existing drainage patterns would be maintained, and that the Project would not encroach upon or impede existing drainage features.

The Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve Land Management Plan reports that Davis Creek has perennial flow due in part to a spring at the top of the drainage and a second spring between Clubhouse Road and a District service road, but likely primarily to irrigation runoff from the Vandenberg Village golf course, indicating that the creek's flow is principally supported by surface sources rather than by the aquifer from which the District produces. Existing well depths range from approximately 530 feet below ground surface (bgs) to approximately 685 feet bgs. Project design is preliminary at this time, and well depths, screened intervals, and final pump specifications have not been established. For purposes of the Proposed MND, the depths bgs, the pumping rates, and pumping times were assumed to be the same as existing well depths and operations. These details will be determined during final design and in connection with the District's water supply permit amendment application to DDW and its well construction permits from the County. The District will provide that information to the Commission when it is available, together with the final construction plans described in Response 2-7. Because the Project would not increase the volume of groundwater extracted, would have similar well depths bgs, and similar operations, the Project would not substantially affect the existing relationship between groundwater and surface water in the vicinity of Davis Creek and impacts would remain less than significant in the Final MND.

Comment 2-15

Tribal Cultural Resources

6. In the environmental checklist for Section 4.18, Tribal and Cultural Resources (page 4-72), impact a.ii. is listed as Less Than Significant with Mitigation. However, in the Discussion section, impact a.ii. is identified as Less Than Significant without mitigation. Please clarify this discrepancy, and if applicable, state the necessary mitigation measures proposed to protect on-site Tribal Cultural Resources.

Response 2-15

As noted in the comment, the checklist box was marked in error. No tribal cultural resources were identified in the analysis provided in the Proposed MND. AB 52 notification letters were mailed to the 11 tribal contacts on the NAHC list on September 30, 2025, and no tribe requested consultation within the 30-day period. Impacts within the text of the Proposed MND identified a less than significant impact to tribal cultural resources. The checklist for Section 4.18, impact a.ii, is corrected in the Final MND to Less Than Significant Impact, and no mitigation measures are required.

Comment 2-16

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the IS/MND for the Project. As a responsible and trustee agency, the Commission will rely on the adopted IS/MND when issuing a new lease. Staff requests that you consider these comments before adopting the IS/MND.

Response 2-16

The District acknowledges that the Commission will rely on the adopted MND for its lease decision. The District has considered the Commission's comments, and the revisions described above are incorporated into the Final MND.

Comment 2-17

Please send electronic copies of the adopted IS/MND, Mitigation Monitoring Program, Notice of Determination, and approving resolution when they are final.

Response 2-17

The District will provide electronic copies of the adopted MND, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, Notice of Determination, and approving resolution to Commission staff once they are final.

Comment 2-18

Please note that federal and state laws require all government entities to improve accessibility of information technology and content by complying with established accessibility requirements. (29 U.S.C. § 794d; 36 C.F.R. § 1194.1 et seq.; Gov. Code, § 7405.) California State law prohibits State agencies from publishing on their websites content that does not comply with accessibility requirements. (Gov. Code, § 115467.) Therefore, any documents submitted to Commission staff during the processing of a lease or permit that will be posted online, including relevant CEQA documentation, must meet accessibility requirements for Commission staff to place the application on the Commission agenda.

Response 2-18

The District acknowledges the accessibility requirements. Documents submitted to Commission staff for the lease application, including the Final MND, appendices, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, will be prepared to meet applicable accessibility standards.

3. MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15074(d) and Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 require the Lead Agency to adopt a program for monitoring the changes it has required in the Project to mitigate or avoid significant environmental effects. This MMRP fulfills that requirement. VVCSD is responsible for administering it and, although reporting and monitoring duties may be delegated, remains responsible for ensuring implementation until the mitigation measures are complete.

The Final IS/MND identified potentially significant impacts to biological resources that can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. **Table 3-1: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program**, lists the required mitigation measures and identifies, for each one, the impact it responds to, the entities responsible for implementation and monitoring, and the timing and documentation of compliance.

VVCSD shall implement each mitigation measure unless otherwise noted, document that each measure has been implemented, and obtain any review or approval required from a responsible or trustee agency before the associated Project activity proceeds. VVCSD shall maintain all certifications and supporting documentation in the Project file. After the Lead Agency approves the final MMRP, minor modifications that would not result in any new or more severe significant environmental effect and would be equally or more effective in mitigating the identified effect are permitted, subject to VVCSD approval.

Table 3-1: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

Potential Significant Impacts	Environmental Mitigation Required	Implementation Responsibility	Monitoring Responsibility	Timing
Biological Resources				
a. Would the Project 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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	MM BIO-1: Preconstruction Biological Survey and Worker Environmental Awareness Training. No more than seven days prior to the commencement of vegetation removal or ground-disturbing activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct a preconstruction survey of the Project Site and adjacent areas that could be affected by construction to identify any special-status plants, wildlife including nesting raptors and migratory birds, or other sensitive biological resources such as bats, herpetofauna, and other mammals. Construction activities will be scheduled to avoid the nesting season (between October and January). In the event construction activities occur between February and September, the preconstruction survey will identify presence/absence of nesting raptors and migratory birds. If construction activities cease for five consecutive days during the nesting season, the preconstruction nesting survey shall be conducted again to ensure no nesting birds have moved into the Project site. If active nests (nests with eggs or chicks) are located, the qualified biologist shall establish an appropriate avoidance buffer (50 to 500 feet) based on species biology and in consultation with CDFW. Prior to the start of construction, all construction personnel shall receive Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training conducted by a qualified biologist. The training shall familiarize workers with sensitive biological resources that may occur in the Project Area, applicable environmental regulations, required avoidance measures, permit conditions, and procedures to follow if sensitive biological resources are encountered during construction.	WVCS	WVCS; CDFW	Pre-Construction. Prior to the start of construction, surveys conducted in accordance with species specific California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) timing protocols, and Conduct WEAP for all construction personnel Compliance documented by: Submittal of the preconstruction survey report and WEAP training sign-in sheets to WVCS. Reports of present species will be provided to WVCS and CDFW.

3. | Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

Potential Significant Impacts	Environmental Mitigation Required	Implementation Responsibility	Monitoring Responsibility	Timing
	MM BIO-2 Biological Monitoring. A qualified biologist shall monitor vegetation clearing and other ground-disturbing activities in areas supporting sensitive biological resources (e.g., roosting bats) or where special-status species have the potential to occur, including special status plant species and sensitive natural vegetation communities. The biological monitor shall have the authority to halt or redirect construction activities if necessary to avoid impacts to special-status species or other sensitive biological resources. Construction activities shall not resume until the qualified biologist determines that appropriate avoidance measures have been implemented. If roosting habitat for bats is identified during the preconstruction survey, a buffer shall be established by a qualified biologist and no clearing or grubbing activities shall occur within 300 feet of the roosting habitat until the maternal season is over or the bats have left the site.	VCSD	VCSD; CDFW	Construction. During all vegetation clearing and ground-disturbing activities. Compliance documented by: Submittal of biological monitoring logs to CDFW
	MM BIO-3 Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Fencing and Resource Protection. Prior to the start of construction, Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) fencing or other highly visible barriers shall be installed around sensitive biological resources designated for avoidance, as identified by the qualified biologist, including individual oak trees. Construction personnel and equipment shall remain within designated work areas, and no staging, parking, stockpiling, fueling, or other construction related activities shall occur within fenced or otherwise protected sensitive resource areas. • Prior to any site disturbance, tree protection fencing shall be installed as close to the outer limit of the CRZ as practicable for construction operations. The fencing shall be in place	VCSD	VCSD; CDFW	Pre-Construction and Construction. Once prior to construction to verify installation, and by periodic field inspection thereafter Compliance documented by: Field verification of ESA fencing installation and periodic inspection sign-off by VCSD

3. | Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

Potential Significant Impacts	Environmental Mitigation Required	Implementation Responsibility	Monitoring Responsibility	Timing
	throughout the duration of construction, and removed only under the direction of the project's Certified Arborist. • Prior to any site disturbance, tree protection fencing shall be installed along the outer limit of the critical root zone (1.5 times the trunk diameter) of all oak trees within 50 feet of Project activities. The fencing shall be in place for the duration of the construction occurring within 50 feet of the trees. Where approved Project activities are within the CRZ, fencing shall be temporarily moved to facilitate the work. A Certified Arborist shall be present during approved Project activities within the critical root zone to document impacts to the trees, and shall provide a written report to the District of any mitigation obligation. • During site disturbance and/or construction, impacts to the oak canopy or CRZ should be avoided where practicable. Impacts include pruning, any ground disturbance within the dripline or CRZ of the tree (whichever distance is greater), and trunk damage. • During site disturbance and/or construction, trenching within the CRZ must be approved by the project's Certified Arborist, and shall be done by hand or with an air spade. Any roots exposed during construction shall be evaluated and treated by the project's Certified Arborist. • During site disturbance and/or construction, impacts to oak trees shall be assessed by a			Final reports provided to VVCS and CDFW

3. | Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

Potential Significant Impacts	Environmental Mitigation Required	Implementation Responsibility	Monitoring Responsibility	Timing
	Certified Arborist. Impacts include pruning, any ground disturbance within the dripline or CRZ of the tree (whichever distance is greater), and trunk damage. - During site disturbance and/or construction, all hazardous materials shall be properly stored within secondary containment. All portable generators and portable toilets shall also be staged within secondary containment. - During site disturbance and/or construction, no equipment fueling, hazardous materials storage, portable restrooms, concrete washouts, or overnight vehicle or equipment staging shall be permitted within 100 feet of aquatic features.			

3. | Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

Potential Significant Impacts	Environmental Mitigation Required	Implementation Responsibility	Monitoring Responsibility	Timing
	MM BIO-4 Special-Status Plant Avoidance and Protection. Prior to construction, a qualified botanist shall identify and clearly mark populations of special-status plant species located within or adjacent to the construction limits, including but not limited to Vandenberg monkeyflower, California spineflower, dune larkspur, Lompoc ceanothus, Seaside Bird's-beak, Southern curly-leaved monardella, Hoover's bent grass, Santa Ynez groundstar, mesa horkelia, black-flowered figwort, La Purisima manzanita, sand mesa manzanita, Blushing layia, and Pale-yellow layia. Construction activities shall avoid impacts to these populations through project redesign, establishment of avoidance buffers (i.e., fencing adhering to CDFW species requirements) by a qualified biologist, or other protective measures for identified species in accordance with State (e.g., CDFW protocols/requirements) and federal regulatory requirements. If complete avoidance is determined to be infeasible, the potential for salvaging the affected plants shall be considered with appropriate compensation based upon current CDFW standards for the identified special status plant or sensitive natural vegetation communities. Impacts shall be minimized and addressed in accordance with applicable State and federal regulatory requirements and any required agency approvals.	VVCSD	VVCSD; CDFW	Pre-Construction and Construction. Once prior to construction, and as needed during construction adjacent to marked populations Compliance documented by: Submittal of the botanical survey and avoidance plan to VVCSD and CDFW, and field verification of marked populations

3. | Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

Potential Significant Impacts	Environmental Mitigation Required	Implementation Responsibility	Monitoring Responsibility	Timing
	MM BIO-5 Special-Status Wildlife Protection Measures. Prior to and during construction, a qualified biologist shall implement species-specific avoidance measures for special-status wildlife with the potential to occur within the Project Area, including herpetofauna (i.e., California red-legged frog), southwestern pond turtle, northern California legless lizard, coast horned lizard, pallid bat, and American badger. These measures may include preconstruction surveys, establishment of species-specific exclusion buffers in adherence to the protocols established by CDFW for each special-status wildlife species, relocation of individuals by qualified personnel when authorized, and temporary work stoppages if special-status wildlife are observed within or adjacent to active construction areas. Construction activities shall be conducted in accordance with all applicable State and federal regulations to avoid the take of special status wildlife species.	VVCSD	VVCSD; CDFW	Pre-Construction and Construction. Once prior to construction, and during construction when special-status wildlife are observed. Compliance documented by: Submittal of preconstruction survey results and biological monitoring logs to VVCSD and CDFW

APPENDIX A. REVISIONS TO THE PROPOSED MND

DRAFT INITIAL STUDY AND PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Water Well Replacement Project



Vandenberg Village Community Services District

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AUGUST 2026

Project R250514.0005



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Vandenberg Village Community Services District (VVCSD or District) has prepared this Initial Study (IS) and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the VVCSD Water Well Replacement Project (Project).

VVCSD is an independent special district established in 1983 under California Government Code Section 61000 et seq. to provide potable water and wastewater services to the unincorporated community of Vandenberg Village in northern Santa Barbara County. The District currently serves approximately 2,600 connections and operates a water system consisting of groundwater wells, storage reservoirs, and distribution infrastructure.

The District's potable water supply is derived entirely from groundwater wells that extract water from the Lompoc Upland Aquifer. The existing wells that serve the system were constructed in the 1970s and 1980s and are approaching the end of their functional lifespan. In order to maintain reliable water service, the District is proposing to replace three existing wells, identified as Well 1B, Well 3A, and Well 3B, as these wells are taken out of service.

The purpose of the Project is to maintain the District's existing water supply capacity and ensure continued reliability of potable water service to the Vandenberg Village community. The Project does not propose an increase in groundwater pumping, but instead the replacement of aging infrastructure to support ongoing operations of the District's water system.

1.2 AUTHORITY

Approval of the replacement of the three existing water wells is a discretionary action subject to environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The preparation of an IS and MND is governed by CEQA¹ and, more specifically, the State *CEQA Guidelines*,² which guide the process for the preparation of an IS and environmental determination on the form of CEQA documentation required; Negative Declaration (ND), Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) or Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Where appropriate and supportive to an understanding of the information and analysis in this IS, reference is made to the statute, the State *CEQA Guidelines*, or applicable case law.

This IS, as required by CEQA, contains a project description; a description of the environmental setting; an analysis of potential environmental impacts; mitigation measures for any significant effects; an evaluation of the proposed Project's consistency with applicable plans and policies; and the names of preparers.

VVCSD is the Lead Agency for the proposed Project as defined by CEQA, with the primary responsibility for carrying out and approving a project within its jurisdiction. As the Lead Agency, VVCSD is required to conduct an environmental review to analyze the potential environmental effects associated with the proposed Project described in this IS. An MND is prepared for a project where the IS has identified potential

¹ California Code of Regulations, Sec. 15000, et seq., *CEQA Guidelines*.

² California Code of Regulations, Sec. 15000, et seq.

significant impacts which can be mitigated to less than significant by adopting and implementing mitigation measures. If the proposed Project is found to have a less than significant or no impact for an environmental topic, the IS provides substantial evidence supporting this conclusion.

1.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE INITIAL STUDY AND PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

The content and format of this Initial Study are designed to meet the requirements of CEQA. The IS/MND consists of the proposed findings that the project, with the incorporation of the mitigation measures identified in the IS, would not result in significant impacts. The IS/MND contains the following sections and supporting studies:

- ▶ **Section 1.0: Introduction** identifies the purpose and scope of the IS/MND and the terminology used.
- ▶ **Section 2.0: Project Description** identifies the location, background, and objectives of the proposed Project in detail, and describes the existing conditions, surrounding land use, general plan, and existing zoning in the proposed Project area.
- ▶ **Section 3.0: Environmental Checklist** presents the checklist responses and evaluation for each resource topic.
- ▶ **Section 4.0: Environmental Analysis** includes an analysis for each resource topic and identifies potential impacts of implementing the proposed Project. It also identifies mitigation measures, if applicable.
- ▶ **Section 5.0: References** identifies all printed references and individuals cited in this IS/MND.
- ▶ **Section 6.0: Preparers** identifies the individuals who prepared this report and their areas of technical specialty.
- ▶ **Appendices** present data supporting the analysis or contents of this IS/MND. These include:
 - Appendix A: Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emission Output Sheets
 - Appendix B: Biological Survey Report
 - Appendix C: Phase I Archaeological Assessment
 - Appendix D: Energy Data
 - Appendix E: Climate Action Plan Consistency Checklist for Future Development
 - Appendix F: Environmental Data Resources Radius Map Report
 - Appendix G: Construction Noise Worksheets
 - Appendix H: Construction Vibration Worksheets
 - Appendix I: AB 52 Consultation Letters

1.4 PUBLIC AND AGENCY REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED MND

CEQA requires that the lead agency provide the public and other public agencies the opportunity to review and comment on a Proposed MND. As required by CEQA, VVCSD is providing a 30-day period for review and comment on the Proposed MND. Upon completion of the public and agency review period, VVCSD, as Lead Agency, will consider the Proposed MND together with all comments received during the review period. If appropriate, revisions to the IS and Proposed MND may be made based on comments received before the document is considered for adoption by VVCSD.

Interested individuals, organizations, responsible agencies, and other agencies can provide written comments to:

Dr. Cynthia Allen, General Manager
Vandenberg Village Community Services District
3745 Constellation Road
Lompoc, CA 93436

Comments may also be sent by email to callen@vvcasd.org. Please put “VVCSD Water Well Replacement Project” in the subject line. Agency responses should include the name of a contact person within the commenting agency.

The IS and Proposed MND are available for review on VVCSD’s website: <http://vvcasd.org>

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 BACKGROUND

Vandenberg Village Community Services District (VVCSD or District) was established in 1983 under California Government Code Section 61000 et seq. to provide dependable water and wastewater services to the unincorporated community of Vandenberg Village in northern Santa Barbara County. The formation of the District was driven by community concerns about high utility rates and water quality for water and wastewater service under private ownership. Local residents organized and successfully petitioned the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to form a publicly governed district, resulting in a voter-approved initiative and the election of the District's first Board of Directors. VVCSD is an independent special district and is the Lead Agency as defined by CEQA for this project.

Today, VVCSD serves approximately 2,600 connections and operates 33 miles of water distribution lines, three (3) groundwater wells, four (4) reservoir tanks, and other associated infrastructure. Wastewater is conveyed through 31 miles of collection lines to the Lompoc Regional Wastewater Reclamation Plant, with the District holding a 0.89 million gallons per day (MGD) treatment capacity entitlement.

The District is proposing to replace its three (3) aging wells (Well 1B, Well 3A, and Well 3B) with three (3) new wells to be constructed when an existing well is taken out of commission (proposed Project). As shown in **Figure 2-1: Regional Location Map**, the Project Site is generally located north of the City of Lompoc, east of California State Route 1 (SR-1), and southeast of Vandenberg Village in unincorporated Santa Barbara County.

The VVCSD service area boundary, spheres of influence, and well sites are identified in **Figure 2-2: VVCSD Service Area Map**. Existing Well 1B is located at Well Site 1 and existing Wells 3A and 3B are located at Well Site 3, all located within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (BMER). The three (3) existing wells were drilled in the 1970s and 1980s and are still currently active, however the expected operational life of these existing wells is estimated to be reached as early as 2027 for Well 3A, 2035 for Well 1B, and 2037 for Well 3B.

The proposed Project is intended to maintain the District's operational capacity as these existing wells reach the end of their functional lifespan. Implementation of the proposed Project would ensure the continued reliability of the District's potable water supply system.

2.2 PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed Project consists of an approximately 0.76-acre site identified by the District as Well Site E (Project Site), which is land owned by the State Lands Commission within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (BMER), which is leased from the State Lands Commission, and managed by, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) in unincorporated Santa Barbara County. As shown in **Figure 2-1**, the Project Site is located southeast of Vandenberg Village, east of SR-1, and northwest of Mission Hills. The Project Site is accessible from Exit 702/704 of SR-1, a major north-south state highway, and from Burton Mesa Boulevard, a two-lane paved collector road that runs north-south and provides connectivity to SR-1 to the west. A dirt access road connects Burton Mesa Boulevard to the Project Site. No formal access driveways or parking areas currently exist at the Project Site.

The Project Site is currently undeveloped and unpaved, with no permanent structures, utilities, or infrastructure in place. The site is not currently served by electricity, water, or sewer connections. The Project Site is generally flat and covered in existing vegetation.

The Project Site is surrounded primarily by open space within the BMER, which is managed for conservation, habitat preservation, and passive recreation uses such as limited hiking and nature observation. To the west of the Project Site is U.S. Route 1 (Cabrillo Highway), which serves as a regional transportation corridor. Beyond the highway, approximately 0.3 miles from the Project Site, lies a residential neighborhood comprised of single-family homes located within Vandenberg Village, a census-designated place in unincorporated Santa Barbara County. To the north and south of the Project Site are additional open space areas, while the eastern portion of the surrounding area includes sparse development and utility infrastructure. The Vandenberg Village Community Services District Office and Well Site 3 are located approximately 700 feet to the south of the Project Site, and Well Site 1 is located approximately 250 feet to the north of the Project Site.

The Project Site has a Santa Barbara County land use designation of Other Open Lands and a zoning designation of Resource Management (RMZ-100). Resource Management zones allow for the development of public utility facilities and water systems with two to less than five connections as permitted use.³ However, the Project Site is managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) under a lease agreement with the California State Lands Commission and is not subject to local zoning ordinances. Additionally, the California Government Code exempts the development of water and wastewater infrastructure projects initiated by water agencies from County and City building and zoning regulations.⁴

2.3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

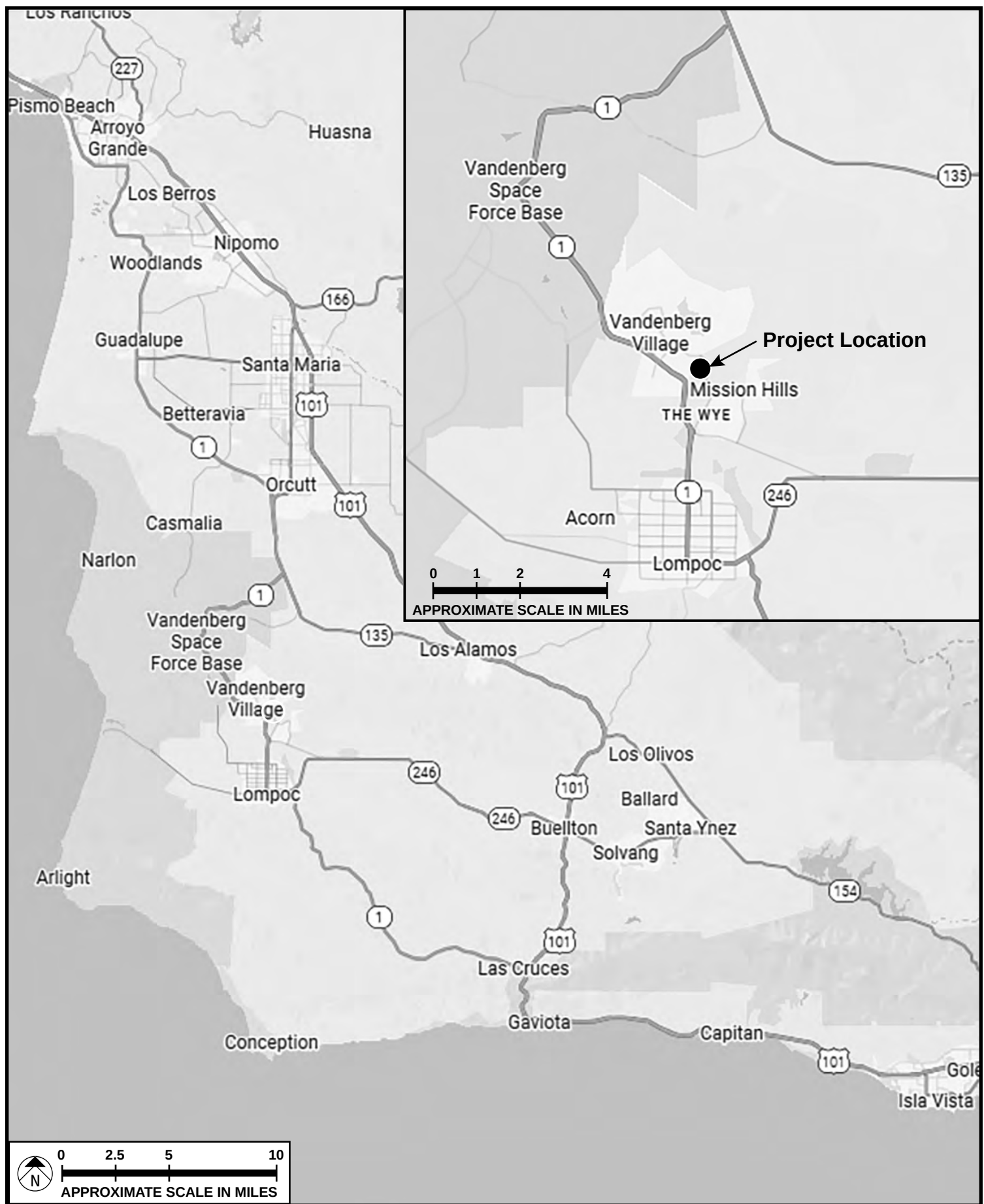
As discussed above, the purpose of the proposed Project is to maintain the District's operational capacity, as the existing wells reach the end of their functional lifespan to ensure the continued reliability of the District's potable water supply system. As shown in **Figure 2-3: Proposed Project Site**, the proposed Project involves the construction of three (3) new replacement wells with temporary construction staging located in the vicinity of Exit 702/704 from SR-1 during construction. Construction of the new wells will be phased as existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B are taken out of commission. Each existing well would be taken out of production and decommissioned as its replacement well is placed into service. Project design is preliminary at this time, and detailed decommissioning plans have not been prepared. Decommissioning would be performed under a well destruction permit issued by Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services, the administrative authority under Chapter 34A (Wells) of the Santa Barbara County Code, and in accordance with the California Department of Water Resources Water Well Standards, Bulletin 74-81 (December 1981) and California Well Standards, Bulletin 74-90 (June 1991). Because existing Well Sites 1 and 3 are located within the BMER, decommissioning activities at these locations would occur within previously disturbed areas, and would be subject to the biological resources mitigation measures identified in Section 4.4, Biological Resources, as revised. The maximum expected yield of the new wells is planned to be similar to the existing wells, approximately 800 to 1,350 gallons per minute (gpm). Each new well would be

³ Santa Barbara County Land Use and Development Code. Article 35.2 – Zones and Allowable Land Uses. Accessed July 2025.
https://library.municode.com/ca/santa_barbara_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=SABACOLAUSDECO_ART35.2ZOALLAUS_CH35.22REPRZO_35.22.030REPRZOALLAUS.

⁴ California Government Code. Section 53091 (d) and (e).

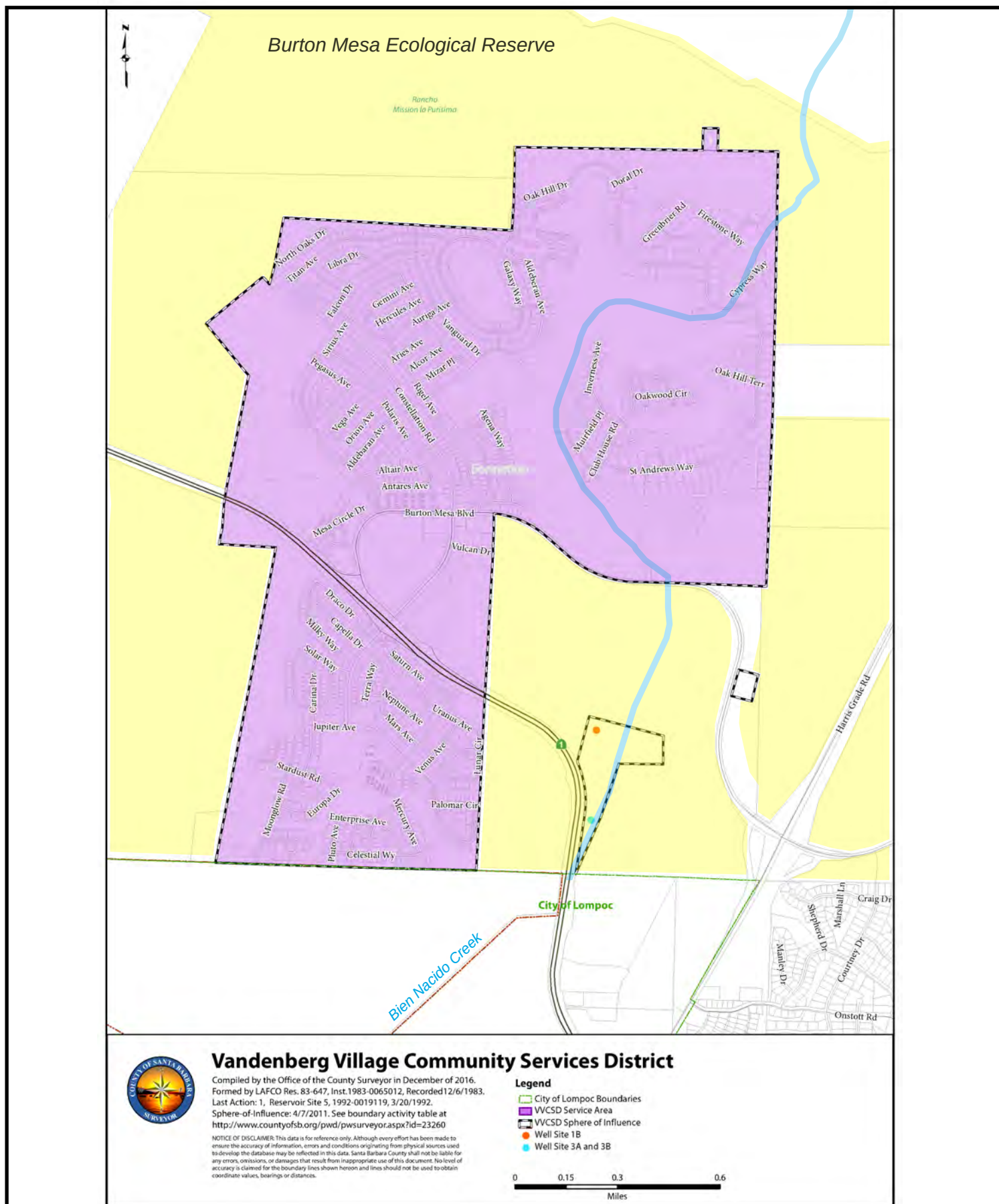
equipped with electrical service, metering, monitoring, and security infrastructure. A small control panel and wellhead enclosure may also be installed at each new well site.

The proposed new wells would be connected to the District's existing water distribution system through new lateral connections and replacement pipelines constructed in the existing right-of-way and extending between the replacement well sites and the District's existing Well Site 1, located approximately 250 feet north of the Project Site. Electrical service would also be extended from the existing electrical distribution system at Well Site 1 to the replacement well sites. The pipeline and electrical connections would be constructed by open-trench methods extending west approximately 50 feet to the existing right-of-way easement, and then north approximately 250 feet to connect to the existing well infrastructure at Well Site 1. Project design is preliminary at this time, and detailed construction plans have not been prepared. The footprint of disturbance associated with these connections is evaluated for potential environmental impacts in this document, and the District will provide final construction plans to the State Lands Commission with its application.



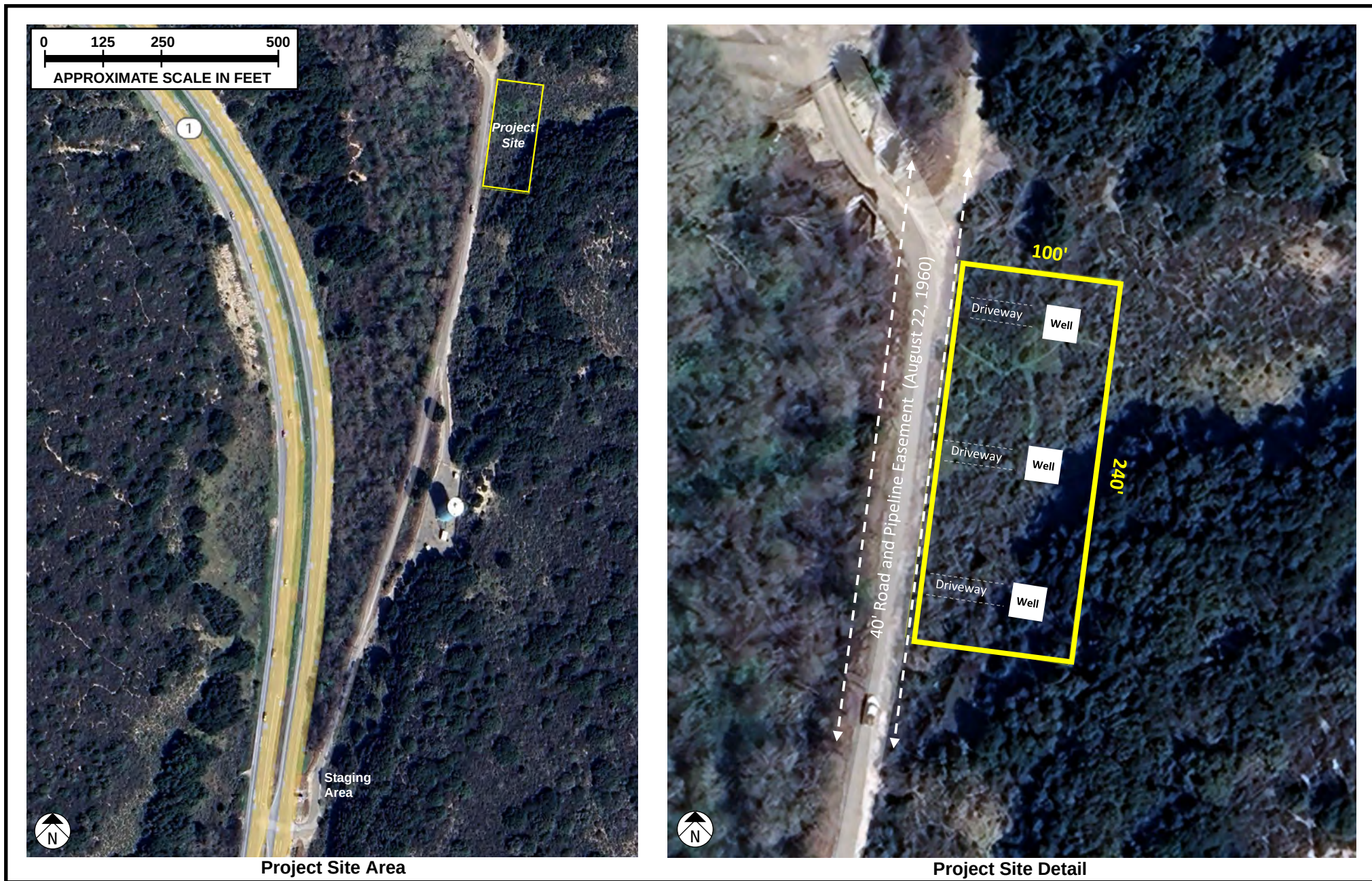
SOURCE: Meridian Consultants LLC - 2025

FIGURE 2-1



SOURCE: Meridian Consultants LLC - 2025

FIGURE 2-2



SOURCE: Google Earth – 2025

FIGURE 2-3

These utility improvements would be constructed within the existing utility service area. The District would rely on diesel generators to maintain water supply reliability during power outages. No treatment facilities would be constructed at the Project Site, as treatment occurs at existing centralized facilities. The new well sites would be surfaced with crushed rock or asphalt paving for access and maintenance. The District would also install fencing and signage for security and operational clarity. As part of the proposed Project, minor access improvements may be made to facilitate equipment delivery and maintenance access.

2.3.1 Construction

Construction access would be provided via SR-1, with staging occurring at an area near Exit 704. Construction would take approximately 30 months from July 2027 to December 2029. Construction activities would include site preparation, grading and excavation, construction, and foundation work, paving, and architectural coating.

The site preparation phase would occur over a two-week period in July 2027, and activities would include the removal of approximately 30,000 square feet of brush and surface clearing and debris removal, including any existing paved areas within the Project Site.

Following demolition, the grading and excavation phase would occur over a two-week period in July 2027. No soil import or export is anticipated, and existing soil will be leveled and compacted on site. Construction and foundation work would take place from July 2029, through November 2029. This phase would include all structural development, including foundation pouring, vertical construction, and well drilling. The three (3) new wells to be constructed on the Project Site would each be drilled using rotary drilling methods, and constructed with casings, screens, and pumps suitable for potable water production.

The paving phase would occur over a two-week period in December 2029 and would include the application of asphalt for driveways, parking areas, and walkways. The final construction phase would include the application of architectural coatings like exterior paint and sealants and would occur concurrently or shortly after the paving phase.

Table 2-1: Construction Schedule provides the proposed dates and durations of each of the activities that will take place during construction, as well as a brief description of the work that would occur in each phase.

Table 2-1: Construction Schedule

Construction Activity	Approximate Start Date	Approximate End Date	Duration (days)	Description
Site Preparation	July 2027	July 2027	12	Clearing existing vegetation.
Grading and Excavation	July 2027	July 2027	12	Minor grading and compaction of on-site soils.
Well Drilling	July 2029	November 2029	28	Casing installation, pump and electrical system installation, and initial well testing.

Table 2-1: Construction Schedule

Construction Activity	Approximate Start Date	Approximate End Date	Duration (days)	Description
Paving	December 2029	December 2029	16	Minor paving or surface improvements.
Architectural Coatings	December 2029	December 2029		Protective coatings or painting of appurtenant equipment or infrastructure.

2.4 OTHER PUBLIC AGENCY REQUIRED APPROVALS

The District is the Lead Agency as defined by CEQA for the environmental review of this proposed project. The State Lands Commission, as the owner of the Project Site, and CDFW, which leases and manages the Project Site, are Responsible Agencies as defined by CEQA as other public agencies with discretionary authority over actions requiring approval to implement the Project. The State Lands Commission is also a Trustee Agency pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15386, having jurisdiction by law over natural resources held in trust for the people of the State of California that may be affected by the Project. CDFW is also a Trustee Agency pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15386, having jurisdiction over the fish and wildlife resources of the State that could be affected by the Project.

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is also a Responsible Agency, with approval authority over the water well permits required to implement the Project. The State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water (DDW), Santa Barbara District, is also a Responsible Agency, with approval authority over the domestic water supply permit amendment required for the three new replacement wells. The District will submit an application for a water supply permit amendment to the DDW Santa Barbara District for the three new replacement wells.

2.5 REGULATORY BACKGROUND

2.5.1 Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan

The Project Site is located in unincorporated Santa Barbara County. The County's Comprehensive Plan establishes long-term goals and policies to guide land use, conservation, and infrastructure planning. The Comprehensive Plan includes elements addressing land use, conservation, circulation, safety, and open space.

The Project Site is designated as Other Open Lands and is zoned Resource Management (RMZ-100), which is intended to preserve natural resources while allowing for certain compatible uses, including public utility infrastructure. Although the Project Site is managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and facilities for the production, storage, treatment, and transmission of water by a local agency are exempt from local zoning requirements pursuant to California Government Code Section 53091, the County's land use framework provides relevant context for evaluating environmental consistency.

2.5.2 Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District Clean Air Plan

The Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (SBCAPCD) is responsible for air quality planning and management within the County. The SBCAPCD Clean Air Plan provides a regional framework for achieving and maintaining State and federal ambient air quality standards through emissions inventories, regulatory controls, and implementation strategies.

The Clean Air Plan addresses attainment of ozone and particulate matter standards and emphasizes reductions in emissions from stationary and mobile sources. The Project would be subject to applicable SBCAPCD rules and regulations, and consistency with regional air quality planning efforts is evaluated in this Initial Study.

2.5.3 Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan

The Project Site is within the jurisdiction of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The RWQCB Basin Plan establishes water quality objectives, beneficial uses, and implementation measures for surface water and groundwater resources in the region.

The Basin Plan provides the regulatory framework for protecting water quality through permitting, best management practices, and compliance with waste discharge requirements. The Project would be required to comply with applicable RWQCB requirements, including erosion control, stormwater management, and protection of groundwater quality during construction and operation.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

3.1 SUMMARY

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines,⁵ an Initial Study is a preliminary environmental analysis that is used by the lead agency as a basis for determining whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), a Mitigated Negative Declaration, or a Negative Declaration is required for a project. The State CEQA Guidelines require that an Initial Study contain a project description; a location map; a description of the environmental setting; an identification of environmental effects by checklist or other similar form; an explanation of environmental effects; a discussion of mitigation for potentially significant environmental effects; an evaluation of the project's consistency with existing, applicable land use controls; and the names of persons who prepared the study. In addition, the Initial Study includes additional environmental requirements in compliance with federal environmental laws.

3.2 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.

☐	Aesthetics	☐	Agriculture and Forestry Resources	☐	Air Quality
☒	Biological Resources	☐	Cultural Resources	☐	Energy
☐	Geology/Soils	☐	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐	Hazards & Hazardous Materials
☐	Hydrology/Water Quality	☐	Land Use/Planning	☐	Mineral Resources
☐	Noise	☐	Population/Housing	☐	Public Services
☐	Recreation	☐	Transportation	☐	Tribal Cultural Resources
☐	Utilities/Service Systems	☐	Wildfire	☐	Mandatory Findings of Significance

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐	I find that the proposed Project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and is eligible for a Categorical Exemption.
☐	I find that the proposed Project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
☒	I find 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.
☐	I find that the proposed Project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

⁵ California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sec. 15063.

3. | Environmental Checklist

☐	I find 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.
☐	I find 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.

Signature

Date

4. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This section provides an evaluation of the various topics considered for environmental review. A brief explanation for the determination of significance is provided for all impact determinations except “No Impact” determinations that are adequately supported by the information sources the Lead Agency (Vandenberg Village Community Services District) cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” determination is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to the proposed Project (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” determination includes an explanation of its bases relative to project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project would not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

Explanations 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.

Once the Lead Agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist indicates 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.

“Mitigated 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.

Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering of a program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

- ▶ **Earlier Analysis Used.** Identify and state where they are available for review.
- ▶ **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.
- ▶ **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.

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. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion. 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. The explanation of each issue should identify:

- ▶ The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
- ▶ The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

4.1 AESTHETICS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
AESTHETICS – Would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.1.1 Discussion

Would the project:

a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Santa Barbara County identifies scenic study areas and scenic travel corridors in the County Comprehensive Plan to recognize landscapes that contribute substantially to the visual character of the County. Five scenic study areas have been identified in the County, including the South Coast: Toro Canyon Watershed north of Carpinteria, South Coast: Santa Barbara Wilderness Area north of the City of Santa Barbara, Lompoc: Cebada Canyon northeast of Lompoc, Lompoc: Eastern portion of the Federal Correctional Institution, and Lompoc: La Salle Canyon southwest of Lompoc.⁶ Scenic travel corridors have also been identified and classified according to scenic value.⁷

The Project Site is not located within a designated scenic study area, identified scenic vista, or designated scenic corridor identified in the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan. The approximately 0.76-acre Project Site is located within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (BMER), east of U.S. Route 1 (SR-1). Although the BMER is managed for habitat conservation and passive recreation, it is not designated by the County as a scenic vista. The Project Site is situated within an existing utility setting, with Well Site 1 located approximately 250 feet to the north and the Vandenberg Village Community Services District Office and Well Site 3 located approximately 700 feet to the south. Surrounding land uses consist primarily of open

⁶ County of Santa Barbara. *Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan*. Accessed September 2025. <https://www.countyofsb.org/972/Open-Space>.

⁷ County of Santa Barbara. *Environmental Resource Management Element, Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan*. Adopted 1980. Republished May 2009. Accessed September 2025. <https://www.countyofsb.org/966/Environmental-Resource-Management>.

space within the BMER, with a residential neighborhood located west of SR-1 approximately 0.3 miles from the Project Site.

Each replacement well would include customary utility appurtenances, including electrical service, metering, monitoring equipment, security infrastructure, a small control panel, and a wellhead enclosure. New lateral water connections and replacement pipelines would be installed underground and would not be visible following construction. The Project would also include minor paved or crushed-rock access improvements, security fencing, signage, and extension of electrical service to the site. No water treatment facilities or other substantial above-ground structures are proposed.

Although construction activities would temporarily introduce equipment, staging, and construction traffic to the area, these activities would be short-term and would not permanently alter views of the surrounding landscape. Upon completion, the replacement well facilities would be visually consistent with the existing public utility infrastructure that currently serves the Vandenberg Village Community Services District. The Project would not obstruct public views, substantially alter the visual quality of the site or surrounding area, or adversely affect any designated scenic vista. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to scenic vistas.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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

No Impact. The Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan identifies two officially designated State Scenic Highways within the County: State Route 1 from its intersection with U.S. Highway 101 at Las Cruces north to the southerly city limits of Lompoc, and the entirety of State Route 154. Portions of State Routes 33, 166, 101, and 150 are designated as eligible State Scenic Highways.⁸ According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Project Site is not located within or adjacent to an officially designated State Scenic Highway.⁹

The Project Site is located east of U.S. Route 1 (SR-1) within the BMER and is accessed by an existing dirt road extending from Burton Mesa Boulevard. Although SR-1 is located west of the Project Site, the segment adjacent to the Project Site is not designated as an Official State Scenic Highway. Therefore, the proposed Project would not affect scenic resources visible from an officially designated State Scenic Highway.

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within an existing utility setting. Project improvements would be confined to the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. Construction would require the removal of portions of the existing black sage–California sagebrush scrub vegetation and disturbed vegetation within the Project Site to accommodate the replacement wells and associated utility infrastructure. Although coast live oak woodland occurs within portions of the Project Site, the proposed Project has been designed to avoid the removal of coast live oak trees through implementation of tree protection measures.

⁸ County of Santa Barbara. *Scenic Highways Element, Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan*. Adopted 1975; Republished May 2009. Accessed September 2025. <https://cosantabarbara.app.box.com/s/jwf0nztwk7tveuqx0iay67jmd6he5pb9>.

⁹ California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). *State Scenic Highway System Map*. 2019. Accessed September 2025. <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>.

The proposed Project would not require the removal of scenic trees, rock outcroppings, historic buildings, or other scenic resources associated with an officially designated State Scenic Highway. Accordingly, implementation of the proposed Project would have no impact on scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The Project Site is an approximately 0.76-acre undeveloped area of the BMER characterized by generally flat terrain and native vegetation, including black sage–California sagebrush scrub, coast live oak woodland, and arroyo willow thickets, as well as small areas of disturbed and developed land. Although the Project Site does not currently contain permanent infrastructure, it is located within the immediate vicinity of similar existing utility improvements. Well Site 1 is located approximately 250 feet north of the Project Site, while the Vandenberg Village Community Services District Office and Well Site 3 are located approximately 700 feet to the south. Surrounding land uses consist primarily of open space within the BMER, with U.S. Route 1 (SR-1) located to the west and a residential neighborhood beyond the highway approximately 0.3 mile from the Project Site. As shown in **Figure 2-3: Proposed Project Site**, the Project Site is accessed by an existing dirt road and is situated adjacent to existing utility facilities.

The Project Site is designated Other Open Lands and zoned Resource Management (RMZ-100), where public utility facilities are an allowable use.¹⁰ The Project Site is managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife under a lease agreement with the California State Lands Commission, California Government Code Section 53091 exempts water infrastructure projects undertaken by public agencies from local building and zoning regulations.¹¹

Construction activities would be temporary and would include vegetation clearing, minor grading, well drilling, utility installation, and limited paving for access and maintenance. As summarized in **Table 2-1: Construction Schedule**, construction would occur over an approximately 30-month period and would include the phased replacement of the District's existing groundwater wells. Temporary construction equipment, staging areas, stockpiled materials, and drilling equipment would temporarily alter the visual character of the Project Site; however, these effects would be confined to the construction period and would cease upon completion of construction.

Permanent improvements would consist of the replacement wells and customary utility appurtenances, including wellheads, electrical service, metering, monitoring equipment, small control panels, security fencing, signage, and minor paved or crushed-rock access areas. Replacement pipelines and lateral utility connections would be installed underground and would not be visible following construction. No water treatment facilities or other substantial above-ground structures are proposed.

Although the Project Site is currently undeveloped, the proposed facilities would be compatible with the surrounding visual environment, which includes existing water utility infrastructure, access roads, nearby well sites, and surrounding open space. The Project would not introduce a new or visually prominent land

¹⁰ Santa Barbara County Land Use and Development Code. Article 35.2 – Zones and Allowable Land Uses. Accessed September 2025.
https://library.municode.com/ca/santa_barbara_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=SABACOLAUSDECO_ART35.2ZOALLAUS_CH35.22REPRZO_35.22.030REPRZOALLAUS.

¹¹ California Government Code. Section 53091 (d) and (e).

use into the area, but rather would replace aging water supply infrastructure with functionally equivalent facilities designed to maintain the District's existing level of service. Upon completion of construction, the replacement well facilities would be visually consistent with the nearby existing utility facilities and would not substantially alter the visual character or quality of the Project Site or its surroundings. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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 Project Site is located within the BMER, where existing nighttime lighting is limited primarily to nearby roadway lighting, existing utility facilities, and surrounding development associated with Vandenberg Village. As shown in **Figure 2-3**, the Project Site is situated adjacent to existing VVCSD utility facilities and is separated from the nearest residential neighborhood by U.S. Route 1 (SR-1).

Construction activities would be limited to Santa Barbara County's allowable construction hours and would therefore occur during daytime hours. As a result, construction of the proposed Project would not generate substantial nighttime lighting or adversely affect nighttime views in the surrounding area.

Operation of the proposed Project would not introduce a substantial new source of light or glare. The replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure would not require permanent high-intensity lighting. Any exterior lighting associated with the well sites would be limited to low-intensity, shielded security or maintenance lighting necessary for facility operation. In addition, aboveground equipment, including wellheads, control panels, and associated utility appurtenances, would be constructed of materials that would not create substantial daytime glare. Replacement pipelines and lateral utility connections would be installed underground and would not contribute to light or glare.

Because the proposed Project would only include minimal lighting and would not introduce substantial sources of reflective materials, the Project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the surrounding area. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

4.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES – 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 nonagricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, 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))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Result in the loss of forestland or conversion of forestland to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature could result in conversion of Farmland, to nonagricultural use or conversion of forestland to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.2.1 Discussion

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 nonagricultural use?

No Impact. According to the California Department of Conservation's California Important Farmland Finder, the Project Site is designated as "Other Land" and is not mapped as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, or Grazing Land.¹² The Project Site is located within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve and is not currently used for agricultural production.

Because the Project Site is not designated as Important Farmland under the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), implementation of the proposed Project would not convert Prime Farmland,

¹² California Department of Conservation. *California Important Farmland Finder*. 2022. Accessed September 2025. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/>.

Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to a nonagricultural use. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

No Impact. The Project Site is designated Other Open Lands and zoned Resource Management (RMZ-100), which is not agricultural zoning.¹³ According to the California Department of Conservation's Williamson Act Enrollment Finder, the Project Site is not subject to a Williamson Act contract.¹⁴

Because the Project Site is not zoned for agricultural use and is not encumbered by a Williamson Act contract, implementation of the proposed Project would not conflict with existing agricultural zoning or result in the cancellation or modification of a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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))?

No Impact. The Project Site is designated Other Open Lands and zoned Resource Management (RMZ-100).¹⁵ The Project Site is not identified as forest land, timberland, or Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) land under applicable State or local land use designations, and no such designations occur adjacent to the Project Site.

Because the Project Site is not designated or zoned for forest land, timberland, or timberland production, implementation of the proposed Project would not conflict with existing zoning for these land uses or result in the rezoning of forest land or timberland. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

d. Result in the loss of forestland or conversion of forestland to non-forest use?

No Impact. The Project Site is designated Other Open Lands and zoned Resource Management (RMZ-100).¹⁶ The Project Site does not support forest land or timberland, nor is it designated as Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) land.

Because the Project Site does not contain forest land, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in the loss of forest land or the conversion of forest land to a non-forest use. Therefore, no impact would occur.

¹³ California Department of Conservation. *Williamson Act Enrollment Finder*. Accessed September 2025. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/WilliamsonAct/>.

¹⁴ Santa Barbara County Land Use and Development Code. Article 35.2 – Zones and Allowable Land Uses.

¹⁵ Santa Barbara County Land Use and Development Code. Article 35.2 – Zones and Allowable Land Uses.

¹⁶ Santa Barbara County Land Use and Development Code. Article 35.2 – Zones and Allowable Land Uses.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

e. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature could result in conversion of Farmland, to nonagricultural use or conversion of forestland to non-forest use?

No Impact. As discussed previously under Thresholds (a) through (d), the Project Site is not designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, forest land, timberland, or Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) land.¹⁷

The proposed Project would not extend infrastructure into agricultural or forested areas, induce growth that could facilitate the conversion of agricultural or forest land, or otherwise alter surrounding land uses in a manner that would result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use or forest land to non-forest use. Accordingly, implementation of the proposed Project would not involve other changes in the existing environment that could result in the conversion of farmland or forest land. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

¹⁷ California Department of Conservation. *California Important Farmland Finder*.

4.3 AIR QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
AIR QUALITY – Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.3.1 Discussion

Would the project:

a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The Project Site lies within the jurisdiction of the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (SBCAPCD). SBCAPCD provides oversight on compliance with air quality standards within the County and is responsible for the preparation of the County's air quality attainment plans. The SBCAPCD is also responsible for monitoring air pollutant levels to ensure National Ambient Air Quality Standards and California Ambient Air Quality Standards are met, and, if they are not met, to develop strategies to meet the standards. Depending on whether the standards are met or exceeded, Santa Barbara County is classified as being in "attainment" or "nonattainment." Currently, Santa Barbara County is in nonattainment for the State standards for Particulate Matter with a diameter of 10 microns or less (PM₁₀) and in transitional nonattainment for ozone (O₃).

The County's most recent air quality attainment plan was adopted in 2022. The SBCAPCD adopted the 2022 Ozone Plan with the purpose of addressing the County's nonattainment status for State Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS).¹⁸ The 2022 Ozone Plan includes updates to ozone control measures and the most recent ozone inventory. Additionally, the plan includes the County's updated population projections through 2045.¹⁹

¹⁸ Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District. *2022 Ozone Plan*. December 2022. Accessed September 2025. <https://www.ourair.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-Ozone-Plan.pdf>.

¹⁹ Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District. *2022 Ozone Plan*.

If a project exceeds the regional air pollutant thresholds, then it would significantly contribute to air quality violations in the Air Basin. As discussed in the 2022 Ozone Plan, ozone is not directly emitted into the atmosphere but rather produced by reactions between nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). As shown in **Table 4.3-1: Maximum Construction Emissions** below, temporary emissions associated with construction of the Project would not exceed regional construction thresholds. As such, the Project would not contribute to air quality violations in the Air Basin and would be consistent with the Ozone Plan.

Additionally, as shown below in **Table 4.3-2: Unmitigated Maximum Operational Emissions**, emissions from operations of the Project would not result in emissions that would exceed the regional concentration thresholds. As such, the Project would not conflict with the SBCAPCD Ozone Plan.

With respect to the determination of consistency with the Ozone Plan growth assumptions, the projections in the Ozone Plan for achieving air quality goals are based on the Department of Finance projections, which are similar to the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) Regional Growth Forecast 2050.²⁰ The Ozone Plan estimates a population of 501,060 in 2035.²¹ The proposed Project does not include any residential uses and would not directly increase the County's population. In addition, the proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the existing Project Site to maintain the Vandenberg Village Community Services District's existing potable water supply system. No increase in groundwater pumping or expansion of the District's water system is proposed that would indirectly support population growth. Therefore, it would not conflict with the population projections identified by the SBCAPCD.

Based on the discussion above, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of any applicable air quality plan.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Chapter 5 of the Santa Barbara County Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual addresses the subject of air quality. The thresholds provide that a proposed project will not have a significant impact on air quality if operation of the Project will:

- ▶ Emit (from all project sources, mobile and stationary), less than the daily trigger for offsets for any pollutant (currently 240 pounds per day for NO_x and VOC, and 80 pounds per day for PM₁₀);
- ▶ Emit less than 25 pounds per day of oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) or volatile organic compounds (VOC) from motor vehicle trips only;
- ▶ Not cause or contribute to a violation of any California or National Ambient Air Quality Standard (except ozone);
- ▶ Not exceed the APCD health risk public notification thresholds adopted by the APCD Board; and
- ▶ Be consistent with the adopted federal and state Air Quality Plans.

²⁰ Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District. 2022 Ozone Plan.

²¹ Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District. 2022 Ozone Plan.

No thresholds have been established for short-term impacts associated with construction activities. However, the County's Grading Ordinance requires standard dust control conditions for all proposed projects involving grading activities. In addition, SBCAPCD Rule 202 D.16 states that if the combined emissions from all construction equipment used to construct a stationary source that requires an Authority to Construct permit have the potential to exceed 25 tons of any pollutant, except carbon monoxide (CO) in a 12-month period, the owner of the stationary source shall provide offsets under the provisions of SBCAPCD Rule 804 (Emission Offsets) and shall demonstrate that no ambient air quality standards will be violated.²²

Long-term/operational emissions thresholds have been established to address mobile emissions (i.e., motor vehicle emissions) and stationary source emissions (i.e., stationary boilers, engines, and chemical or industrial processing operations that release pollutants).²³

4.3.1.1 Construction

The SBCAPCD has not identified a specific numerical criterion for construction, as emissions are considered to be temporary. However, construction-related emissions should be discussed in all environmental documents for projects involving ground disturbance. Dust control measures are required under the County of Santa Barbara's Grading Ordinance for most projects. Some projects have the potential for construction-related dust to cause a nuisance. The proposed Project would comply with the County's dust control measures included in the County Code of Ordinances Chapter 14, which controls the design, construction, quality of materials, location and maintenance of grading, drainage, erosion, and sediment control. As such, earth moving operations at the proposed Project Site would not have the potential to result in significant proposed project-specific short-term emissions of fugitive dust and PM₁₀, with the implementation of standard dust control measures that are required for all new development within the County.

Emissions of ozone precursors (NO_x and VOCs) during construction of the proposed Project would result primarily from the on-site use of heavy earthmoving equipment. Due to the limited period of time that grading activities would occur on the proposed Project Site, construction-related emissions of NO_x and VOC would not be significant. Construction emissions were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod version 2022.1.1.30) (Refer to **Appendix A: Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emission Output Sheets**).

The results presented in **Table 4.3-1** are compared to the SBCAPCD maximum daily emissions thresholds for criteria pollutants established by Rule 202 D.16. As shown emissions would be below the SBCAPCD emissions thresholds. Additionally, the proposed Project would comply with SBCAPCD Rules. As such, construction impacts would be less than significant.

²² Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District. *Rule 202. Exemptions to Rule 201*. Accessed September 2025. <https://www.ourair.org/wp-content/uploads/Rule202.pdf>.

²³ County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development. *Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual*. Published January 2021. Accessed September 2025. https://www.sblafco.org/files/f2915ea5d/Information_Item_No_1___Attachment_B_Environmental_Thresholds_Amen_ded_January_2021.pdf.

Table 4.3-1: Maximum Construction Emissions

Source	VOC	NO _x	CO	SO _x	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
	tons/year					
2026	<0.1	0.1	0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
2028	0.2	0.4	0.6	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Maximum	0.2	0.4	0.6	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
SBCAPCD Daily Threshold	25	25	—	25	25	25
Threshold exceeded?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Notes: CO = carbon monoxide; NO_x = nitrogen oxides; PM₁₀ = particulate matter less than 10 microns; PM_{2.5} = particulate matter less than 2.5 microns; SO_x = sulfur oxides; VOC = volatile organic compounds.

Source: Refer to **Appendix A** for Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emission Output Sheets.

4.3.1.2 Operation

Operational emissions associated with the proposed Project would result from area and mobile sources, including vehicle trips for required inspection and maintenance activities. Vehicles traveling on paved roads would be a source of fugitive emissions due to the generation of road dust inclusive of tire wear particulates. The default number of vehicle trips from CalEEMod was used to provide a conservative estimate of mobile emissions, however emissions would be lower due to the minimal number of vehicle trips associated with operation of the proposed Project. Based on these assumptions, the estimated operational source emissions of VOC and NO_x would be below the 25-pound-per-day from mobile sources threshold.

Operation of the proposed Project would also require electricity to operate the replacement groundwater wells and pump groundwater into the District's existing potable water distribution system. However, the proposed wells would replace existing groundwater wells that currently perform these same functions and already generate operational emissions associated with electricity use. Accordingly, the operational emissions associated with the replacement wells would primarily replace existing operational emissions rather than represent a new source of operational emissions.

The results presented in **Table 4.3-2** compare the total operational emissions estimated for the Project to the SBCAPCD-established operational significance thresholds. As shown in **Table 4.3-2**, the operational emissions would not exceed the regional VOC, NO_x, or PM₁₀ concentration thresholds. As such, operational impacts would be less than significant.

Table 4.3-2: Unmitigated Maximum Operational Emissions

Source	VOC	NO _x	CO	SO _x	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
	tons/year					
Mobile	0.3	0.2	1.8	<0.1	0.4	0.1
Area	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 4.3-2: Unmitigated Maximum Operational Emissions

Source	VOC	NO _x	CO	SO _x	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
	tons/year					
Energy	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	0.7	0.2	1.8	<0.1	0.4	0.1
SBCAPCD Daily Threshold	240	240	—	—	80	—
Threshold exceeded?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Notes: CO = carbon monoxide; NO_x = nitrogen oxides; PM₁₀ = particulate matter less than 10 microns; PM_{2.5} = particulate matter less than 2.5 microns; SO_x = sulfur oxides; VOC = volatile organic compounds.

Source: Refer to **Appendix A** for Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emission Output Sheets.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Sensitive receptors are defined as schools, residential homes, hospitals, resident care facilities, daycare centers, or other facilities that may house individuals with health conditions that would be adversely impacted by changes in air quality. The nearest sensitive receptors to the Project Site include single family residential uses located over 2,000 feet (0.4 miles) to the west along Lunar Circle, single family residential uses located over 3,300 feet (0.6 miles) to the southeast along Shepherd Drive, and single-family residential uses to the north located over 3,400 feet (0.7 miles) along Burnham Drive.

As indicated in **Table 4.3-1** above, construction of the proposed Project would not exceed SBCAPCD maximum daily emissions thresholds for criteria pollutants. Further, as shown in **Table 4.3-2** above, Project operations would not emit a substantial amount of any criteria pollutant that would exceed the SBCAPCD thresholds. Sensitive receptors would not be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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

Less-Than-Significant Impact. According to the California Air Resources Board's Air Quality and Land Use Handbook,²⁴ odors are the most common sources of air pollution complaints and as with other types of air pollution, a number of factors need to be considered when determining potential effects on land use. Land uses that are more likely to produce odors include agriculture, chemical plants, composting operations, dairies, fiberglass molding, landfills, refineries, rendering plants, rail yards, and wastewater treatment plants.

²⁴ California Environmental Protection Agency, California Air Resources Board (CARB). *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective*. 2005.

Development activities associated with the proposed Project would generate odors from heavy-duty equipment exhaust including diesel and gasoline. Odors associated with diesel and gasoline fumes are transitory in nature and would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people. The impacts from these odors would be short term and would cease upon the completion of construction activities. The Project includes three (3) water wells and would not include any land uses known to produce odors. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

4.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
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 Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native 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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☒	☐	☐
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?	☐	☒	☐	☐

4.4.1 Discussion

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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less-Than-Significant Impact with Project Mitigation. A Biological Survey Report, included in **Appendix B**, was prepared for the Project Site to identify existing biological resources within the Project Site and surrounding Study Area. The Biological Survey Report incorporates database reviews, habitat assessments,

focused botanical surveys, special-status species evaluations, and field investigations to identify biological resources that could be affected by implementation of the proposed Project. The report also evaluates the potential for special-status plant and wildlife species to occur within the Study Area based on existing habitat conditions and documented occurrences in the vicinity of the Project Site.

The Biological Survey Report (Appendix B, dated October 17, 2025) updates the 2022 biological resource assessment prepared by Althouse and Meade and documents field surveys conducted across three survey years: February through July 2016, spring 2022, and reconnaissance-level wildlife and focused botanical surveys on April 9 and May 14, 2025. The Biological Survey Report analyzed an area of approximately 0.87 acre (Study Area), which is larger than the 0.76-acre Project Site analyzed in this document. The Study Area was surveyed on foot, and the 2025 botanical surveys were timed to coincide with the bloom periods for special-status plant species and conducted in accordance with applicable U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Native Plant Society (CNPS), and CDFW survey guidelines. The Biological Survey Report also included an examination for wetland and riverine boundaries.

The Biological Survey Report identified three native vegetation communities within the Study Area, including black sage–California sagebrush scrub, coast live oak woodland, and arroyo willow thickets, as well as disturbed and developed areas. As mapped in Appendix B (Table 2), the 0.87-acre Study Area supports 0.60 acre of black sage–California sagebrush scrub, 0.17 acre of coast live oak woodland and forest, 0.06 acre of developed land, 0.03 acre of arroyo willow thickets, and 0.01 acre of disturbed land. Vegetation removal and the resulting disturbance footprint would occur within these communities as mapped on Figure 5 of the Biological Survey Report. The Project Area supports suitable habitat for numerous special-status plant and wildlife species due to its location within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (BMER) and its proximity to the riparian habitat in Davis Creek.

Focused botanical surveys documented three special-status plant species within the Project Area: California spineflower (*Mucronea californica*), seaside bird's-beak (*Cordylanthus rigidus* ssp. *littoralis*), and Lompoc ceanothus (*Ceanothus cuneatus* var. *fascicularis*). In addition, Vandenberg monkeyflower (*Diplacus vanderbergensis*), a federally endangered species, was observed immediately east of the Project Area, and federally designated critical habitat for the species occurs within and adjacent to the Study Area. The Biological Survey Report also determined that several additional special-status plant species have moderate to high potential (e.g., Vandenberg monkeyflower, California spineflower, dune larkspur, Lompoc ceanothus, Seaside Bird's-beak, Southern curly-leaved monardella, Hoover's bent grass, Santa Ynez groundstar, mesa horkelia, black-flowered figwort, La Purisima manzanita, sand mesa manzanita, Blushing layia, and Pale-yellow layia) to occur based on suitable habitat and documented occurrences in the vicinity.

Although no special-status wildlife species were observed on the Project Site during field surveys, the Biological Survey Report determined that southwestern pond turtle, northern California legless lizard, coast horned lizard, pallid bat, and American badger have moderate to high potential to occur within the Study Area due to the presence of suitable riparian, coastal scrub, oak woodland, and sandy soil habitats.

Construction activities, including vegetation removal, grading, well drilling, utility installation, equipment movement, and other ground-disturbing activities, have the potential to directly or indirectly affect special-status plant and wildlife species and their habitats. Potential impacts include disturbance or removal of special-status plants, injury or mortality of special-status wildlife, temporary habitat disturbance, and indirect effects associated with construction activities.

To avoid and minimize impacts to special-status species, the Biological Survey Report identifies **Mitigation Measures (MM) BIO-1** through **BIO-5**, which include preconstruction biological surveys, worker environmental awareness training, biological monitoring during construction, establishment of environmentally sensitive area fencing where appropriate, and species-specific avoidance and protection measures for special-status plants and wildlife. Implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5** would avoid or minimize direct and indirect impacts to special-status species during construction and ensure compliance with applicable State and federal regulations.

Therefore, with implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5**, impacts to candidate, sensitive, and special-status plant and wildlife species would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: The following mitigation measures, as described in **Appendix B**, would reduce impacts to special-status plant and wildlife species to less than significant.

MM BIO-1 Preconstruction Biological Survey and Worker Environmental Awareness Training. No more than seven days prior to the commencement of vegetation removal or ground-disturbing activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct a preconstruction survey of the Project Site and adjacent areas that could be affected by construction to identify any special-status plants, wildlife including nesting raptors and migratory birds, or other sensitive biological resources such as bats, herpetofauna, and other mammals. Construction activities will be scheduled to avoid the nesting season (between October and January). In the event construction activities occur between February and September, the preconstruction survey will identify presence/absence of nesting raptors and migratory birds. If construction activities cease for five consecutive days during the nesting season, the preconstruction nesting survey shall be conducted again to ensure no nesting birds have moved into the Project site. If active nests (nests with eggs or chicks) are located, the qualified biologist shall establish an appropriate avoidance buffer (50 to 500 feet) based on species biology and in consultation with CDFW.

Prior to the start of construction, all construction personnel shall receive Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training conducted by a qualified biologist. The training shall familiarize workers with sensitive biological resources that may occur in the Project Area, applicable environmental regulations, required avoidance measures, permit conditions, and procedures to follow if sensitive biological resources are encountered during construction.

MM BIO-2 Biological Monitoring. A qualified biologist shall monitor vegetation clearing and other ground-disturbing activities in areas supporting sensitive biological resources (e.g., roosting bats) or where special-status species have the potential to occur, including special status plant species and sensitive natural vegetation communities. The biological monitor shall have the authority to halt or redirect construction activities if necessary to avoid impacts to special-status species or other sensitive biological resources. Construction activities shall not resume until the qualified biologist determines that appropriate avoidance measures have been implemented. If roosting habitat for bats is identified during the preconstruction survey, a buffer shall be established by a qualified biologist and no clearing or grubbing activities shall occur within 300 feet of the roosting habitat until the maternal season is over or the bats have left the site.

MM BIO-3 Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Fencing and Resource Protection. Prior to the start of construction, Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) fencing or other highly visible barriers shall be installed around sensitive biological resources designated for avoidance, as identified by the qualified biologist, including individual oak trees. Construction personnel and equipment shall remain within designated work areas, and no staging, parking, stockpiling, fueling, or other construction-related activities shall occur within fenced or otherwise protected sensitive resource areas.

- Prior to any site disturbance, tree protection fencing shall be installed as close to the outer limit of the CRZ as practicable for construction operations. The fencing shall be in place throughout the duration of construction, and removed only under the direction of the project's Certified Arborist.
- Prior to any site disturbance, tree protection fencing shall be installed along the outer limit of the critical root zone (1.5 times the trunk diameter) of all oak trees within 50 feet of Project activities. The fencing shall be in place for the duration of the construction occurring within 50 feet of the trees. Where approved Project activities are within the CRZ, fencing shall be temporarily moved to facilitate the work. A Certified Arborist shall be present during approved Project activities within the critical root zone to document impacts to the trees, and shall provide a written report to the County of any mitigation obligation.
- During site disturbance and/or construction, impacts to the oak canopy or CRZ should be avoided where practicable. Impacts include pruning, any ground disturbance within the dripline or CRZ of the tree (whichever distance is greater), and trunk damage.
- During site disturbance and/or construction, trenching within the CRZ must be approved by the project's Certified Arborist, and shall be done by hand or with an air spade. Any roots exposed during construction shall be evaluated and treated by the project's Certified Arborist.
- During site disturbance and/or construction, impacts to oak trees shall be assessed by a Certified Arborist. Impacts include pruning, any ground disturbance within the dripline or CRZ of the tree (whichever distance is greater), and trunk damage.
- During site disturbance and/or construction, all hazardous materials shall be properly stored within secondary containment. All portable generators and portable toilets shall also be staged within secondary containment.
- During site disturbance and/or construction, no equipment fueling, hazardous materials storage, portable restrooms, concrete washouts, or overnight vehicle or equipment staging shall be permitted within 100 feet of aquatic features.

MM BIO-4 Special-Status Plant Avoidance and Protection. Prior to construction, a qualified botanist shall identify and clearly mark populations of special-status plant species located within or adjacent to the construction limits, including but not limited to Vandenberg monkeyflower, California spineflower, dune larkspur, Lompoc ceanothus, Seaside Bird's-beak, Southern curly-leaved monardella, Hoover's bent grass, Santa Ynez groundstar, mesa horkelia, black-flowered figwort, La Purisima manzanita, sand mesa manzanita, Blushing layia, and Pale-yellow layia. Construction activities shall avoid impacts to these populations through

project redesign, establishment of avoidance buffers (i.e., fencing adhering to CDFW species requirements) by a qualified biologist, or other protective measures for identified species in accordance with State (e.g., CDFW protocols/requirements) and federal regulatory requirements. If complete avoidance is determined to be infeasible, the potential for salvaging the affected plants shall be considered with appropriate compensation based upon current California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) standards for the identified special status plant or sensitive natural vegetation communities impacts shall be minimized and addressed in accordance with applicable State and federal regulatory requirements and any required agency approvals.

MM BIO-5 Special-Status Wildlife Protection Measures. Prior to and during construction, a qualified biologist shall implement species-specific avoidance measures for special-status wildlife with the potential to occur within the Project Area, including herpetofauna (i.e., California red-legged frog), southwestern pond turtle, northern California legless lizard, coast horned lizard, pallid bat, and American badger. These measures may include preconstruction surveys, establishment of species-specific exclusion buffers in adherence to the protocols established by CDFW for each special-status wildlife species, relocation of individuals by qualified personnel when authorized, and temporary work stoppages if special-status wildlife are observed within or adjacent to active construction areas. Construction activities shall be conducted in accordance with all applicable State and federal regulations to avoid the take of special-status wildlife species.

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 Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less-Than-Significant Impact with Project Mitigation. The Biological Survey Report (**Appendix B**) identified three native vegetation communities within the Study Area, including black sage-California sagebrush scrub, coast live oak woodland, and arroyo willow thickets, as well as disturbed and developed areas. The Project Site is located within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (BMER), which supports a diversity of native habitats and sensitive biological resources.

The BMER is managed by CDFW in accordance with the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve Land Management Plan (CDFG, Administrative Final, August 2007). The Land Management Plan divides the Reserve into five management units of approximately 1,000 acres each: Vandenberg, Santa Lucia, Purisima Hills, Encina, and La Purisima. The Project Site is located within the Encina Management Unit. Within the Encina unit, the dominant geologic formation is the Orcutt Formation and the dominant soil series is Marina sand, which the Land Management Plan identifies as the most abundant soil on the Reserve, consistent with the Marina sand mapped at the Project Site in Appendix B. The Land Management Plan identifies Davis Creek and its tributary Meriam Creek within the Encina unit, a spring located north of Burton Mesa Boulevard and west of Clubhouse Road, and the State Water pipeline crossing the unit. Management direction for the Encina unit includes the Land Management Plan's trail program, which would reduce trails within the unit from approximately 15.0 miles to approximately 6.6 miles, and the phase-out and restoration of grazing areas within the unit.

The Biological Survey Report identified arroyo willow thickets associated with Davis Creek along the western portion of the Study Area. This riparian habitat offers wildlife cover, movement opportunities, and habitat for special-status species. Coast live oak woodland also occurs within portions of the Study Area

and contains coast live oak trees protected under the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan. These habitat communities are considered sensitive because of their ecological value and the wildlife habitat they provide.

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. As described in **Appendix B**, the Project Site was selected following an alternatives evaluation to minimize impacts to biological resources and is located adjacent to existing access roads and utility infrastructure. Although construction activities, including vegetation removal, grading, drilling, and utility installation, have the potential to temporarily disturb adjacent sensitive natural communities, the proposed improvements have been designed to avoid direct impacts to riparian habitat and minimize disturbance to surrounding native vegetation to the maximum extent practicable.

Implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **BIO-5** would further reduce potential impacts by requiring preconstruction biological surveys, worker environmental awareness training, biological monitoring during construction, establishment of environmentally sensitive area fencing around sensitive habitat designated for avoidance, and implementation of species- and habitat-specific avoidance measures. These measures would ensure that construction activities remain within designated work limits and avoid or minimize impacts to adjacent riparian habitat and other sensitive natural communities.

Therefore, with implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **BIO-5**, impacts to riparian habitat and other sensitive natural communities would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: Previously described **Mitigation Measures BIO-1** through **BIO-5**.

c. Have a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

Less-Than-Significant Impact with Project Mitigation. The Biological Survey Report (**Appendix B**) identified a perennial stream, Davis Creek, extending through the northwestern portion of the Study Area, as well as a likely wetland feature immediately west of the Project Site. The report concludes that these aquatic resources are likely subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and/or the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The adjacent arroyo willow thicket community further supports the likelihood that these features constitute protected waters and wetlands.

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. As described in **Appendix B**, the Project Site was selected following an alternatives evaluation to minimize impacts to biological resources and is located outside of the identified riparian and wetland features. The proposed wells and associated improvements would be constructed within the designated Project Area and would not require the direct removal, filling, or permanent modification of jurisdictional wetlands or other aquatic resources.

Construction activities occurring in proximity to Davis Creek and the adjacent wetland feature have the potential to result in indirect impacts, including accidental encroachment, sedimentation, or disturbance to adjacent jurisdictional resources. However, implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **BIO-5** would require biological monitoring, establishment of environmentally sensitive area fencing, and protection of sensitive biological resources during construction. These measures would ensure that construction activities remain

within approved work limits and avoid direct or indirect impacts to adjacent jurisdictional wetlands and riparian habitat.

Because the proposed Project has been designed to avoid jurisdictional aquatic resources and would not result in the removal, filling, hydrologic interruption, or other substantial adverse modification of State or federally protected wetlands, implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **BIO-5** would reduce potential impacts to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: Previously described **Mitigation Measures BIO-1** through **BIO-5**.

d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native 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?

Less-Than-Significant Impact with Project Mitigation. The Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (BMER) is a largely undeveloped area that supports habitat connectivity for native wildlife. Davis Creek, which extends through the northwestern portion of the Study Area, serves as an important wildlife movement corridor by providing habitat connectivity for resident and migratory wildlife species moving through the BMER.

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within an approximately 0.76-acre Project Site located adjacent to existing access roads and utility facilities. The Project would replace existing water supply infrastructure and would not introduce new linear barriers, fencing, or other permanent features that would substantially impede wildlife movement through the surrounding landscape. Because the Project would occupy a relatively small area within the larger BMER, wildlife movement opportunities would remain available before, during, and after Project implementation.

Construction activities, including vegetation removal, grading, drilling, equipment operation, and increased human activity, could temporarily disturb wildlife movement within the immediate vicinity of the Project Site. Construction also has the potential to affect active bird nests if vegetation removal or ground-disturbing activities occur during the nesting season. However, these effects would be temporary and confined to the construction period.

Implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **BIO-5** would minimize temporary construction-related impacts by requiring preconstruction biological surveys, worker environmental awareness training, biological monitoring, establishment of environmentally sensitive area fencing, protection of sensitive habitat, and species-specific avoidance measures. These measures include surveys for nesting birds and establishment of appropriate avoidance buffers around active nests, if present, to prevent impacts to nesting resident and migratory birds. Collectively, these measures would ensure that construction activities do not substantially interfere with wildlife movement, habitat connectivity, or the use of wildlife nursery sites.

Because the Project would not create a permanent barrier to wildlife movement or substantially disrupt established wildlife corridors, and because temporary construction-related effects would be minimized through implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **BIO-5**, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measures: Previously described **Mitigation Measures BIO-1** through **BIO-5**.

e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Less-Than-Significant Impact with Project Mitigation. The approximately 0.76-acre Study Area is located within the 166.2-acre Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve, which is managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to preserve sensitive habitat and native biological resource. The Biological Survey Report (**Appendix B**) identified black sage–California sagebrush scrub, coast live oak woodland, arroyo willow thickets, disturbed areas, and developed areas within the Study Area. Coast live oak trees are protected under the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, and the BMER is managed to conserve native vegetation communities and wildlife habitat.

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project Site was selected to minimize impacts to biological resources and is located adjacent to existing access roads and utility infrastructure. Although construction activities have the potential to temporarily disturb native vegetation or protected biological resources, the Project has been designed to avoid sensitive habitat to the maximum extent practicable.

Implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **BIO-5** would require preconstruction biological surveys, worker environmental awareness training, biological monitoring, establishment of environmentally sensitive area fencing around sensitive biological resources designated for avoidance, and implementation of species- and habitat-specific avoidance measures. These measures would protect coast live oak trees, sensitive vegetation communities, and other biological resources during construction and ensure that Project activities remain consistent with applicable local policies protecting biological resources.

Therefore, with implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **BIO-5**, the proposed Project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, and impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measures: Previously described **Mitigation Measures BIO-1** through **BIO-5**.

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?

Less-Than-Significant Impact with Project Mitigation. The approximately 0.76-acre Study Area is located within the 166.2-acre Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve, which is owned by the California State Lands Commission and managed by CDFW to preserve sensitive habitats, special-status species, and native ecological communities. The Project Site is also located within federally designated critical habitat for the federally endangered Vandenberg monkeyflower (*Diplacus vandenbergensis*).

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project Site was selected through an alternatives evaluation to minimize impacts to biological resources and is located adjacent to existing access roads and utility infrastructure. Construction activities have the potential to temporarily disturb sensitive habitats and special-status species if appropriate avoidance measures are not implemented.

While the Project Site is not located within an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) or Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) area, the Project has been designed to avoid and minimize impacts to the biological resources protected within the BMER. Implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **BIO-5** would require preconstruction biological surveys, worker environmental awareness training, biological

monitoring, establishment of environmentally sensitive area fencing, and implementation of species- and habitat-specific avoidance measures. These measures would minimize construction-related impacts and ensure that Project activities remain consistent with the conservation and management objectives of the BMER and the protection of sensitive biological resources identified in **Appendix B: Biological Survey Report**. The Project would also remain consistent with the management objectives of the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve Land Management Plan for the Encina Management Unit. Furthermore, implementation of mitigation would ensure the District is consistent with the goals in the BMER Final Land Management Plan Biological Element focused on enhancing upland habitats for native plants and animals, the protection of wetlands, and riparian vegetation.

Therefore, with implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **BIO-5**, the proposed Project would not conflict with the provisions of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved habitat conservation plan, and impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measures: Previously described **Mitigation Measures BIO-1** through **BIO-5**.

4.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
CULTURAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.5.1 Discussion

Would the project:

a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in section 15064.5?

No Impact. A Phase I Archaeological Assessment (included as **Appendix C**) was prepared for the proposed Project Site. The assessment included a records search at the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), consultation with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), a Sacred Lands File search, review of historical maps and aerial photographs, and an intensive pedestrian survey of the Area of Potential Effect (APE).

The records search identified one previously recorded cultural resource within the APE: historic trail CA-SBA-3948H/P-42-001860. The trail has previously been evaluated and determined ineligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). As such, it does not qualify as a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5. No additional historical resources were identified during the field survey, and the Phase I Archaeological Assessment concluded that no historical resources eligible for listing in the CRHR or National Register of Historic Places are present within the APE.

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. Because no historical resources, as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, are located within the Project Site or APE, implementation of the proposed Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. Accordingly, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to section 15064.5?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The Phase I Archaeological Assessment (**Appendix C**) included a California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) records search, consultation with the Native American

Heritage Commission (NAHC), a Sacred Lands File search, review of historical maps and aerial photographs, and an intensive pedestrian survey of the Area of Potential Effect (APE).

The records search identified one previously recorded cultural resource within the APE, historic trail CA-SBA-3948H/P-42-001860, which has been evaluated and determined ineligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). No additional archaeological resources were identified during the pedestrian survey, and the Phase I Archaeological Assessment concluded that no archaeological resources eligible for listing in the CRHR or National Register of Historic Places are present within the APE.

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. Construction activities would involve vegetation clearing, grading, trenching, drilling, excavation, and other ground-disturbing activities that have the potential to encounter previously undiscovered buried archaeological resources that were not identified during the records search or field survey.

In the event previously undiscovered archaeological resources are encountered during construction, California Public Resources Code Section 21083.2 requires impacts to unique archaeological resources be avoided or mitigated, as appropriate. In addition, California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that work cease in the vicinity of a discovery until the find has been evaluated by a qualified archaeologist and appropriate treatment measures have been implemented. Compliance with these existing State laws and regulations would ensure that any previously undiscovered archaeological resources are appropriately evaluated and protected.

Accordingly, the proposed Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The Phase I Archaeological Assessment (**Appendix C**) included a California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) records search, consultation with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), a Sacred Lands File search, and an intensive pedestrian survey of the Area of Potential Effect (APE). The records search and field survey did not identify any known human remains, formal cemeteries, or burial sites within the APE. In addition, the NAHC Sacred Lands File search returned negative results for the Project Site.

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. Construction activities would involve grading, trenching, drilling, excavation, and other ground-disturbing activities that have the potential to encounter previously undiscovered human remains.

If human remains are encountered during construction, California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that all work in the vicinity of the discovery cease immediately and that the Santa Barbara County Coroner be notified to evaluate the remains. If the Coroner determines that the remains are Native American, the Coroner is required to notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), which will designate a Most Likely Descendant (MLD) pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The MLD will provide recommendations regarding the treatment or disposition of the remains, and construction

activities may resume only after the requirements of State law have been satisfied. These procedures are also recommended in the Phase I Archaeological Assessment.

Compliance with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, and other applicable State regulations governing the treatment of human remains would ensure that any previously undiscovered human remains are appropriately protected. Therefore, impacts associated with the inadvertent discovery of human remains would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

4.6 ENERGY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
ENERGY – Would the project:				
a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.6.1 Discussion

Would the project:

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 following analysis estimates the electricity and transportation fuel usage associated with the proposed Project and evaluates whether the Project would result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy. As the proposed Project includes the operation of water wells, it would not result in the consumption of natural gas resources. The supporting energy calculations are included in **Appendix D: Energy Data**.

The Project Site and surrounding area are within the Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) service area. The PG&E service area covers 70,000 square miles and serves approximately 16 million people in central and Southern California.²⁵ PG&E generates electricity from a variety of sources including renewable sources such as wind, geothermal, biomass, solar and hydropower, nuclear sources, hydroelectric power, and natural gas. The PG&E planning area used approximately 282,783 gigawatt hours (GWh) of electricity in 2024, the most recent year for which data is available.²⁶

According to the California Energy Commission (CEC), transportation accounts for nearly 40 percent of California's total energy consumption. In 2022, the most recent year of publicly available data, California consumed approximately 648,296 thousand barrels (27.22 million gallons, or 42 gallons per barrel) of petroleum for transportation.²⁷ Incentive programs, such as the CEC Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program (ARFVTP), are helping the State to reduce its dependency on gasoline. Several

²⁵ Pacific Gas & Electric Company. "Company Profile." Accessed September 2025.
<https://www.pge.com/en/about/company-information/company-profile.html>.

²⁶ California Energy Commission (CEC). "Electricity Consumption." Accessed September 2025.
<https://www.energy.ca.gov/data-reports/energy-almanac/california-electricity-data/california-energy-consumption-dashboards-0>.

²⁷ United States Energy Information Administration, Independent Statistics & Analysis. "Table F16: Total Petroleum Consumption Estimates, 2023." Accessed September 2025.
https://www.eia.gov/state/seds/data.php?incfile=/state/seds/sep_fuel/html/fuel_use_pa.html&sid=US.

regulations adopted by California to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, such as Senate Bill (SB) 375, have the added benefit of reducing the State's demand on petroleum-based fuels by requiring reductions in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and by reducing the carbon intensity of transportation fuels. The CEC predicts that the demand for gasoline would continue to decline over the upcoming years, and there would be an increase in the use of alternative fuels.²⁸

4.6.1.1 Construction

During construction, energy would be consumed in the form of electricity associated with the conveyance of water used for dust control, and on a limited basis, powering lights, electronic equipment, or other construction activities necessitating electrical power. Construction activities typically do not involve the consumption of natural gas. Construction would also consume energy in the form of petroleum-based fuels associated with the use of off-road construction vehicles and equipment within the Project Site, construction worker travel trips.

The Project would utilize construction contractors who demonstrate compliance with applicable CARB regulations governing the accelerated retrofiting, repowering, or replacement of heavy-duty diesel on- and off-road equipment. Compliance with anti-idling and emissions regulations would result in efficient use of construction-related energy and the minimization or elimination of wasteful and unnecessary consumption of energy. Idling restrictions and the use of newer engines and equipment would result in less fuel combustion and energy consumption, as would the use of haul trucks with larger capacities.

Construction of the proposed Project would require the use of various forms of energy. **Table 4.6-1: Summary of Fuel Use During Construction** summarizes the quantity of petroleum fuels that would be consumed during construction. As shown in **Table 4.6-1**, approximately 13,624 gallons of fuel and additionally 69 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity would be consumed during construction.

Table 4.6-1: Summary of Fuel Use During Construction

Fuel Type	Quantity (gallons)
Off-Road Construction Equipment	11,443
Construction Worker	716
Construction Vendor (MDH & HHD Trucks)	1,465
Total	13,624

Source: Refer to **Appendix D: Energy Data**.

4.6.1.1.1 Construction Equipment Fuel Estimates

Fuel consumed by construction equipment would be the primary energy resource expended over the course of Project construction. Fuel consumed by construction equipment was evaluated with the following assumptions:

²⁸ CEC. Adopted 2023 Integrated Energy Policy Report with Errata. February 2024. Accessed September 2025. <https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=254463>.

- ▶ Construction schedule of approximately 30 months.
- ▶ All construction equipment was assumed to run on diesel fuel.
- ▶ Typical daily use of eight (8) hours, with some equipment operating for approximately six (6) hours.
- ▶ Aggregate fuel consumption rate for all equipment was estimated at 18.5 horsepower hours per gallon (hp-hr/gal).²⁹
- ▶ Diesel fuel would be the responsibility of the equipment operators/contractors and would be sourced within the region.
- ▶ Project construction represents a “single-event” for diesel fuel demand and would not require on-going or permanent commitment of diesel fuel resources during long-term operation.

Construction of the Project would consume electricity and fossil fuels as a single energy demand; that is, once construction is completed their use would cease. The CARB2022 Emissions Factors Tables show that, on average, aggregate fuel consumption (gasoline and diesel fuel) would be approximately 18.5 hp-hr/gal.

4.6.1.1.2 Construction Worker Fuel Estimates

Construction worker trips would likely range from light-duty autos (LDA), light duty truck 1 (LDT1), and light duty truck 2 (LDT2) at a mix of 25 percent, 50 percent, and 25 percent, respectively, along area roadways.³⁰ Data regarding Project-related construction worker trips were based on CalEEMod model defaults.

Vehicle fuel efficiencies for construction workers were estimated in the air quality and greenhouse gas analyses using information generated from CARB’s 2021 Emissions Factor Model (EMFAC) (refer to **Appendix D** for data). An aggregate fuel efficiency of 26.02 miles per gallon (mpg) was used to calculate VMT for construction worker trips. **Table 4.6-1** shows that an estimated 716 gallons of fuel would be consumed for construction worker trips.

4.6.1.1.3 Construction Vendor/Hauling Fuel Estimates

Construction worker trips were estimated based on CalEEMod model defaults. For architectural coatings, it is assumed that contractors would be responsible for bringing coatings and equipment with them in their light-duty vehicles. Therefore, vendors delivering construction material or hauling debris from the site during grading and building construction would use medium- to heavy-duty vehicles with an average fuel consumption of 7.75 mpg for medium-duty trucks and 6.05 mpg for heavy-duty trucks. **Table 4.6-1** shows that an estimated 1,157 gallons of fuel would be consumed for vendor and haul truck trips.

4.6.1.1.4 Construction Energy Efficiency/Conservation Measures

Construction equipment used over the approximately thirty-month construction phase would conform to CARB regulations and California emissions standards and is evidence of related fuel efficiencies. There are no unusual Project characteristics or construction processes that would require the use of equipment that would be more energy-intensive than is used for comparable activities; or equipment that would not

²⁹ CARB. “The Carl Moyer Program Guidelines. “ *Table D-21: Fuel Consumption Rate Factors (bhp-hr/gal)*, 2017. Accessed September 2025. https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/classic/msprog/moyer/guidelines/2017/2017_cmpgl.pdf.

³⁰ CalEEMod User’s Guide Appendix C (April 2022) states that construction work trips are made by a fleet consisting of 25 percent light-duty auto (or passenger car), 50 percent light-duty truck type 1 (LDT1), and 25 percent light-duty truck type 2 (LDT2).

conform to current emissions standards (and related fuel efficiencies). Equipment employed in construction of the Project would therefore not result in inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of fuel.

The Project would utilize construction contractors which practice compliance with applicable CARB regulations regarding retrofitting, repowering, or replacement of diesel off-road construction equipment. Additionally, CARB has adopted the Airborne Toxic Control Measures³¹ to limit heavy-duty diesel motor vehicle idling in order to reduce public exposure to diesel particulate matter and other TACs. Compliance with these measures would result in a more efficient use of construction-related energy and would minimize or eliminate wasteful or unnecessary consumption of energy. Idling restrictions and the use of newer engines and equipment would result in less fuel combustion and energy consumption.

Additionally, as required by California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 13-Motor Vehicles, Section 2449(d)(3) Idling, idling times of construction vehicles are limited to no more than five minutes, thereby minimizing or eliminating unnecessary and wasteful consumption of fuel due to unproductive idling of construction equipment. Enforcement of idling limitations is realized through periodic site inspections conducted by County building officials, and/or in response to citizen complaints.

Due to the relatively short duration of the construction process, and the fact that the extent of fuel consumption is inherent to construction projects of this size and nature, fuel consumption impacts would not be considered excessive or substantial with respect to regional fuel supplies. The energy demands during construction would be typical of construction projects of this size and would not necessitate additional energy facilities or distribution infrastructure. As a result, the Project would not result in inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of transportation resources during construction. Accordingly, transportation resource demands during construction would be less than significant.

4.6.1.2 Operation

Operation of the proposed Project would require electricity to operate the groundwater wells, pump groundwater from the wells, and convey water through the distribution system. By 2029, when the proposed Project well is anticipated to be completed and operational, PG&E projects total demand in its service area to be approximately 132,248 GWh.³² PG&E is prepared to meet this demand. For a conservative estimate, the proposed Project's energy demand was compared to the baseline demand energy forecast for PG&E. It is estimated that the proposed Project would consume approximately 3.92 million kWh of electricity per year. This is estimated based on the default electricity use by Light Industrial uses by CalEEMod and the electricity needed to convey the 710 million gallons of water conservatively estimated to be yielded by the wells per year based on a maximum of 1,350 gpm operation for each well and the wells operating at all times. This would be less than 0.01 percent of electricity delivered by PG&E in 2029. Impacts would be less than significant.

Transportation energy consumption from the proposed Project would result from the estimated 74 trips per weekday. The default number of vehicle trips from CalEEMod for industrial uses was used to provide a conservative estimate mobile emissions, however fuel use would be lower due to the minimal number of

³¹ CARB. "Airborne Toxic Control Measures." Accessed September 2025. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/airborne-toxic-control-measures>.

³² CEC. "California Energy Demand 2024–2040." Accessed September 2025. <https://www.energy.ca.gov/data-reports/reports/integrated-energy-policy-report-iepr/2024-integrated-energy-policy-report-0>.

vehicle trips during the operation of the proposed Project. The proposed Project operations would consume approximately 9,497 gallons of petroleum per year.³³ The EIA forecasts a national oil supply of 16.1 million barrels (mb) per day in 2029, which is the year of operation for the proposed Project.³⁴ This equates to approximately 264,442 million gallons (mg) per year. Operation of the proposed Project would account for less than 0.01 percent of the projected annual oil supply in 2029. Impacts would be less than significant.

The proposed Project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during construction or operation. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The proposed Project would be developed in conformance with all applicable energy conservation regulations including but not limited to Title 24 energy conservation standards. The operation of the proposed Project requires electricity to distribute water within the VVCSD service area and would not conflict or obstruct with any state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency, including the County of Santa Barbara ECAP. Therefore, with respect to conflicts or obstruction of any state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

³³ Refer to **Appendix D: Energy Data**.

³⁴ United States Energy Information Administration. "Annual Energy Outlook 2025." Accessed September 2025. <https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/aeo/data/browser/#/?id=11-AEO2025®ion=0-0&cases=ref2025&start=2023&end=2029&f=A&linechart=ref2025-d032025a.3-11-AEO2025&sourcekey=0>.

4.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
GEOLOGY AND SOILS – Would the project:				
a. Expose people or structures to 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 evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42?	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv. Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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 landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.7.1 Discussion

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

No Impact. The California Geological Survey (CGS) designates Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones around known active faults where there is a potential for surface fault rupture. Development within these zones is subject to the requirements of the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, including site-specific geologic investigations for structures intended for human occupancy.

The Project Site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. According to the California Geological Survey, the nearest designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone is associated with the Lions Head Fault, located approximately 2.7 miles northeast of the Project Site. No known active faults capable of surface rupture have been identified beneath the Project Site.

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project would not introduce habitable structures or involve activities that could induce fault rupture. Because the Project Site is not located within a designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or along a known active fault, the proposed Project would not expose people or structures to hazards associated with surface fault rupture. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The Project Site is located within the seismically active Southern California region and could experience moderate to strong ground shaking during an earthquake originating on present in the region. Although the Project Site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone, seismic ground shaking associated with earthquakes occurring on nearby faults represents the primary seismic hazard affecting the Project Site.

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project would not induce seismic activity or increase the likelihood or intensity of seismic ground shaking. However, construction and operation of the proposed facilities could expose workers and infrastructure to seismic hazards typical of the region.

Design and construction of the proposed facilities would be required to comply with the current California Building Code (CBC), as adopted by Santa Barbara County, including applicable seismic design requirements. Prior to construction, site-specific geotechnical recommendations would be incorporated into the final design, as appropriate, to address site conditions and ensure compliance with applicable building standards. Compliance with the CBC, County building permit requirements, and accepted engineering practices would minimize the potential for structural damage or injury resulting from seismic ground shaking.

Accordingly, although the Project Site is located within a region susceptible to seismic ground shaking, compliance with applicable seismic design standards and building regulations would ensure that impacts associated with strong seismic ground shaking would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction, can occur when loose, saturated soils lose strength during strong seismic shaking, resulting in ground settlement or lateral displacement. According to the California Geological Survey (CGS) Liquefaction Zones mapping and the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, Safety Element, the Project Site is not located within a mapped liquefaction hazard zone or other area identified as having a significant potential for seismic-related ground failure.^{35,36} The Project Site is also not located within an area where mitigation would be required pursuant to the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act.³⁷

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project would not alter local geologic conditions or increase the potential for liquefaction or other forms of seismic-related ground failure. In addition, the Project would be designed and constructed in accordance with the current California Building Code (CBC), as adopted by Santa Barbara County, and would incorporate site-specific geotechnical recommendations, as appropriate, during final design. Compliance with the CBC and County building permit requirements would minimize the potential for damage resulting from seismic-related ground failure.³⁸

Because the Project Site is not located within a mapped liquefaction hazard zone and the proposed facilities would comply with applicable seismic design and construction standards, the proposed Project would not expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects associated with seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

iv. Landslides?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Landslides generally occur on steep slopes where geologic materials become unstable due to natural conditions, seismic activity, or saturation. According to the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, Safety Element, the Project Site is located within an area identified as having potential susceptibility to landslides.³⁹ However, the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site is generally flat and does not contain the steep slopes typically associated with landslide hazards.

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project would not require substantial

³⁵ County of Santa Barbara. *Seismic Safety and Safety Element*. In *Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan*. Adopted 1979; Amended July 2023. Accessed September 2025. <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/f0b97ebb-c2c6-4f92-afd0-e04bf738537d>.

³⁶ California Geological Survey. "CGS Liquefaction Zones." Map. CGS Information Warehouse. Accessed September 2025. <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=fcf1ebfe19be49819a12c404d74b4a7d>.

³⁷ Public Resources Code. Chapter 7.8, *Seismic Hazards Mapping*, Section 2693(c).

³⁸ County of Santa Barbara. *Seismic Safety and Safety Element*.

³⁹ County of Santa Barbara. *Seismic Safety and Safety Element*.

grading, creation of steep cut or fill slopes, or significant alteration of existing topography that could increase the potential for slope instability or landslides.

In addition, the proposed facilities would be designed and constructed in accordance with the current California Building Code (CBC), as adopted by Santa Barbara County, and would incorporate site-specific geotechnical recommendations, as appropriate, during final design. Compliance with the CBC, County building permit requirements, and accepted engineering practices would minimize the potential for landslide-related impacts.

Although the Project Site is located within a broader area identified as having potential landslide susceptibility, the relatively flat site conditions, limited grading, and compliance with applicable design and construction standards would ensure that the proposed Project would not expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects associated with landslides. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Construction of the proposed Project would require temporary ground-disturbing activities, including vegetation clearing, grading, excavation, trenching, and compaction within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. These activities have the potential to expose soils to erosion from wind and stormwater runoff during construction. However, the Project Site is generally flat, no substantial cut-and-fill slopes would be created, and no soil import or export is anticipated. Disturbed soils would be graded, compacted, and stabilized following construction.

Because construction activities would disturb more than one acre as part of a common plan of development, the proposed Project would be required to obtain coverage under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit. Compliance with the Construction General Permit would require preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that identifies erosion and sediment control Best Management Practices (BMPs), including measures to minimize soil erosion, prevent sediment from leaving the Project Site, stabilize disturbed areas, and control stormwater runoff throughout construction.

Implementation of the required SWPPP and BMPs would minimize the potential for soil erosion and loss of topsoil during construction, while permanent stabilization of disturbed areas following construction would prevent long-term erosion. Accordingly, the proposed Project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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 landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Unstable geologic conditions may result in landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or soil collapse when development occurs on geologic units or soils that are susceptible to failure. As discussed under Thresholds (a) through (d), the Project Site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or a mapped liquefaction hazard zone. Although the Project Site is located within a broader area identified as having potential landslide susceptibility, the approximately

0.76-acre Project Site is generally flat and does not contain the steep slopes typically associated with slope instability.^{40,41}

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project would not require substantial grading, deep excavations, or significant alterations to existing topography that could destabilize underlying geologic materials or increase the potential for landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.

In addition, the proposed facilities would be designed and constructed in accordance with the current California Building Code (CBC), as adopted by Santa Barbara County, and would incorporate site-specific geotechnical recommendations, as appropriate, during final design. Compliance with the CBC, County building permit requirements, and accepted engineering practices would minimize the potential for adverse effects associated with unstable geologic units or soils.

Accordingly, the proposed Project would not create or exacerbate unstable geologic conditions or expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects associated with landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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. Expansive soils are clay-rich soils that undergo significant volume changes as moisture content fluctuates, potentially causing damage to foundations and other structures if not properly addressed during design and construction. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey, soils within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site consist primarily of Marina sand with 9 to 30 percent slopes, which is not classified as an expansive soil.⁴² In addition, the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, Safety Element identifies the Project Site as being located within an area of low expansive soil potential.⁴³

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. Construction would include localized grading, excavation, and compaction necessary to support the proposed improvements. The Project would be designed and constructed in accordance with the current California Building Code (CBC), as adopted by Santa Barbara County, and would incorporate site-specific geotechnical recommendations, as appropriate, during final design to ensure that subsurface conditions are properly addressed.

Because the Project Site is not underlain by expansive soils and the proposed facilities would be designed in accordance with applicable building and engineering standards, the proposed Project would not create

⁴⁰ County of Santa Barbara. *Seismic Safety and Safety Element*.

⁴¹ California Geological Survey. "CGS Liquefaction Zones." Map.

⁴² United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. "Web Soil Survey." Accessed September 2025. <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

⁴³ County of Santa Barbara. *Seismic Safety and Safety Element*.

substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property associated with expansive soils. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

No Impact. The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project would not generate wastewater requiring on-site treatment or disposal and does not include the installation or use of septic tanks, leach fields, or alternative wastewater disposal systems.

Because the proposed Project would not rely on septic tanks or other on-site wastewater disposal systems, the suitability of on-site soils for wastewater disposal is not applicable. Accordingly, the proposed Project would not result in impacts associated with soils incapable of supporting septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Construction of the proposed Project would involve vegetation clearing, grading, trenching, drilling, excavation, and other ground-disturbing activities within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. These activities have the potential to encounter previously undiscovered paleontological resources, if present beneath the ground surface.

A Phase I Archaeological Assessment (**Appendix C**) was prepared for the proposed Project and included a paleontological records search conducted by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (SBMNH). The records search identified no previously recorded fossil localities within the Project Area or within a 0.25-mile radius of the Project Site. However, the assessment determined that fossil-bearing geologic formations, including the Monterey and Sisquoc Formations, occur in the vicinity of the Project Site, indicating that previously undiscovered paleontological resources could be encountered during ground-disturbing activities.

In the event that paleontological resources are encountered during construction, work in the vicinity of the discovery would cease until the find has been evaluated by a qualified paleontologist. Any discovered paleontological resources would be managed in accordance with California Public Resources Code Section 5097.5 and other applicable State laws to ensure that significant resources are appropriately identified, documented, and treated before construction activities resume. Compliance with these existing regulatory requirements would reduce potential impacts to unique paleontological resources to a less-than-significant level.

Accordingly, implementation of the proposed Project would not directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource, paleontological site, or unique geologic feature. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

4.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS – Would the project:				
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.8.1 Discussion

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 following analysis estimates the proposed Project’s GHG emissions from construction and operation. As the proposed Project includes the operation of three (3) wells, it would not produce GHG emissions from area, natural gas, or solid waste sources. Construction and operation emissions were estimated using CalEEMod (refer to **Appendix A**).

Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere are called greenhouse gases (GHG), since they have effects that are analogous to the way in which a greenhouse retains heat. Greenhouse gases are emitted by both natural processes and human activities. The accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere regulates the earth’s temperature. The State of California has undertaken initiatives designed to address the effects of greenhouse gas emissions, and to establish targets and emission reduction strategies for greenhouse gas emissions in California.

The principal GHGs are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), and water vapor (H₂O). CO₂ is the reference gas for climate change because it is the predominant greenhouse gas emitted. To account for the varying warming potential of different GHGs, GHG emissions are often quantified and reported as CO₂ equivalents (CO₂e).

In 2024, Santa Barbara County adopted its 2030 Climate Action Plan (2030 CAP), with an emission reduction goal of 50 percent below 2018 levels by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2045 or sooner, which are in line with the State’s GHG emission reduction goals. The 2030 CAP is a qualified greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5, which allows discretionary non-industrial proposed projects to tier their GHG emissions analysis off the 2030 CAP Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) if the proposed Project is found consistent with the 2030 CAP. To aid in determining a proposed project’s consistency with the 2030 CAP, the County has developed the Climate Action Plan Consistency Checklist (Checklist). A proposed project found to be consistent with the 2030 CAP that tiers GHG emissions analysis off the 2030 CAP PEIR will have an insignificant environmental impact in regards to GHG emissions.

Concurrent with adoption of the 2030 CAP, Santa Barbara County adopted new GHG emissions thresholds of significance (Thresholds) for non-industrial stationary source proposed projects based on the County's 2030 GHG target (i.e., 50 percent below 2018 levels by 2030). The thresholds were developed and adopted consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.7, Thresholds of Significance. The thresholds are designed to identify (1) a cumulatively considerable contribution to an existing adverse condition, and (2) a cumulatively significant impact in combination with other proposed projects causing related impacts. A CEQA lead agency may determine that a proposed project's incremental contribution to an existing cumulatively significant issue, such as climate change, is not significant based on supporting facts and analysis (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130, Discussion of Cumulative Impacts, Subsection (a)(2)). The CEQA Guidelines direct that a proposed project's contribution to a significant cumulative impact will be rendered insignificant if the project is required to implement or fund its fair share of a mitigation measure designed to alleviate the cumulative impact (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a)(3)). All industrial stationary-source projects shall be subject to a numeric, bright-line threshold of 1,000 MTCO₂e/year to determine if GHG emissions constitute a significant cumulative impact.⁴⁴

Any non-industrial stationary source project that does not demonstrate consistency with the 2030 CAP shall be subject to the following applicable threshold based on proposed project type: 2.68 metric tons CO₂ equivalent (MTCO₂e) per year per resident for residential proposed projects; 2.63 MTCO₂e/year per employee for non-residential proposed projects; and 2.67 MTCO₂e/year per service person for mixed-use proposed projects. If the estimated GHG emissions are less than the applicable threshold, staff can conclude that the proposed project will have an insignificant environmental impact, and the proposed project would require no further analysis. For proposed projects that exceed the threshold, mitigation measures are needed.

The forecasting of construction-related GHG emissions requires assumptions regarding the timing of construction as the emission factors for some of the proposed Project's construction-related GHG emission sources decline over time. As shown in **Table 4.8-1: Construction GHG Emissions**, total construction emissions would be 143 MTCO₂e. One-time, short-term emissions are converted to average annual emissions by amortizing them over the service life of the proposed Project. As shown in **Table 4.8-1**, when amortized over an average 30-year Project lifetime, average annual construction emissions from the proposed Project would be 5 MTCO₂e per year.

Table 4.8-1: Construction GHG Emissions

Construction Year	MTCO ₂ e/Year
2026	24
2028	119
Total Construction	143
30-Year Annual Amortized Rate	5

Source: Refer to **Appendix A**.

Notes: GHG = greenhouse gas; MTCO₂e = metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.

⁴⁴ County of Santa Barbara. "Final Greenhouse Gas Thresholds of Significance Amendments." *2030 Climate Action Plan*. Accessed September 2025. <https://www.countyofsb.org/1217/2030-Climate-Action-Plan>.

Operation of the Proposed Project has the potential to generate GHG emissions from mobile and energy sources. Mobile source emissions would include vehicle trips traveling to and from the Project Site for general inspection, as well as maintenance activities, and would be minor. To estimate the MTCO₂e from water conveyance, it was conservatively assumed that all wells would be operating at the maximum 1,350 gpm for the entire year. **Table 4.8-2: Operational GHG Emissions** shows the total operational GHG emissions during Project operation. As shown in **Table 4.8-2**, the operation of the proposed Project would generate 338 MTCO₂e per year. This would be below the industrial threshold of 1,000 MTCO₂e. Impacts would be less than significant.

Table 4.8-2: Operational GHG Emissions

Construction Year	MTCO ₂ e/Year
Construction (Amortized)	5
Energy	14
Mobile	65
Water	257
Annual Total	338

Source: Refer to **Appendix A**.

Notes: GHG = greenhouse gas; MTCO₂e = metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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

Less-Than-Significant Impact. A significant impact would occur if the proposed Project conflicted with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing emissions of GHGs.

With regard to GHG emissions, the County has adopted their CAP, which includes a Climate Action Plan Consistency Checklist for Future Development (Checklist). The Checklist is designed to assist the applicant in identifying the minimum 2030 Climate Action Plan and other applicable sustainability-focused requirements specific to a proposed project or plan.⁴⁵ The proposed Project includes construction of three (3) new replacement wells in order to maintain the District's operational capacity. The proposed new wells would be connected to the District's existing water distribution system through new lateral connections and replacement pipelines. Electrical service would be extended to the Project Site, and the District would rely on diesel generators to maintain water supply reliability during power outages. The Project would be consistent with all applicable regulations in the Checklist as included in **Appendix E: Climate Action Plan Consistency Checklist for Future Development**.

As discussed previously, the proposed Project does not include any land uses that would increase population, employment, or housing projections and, therefore, would not conflict with the population projections included in the County's Ozone Plan. The proposed Project would not conflict with local zoning,

⁴⁵ County of Santa Barbara. "2030 CAP Consistency Checklist Final." *2030 Climate Action Plan*. Accessed September 2025. <https://www.countyofsb.org/1217/2030-Climate-Action-Plan>.

land use designations, plans, policies, or regulations, and would not conflict with regional growth projections as it is a water infrastructure project planned to offset deficient water storage for surrounding development. Operation of the proposed Project would require electricity to operate the groundwater wells, pump groundwater, and convey water through the distribution system. However, the existing wells currently perform these same functions and already generate operational greenhouse gas emissions. Accordingly, the proposed operational greenhouse gas emissions would primarily replace existing operational emissions rather than represent a new source of emissions. As shown in **Table 4.8-2**, the proposed Project would generate 338 MTCO₂e per year, which is below the County established threshold. As such, the proposed Project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

4.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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 for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
h. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.9.1 Discussion

Would the project:

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

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Construction and operation of the proposed Project would involve the routine transport, use, and disposal of limited quantities of hazardous materials typical of groundwater well construction and operation. Hazardous materials used during construction would primarily consist of fuels, lubricants, hydraulic fluids, paints, coatings, solvents, and other petroleum-based products associated with construction equipment and vehicles. During operation, hazardous materials would be limited to small quantities of fuels, lubricants, cleaning products, and maintenance materials necessary for operation of the replacement wells and emergency backup generators. The proposed Project would not involve the routine use, storage, or disposal of unusually hazardous materials or hazardous waste.

Construction activities would be temporary and would comply with all applicable federal, State, and local regulations governing the transportation, storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous materials, including the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the California Hazardous Waste Control Law, and Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations. Hazardous materials would be properly stored, handled, and disposed of in accordance with manufacturer specifications and applicable regulatory requirements. Any hazardous wastes generated during construction or operation would be transported by licensed haulers and disposed of or recycled at appropriately permitted facilities.

Accordingly, the routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials associated with construction and operation of the proposed Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Construction and operation of the proposed Project would involve the temporary use and storage of limited quantities of hazardous materials typical of groundwater well construction and maintenance, including fuels, lubricants, hydraulic fluids, paints, coatings, solvents, and other petroleum-based products. During operation, hazardous materials would be limited to small quantities of fuels, lubricants, cleaning products, and maintenance materials associated with operation of the replacement wells and emergency backup generators. Although the accidental release of these materials is possible, the quantities used would be relatively small and would not present a substantial hazard to the public or the environment.

An Environmental Data Resources (EDR) Radius Map Report was prepared for the proposed Project and is included as **Appendix F**. The report identified the Project Site as an existing Vandenberg Village Community Services District water supply facility with historic hazardous waste tracking and hazardous waste manifest records associated with routine utility operations. The Project Site is identified as a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Non-Generator/No Longer Regulated facility and is not listed on the Cortese List or other databases identifying active hazardous materials cleanup sites.

The EDR report also identified one closed leaking underground storage tank (LUST) case at Fire Station #51, located approximately 0.4 mile northeast of the Project Site. The case has been closed by the regulatory agency and would not be disturbed or affected by implementation of the proposed Project.

Construction and operation of the proposed Project would comply with all applicable federal, State, and local regulations governing the transportation, storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous materials, including the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the California Hazardous Waste Control Law, applicable Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) requirements, and Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations. Construction contractors would be required to properly store hazardous materials, maintain spill prevention and response equipment on site, and immediately contain, clean up, and properly dispose of any accidental releases in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements.

The proposed Project would not involve the use of unusually hazardous materials, large quantities of hazardous substances, or processes with a high potential for accidental release. In addition, the replacement wells would convey potable groundwater and would not store or handle hazardous chemicals as part of normal operations. Because the Project would comply with applicable hazardous materials regulations and standard construction practices, the potential for reasonably foreseeable upset or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials would be minimal. Accordingly, the proposed Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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

No Impact. The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project Site is not located within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. The nearest school to the Project Site is Maple High School, located at 4010 Jupiter Avenue approximately 0.8 miles west of the Project Site.

Although construction and operation of the proposed Project would involve the routine handling of limited quantities of hazardous materials typical of groundwater well construction and maintenance, no schools are located within one-quarter mile of the Project Site. Accordingly, the proposed Project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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. The EDR Report (**Appendix F**) included a review of the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) Cortese List and other federal, State, and local hazardous materials databases to identify known hazardous materials sites within and surrounding the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site.

The EDR report identified the Project Site as an existing Vandenberg Village Community Services District water supply facility with historic hazardous waste tracking records and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) hazardous waste manifest records associated with routine utility operations. The Project Site is identified as a RCRA Non-Generator/No Longer Regulated facility and is listed in several informational regulatory databases; however, it is not included on the Cortese List of hazardous materials

sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. In addition, the Project Site is not identified as having an active hazardous materials release, hazardous waste cleanup case, or other environmental condition that would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

The EDR report identified a closed Cortese List site associated with Fire Station #51 approximately 0.4 mile east-northeast of the Project Site. The site has received regulatory closure and is sufficiently distant that it would not be affected by construction or operation of the proposed Project.

Because the Project Site is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, implementation of the proposed Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment associated with hazardous materials contamination. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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 for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact. The nearest public airport is Lompoc Airport, located at 1801 North H Street, approximately two miles south of the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project Site is not located within the Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan or any adopted Airport Land Use Plan.⁴⁶

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project would not include residential development, schools, hospitals, or other land uses that would concentrate people in areas subject to airport-related safety hazards. Construction activities would be temporary, and operation of the replacement wells would require only periodic maintenance visits by District personnel.

In addition, the proposed replacement wells would be similar in size and function to the existing wells they are replacing and would not introduce tall structures, lighting, or other features that could interfere with aircraft operations or navigation. The Project would not alter existing land uses or increase the number of people residing or working within the Project area.

Accordingly, the proposed Project would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area related to airport operations. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact. The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project Site is not within an airport land use area and is not located in the vicinity of a private airstrip.⁴⁷ Accordingly, the

⁴⁶ Santa Barbara County. "Exhibit A-1 Lompoc Airport and Surrounding Areas." *Airport Background Data and Assumptions Report – Lompoc Airport*. In *Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan Update*. Accessed September 2025. https://www.sbcag.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/lpc_appendix_a.pdf.

⁴⁷ Santa Barbara County. "Exhibit A-1 Lompoc Airport and Surrounding Areas."

proposed Project would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area associated with private airstrip operations. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

g. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. State Route 1 (SR-1/Cabrillo Highway), which borders the western boundary of the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site, is designated as an emergency evacuation route for Santa Barbara County.⁴⁸ Construction of the proposed Project would generate a temporary increase in construction-related traffic, equipment deliveries, and worker vehicle trips that could result in minor, short-term delays along SR-1.

Construction activities would be temporary and would be managed to maintain access along SR-1 and adjacent roadways. Two-way access to the Project Site would be maintained throughout construction, and construction vehicles would utilize established access points and avoid unnecessary use of local roadways to the extent practicable. Any temporary lane closures or traffic control measures, if required, would be coordinated with the appropriate agencies and implemented in accordance with applicable permit requirements to ensure continued access for emergency vehicles and the traveling public.

Operation of the proposed Project would not increase traffic volumes or alter the existing roadway network. The replacement wells would operate similarly to the existing wells and would require only periodic maintenance visits by District personnel. The Project would not introduce new permanent structures or roadway improvements that would obstruct or interfere with emergency access or evacuation routes.

Accordingly, the proposed Project would not impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Temporary construction-related effects would be minor and short-term, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

h. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site is located within a State Responsibility Area (SRA) where wildland fire hazards are present.⁴⁹ The Project Site is also located within the 166.2-acre Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (BMER), which consists primarily of undeveloped open space and native vegetation. The Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, Safety Element recognizes wildfire as a significant natural

⁴⁸ County of Santa Barbara, Planning & Development. "Santa Barbara County Safety Element Map." Accessed September 2025. <https://sbcopad.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e23b50981c344a15b48de8234571d9e1>.

⁴⁹ California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). "State Responsibility Area (SRA) Viewer." August 2023. Accessed September 2025. <https://hub-calfire-forestry.hub.arcgis.com/apps/CALFIRE-Forestry::state-responsibility-area-sra-viewer/explore>.

hazard within portions of the County and includes policies intended to reduce wildfire risk through appropriate site planning, emergency access, and compliance with applicable fire protection standards.⁵⁰

The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure to replace existing wells that currently serve the Vandenberg Village Community Services District water system. The Project would not include residential development or other habitable structures that would increase the number of people exposed to wildfire hazards. Construction activities would be temporary and would be conducted in accordance with applicable fire prevention requirements, including measures to minimize ignition sources and maintain emergency access. During operation, the replacement wells would require only periodic maintenance visits by District personnel and would not substantially increase vehicle trips or occupancy at the Project Site.

The proposed facilities would be designed, constructed, and operated in compliance with the Santa Barbara County Fire Code and other applicable State and local fire protection regulations.⁵¹ In addition, replacement of the existing groundwater wells would maintain the reliability of the local water supply, which supports fire protection and emergency response capabilities within the District.

Accordingly, the proposed Project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, nor would it substantially increase wildfire hazards within the Project area. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

⁵⁰ County of Santa Barbara. *Seismic Safety and Safety Element*.

⁵¹ County of Santa Barbara. Code of Ordinances. *Chapter 15 – Fire Prevention*. Accessed September 2025.
https://library.municode.com/ca/santa_barbara_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CH15FIPR.

4.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	☐	☐	☒	☐
i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off-site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner 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; or	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.10.1 Discussion

Would the project:

a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Construction of the proposed Project would involve vegetation clearing, grading, excavation, trenching, drilling, and other ground-disturbing activities within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. These activities have the potential to temporarily affect surface water quality through

erosion, sedimentation, or the accidental release of fuels, lubricants, hydraulic fluids, concrete washout, or other construction-related pollutants if appropriate controls are not implemented.

Construction activities would be required to comply with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit, as applicable, including preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP would identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize erosion, control sediment, prevent pollutant discharges, properly manage hazardous materials and wastes, and protect nearby stormwater conveyance systems and receiving waters throughout construction. Although the proposed Project is not subject to the Santa Barbara County drainage, erosion, and sediment control requirements, the Project would implement equivalent construction BMPs consistent with the objectives of Section 14-29 (Drainage, Erosion and Sediment Control) of the Santa Barbara County Code to minimize erosion and protect water quality during construction.⁵²

Operation of the proposed Project would not generate industrial wastewater or process discharges and would not introduce new sources of pollutants that could adversely affect surface water or groundwater quality. The proposed replacement wells would maintain existing water supply infrastructure and would not increase groundwater extraction, water storage capacity, or wastewater generation beyond existing conditions. Water produced by the replacement wells would continue to be treated and monitored in accordance with all applicable federal and State drinking water quality standards prior to distribution.

With implementation of applicable construction BMPs and compliance with federal, State, and local water quality regulations, the proposed Project would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure to replace existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B, which are approaching the end of their operational service lives. The replacement wells are intended to maintain the Vandenberg Village Community Services District's (VVCSD) existing potable water supply system and operational reliability and are not intended to increase groundwater production or expand the District's water service area.

VVCSD obtains groundwater from the Lompoc Groundwater Basin, which consists of the Lompoc Plain, Lompoc Terrace, and Lompoc Upland subbasins. Recharge to the basin occurs primarily through infiltration from the Santa Ynez River, local tributaries, precipitation, and subsurface inflow.^{53,54} The proposed Project

⁵² County of Santa Barbara, County Executive Office. *Sec. 14-29. – Drainage, Erosion and Sediment Control*. County Code. Accessed September 2025. <https://www.countyofsb.org/1247/County-Code>.

⁵³ Santa Barbara County. *2019 Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan*. 2019. Accessed September 2025. <https://www.countyofsb.org/2471/2019-IRWM-Plan>.

⁵⁴ U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). *Ground-Water Resources in the Lompoc Area, Santa Barbara County, California*. April 1976. Accessed September 2025. <https://pubs.usgs.gov/publication/ofr76183>.

would replace existing groundwater production facilities on a one-for-one basis. Each replacement well would be placed into service as the corresponding existing well is decommissioned, maintaining approximately the same combined production capacity as the existing wells. Accordingly, the proposed Project would not increase groundwater extraction or groundwater demand beyond existing conditions.

The Project Site is located within the Western Management Area (WMA) of the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin (DWR Bulletin 118 Basin No. 3-015), which includes the Lompoc Upland from which the District's wells produce. The District's existing wells draw from the Lompoc Upland Aquifer (VVCSD 2025 Consumer Confidence Report). Groundwater within the WMA is managed pursuant to the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Western Management Area, adopted under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), and the District is a member agency of the WMA Groundwater Sustainability Agency. Groundwater production in the WMA is reported to the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, and VVCSD production is included in the annual reporting prepared for the Basin under SGMA. The existing and replacement wells would operate pursuant to the GSP.

The replacement wells would be located in the immediate vicinity of the existing wells to be decommissioned. As described in Section 2.3, Well Site 1 is located approximately 250 feet north of the Project Site and Well Site 3 is located approximately 700 feet south. Because the replacement wells would draw from the same Lompoc Upland Aquifer as the wells they replace, production would shift a few hundred feet within the same aquifer system without an increase in the volume extracted. The maximum expected yield of the replacement wells is planned to be similar to that of the existing wells, approximately 800 to 1,350 gallons per minute. Because the replacement wells are sized to maintain existing production rather than to increase it, the Project would not change the District's reported production relative to baseline conditions.

The WMA encompasses approximately 85,600 acres (133.7 square miles) and comprises six subareas: the Lompoc Plain, Lompoc Terrace, Lompoc Upland, Santa Rita Upland, Santa Ynez River Alluvium, and Burton Mesa. The District's wells are located within the Lompoc Upland subarea, which encompasses approximately 21,170 acres (33.1 square miles) and is located north and northeast of the Lompoc Plain, bounded in part along the top of the Purisima Hills, a topographic expression of the Purisima Hills Anticline. The GSP identifies the residential areas served by the District and by Mission Hills CSD as the consumptive water uses within the Lompoc Upland subarea, along with some agriculture, and identifies the Mission Hills Wastewater Treatment Plant as contributing recharge to the subarea through return flows in its percolation ponds.

Although the Project Site lies within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve, the Reserve is not coextensive with the GSP's separately designated Burton Mesa subarea, which lies almost entirely within Vandenberg Space Force Base. The GSP describes the Burton Mesa subarea as containing only perched groundwater in the Orcutt Sand, not hydrogeologically connected to the principal aquifers of the WMA, with no known groundwater pumping for consumptive use. The District's existing and replacement wells draw from the Lower Aquifer within the Lompoc Upland subarea, not from the Burton Mesa subarea.

The WMA contains two principal aquifers: an Upper Aquifer, consisting of current and historical deposits of the Santa Ynez River downstream of the Lompoc Narrows, and a Lower Aquifer, consisting of the older Paso Robles and Careaga Formations. The Lower Aquifer is the main aquifer in the Lompoc Upland, where groundwater conditions range from unconfined to confined. Much of the Paso Robles Formation beneath the Lompoc Upland is unsaturated, so the saturated and productive portion of the Lower Aquifer there is primarily the Careaga Formation, whose Graciosa Member is the main producer of groundwater and has a

hydraulic conductivity of up to approximately 90 feet per day beneath the Lompoc Upland. Perched groundwater is also locally present in the overlying Orcutt Sand, which the GSP reports has historically stood more than 100 feet above water levels in the underlying Lower Aquifer formations. Groundwater monitoring in the Lompoc Upland occurs only in the Lower Aquifer. Representative hydrographs show a net decline of approximately 10 feet in the western Lompoc Upland since the late 1960s, most of it since approximately 2005, and a net decline of approximately 30 feet in the eastern Lompoc Upland since 1950. The GSP water budget estimates an average annual change in groundwater storage in the Lompoc Upland of approximately negative 110 acre-feet per year.

Groundwater in the WMA is used for agricultural, municipal, and domestic purposes, with agricultural use the predominant category. As reported for Water Year 2025, total groundwater extraction in the WMA was approximately 23,500 acre-feet (AF), comprising approximately 17,500 AF of agricultural use, 5,700 AF of municipal use, and 300 AF of domestic use. Of that total, approximately 18,120 AF was produced from the Upper Aquifer and approximately 5,380 AF from the Lower Aquifer. WMA extraction in Water Year 2025 was below the WMA's estimated long-term sustainable yield of 26,500 acre-feet per year established in the 2022 GSP.

The proposed Project would also not substantially interfere with groundwater recharge. Construction activities would occur within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site and would not substantially expand the existing developed footprint. The Project would introduce only limited areas of impervious surface associated with well pads, access improvements, and associated utility infrastructure, none of which would substantially reduce infiltration or impede groundwater recharge within the Lompoc Groundwater Basin. In addition, implementation of applicable stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) during construction would minimize changes to site drainage and infiltration characteristics.⁵⁵

Because the proposed Project would maintain existing groundwater production capacity without increasing groundwater demand and would not substantially reduce groundwater recharge, the Project would not impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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

i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site;

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Construction of the proposed Project would involve temporary ground-disturbing activities, including vegetation clearing, grading, excavation, trenching, drilling, and minor access improvements within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. These activities have the potential to temporarily increase erosion and sediment transport during construction if disturbed soils are exposed to wind or stormwater runoff. However, the Project Site is generally flat, construction would occur within a limited disturbance area, and no substantial cut-and-fill slopes would be created.

⁵⁵ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Wastewater Management, Water Permits Division. *Summary of State Stormwater Standards*. June 2011. Accessed September 2025.
https://www3.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/sw_state_summary_standards.pdf.

Construction activities would be required to comply with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit, as applicable, including preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP would identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control erosion, stabilize disturbed soils, minimize sediment transport, and prevent sediment-laden runoff from leaving the Project Site. Typical BMPs would include stabilized construction entrances, fiber rolls, silt fencing, temporary soil stabilization, stockpile protection, good housekeeping practices, and prompt stabilization of disturbed areas following construction.⁵⁶ Although the proposed Project is not subject to the Santa Barbara County drainage, erosion, and sediment control requirements, the Project would implement BMPs consistent with the objectives of the Santa Barbara County Code to minimize erosion and sedimentation during construction.⁵⁷

Upon completion of construction, disturbed areas would be permanently stabilized, minimizing the potential for long-term erosion or siltation. Because the proposed Project would implement erosion and sediment control BMPs in accordance with applicable federal and State requirements, construction activities would not result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project would introduce only limited areas of impervious surface associated with well pads, access improvements, and related infrastructure and would not substantially expand the existing developed footprint. Existing drainage patterns would be maintained, and the Project would not substantially alter the direction, volume, or rate of stormwater runoff.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Project Site is located within Flood Zone X, an area of minimal flood hazard. The Project would not encroach upon floodways or other drainage features, nor would it impede existing stormwater conveyance patterns. Temporary construction activities would be conducted in accordance with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit, as applicable, including implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control stormwater runoff and minimize erosion during construction.⁵⁸ Although the proposed Project is not subject to the Santa Barbara County drainage, erosion, and sediment control requirements, the Project would implement BMPs consistent with the objectives of the Santa Barbara County Code to maintain existing drainage conditions during construction.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Wastewater Management, Water Permits Division. *Summary of State Stormwater Standards*.

⁵⁷ County of Santa Barbara, County Executive Office. County Code. Accessed September 2025. <https://www.countyofsb.org/1247/County-Code>.

⁵⁸ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Wastewater Management, Water Permits Division. *Summary of State Stormwater Standards*.

⁵⁹ County of Santa Barbara, County Executive Office. County Code.

Because the proposed Project would not substantially increase impervious surface area, alter existing drainage patterns, or increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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;

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Construction of the proposed Project would involve temporary ground-disturbing activities, including vegetation clearing, grading, excavation, trenching, drilling, and minor access improvements within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. These activities have the potential to generate temporary sediment-laden runoff and introduce construction-related pollutants, such as fuels, lubricants, hydraulic fluids, concrete washout, and other construction materials, if appropriate controls are not implemented.

The proposed Project would not substantially increase impervious surface area or alter existing drainage patterns and, therefore, would not substantially increase the volume or rate of stormwater runoff entering existing drainage facilities. Construction activities would be required to comply with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit, as applicable, including preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP would identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize erosion, control sediment, prevent pollutant discharges, properly manage construction materials, and protect stormwater conveyance systems and receiving waters.⁶⁰ Although the proposed Project is not subject to the Santa Barbara County drainage, erosion, and sediment control requirements, the Project would implement BMPs consistent with the objectives of the Santa Barbara County Code to minimize runoff and pollutant loading during construction.⁶¹

Operation of the replacement wells would not generate industrial wastewater or introduce new sources of polluted runoff. Because the proposed Project would maintain existing site conditions, implement applicable construction BMPs, and would not substantially increase runoff volumes, the Project would not exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or create substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

iv. Impede or redirect flood flows;

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Project Site is located within Flood

⁶⁰ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Wastewater Management, Water Permits Division. *Summary of State Stormwater Standards*.

⁶¹ County of Santa Barbara, County Executive Office. County Code.

Zone X, an area of minimal flood hazard outside the 100-year floodplain.⁶² The Project Site is not located within a designated floodway or other area intended to convey flood flows.

The proposed Project would not substantially alter existing topography, modify natural drainage channels, or introduce structures that would obstruct or redirect floodwaters. Replacement wells, minor access improvements, and associated utility infrastructure would be constructed within the existing developed footprint and would maintain existing drainage patterns. The proposed Project would also be consistent with regional watershed management objectives identified in the 2019 Santa Barbara County Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan, which include protecting surface water and groundwater quality, preserving natural watershed functions, reducing pollutant loading from stormwater runoff, and maintaining reliable water supply infrastructure. Specifically, the proposed Project would replace three aging groundwater wells to maintain the District's existing potable water supply system without increasing groundwater production or expanding the service area. During construction, compliance with the Construction General Permit and implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs), including erosion and sediment controls, pollutant containment measures, and stormwater management practices, would minimize the potential for sedimentation and pollutant discharges to receiving waters. In addition, the Project would maintain existing drainage patterns, avoid substantial increases in impervious surface area, and preserve the capacity of existing drainage facilities to convey stormwater runoff. Accordingly, the proposed Project would support the IRWM Plan's objectives for sustainable water resource management and protection of watershed resources while avoiding adverse impacts to hydrology and water quality.

Because the proposed Project would not alter floodplains, obstruct floodways, or redirect flood flows, implementation of the Project would not impede or redirect floodwaters. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, would the project risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Project Site is located within Flood Zone X, an area of minimal flood hazard outside the 100-year floodplain.⁶³ The Project Site is also not located within a mapped tsunami inundation zone or in the vicinity of a large enclosed water body that could generate seiche hazards.⁶⁴

Construction of the proposed Project would involve the temporary use of limited quantities of fuels, lubricants, hydraulic fluids, paints, and other construction-related materials. During operation, the replacement wells would utilize only small quantities of maintenance-related materials typical of municipal groundwater production facilities. The proposed Project would not involve the storage or use of

⁶² Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). "National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) Viewer." Accessed September 2025. <https://hazards-fema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8b0adb51996444d4879338b5529aa9cd>.

⁶³ Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). "National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) Viewer."

⁶⁴ Santa Barbara County. 2019 *Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan*.

substantial quantities of hazardous materials that could be released as a result of flooding, tsunami, or seiche inundation.

Construction and operation of the proposed Project would comply with applicable federal, State, and local regulations governing the storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous materials. In addition, implementation of construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) would minimize the potential for accidental releases during construction.

Because the Project Site is not located within a mapped flood hazard, tsunami inundation, or seiche hazard zone, and because the proposed Project would not involve the storage of substantial quantities of hazardous materials, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in the release of pollutants due to project inundation. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

e. Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The approximately 0.76-acre Project Site is located within the jurisdiction of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast RWQCB), which administers the Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coast Basin (Basin Plan). The Basin Plan establishes water quality objectives, beneficial uses, and implementation measures to protect surface water and groundwater resources throughout the Central Coast Region.⁶⁵ Construction and operation of the proposed Project would comply with applicable federal, State, and local water quality regulations, including the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit, as applicable, and any other applicable waste discharge requirements administered by the Central Coast RWQCB.

The proposed Project would also be consistent with regional groundwater management objectives for the Lompoc Groundwater Basin. Vandenberg Village Community Services District (VVCSD) obtains groundwater from the Lompoc Groundwater Basin, which consists of the Lompoc Plain, Lompoc Terrace, and Lompoc Upland subbasins. Recharge to the basin occurs primarily through infiltration from the Santa Ynez River, local tributaries, precipitation, and subsurface inflow.^{66,67} The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis as they reach the end of their operational service lives. Each replacement well would be placed into service as the corresponding existing well is decommissioned, maintaining existing groundwater production capacity without increasing groundwater extraction or expanding the District's service area.

The Project Site is located within the Western Management Area (WMA) of the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin, which is managed under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) pursuant to the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Western Management Area, adopted in 2022. VVCSD is a member agency of the WMA Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), and the existing and replacement wells would operate pursuant to the GSP. As reported in the Santa Ynez River Valley

⁶⁵ Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. *Basin Plan*. June 2019. Accessed September 2025. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/.

⁶⁶ Santa Barbara County. *2019 Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan*.

⁶⁷ USGS. *Ground-Water Resources in the Lompoc Area, Santa Barbara County, California*.

Groundwater Basin SGMA Joint Annual Report for Water Year 2025, the joint report of the Basin's three GSAs finalized March 20, 2026, total WMA groundwater extraction in Water Year 2025 was approximately 23,500 acre-feet, below the WMA's estimated long-term sustainable yield of 26,500 acre-feet per year, groundwater in storage in the WMA increased slightly, and the WMA GSA reported that conditions within the WMA continue to meet the GSP's sustainability goals with no undesirable results.

Because the Project would replace existing wells on a one-for-one basis within the same Lompoc Upland Aquifer, would maintain rather than increase production, and would not change the District's reported production relative to baseline conditions, the Project would not cause or contribute to an undesirable result or interfere with the sustainable management criteria established in the GSP, including the measurable objectives and minimum thresholds for chronic lowering of groundwater levels and reduction of groundwater storage.

Because the proposed Project would maintain existing groundwater production capacity, would not increase groundwater demand beyond existing conditions, and would comply with applicable water quality regulations and permit requirements, it would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Central Coast Basin Plan, the GSP for the Western Management Area, or regional groundwater management objectives for the Lompoc Groundwater Basin. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

4.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
LAND USE AND PLANNING – Would the project:				
a. Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Conflict with applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.11.1 Discussion

Would the project:

a. Physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The proposed Project consists of constructing three replacement groundwater wells and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site located within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (BMER). The surrounding area is characterized by open space, existing Vandenberg Village Community Services District (VVCSD) water utility facilities, and limited development. The nearest residential neighborhood is located west of U.S. Route 1 (Cabrillo Highway), approximately 0.3 mile from the Project Site.

The proposed Project would replace existing groundwater production facilities and include minor access improvements within the existing utility service area. The Project would not construct new roadways, rail lines, flood control channels, walls, or other infrastructure that would impede circulation or separate residential neighborhoods, businesses, recreational areas, or other components of an established community. In addition, the Project would not alter existing public access or circulation patterns within the surrounding area.

Because the proposed Project would be constructed within an existing utility corridor and would not introduce physical barriers that divide or isolate an established community, implementation of the proposed Project would not physically divide an established community. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Conflict with applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

No Impact. The approximately 0.76-acre Project Site is designated Other Open Lands by the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan and is zoned Resource Management (RMZ-100). The Project Site is located within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (BMER), which is managed by the California Department of Fish

and Wildlife (CDFW) pursuant to a lease agreement with the California State Lands Commission. Although the Resource Management (RMZ) zoning district permits public utility facilities under certain circumstances, the proposed Project is a public water utility improvement undertaken by the Vandenberg Village Community Services District (VVCSD). Pursuant to Section 53091 of the California Government Code, local zoning and building regulations do not apply to this type of public utility project.⁶⁸

The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis to maintain the District's existing groundwater production capacity and ensure the continued reliability of the public water system. The Project would not alter surrounding land uses, expand the District's service area, or introduce new development that would conflict with applicable land use plans or policies adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects. As discussed throughout this Initial Study, the proposed Project has been designed to avoid or minimize impacts related to biological resources, hydrology and water quality, hazards, and other environmental resources through compliance with applicable federal, State, and local regulations.

Accordingly, the proposed Project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

⁶⁸ California Government Code, Section 53091.

4.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
MINERAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of future value to the region and the residents of the State?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.12.1 Discussion

Would the project:

a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of future value to the region and the residents of the State?

No Impact. The Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan Conservation Element identifies and protects significant mineral resources within the County to ensure their continued availability for future use.⁶⁹ The approximately 0.76-acre Project Site is not located within a designated Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) or an area identified by the County as containing significant mineral resources.⁷⁰ The Project Site is located within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (BMER) and contains existing groundwater production facilities associated with the Vandenberg Village Community Services District (VVCSD). There are no active mineral extraction operations or known mineral resources of regional or statewide importance located on or adjacent to the Project Site.

The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis to maintain the District's existing potable water supply system. The Project would not involve mineral extraction, permanently preclude access to known mineral resources, or interfere with existing or future mineral resource recovery.

Accordingly, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource of future value to the region or the residents of the State. Therefore, no impact would occur.

⁶⁹ County of Santa Barbara. *Conservation Element*. In *Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan*. Adopted 1979; Amended August 2010. Accessed September 2025. <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/89d60832-8fd8-47ae-b7e8-787ad1253820>.

⁷⁰ County of Santa Barbara. "Mineral Resources." *Conservation Element*. In *Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan*. Adopted 1979; Amended August 2010. Accessed September 2025. <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/89d60832-8fd8-47ae-b7e8-787ad1253820>.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?

No Impact. The Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan Conservation Element identifies locally important mineral resource areas and includes policies intended to conserve these resources for future extraction.⁷¹ The approximately 0.76-acre Project Site is not located within a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated by the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan or any other applicable land use plan.⁷²

The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis within the existing Vandenberg Village Community Services District (VVCSD) water system. The Project would occur within the existing utility service area and would not interfere with existing or future mineral extraction activities or preclude access to locally important mineral resources.

Accordingly, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site identified in a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

⁷¹ County of Santa Barbara. *Conservation Element*. In *Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan*.

⁷² County of Santa Barbara. "Mineral Resources." *Conservation Element*. In *Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan*.

4.13 NOISE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
NOISE – Would the project:				
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.13.1 Discussion

Would the project:

- a. Generate 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.

4.13.1.1 Environmental Setting

Human response to noise varies widely depending on the type of noise, time of day, and sensitivity of the receptor. The effects of noise on humans can range from temporary or permanent hearing loss to mild stress and annoyance due to such things as speech interference and sleep deprivation. Prolonged stress, regardless of the cause, is known to contribute to a variety of health disorders. Noise, or the lack thereof, is a factor in the aesthetic perception of some settings, particularly those with religious or cultural significance. Certain land uses are particularly sensitive to noise, including schools, hospitals, rest homes, long-term medical and mental care facilities, and parks and recreation areas. Residential areas are also considered noise sensitive, especially during the nighttime hours.

4.13.1.2 Local Regulatory Setting

Noise is generally defined as unwanted or objectionable sound which is measured on a logarithmic scale and expressed in decibels (dB(A)). The duration of noise and the time period at which it occurs are

important values in determining impacts on noise-sensitive land uses. The Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) and Day-Night Average Level (Ldn) are noise indices which account for differences in intrusiveness between day- and night-time uses. County noise thresholds are: 1) 65 dB(A) CNEL maximum for exterior exposure, 2) 45 dB(A) CNEL maximum for interior exposure of noise-sensitive uses, and 3) an increase in noise levels by 3 db(A) – either individually or cumulatively when combined with other noise-generating sources when the existing (ambient) noise levels already exceed 65 db(A) at outdoor living areas or 45db(A) at interior living areas.

4.13.1.3 Noise Sensitive Receptors

Noise-sensitive land uses are generally considered to include those uses where noise exposure could result in health-related risks to individuals, as well as places where quiet is an essential element of their intended purpose. Residential dwellings are of primary concern because of the potential for increased and prolonged exposure of individuals to both interior and exterior noise levels. Additional land uses such as parks, historic sites, cemeteries, and recreation areas are considered sensitive to increases in exterior noise levels. Noise-sensitive land uses include: residential dwellings; transient lodging; hospitals and other long-term care facilities; public or private educational facilities; libraries, churches; and places of public assembly.

The proposed Project is surrounded by vacant and undeveloped land. The nearest sensitive receptors to the Project Site include single family residential uses located over 2,000 feet (0.4 miles) to the west along Lunar Circle, single family residential uses located over 3,300 feet (0.6 miles) to the southeast along Shepherd Drive, and single-family residential uses to the north located over 3,400 feet (0.7 miles) along Burnham Drive.

4.13.1.4 Construction

Construction activities that would occur during the construction phases would generate both steady-state and episodic noise that would be heard both on and off the Project Site. Each phase involves the use of different types of construction equipment and, therefore, has its own distinct noise characteristics. The Project would be constructed using typical construction techniques; no blasting or impact pile driving would be required. Additionally, no construction noise would occur where the construction equipment would be stored at the end of the day during construction.

The potential noise impact generated during construction depends on the phase of construction and the percentage of time the equipment operates over the workday. However, construction noise estimates used for the analysis are representative of worst-case conditions because it is unlikely that all the equipment contained on site would operate simultaneously. As would be the case for construction of most land use development projects, construction of the proposed Project would require the use of heavy-duty equipment with the potential to generate audible noise above the ambient background noise level.

To provide a conservative estimate, on-site construction noise levels that may occur at the nearest noise-sensitive receptor in the proposed Project vicinity, the construction equipment noise levels were calculated using the Roadway Noise Construction Model (RNCM). No standardized criteria have been developed for assessing construction noise impact. Consequently, criteria must be developed on a project-specific basis unless local ordinances apply. However, local ordinances typically relate to nuisance and hours of allowed activity, and sometimes specify limits in terms of maximum levels, but are generally not practical for assessing the impact of a construction project. Project construction noise criteria should account for the

existing noise environment, the absolute noise levels during the construction activities, the duration of the construction, and the adjacent land use.

The Project's construction noise level at the nearest sensitive receptor to the Project Site are shown in **Table 4.13-1: Construction Maximum Noise Estimates**. As shown, construction noise levels would not result in an exceedance of the 65 dBA CNEL County noise threshold.

Table 4.13-1: Construction Maximum Noise Estimates

Receptor	Nearest Off-Site Building Structures	Distance from Project Site (feet)	Max Leq	Significance Threshold (dBA)
Nearest Residential Use	Single-family residential uses along Lunar Circle	2,000	54.4	65.0

Source: FHWA, RCNM, version. 1.1. Refer to **Appendix G** for construction noise worksheets.

Construction of the proposed Project would require worker, haul, and vendor truck trips to and from the site to work on the site, export demolition debris, and deliver supplies to the site. Trucks traveling to and from the Project Site would be required to travel along a haul route approved by the County. Demolition activities would require a maximum of 35 haul truck trips per day. Haul truck traffic would take the most direct route to the freeway ramp, which includes California State Route 1 (SR1).

Project haul truck trips which includes medium- and heavy-duty trucks would generate noise levels of approximately 50.7 dBA and 54.4 dBA, respectively, measured at a distance of 75 feet from the nearest sensitive receptors located along Lunar Circle. The noise level increases from truck trips would be below the significance threshold of 65 dBA.

4.13.1.5 Operation

The proposed Project includes the operation of three (3) water wells. Operation of the wells would be subject to the County's 65 dBA CNEL threshold. Further, the Project Site is over 2,000 feet (0.4 miles) from the nearest sensitive receptor. The proposed wells would be stationary and would not generate significant noise levels. Therefore, the proposed Project's operational noise impacts would not result in a significant permanent increase in ambient noise levels. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less-Than-Significant Impact.

4.13.1.6 Construction

Construction machinery and operations can generate varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the construction procedures and the construction equipment used. The operation of construction equipment generates vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish in amplitude with distance from the source. The effect on buildings located in the vicinity of a construction site often varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and construction characteristics of the receptor buildings. The results from

vibration impacts can range from no perceptible effects at the lowest vibration levels, to low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibration at moderate levels, to slight damage at its highest levels. Ground-borne vibration from construction activities rarely reaches the levels that damage structures. Potential building damage occurs when construction activities cause ground-borne vibration levels to exceed 0.2 inches-per second peak particle velocity (PPV) at the nearest off-site sensitive receptors.

The Caltrans Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual⁷³ is used as a screening tool to assess the potential for adverse vibration effects related to structural damage. Impacts related to vibration would be considered significant if it exceeds the following standards:

- ▶ Project construction activities cause ground-borne vibration levels to exceed 0.5 PPV at the nearest off-site reinforced-concrete, steel, or timber building.
- ▶ Project construction activities cause ground-borne vibration levels to exceed 0.3 PPV at the nearest off-site engineered concrete and masonry building.
- ▶ Project construction activities cause ground-borne vibration levels to exceed 0.2 PPV at the nearest off-site nonengineered timber and masonry building.
- ▶ Project construction activities cause ground-borne vibration levels to exceed 0.12 PPV at buildings extremely susceptible to vibration damage, such as historic buildings.

For the purpose of this analysis, the lower, more conservative threshold for non-historic uses of 0.2 PPV is used as an acceptable threshold for construction vibration at the nearby sensitive receptors.

Table 4.13-2: On-Site Construction Vibration Impacts–Building Damage presents the construction vibration impacts associated with on-site construction in terms of building damage. As shown in **Table 4.13-2**, the forecasted vibration levels due to on-site construction activities would not exceed the building damage significance threshold of 0.2 PPV ips for all sites surrounding the proposed Project Site during construction. Due to the distance of the proposed Project-identified sensitive receptors and intervening structures, such as buildings and walls, on-site construction vibration would not result in a significant vibration impact with regard to building damage. Impacts related to building damage from on-site construction vibration would not be considered significant.

Table 4.13-2: On-Site Construction Vibration Impacts–Building Damage

Nearest Off-Site Building Structures	Estimated Vibration Velocity Levels (PPV ips)				Significance Threshold (PPV ips)	Exceeds Threshold?
	Loaded Trucks	Jack-hammer	Vibratory Roller	Large bulldozer		
Single-family residential uses along Lunar circle (2,000 feet)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.2	No

Source: Refer to **Appendix H** for construction vibration worksheets.

⁷³ Federal Transit Authority (FTA). *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual*. September 2018. Accessed September 2025. https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/research-innovation/118131/transit-noise-and-vibration-impact-assessment-manual-fta-report-no-0123_0.pdf.

4.13.1.7 Operation

Water well operation is largely dependent on demand in VVCS D's system. The water wells would operate for several hours, up to several days per week. Operational related groundborne vibration would be episodic in nature and generally not steady over long periods of time. As such, the proposed water wells would be stationary and would not generate significant groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels. Therefore, the proposed Project's operational vibration impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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 nearest airport to the Project Site, public or private, is the Lompoc City Airport located approximately 1.8 miles southwest of the Project Site. The Project Site is located outside of the airport's 60 dBA CNEL noise contours.⁷⁴ Therefore, the proposed Project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels. Consequently, no impacts associated with noise would result from the proposed Project.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

⁷⁴ Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG). "SBCAG Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP)." Accessed September 2025. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/30eeb151f7f84ab39a6e4bfe6901799f>.

4.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
POPULATION AND HOUSING – Would the project:				
a. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.14.1 Discussion

Would the project:

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

No Impact. The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) prepares regional population, housing, and employment forecasts to support long-range planning within Santa Barbara County.⁷⁵ The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis to maintain the Vandenberg Village Community Services District's (VVCSD) existing potable water supply system. The Project is proposed to replace aging groundwater production facilities that are approaching the end of their operational service lives and maintain the District's existing groundwater production capacity.

The proposed Project would not include residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional development, nor would it expand the District's service area or increase the capacity of the existing water system beyond current conditions. In addition, the Project would not extend roads, utilities, or other infrastructure into previously undeveloped areas in a manner that could facilitate future growth. Construction activities would be temporary and would require only a limited workforce that would not result in permanent population growth.

Because the proposed Project would maintain existing public utility infrastructure without increasing service capacity or facilitating new development, it would not directly or indirectly induce substantial population growth. Therefore, no impact would occur.

⁷⁵ SBCAG. *Regional Growth Forecast 2050*. January 2019. Accessed September 2025. https://www.sbcag.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/regional_growth_forecast_2050.pdf.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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

No Impact. The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project Site contains existing groundwater production facilities and does not contain residential uses, housing units, or other occupied structures. Temporary construction staging would occur at a secure off-site location near Exit 704 and would not affect any residential properties.

The proposed Project would not require the demolition or removal of existing housing, nor would it displace any residents. Because no existing housing would be removed or displaced, implementation of the proposed Project would not necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B and associated utility infrastructure within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site. The Project Site contains existing groundwater production facilities and does not contain residential uses or other occupied buildings. Temporary construction staging would occur at a secure off-site location and would not displace any residents, employees, or other occupants.

Implementation of the proposed Project would not require the relocation of existing residents or businesses, nor would it result in the displacement of substantial numbers of people. Accordingly, the proposed Project would not necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

4.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
PUBLIC SERVICES – Would the project:				
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, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i. Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii. Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii. Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv. Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
v. Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.15.1 Discussion

Would the project:

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, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

i. Fire protection?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site is located within a State Responsibility Area (SRA), where wildland fire protection is provided through the Santa Barbara County Fire Department (SBCoFD) under contract with CAL FIRE.⁷⁶ The Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan Safety Element identifies wildfire protection and emergency response as important components of the County's public safety planning framework.⁷⁷ Fire protection and emergency medical services for the Project area are provided by SBCoFD Station 34, located approximately 0.6 mile southeast of the Project Site.

The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis to maintain the VVCSO existing potable water supply system. Construction activities would be temporary and would

⁷⁶ CAL FIRE. "State Responsibility Area (SRA) Viewer."

⁷⁷ County of Santa Barbara. *Seismic Safety and Safety Element*.

require only a limited construction workforce. The proposed Project would not include residential, commercial, or industrial development, would not increase the permanent population or employment within the service area, and would not expand the District's service area. Accordingly, the Project would not increase the demand for fire protection services beyond existing conditions or require the construction of new or expanded fire protection facilities to maintain acceptable service ratios or response times.

The temporary construction activities would be conducted in compliance with applicable fire prevention requirements, the Project would not interfere with emergency access or emergency response operations. In addition, replacement of the existing wells would maintain the reliability of the District's potable water system, which supports fire suppression capabilities within the service area.

Because the proposed Project would not generate a demand for new or physically altered fire protection facilities, implementation of the Project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of fire protection services. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

ii. Police protection?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Police protection services for the Project area are provided by the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office. The nearest Sheriff's station is located at 3500 Harris Grade Road in Lompoc, approximately 0.6 mile southeast of the Project Site. The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis to maintain the VVCSD existing potable water supply system.

Construction activities would be temporary and would require only a limited construction workforce. Although construction sites can be susceptible to unauthorized access, theft, or vandalism, the Project Site and temporary construction staging area would remain secured through controlled access, including perimeter fencing and locked gates when construction is not actively occurring, consistent with existing VVCSD operations. During operation, the replacement wells would require only periodic maintenance visits by District personnel and would not increase public access or occupancy at the Project Site.

The proposed Project would not increase the permanent population, employment, or development within the service area and, therefore, would not generate a substantial increase in demand for law enforcement services. As a result, the Project would not require the construction of new or expanded police protection facilities to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives.

Accordingly, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of police protection services. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

iii. Schools?

No Impact. The nearest school to the Project Site is Maple High School, located at 4010 Jupiter Avenue approximately 0.8 miles west of the Project Site. The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis to maintain the VVCSD existing potable water supply system.

The proposed Project would not include residential development or expand the District's service area, nor would it directly or indirectly induce population growth that could increase student enrollment.

Construction activities would be temporary and would require only a limited construction workforce that would not create a demand for new educational facilities.

Because the proposed Project would not increase the residential population or generate additional demand for school services, it would not require the construction of new or expanded school facilities. Accordingly, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of school facilities. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

iv. Parks?

No Impact. The proposed Project is located within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve, which is managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for habitat conservation and limited passive recreation. The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site to maintain the VVCSD existing potable water supply system.

The proposed Project would not include residential development or other land uses that would increase the permanent population or generate additional demand for parks or recreational facilities. Construction activities would be temporary and confined to the Project Site and designated off-site staging area and would not require the permanent closure, relocation, or expansion of existing recreational facilities within the BMER or surrounding area.

Because the proposed Project would not increase demand for parks or recreational facilities or require the construction of new or expanded park facilities, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of park or recreational services. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

v. Other public facilities?

No Impact. Other public facilities serving the Project area include libraries and other governmental service facilities. The nearest library is the Village Library, located at 3755 Constellation Road, approximately 0.7 mile northwest of the Project Site.

The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis to maintain the VVCSD existing potable water supply system. The proposed Project would not include residential, commercial, or institutional development, would not increase the permanent population or employment within the service area, and would not expand the District's service area. Accordingly, the Project would not generate additional demand for libraries or other governmental facilities or require the construction or expansion of such facilities to maintain acceptable service levels.

Because implementation of the proposed Project would not require new or physically altered governmental facilities, it would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of other public facilities. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

4.16 RECREATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
RECREATION – Would the project:				
a. Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.16.1 Discussion

Would the project:

a. **Increase the use of 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 Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan Open Space Element establishes goals and policies for the preservation and management of parks, recreational facilities, and open space resources throughout the County.⁷⁸ The nearest public recreational facility to the Project Site is Miguelito County Park, located approximately 7 miles south of the Project Site.⁷⁹

As discussed in **Section 4.14: Population and Housing**, the proposed Project would not induce population growth, expand VVCS's service area, or include residential development that would increase demand for parks or other recreational facilities. Construction activities would be temporary and confined to the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site and designated off-site staging area. Operation of the replacement wells would require only periodic maintenance visits by VVCS personnel and would not generate additional recreational use.

Because the proposed Project would not increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities, implementation of the Project would not result in substantial physical deterioration of those facilities or accelerate their deterioration. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

⁷⁸ County of Santa Barbara. *Open Space Element*. In *Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan*. Adopted 1979; Republished May 2009. Accessed September 2025.
<https://cosantabarbara.app.box.com/s/tjpi5vq90gul6pmsww66q8nwpqq2kqg>.

⁷⁹ County of Santa Barbara, Parks Division. "Miguelito Park." Accessed September 2025.
<https://www.countyofsb.org/854/Miguelito-Park>.

b. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact. As previously discussed under Threshold (a), the proposed Project would not induce population growth, expand VVCS's service area, or increase demand for neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities. The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis to maintain VVCS's existing potable water supply system and does not include recreational facilities as part of the Project.

Because the proposed Project would not require the construction or expansion of parks or other recreational facilities, implementation of the Project would not result in adverse physical effects on the environment associated with such facilities. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

4.17 TRANSPORTATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
TRANSPORTATION – Would the project:				
a. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.17.1 Discussion

Would the project:

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

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan Circulation Element establishes policies for maintaining a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system, including roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. The approximately 0.76-acre Project Site is accessed from State Route 1 (SR-1) via Burton Mesa Boulevard and an existing unpaved access road. SR-1 is the primary north-south transportation corridor serving the Project area, while Burton Mesa Boulevard provides local access to the VVCS D well sites and surrounding development.

Construction of the proposed Project would generate temporary vehicle trips associated with construction workers, equipment, and material deliveries. Construction access would be provided from SR-1, with staging occurring at a secure off-site location near Exit 704. To minimize temporary traffic effects, construction workers would generally arrive before the morning peak traffic period and depart after the afternoon peak traffic period. Any temporary traffic control measures required during construction would be implemented in accordance with applicable agency requirements to maintain safe access along SR-1 and Burton Mesa Boulevard. Upon completion of construction, traffic conditions would return to existing levels.

As previously described in **Section 4.14: Population and Housing**, the proposed Project would not induce population growth or expand VVCS D's service area. Accordingly, operation of the replacement wells would generate only periodic maintenance trips and would not substantially increase traffic volumes or affect the operation of the surrounding roadway network. The Project would not increase demand for public transit services, nor would it modify or conflict with existing transit routes or facilities.

The Project Site does not contain existing bicycle or pedestrian facilities, and the proposed Project would not remove, relocate, or impede planned bicycle or pedestrian improvements. Construction activities would be temporary and confined to the Project Site and designated staging area, and operation of the replacement wells would not affect multimodal circulation within the surrounding area.

Accordingly, the proposed Project would not conflict with any applicable program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including roadway, transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivisions (b)?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 requires evaluation of transportation impacts based on vehicle miles traveled (VMT), rather than level of service, for most land use projects, consistent with the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 743.⁸⁰ As previously described under Threshold (a), construction of the proposed Project would generate a temporary increase in vehicle trips associated with construction workers, equipment, and material deliveries over the approximately 30-month construction period. These trips would be temporary, would not induce additional travel demand, and would cease upon completion of construction.

Operation of the proposed Project would generate only periodic maintenance trips associated with replacement of the existing groundwater wells. The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis to maintain VVCS's existing potable water supply system and would not increase groundwater production capacity, expand the District's service area, or induce population growth. Accordingly, the Project would not result in a measurable increase in operational VMT compared to existing conditions.

Because the proposed Project would not induce substantial additional vehicle travel or increase operational VMT, it would not conflict with or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As previously described under Threshold (a), the Project Site is accessed from SR-1 via Burton Mesa Boulevard and an existing unpaved access road. The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis and includes minor access improvements within the existing utility service area, including construction of new driveway segments to provide access to the replacement well sites. These improvements would occur within the existing utility service area and would not alter the geometry of the surrounding roadway network, construct new intersections, modify roadway alignments, or introduce other design features that could create transportation hazards.

Construction activities would result in temporary construction traffic associated with workers, equipment, and material deliveries. However, construction would occur primarily within the Project Site and designated

⁸⁰ Senate Bill 743, Ch. 386. Approved September 27, 2013.

off-site staging area and would not require permanent lane closures or major in-street construction. Any temporary traffic control measures would be implemented, as necessary, to maintain safe traffic operations during construction.

Operation of the replacement wells would generate only periodic maintenance trips and would not introduce incompatible land uses or vehicle types that could increase transportation hazards. Although the Project would improve on-site access through placement of crushed rock or asphalt surfacing within the well sites, these improvements would occur entirely on site and would not affect the design or operation of the surrounding public roadway network.

Because the proposed Project would not alter roadway geometry, create hazardous access conditions, or introduce incompatible transportation uses, implementation of the Project would not substantially increase transportation hazards. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

d. Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As previously described in **Section 4.9: Hazards and Hazardous Materials**, State Route 1 (SR-1) is identified as a designated emergency evacuation route in the Santa Barbara County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.⁸¹ As discussed under Threshold (a), construction access to the Project Site would be provided via SR-1 and Burton Mesa Boulevard, with staging occurring at a designated off-site location near Exit 704.

Construction activities would generate temporary vehicle trips associated with workers, equipment, and material deliveries. However, construction traffic would be temporary and incremental, and the proposed Project would not require permanent roadway closures or substantial in-street construction that would impede emergency vehicle access. Any temporary traffic control measures necessary during construction would be implemented to maintain safe traffic operations and emergency access along SR-1 and Burton Mesa Boulevard.

Operation of the proposed Project would generate only periodic maintenance trips and would not alter existing roadway alignments, access points, or circulation patterns. Accordingly, the proposed Project would not interfere with emergency response or evacuation routes or result in inadequate emergency access.

Because implementation of the proposed Project would not permanently impair emergency access or interfere with designated emergency evacuation routes, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

⁸¹ Santa Barbara County. "Figure 6-9. Evacuation Routes, Residential Areas with Single Access, and Critical Facilities." *Santa Barbara County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan*. February 2023. Accessed September 2025. <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/ebc26205-512c-48d7-bca7-cfa0a18faa24>.

4.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Tribal Cultural Resources – Would the project:				
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:				
i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	☐	☐	☒	☐
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 in 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.	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.18.1 Discussion

Would the project:

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:

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

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As discussed in **Section 4.5: Cultural Resources**, the archaeological assessment prepared for the proposed Project included a records search through the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), a Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Sacred Lands File search, a pedestrian archaeological survey of the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site, and an evaluation of previously recorded cultural resources within and adjacent to the Area of Potential Effects (APE). The archaeological assessment concluded that no archaeological resources, historical resources, or tribal

cultural resources listed in, or eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) or a local register of historical resources were identified within the Project Site.

Based on the findings of the archaeological assessment, implementation of the proposed Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource listed in, or eligible for listing in, the CRHR or a local register of historical resources. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

- 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 in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 52 and Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1, the VVCSO requested from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) a list of California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed Project. The NAHC provided a list of 11 tribal contacts and recommended that each tribe be notified regarding the proposed Project. AB 52 notification letters describing the proposed Project were mailed to all 11 tribal contacts on September 30, 2025. Copies of these letters are available in **Appendix I: AB 52 Consultation Letters**. No requests for consultation or other responses were received during the required 30-day notification period.

As discussed in **Section 4.5: Cultural Resources**, the archaeological assessment prepared for the proposed Project did not identify any historical resources or archaeological resources within the approximately 0.76-acre Project Site that would qualify as tribal cultural resources. In addition, no California Native American tribe requested consultation or provided information indicating that the Project Site contains a tribal cultural resource that should be considered significant pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5024.1(c).

Based on the results of the archaeological assessment, the AB 52 consultation process, and the absence of evidence identifying a tribal cultural resource within the Project Site, the Lead Agency has no substantial evidence that the proposed Project would cause a substantial adverse change to a tribal cultural resource as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074(a)(2). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

4.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonable foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Result in a determination by the wastewater 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 commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Comply with federal, State, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.19.1 Discussion

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?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis to maintain VVCS's existing potable water supply system. As previously described in **Section 2: Project Description**, the Project would maintain existing groundwater production capacity and would not expand VVCS's service area or increase demand for public utilities.

4.19.1.1 Water and Wastewater

The proposed Project would replace existing groundwater production facilities and would not increase water demand or groundwater extraction beyond existing conditions. The replacement wells would

maintain the existing potable water supply system and would not require construction of new or expanded water treatment, water distribution, or wastewater treatment facilities. Because the Project does not include habitable buildings or permanent occupied structures, operation would not generate wastewater requiring new wastewater infrastructure.

4.19.1.2 *Stormwater and Drainage*

As discussed in **Section 4.10: Hydrology and Water Quality**, construction activities would comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit, including preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and applicable Best Management Practices (BMPs). The proposed Project would not substantially increase impervious surface area or alter existing drainage patterns and, therefore, would not require construction or expansion of stormwater or drainage facilities.

4.19.1.3 *Electric Power*

Electrical service would be extended to the replacement well sites to support normal well operations. In addition, VVCSD would rely on diesel generators to maintain water service during electrical outages. Electrical connections would occur within the existing utility service area and would not require construction of major off-site electrical transmission or distribution facilities that could result in significant environmental impacts.

4.19.1.4 *Natural Gas and Telecommunications*

The proposed Project would not require natural gas service or the construction or expansion of natural gas infrastructure. Likewise, the Project would not require new or expanded telecommunications facilities beyond those necessary for routine operation of the replacement wells within the existing utility system.

Because the proposed Project would utilize existing utility systems, maintain existing service capacity, and would not require new or expanded off-site utility infrastructure that could result in significant environmental impacts, implementation of the Project would result in less-than-significant impacts.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As previously described in **Section 4.10: Hydrology and Water Quality**, the proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis to maintain VVCSD's existing potable water supply system. The replacement wells would maintain the District's existing groundwater production capacity as the aging wells reach the end of their operational service lives and would not increase groundwater extraction beyond existing conditions.

The proposed Project does not include residential, commercial, or industrial development, would not expand VVCSD's service area, and would not induce population growth or increase water demand. The replacement wells would be connected to the existing water distribution system through new lateral connections and replacement pipelines, allowing the District to continue providing reliable potable water service using existing water supplies during normal, single dry, and multiple dry years.

Because the proposed Project would maintain existing water supply capacity without increasing water demand or requiring new water sources, sufficient water supplies would be available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

c. Result in a determination by the wastewater 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 commitments?

No Impact. As previously described under Threshold (a), the proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis to maintain VVCSD's existing potable water supply system. The proposed Project does not include habitable buildings, permanent occupied structures, or other land uses that would generate sanitary wastewater requiring collection or treatment.

Construction activities would rely on temporary portable sanitation facilities, which would be serviced by a licensed provider and would not require connection to a public wastewater collection or treatment system. During operation, the replacement wells would require only periodic maintenance visits and would not generate wastewater requiring treatment by a wastewater service provider.

Because the proposed Project would not generate wastewater requiring treatment, it would not require additional wastewater treatment capacity or result in a determination by a wastewater treatment provider regarding available treatment capacity. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

d. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As previously described under Threshold (a), construction of the proposed Project would generate solid waste associated with vegetation clearing, site preparation, excavation, and replacement of existing groundwater well infrastructure. Construction and demolition debris would be managed in accordance with applicable federal, State, and local regulations, including the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) and Santa Barbara County requirements. A Construction Waste Management Plan (CWMP) would be prepared, as required, to maximize the reuse and recycling of construction and demolition materials and achieve applicable waste diversion requirements.⁸² In addition, vegetation, soils, and other land-clearing materials would be reused or recycled to the maximum extent practicable, consistent with CALGreen requirements.

Any hazardous wastes generated during construction would be characterized, handled, transported, and disposed of in accordance with applicable federal, State, and local hazardous waste regulations. Construction-related solid waste would be temporary and limited in quantity and would be disposed of at appropriately permitted facilities with adequate capacity.

⁸² Santa Barbara County Resource Recovery & Waste Management Division. "Construction Waste Recycling." Accessed September 2025. <https://lessismore.org/materials/31-construction-and-demolition-recycling/>.

Operation of the replacement wells would generate only negligible amounts of routine maintenance waste and would not substantially increase the demand for solid waste disposal services or impair the attainment of State or local solid waste reduction goals.

Accordingly, the proposed Project would not generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, exceed the capacity of local solid waste infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of applicable solid waste reduction goals. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

e. Comply with federal, State, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As previously described under Threshold (d), construction of the proposed Project would generate temporary construction and demolition debris associated with vegetation clearing, site preparation, excavation, and replacement of existing groundwater well infrastructure. Construction-related solid waste would be managed in accordance with applicable federal, State, and local statutes and regulations governing solid waste handling, recycling, and disposal.

The proposed Project would comply with the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen), including applicable construction and demolition waste diversion requirements,⁸³ and would implement a Construction Waste Management Plan (CWMP), as required by Santa Barbara County.⁸⁴ In addition, construction waste would be managed in a manner consistent with the requirements of the California Integrated Waste Management Act (Assembly Bill [AB] 939), Mandatory Commercial Recycling (AB 341), and Mandatory Commercial Organics Recycling (AB 1826), as applicable. Construction and demolition materials would be recycled, salvaged, or otherwise diverted from disposal to the maximum extent practicable, and any remaining wastes would be transported to appropriately permitted disposal or recycling facilities.

Operation of the replacement wells would generate only negligible quantities of routine maintenance waste and would continue to comply with applicable federal, State, and local solid waste management requirements.

Accordingly, the proposed Project would comply with applicable federal, State, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste management and reduction. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

⁸³ CalRecycle. *Construction and Demolition (C&D) Diversion Informational Guide*. Accessed September 2025. <https://calrecycle.ca.gov/LGCentral/Library/CandDModel/>.

⁸⁴ Santa Barbara County Resource Recovery & Waste Management Division. "Construction Waste Recycling."

4.20 WILDFIRE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
WILDFIRE - If located in or near State responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard zones, would the project:				
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildlife risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Require the installation or maintenance of 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.20.1 Discussion

Would the project:

a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The approximately 0.76-acre Project Site is located within a State Responsibility Area (SRA).⁸⁵ The Santa Barbara County Safety Element and associated Safety Element Map identify wildfire hazards and establish policies to maintain emergency access and evacuation routes throughout the County.^{86,87} As previously described in **Section 4.17: Transportation**, the Project Site is accessed from SR-1 via Burton Mesa Boulevard and an existing unpaved access road. SR-1 is identified as a designated emergency evacuation route in the Santa Barbara County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.⁸⁸

Construction of the proposed Project would generate temporary vehicle trips associated with workers, equipment, and material deliveries. However, construction traffic would be temporary and incremental,

⁸⁵ CAL FIRE. "State Responsibility Area (SRA) Viewer."

⁸⁶ County of Santa Barbara. *Seismic Safety and Safety Element*.

⁸⁷ County of Santa Barbara. "Santa Barbara County Safety Element Map." Accessed September 2025. <https://sbcopad.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e23b50981c344a15b48de8234571d9e1>.

⁸⁸ Santa Barbara County. "Figure 6-9. Evacuation Routes, Residential Areas with Single Access, and Critical Facilities."

and the Project would not require permanent roadway closures or substantial in-street construction that would impede emergency response or evacuation. Two-way access to the Project Site would be maintained throughout construction, and any temporary traffic control measures would be implemented, as necessary, to maintain safe traffic operations and emergency vehicle access. Construction activities would also comply with the Santa Barbara County Fire Prevention Ordinance and other applicable fire safety regulations.⁸⁹

During operation, the replacement wells would require only periodic maintenance visits and would not increase traffic volumes or alter existing roadway alignments or access routes. Accordingly, operation of the proposed Project would not interfere with emergency response or evacuation during wildfire events.

Because the proposed Project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As previously discussed under Threshold (a), the Project Site is located within a State Responsibility Area (SRA) and is subject to applicable State and local fire protection requirements. The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis to maintain VVCS's existing potable water supply system. The Project would not include residential development, habitable structures, or other land uses that would introduce permanent occupants into a wildfire-prone area.

Construction activities would be temporary and would comply with the Santa Barbara County Fire Prevention Ordinance, the California Fire Code, and other applicable fire safety requirements to minimize the potential for ignition during construction.⁹⁰ Operation of the replacement wells would not increase fuel loads, alter surrounding vegetation in a manner that would exacerbate wildfire behavior, or otherwise increase the potential for the uncontrolled spread of wildfire.

Although periodic maintenance personnel would access the Project Site during operation, the proposed Project would not expose a substantial number of people to wildfire hazards or wildfire-related pollutant concentrations. In addition, maintaining reliable operation of the existing potable water supply system would support the availability of water for emergency response and fire suppression activities within the VVCS service area.

Accordingly, the proposed Project would not exacerbate wildfire risks or expose Project occupants to pollutant concentrations from wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

⁸⁹ County of Santa Barbara. Code of Ordinances. *Chapter 15 – Fire Prevention*. Accessed September 2025. https://library.municode.com/ca/santa_barbara_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CH15FIPR.

⁹⁰ County of Santa Barbara. Code of Ordinances. *Chapter 15 – Fire Prevention*.

c. Require the installation or maintenance of 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?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As previously described, the proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B and includes minor utility connections and access improvements necessary to maintain VVCSD's existing potable water supply system. The proposed Project would not require construction of new public roadways, fuel breaks, or other major infrastructure that could increase wildfire risk or substantially disturb previously undisturbed areas.

Associated infrastructure improvements, including replacement pipelines, electrical service connections, and minor access improvements, would occur within the existing utility service area and would be designed and constructed in accordance with applicable federal, State, and local requirements, including the Santa Barbara County Fire Prevention Ordinance and California Fire Code.⁹¹ Maintenance activities would remain consistent with existing VVCSD operations and would be limited to periodic inspection and servicing of the replacement wells and associated infrastructure.

As discussed throughout this Initial Study, environmental impacts associated with construction and operation of the proposed infrastructure have been evaluated under the applicable resource topics and would be less than significant. The proposed Project would not require infrastructure that would exacerbate wildfire risk or result in additional temporary or ongoing environmental impacts beyond those evaluated herein. Accordingly, implementation of the proposed Project would result in less-than-significant impacts.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As previously discussed in **Section 4.10: Hydrology and Water Quality**, the Project Site is located within Zone X (Area of Minimal Flood Hazard) and the proposed Project would not substantially alter existing drainage patterns, increase surface runoff, or impede flood flows.⁹² In addition, as discussed in **Section 4.7: Geology and Soils**, the Project Site is located within an area identified by the California Department of Conservation as potentially susceptible to landslides; however, implementation of the proposed Project would comply with applicable County and California Building Code requirements, including incorporation of site-specific geotechnical recommendations, to minimize geologic hazards.⁹³

The proposed Project consists of replacing existing Wells 1B, 3A, and 3B on a one-for-one basis within an existing utility service area and does not include residential development or habitable structures. The Project would not substantially alter topography, construct steep cut or fill slopes, or otherwise modify site conditions in a manner that would increase the potential for post-fire flooding, debris flows, slope instability, or drainage-related hazards. Temporary construction activities would implement erosion and

⁹¹ County of Santa Barbara. Code of Ordinances. *Chapter 15 – Fire Prevention*.

⁹² FEMA. "National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) Viewer."

⁹³ California Department of Conservation. "BETA Landslide Inventory and Deep Landslide Susceptibility Map." Accessed September 2025. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/lsl/>.

sediment control Best Management Practices (BMPs), as discussed in **Section 4.10: Hydrology and Water Quality**, to minimize the potential for erosion and runoff during construction.

Because the proposed Project would not increase the risk of post-fire runoff, downslope flooding, landslides, or drainage changes that could expose people or structures to significant hazards, implementation of the Project would result in less-than-significant impacts.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

4.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE – Does the project:				
a. Have the potential to substantially 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, substantially 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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b. 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)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c. Have environmental effects which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.21.1 Discussion

Does the project:

- a. **Have the potential to substantially 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, substantially 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?**

Less-Than-Significant Impact with Project Mitigation. As discussed throughout this Initial Study, implementation of the proposed Project would not substantially degrade the quality of the environment or result in significant adverse impacts to biological, cultural, or historical resources. The proposed Project consists of the phased replacement of three existing groundwater wells to maintain the District's existing operational capacity and ensure the continued reliability of the potable water supply system. The Project would not increase groundwater production capacity, induce population growth, or expand the District's service area.

As discussed in **Section 4.4: Biological Resources**, construction activities have the potential to temporarily affect sensitive biological resources within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve, including special-status plant and wildlife species and sensitive habitats. However, implementation of **Mitigation Measures BIO-1**

through **BIO-5** described in that section, including pre-construction biological surveys, avoidance and minimization measures, worker environmental awareness training, biological monitoring, and restoration requirements, would reduce potentially significant impacts to biological resources to a less-than-significant level.

As discussed in **Section 4.5: Cultural Resources** and **Section 4.18: Tribal Cultural Resources**, records searches, field surveys, and Native American coordination identified no known historical resources or tribal cultural resources within the Project Site that would be adversely affected by the proposed Project. In addition, implementation of inadvertent discovery procedures during construction would ensure that any previously unidentified archaeological resources, human remains, or tribal cultural resources encountered during ground-disturbing activities are appropriately managed in accordance with applicable State laws.

The remaining environmental topics analyzed in this Initial Study would result in either less-than-significant impacts or no impacts. Collectively, implementation of the proposed Project would not substantially degrade environmental quality, substantially reduce habitat for fish or wildlife species, cause wildlife populations to decline below self-sustaining levels, threaten the continued existence of plant or animal communities, substantially reduce the number or distribution of rare or endangered species, or eliminate important examples of California history or prehistory.

Therefore, with implementation of the identified mitigation measures, the proposed Project would not result in significant unavoidable environmental impacts under this threshold.

Mitigation Measures: Previously described **Mitigation Measures BIO-1** through **BIO-5**.

b. 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)?

Less-Than-Significant Impact with Project Mitigation. CEQA requires consideration of whether a project's incremental contribution to cumulative environmental impacts would be cumulatively considerable when viewed together with the effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. As discussed throughout this Initial Study, the proposed Project consists of the phased replacement of three existing groundwater wells to maintain the District's existing operational capacity and ensure the continued reliability of the potable water supply system. The Project would not increase groundwater production capacity, expand the District's service area, induce population growth, or facilitate new development.

Construction activities would be temporary and localized, with short-term impacts related to noise, air quality, traffic, biological resources, and other construction-related activities. As discussed in the applicable environmental topic sections, these impacts would either be less than significant or reduced to a less-than-significant level through implementation of mitigation measures and compliance with applicable federal, State, and local regulations. During operation, the replacement wells would function in substantially the same manner as the existing facilities and would maintain, rather than expand, the District's existing water supply system.

Although other public and private development projects may occur within Santa Barbara County during the same timeframe, the proposed Project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts would be minimal due to its limited scope, replacement nature, and absence of growth-inducing characteristics. The Project would not substantially contribute to cumulative impacts related to land use, transportation, air quality,

greenhouse gas emissions, hydrology and water quality, utilities, public services, wildfire, or other environmental resources.

With implementation of the mitigation measures identified in **Section 4.4: Biological Resources**, the proposed Project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to any significant cumulative environmental impact. Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with implementation of the proposed Project would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: Previously described **Mitigation Measures BIO-1** through **BIO-5**.

c. Have environmental effects which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As discussed throughout this Initial Study, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in significant adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. The proposed Project consists of the phased replacement of three existing groundwater wells to maintain VVCS's existing operational capacity and ensure the continued reliability of the potable water supply system. The Project would not increase groundwater production capacity, expand the District's service area, or induce population growth.

Construction activities would result in temporary increases in noise, air pollutant emissions, traffic, and other construction-related disturbances. However, as discussed in the applicable environmental topic sections, these impacts would be temporary, localized, and reduced to less-than-significant levels through compliance with applicable federal, State, and local regulations and implementation of project-specific mitigation measures where required. During operation, the replacement wells would function in substantially the same manner as the existing facilities and would not generate significant operational noise, air emissions, hazardous materials risks, traffic, or other environmental effects that could adversely affect surrounding residents or workers.

The Initial Study also concluded that the proposed Project would not expose people to significant geologic, hydrologic, wildfire, or hazardous materials hazards. The Project would comply with applicable building, fire, health, and safety regulations, as well as permit requirements governing construction and operation of public water system facilities. Accordingly, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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6.1 LEAD AGENCY

6.1.1 Vandenberg Village Community Services District

3745 Constellation Road
Lompoc, CA 93436

Dr. Cynthia Allen, General Manager

6.2 MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION PREPARATION

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Travis J. McGill, Director

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David Brunzell, Principal Investigator, Archaeologist

APPENDIX B. NOTICE OF INTENT

VANDENBERG VILLAGE COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

3745 Constellation Road • Vandenberg Village • Lompoc, CA 93436
Telephone: (805) 733-2475 • Fax: (805) 733-2109 • info@vvcasd.org



"Pride in Community Service"

NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (MND)

Lead Agency: Vandenberg Village Community Services District

Street Address: 3745 Constellation Road

City/State/Zip: Lompoc, California 93436

Contact: Dr. Cynthia Allen, General Manager

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Vandenberg Village Community Services District (VVCSD) intends to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the following project on, or after **October 6th, 2026**. The Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) have been prepared and distributed pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Project Title: Water Well Replacement Project

Project Location: The Project Site is located within the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (BMER) in unincorporated Santa Barbara County, near Exit 702/704 off State Route 1 (Cabrillo Highway), approximately 0.3 miles east of the Vandenberg Village community. The site is managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) under a lease agreement with the California State Lands Commission. The VVCSD District Office and Well Site 3 are located approximately 700 feet to the south of the Project Site, and Well Site 1 is located approximately 250 feet to the north.

Project Description: The proposed Project consists of the construction of three (3) new replacement potable water wells, with a maximum expected yield of approximately 800 to 1,350 gallons per minute (gpm), to replace existing Wells IB, 3A, and 3B as they reach the end of their functional lifespan. Each new well would be equipped with electrical service, metering, monitoring, and security infrastructure, and would be connected to the District's existing water distribution system through new lateral connections and replacement pipelines extending to the District's existing Well Site 1. Temporary construction staging would occur in the vicinity of Exit 702/704 from SR-1. Construction is anticipated to take approximately 30 months, from July 2027 through December 2029.

Other Public Agency Approvals: The State Lands Commission (as owner of the Project Site) and CDFW (which leases and manages the Project Site) are Responsible Agencies under CEQA. The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is also a Responsible Agency, with approval authority over the water well permits required to implement the Project.

Project Issues: Biological Resources is the only resource area for which the Initial Study identifies required mitigation measures (Mitigation Measures BIO-I through BIO-5, addressing preconstruction surveys, worker environmental awareness training, biological monitoring, and species-specific avoidance and protection measures for special-status plants and wildlife). All other environmental topics addressed in the Initial Study, including Cultural Resources, Noise, and Tribal Cultural Resources, were found to result in no impact or a less-than-significant impact without the need for mitigation.

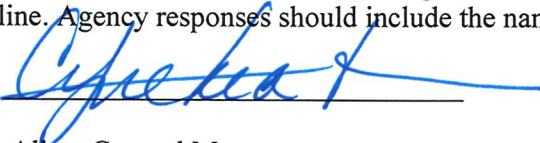
Public Hearing Date: This project is scheduled to be considered for adoption by the VVCSD Board of Directors at a regular Board meeting on **October 6, 2026**, at **7:00 PM**, in the VVCSD District Office Conference Room, 3745 Constellation Road, Vandenberg Village, CA 93436.

Document Availability: Copies of the IS/MND are available for review at the VVCSD District Office, 3745 Constellation Road, Vandenberg Village, CA 93436, during regular business hours, and on the District's website at <http://vvcasd.org>.

Any interested person may submit written comments on the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration from **August 14th** through **September 14th**, at 5:00 p.m. Written comments should be addressed to Dr. Cynthia Allen, General Manager, Vandenberg Village Community Services District, 3745 Constellation Road, Lompoc, CA 93436.

Comments may also be sent by email to callen@vvcasd.org. Please put "VVCSD Water Well Replacement Project" in the subject line. Agency responses should include the name of a contact person within the commenting agency.

Signature:



Date:

8/4/2020

Dr. Cynthia Allen, General Manager

Contact: (805) 733-2475 • callen@vvcasd.org