VII. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

A. GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

The goal of the growth inducing impacts section of the EIR is to address the effects the proposed project may have on surrounding facilities and activities by assessing the ways in which a project could encourage population or economic growth, increase employment opportunities or employment growth in support of an industry, or the construction of new housing or service facilities, either directly or indirectly.

CEQA Guidelines state that in the preparation of an EIR, growth inducing impacts that need to be addressed are such that "…foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing…remove obstacles to population growth…encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment either individually or cumulatively" (Section 15126.2 (d)). An example given is the expansion of a wastewater treatment plant allowing for increased construction in service areas.

Based on the CEQA guidelines outlined above, the proposed project was evaluated in order to determine if any part of the project demonstrates the potential for growth inducing impacts. The project has been proposed in response to the potential increases in San Luis Obispo County anticipated by the Department of Finance and by the County's General Plan. An increasing population generates more waste that needs to be collected and properly disposed of. Therefore, the Landfill is expanding in response to anticipated population increases, not inducing the increase. In addition, if the project did not move forward, residents would find an alternative location for disposal.

The proposed project would require a maximum of approximately ~~41~~ 35 new employees. This increase, which would occur over a period of five or ten years, or more (the proposed expansion would extend the life of the Landfill 25 years), would be consistent with the general level of employment generation in the region and would be considered a *less than significant impact*.

B. SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Section 15126.2 Part c of the CEQA Guidelines states that use of non-renewable resources during the initial and continued phases of a proposed project may be irreversible if a large commitment of these resources makes their removal, indirect removal, or non-use thereafter unlikely. This section of the EIR evaluates whether the project would result in the irretrievable commitment of resources, or would cause irreversible changes in the environment. Also, in accordance with Section 15126.2 of the CEQA Guidelines, this section identifies any irreversible damage that could result from environmental accidents associated with the proposed project.

The proposed project was evaluated based on the above stated conditions and was found to have the following irreversible significant environmental changes: ~~irreversible commitment of resources, loss of agricultural resources, and~~ loss of aesthetic resources.

1. Irreversible Commitment of Resources

Non-renewable resources, such as natural gas, petroleum products, asphalt, petrochemical construction materials, steel, copper and other metals, and sand and gravel are considered to be commodities which are available in a finite supply. The processes that created these resources occur over a long period of time. Therefore, the replacement of these resources would not occur over the life of the project. To varying degrees, the aforementioned materials are all readily available and some materials, such as asphalt or sand and gravel, are abundant. Other commodities, such as metals, natural gas, and petroleum products, are also readily available, but they are finite in supply given the length of time required by the natural process to create them.

The demand for all such resources is expected to increase regardless of whether or not the project is developed. Increases in population will directly result in the need for resources. And they would likely be committed to other projects in the region intended to meet this anticipated growth. The landfill does benefit from having a projected approximate balance of cut and fill material onsite, which means the project would not include the importation of new intermediate or final cover materials, which are made from a non-renewable (in the human scale) geologic resources. In addition, mitigation required in the Climate Change/Greenhouse Gas section, Section V.E., of this EIR may result in a reduction in the use of petroleum products used for energy production and in construction and haul vehicles.

2. Loss of Aesthetic/Visual Resources

As discussed in the Aesthetic Resources section, Section V.A., the project would result in significant changes to the visual context in the surrounding area. Despite significant attempts to mitigate visual impacts in the EIR, engineered landforms would be visible from public roads during operation and after the Landfill has been permanently closed. Construction vehicles would be visible during operation of the Landfill. Additional opportunities for screening are limited given the proposed height of the final disposal area. Implementation of the project would permanently alter the visual setting of the southern Edna Valley, between Corbett Canyon Road and Highway 227.

~~3. Loss of Agricultural Resources~~

~~The project would permanently convert approximately 40 acres of soils considered of Local Potential to another use. These resources are generally considered finite as they are a result of the long-term interaction of climate and geology. There is no way to recreate these soils in a meaningful way in the short- or long-term, in a way that would be considered mitigation for the impact.~~

C. ENERGY CONSERVATION (APPENDIX F)

CEQA requires that EIRs include a discussion of the potential energy impacts of proposed projects, with particular emphasis on avoiding or reducing inefficient, wasteful and unnecessary consumption of energy (CEQA Guidelines, Appendix F).

1. Energy Setting

a. Energy Use

The proposed project would use a substantial amount of energy, primarily in the form of diesel fuel, to run heavy equipment on site. A list of this equipment and its fuel use is quantified in Appendix B. Fuel is also necessary to transport (by commercial or private vehicles) waste products to the facility for processing and either disposal or re-use. The energy use associated with this transportation is substantial, but also limited by the fact that the proposed project is relatively centrally located within its service area. The number of trips proposed and emissions associated with this fuel consumption are shown in Appendix B.

Other components of the project, such as the daily operation of the buildings (e.g., lighting, heating, etc.) and environmental monitoring systems (e.g., water quality, air quality, etc.), require relatively limited amounts of energy. Energy use as it relates to air quality emissions has been described in detail in the Air Quality section. Energy use occurs during the daylight hours currently, and would be with the proposed project – although the MRF would potentially operate until 10 p.m.

b. Energy Savings/Offsets

Components such as the Resource Recovery Park (RRP) and the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) process re-usable materials such as concrete, wood, aluminum cans, glass, etc. so that they can be used in manufacturing of replacement, or secondary products. Use of recycled products can result in a significant energy "savings" when compared to the energy used to manufacture products from "scratch." Much of the energy savings analysis occurring today is focused on converting energy use or savings into greenhouse gas emissions "equivalents." This is a relatively complex process. But efforts have been made to simplify the data as well. Take for example the case of newspapers. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has suggested that recycling 100 tons of newspapers results in an energy savings of approximately 292 barrels (12,264 gallons) of oil. They also estimate that an average passenger car consumes approximately 502 gallons per year. Therefore, the newspaper recycling efforts in recycling 100 tons of newspaper saves the energy equivalent of the annual energy consumption of more than 24 cars. The recycling of other products such as aluminum cans can result in an even greater savings (EPA, 2011).

The Landfill's gas collection and control system is also recognized as having potential beneficial energy impacts. Approximately 60 percent of the methane produced within the disposal area of the Landfill is captured and shipped via pipeline to the nearby Price Canyon Plains Exploration and Production oilfield. The gas is used to fuel the boiler of an onsite steam generator, thereby reducing the demand for energy from other sources.

c. Energy Impacts

The proposed project would require a substantial amount of energy, primarily in the form of diesel fuel. While diesel fuel is technically a finite resource, there is no evidence to suggest that demand for diesel fuel will exceed the supply during the life of the Landfill. In addition, given that the project is centrally located, it includes components that allow for recycling and re-use, which have been shown to save energy, and includes the beneficial re-use of landfill gas, the

proposed project would not result in significant energy conservation impacts. Measures in the Climate Change/GHG section (Section V.E.) would require the Landfill to maintain and/or expand the existing beneficial re-use of landfill gas. No additional mitigation measures are required.