4.3 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

Section 15128 of the *State CEQA Guidelines* requires an EIR to briefly describe any possible significant effects that were determined not to be significant and were, therefore, not discussed in detail. This section addresses the potential environmental effects of the proposed Program that would not be significant.

4.3.1 Aesthetics

a. Setting. Visual resources are easily viewed landscape scenes that are valued for their natural or agricultural features and vegetation, including hills, mountains and rock outcrops. Visual resources are also defined by the view opportunities that people enjoy from a variety of locations, such as but not limited to: viewpoints (parks, plazas, beaches, streets, trails, private property), vista points (specialized viewing areas near roads and highways), and scenic roads and highways (corridors that provide viewing opportunities) (County of San Luis Obispo, 2010).

San Luis Obispo County's visual resources consist of open areas (agricultural and natural, undeveloped land), scenic corridors (areas that have scenic or historic qualities that are visible from recognized roadways), and the built environment (urban landscape). Mountains and ridgelines, unique geological forms, bays and coastal views are among these natural features and scenic areas. The county also includes many other visual resources such as open meadows, riparian corridors, wetland areas, forested areas, and open spaces. Traditional rural development and agricultural areas also contribute to the county's visual quality as they present a "working landscape" that maintains rural character. Scenic views of these resources enhance the travel experience on rural roads and highways (County of San Luis Obispo, 2010).

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) State Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways eligible to become, or designated as, official scenic highways. The intent of the California Scenic Highway System (as stated in Streets and Highways Code Section 260) is to protect and enhance California's natural scenic beauty and to protect the social and economic values provided by the state's scenic resources. Within San Luis Obispo County, State Highway 1 is a designated State Scenic Highway and All American Road from its intersection with U.S. 101 north to the Monterey County border. County Road G14 (Nacimiento Lake Drive) is also a designated County Scenic Highway. In addition, U.S. 101, State Highway 46, State Highway 41, and State Highway 166 are eligible State Scenic Highways within San Luis Obispo County (Caltrans, 2014).

b. Thresholds of Significance. The assessment of aesthetic impacts involves qualitative analysis that is inherently subjective in nature. Different individuals react to aesthetic changes differently. This analysis evaluates the existing visual resources against the proposed Program, analyzing the nature of the anticipated change and its compatibility with the visual character of the area.

As identified in the 2009 COSE EIR, an aesthetic or visual resources impact is considered significant if implementation of the Countywide Water Conservation Program would result in any of the following (based on *State CEQA Guidelines,* Appendix G):

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;

b) Substantially affect scenic resources, including trees, rock outcroppings or historic buildings within a State Scenic Highway, designated County Scenic Roadway, Scenic River Corridor, roadway eligible for listing as a scenic roadway/highway or other public vantage point or scenic vista locally known for its scenic qualities;

c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the county; or

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views within the county.

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR determined that implementation of the COSE Consolidation and Update would have a beneficial impact on scenic and visual resources as implementation would add greater protection and preservation of San Luis Obispo County's scenic resources by requiring land use restrictions, design guidelines, and discretionary project review consistent with, and more stringent than, plans programs and policies currently adopted by the County.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

a-c) San Luis Obispo County's visual character consists of open areas (agricultural and natural, undeveloped land), scenic corridors (areas that have scenic or historic qualities that are visible from recognized roadways), and the built environment (urban landscape). Traditional rural development and agricultural areas also contribute to the county's visual quality.

The Water Neutral New Development (WNND) requirements would include Urban/Rural Water Offset requirements and an Agricultural Offset program. The Urban/Rural Water Offset requirements would ensure that new urban and rural development within certified LOS III-designated groundwater basins offset new water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. The Agricultural Offset program would require new or more intensively irrigated agriculture in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin) to offset new water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. The Agricultural Offset program would facilitate the planting of new agriculture on currently uncultivated land and/or the intensification of irrigation on currently cultivated land by allowing the potential grower to purchase water credits from an existing grower. The grower selling the credits would replace, reduce or eliminate crops on their property to account for the offset. The proposed Agricultural Offset program could result in the partial or complete fallowing of some agricultural lands. However, the presence of fallowed land is a regular part of the pastoral landscape and would therefore not represent a substantial change in the visual character of the county.

Furthermore, the proposed Program would not alter existing land use or zoning designations nor would it facilitate development beyond that accommodated by the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific aesthetic impacts would be addressed. Impacts of General Plan buildout were previously addressed in the 2009 COSE EIR and therefore would not require additional environmental review. Impacts would be less than significant.

d) The proposed Program would not directly result in new sources of light and glare. WNND requirements may facilitate new urban and rural development with new sources of light in areas of the county certified at LOS III for water supply, if that development could offset its water use by a minimum ratio of 1:1. However, any development facilitated by this component of the Program would be subject to existing land use and zoning designations. In addition, future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. Impacts would be less than significant.

e. Findings. No potentially significant impacts related to aesthetics would occur with Program implementation.

4.3.2 Air Quality

a. Setting. Federal and state ambient air quality standards for certain criteria pollutants have been established to protect human health. San Luis Obispo County is located within the South Central Coast Air Basin (SCCAB), which includes all of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties. The portion of the SCCAB in San Luis Obispo County is within the jurisdiction of the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (SLOAPCD). Pollution sources in the county vary widely from large power plants to small household painting projects. Motor vehicles are the largest contributor to air pollution in the county. Inefficient land use patterns, specifically the separation of housing from employment and commercial centers, greatly contribute to air pollution (County of San Luis Obispo, 2010).

In May 2012, the U.S. EPA designated the eastern portion of San Luis Obispo County as marginally nonattainment for the 8-hour ozone standard based on enhanced monitoring over the last decade that revealed previously unrecognized elevated ozone levels in that region; the western portion of the county retained its federal ozone attainment status. San Luis Obispo County is currently designated attainment for all of the other National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS); however, the county does exceed the federal 24-hour standard for particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter (PM_{10}) on the Nipomo Mesa and could be designated nonattainment for that pollutant if exceedances continue. The California Ambient Air Quality Standards are generally more restrictive (i.e. lower) than the NAAQS, and typically are specified as not to be exceeded. San Luis Obispo County is designated as a non-attainment area for the state one-hour and 8-hour ozone standards, as well as the state 24-hour and annual PM_{10} standards. The county is currently designated as attaining the state annual standard for particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter ($PM_{2.5}$), but is expected to be designated as non-attainment when the California Air Resources Board finalizes area designations, which will likely occur in mid-2015 (SLOAPCD, 2014).

b. Thresholds of Significance. As identified in the 2009 COSE EIR, potentially significant impacts would occur if the proposed Program would result in any of the following (based on *State CEQA Guidelines*, Appendix G):

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan;

b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation;

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

d) *Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; or*

e) *Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.*

The *State CEQA Guidelines* state that, where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the above determinations. The SLOAPCD has developed guidelines and thresholds of significance for local plans. Inconsistency with the most recently adopted 2001 Clean Air Plan (CAP) and Particulate Matter Report (2005) is considered a significant impact. According to the APCD, the following criteria must be satisfied for a local plan (or in this case a program) to be determined to be consistent with the CAP and not have a significant air quality impact:

1) *The local plan should be consistent with the CAP population and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) assumptions. This is demonstrated if the population growth over the planning period will not exceed the values included in the current CAP, and*

2) *The local plan demonstrates reasonable efforts to implement the Transportation Control Measures (TCMs) included in the CAP that identify cities as implementing agencies.*

3) *For local plans to have a less than significant impact with respect to potential odors and/or toxic air contaminants, buffer zones should be established around existing and proposed land uses that would emit these air pollutants.*

In addition, plans should not lead to development that would lead to violations of ambient air quality standards.

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR determined that implementation of the COSE Consolidation and Update would have a beneficial impact on air quality as implementation would formalize new policies that would help reduce projected emissions of ozone precursors ROG and NOx that were addressed in the 2001 CAP, would help reduce the potential for future exceedances of state and federal standards for regional and localized pollutants, help reduce ROG and NOx emissions, particularly from motor vehicles, actually reduce emissions assumed from the current General Plan Land Use and Circulation Element, and promote land use strategies that reduce the potential to expose sensitive receptors to unhealthful concentrations of localized pollutants, such as carbon monoxide, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

a-d) The proposed Water Waste Prevention (WWP) program would prohibit certain uses of water deemed to meet the definition of water wasting in urban and rural areas. Prohibited uses may include the application of water to hard surfaces, including but not limited to, driveways, sidewalks, unpaved walkways and any other hardscaped area. The application of water to exposed hard surfaces and unpaved roadways is a technique frequently employed to reduce fugitive dust during earth moving and grading operations, on inactive disturbed land and open areas, unpaved parking lots and staging areas, bulk material storage piles, and track-out from construction activities.

The county is currently designated as a non-attainment area for the state 24-hour and annual PM_{10} standards, and while the county is currently designated as attaining the state annual $PM_{2.5}$ standard, it is expected to be designated as non-attainment when the California Air Resources Board finalizes area designations, which will likely occur in mid-2015 (SLOAPCD, 2014). In addition, the county exceeds the federal 24-hour standard for PM_{10} on the Nipomo Mesa and could be designated nonattainment for that pollutant if exceedances continue.

SLOAPCD adopted the PM Report and associated control measures in July 2005 in compliance with Senate Bill 656 which was enacted to reduce public exposure to particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$). The PM Report identifies watering, among other strategies, as a particulate matter control strategy for both fugitive dust and unpaved and paved roads. SLOAPCD identifies several other fugitive dust control strategies including chemical stabilizers / dust suppressants (control efficiencies range from 60 to 84 percent depending on the product used and application rate), and track-out devices (control efficiencies 46 to 80 percent) and enclosures/wind fencing for stockpiles (60 to 80 percent control). SLOAPCD also identifies the application of gravel, speed limit reductions, or paving of roadways to reduce fugitive dust emissions from unpaved roadways (SLOAPCD, 2005). Since multiple strategies exist for the reduction of fugitive dust emissions, prohibiting the application of water to hard surfaces would not prohibit compliance with PM control strategies. As such, the proposed Program would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan or its associated control strategies.

The proposed Program would also limit the application of water to outdoor landscapes and would require new urban and rural development within certified LOS III groundwater basins and new or more intensively irrigated agricultural development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin) to offset new water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. The Agricultural Offset program would facilitate the planting of new agriculture on currently uncultivated land and/or the intensification of irrigation on currently cultivated land in areas overlying the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin) by allowing the potential grower to purchase water credits from an existing grower. The grower selling the credits would replace, reduce or eliminate crops on their property to account for the offset. Therefore, the proposed Program could result in reduced irrigation and/or the partial or complete fallowing of some agricultural lands. ~~Land designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland would not be permitted to be fallowed as offset credits under the proposed Program as required by Mitigation Measure AG-1.~~

According to the SLOAPCD Emissions Inventory, farming operations (including farm equipment) and fugitive windblown dust make up approximately 16 percent of the county's fugitive dust emissions, while paved and unpaved road dust and construction and demolition activities make up over 60 percent of the county's fugitive dust emissions (SLOAPCD, 2005). ~~As noted above, Mitigation Measure AG-1 would preclude the fallowing of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland.~~ While the Agricultural Offset program may result in an increase in the fallowing of some classes of agricultural land, fallowing of fields is a typical agricultural practice and occurs regularly throughout the county. Therefore, while reduced irrigation and/or fallowing of agricultural lands may temporarily increase the amount of exposed land susceptible to wind-blown fugitive dust within the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), it would not contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation, result in a cumulatively considerable net increase in

particulate matter emissions, or expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. In addition, as noted previously, PM control strategies identified in the San Luis Obispo APCD PM Report would continue to reduce PM emissions within the county.

The proposed Program would not alter existing land use or zoning designations nor would it facilitate development beyond that accommodated by the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. As such, the proposed Program would not result in population growth or contribute to an increase in VMT within the county beyond that accommodated under the existing planning framework. Therefore, the proposed Program would be consistent with the CAP population and VMT assumptions. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

e) The proposed Program would not directly create objectionable odors. WNND requirements may facilitate new urban and rural development within groundwater basins certified at LOS III and new or more intensively irrigated agricultural development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), which may create objectionable odors in these areas of the county. However, any development facilitated by this component of the Program would be subject to existing land use and zoning designations. In addition, future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. Impacts would be less than significant.

d. Findings. No potentially significant impacts related to air quality would occur with Program implementation.

4.3.3 Biological Resources

a. Setting. San Luis Obispo County has many biological features including several distinct vegetation and wildlife habitat communities, plant and animal species of rare and/or endangered status, depleted or declining species, and species or habitat types of limited distribution, such as wetlands. The county is home to a number of diverse and important natural communities, from coastal marine environments to riparian habitats, and a mosaic of forests, woodlands, grasslands, and chaparral (County of San Luis Obispo, 2010).

The unincorporated county area supports a wide range of sensitive species and habitat types. Over 50 species listed under the federal or state Endangered Species Acts are known to occur or have the potential to occur in the county. The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) lists five special status amphibians, 26 special status birds, four special status crustaceans, four special status fish, 14 special status insects, 21 special status mammals, three special status mollusks, seven special status reptiles, and 132 special status plants[1]. Examples include the Morro shoulderband snail, vernal pool fairy shrimp, San Joaquin kit fox, Nelson's antelope

[1] *Special status species are those plants and animals listed, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing as threatened or endangered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the federal Endangered Species Act; those listed or proposed for listing as rare, threatened, or endangered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) [formerly the California Department of Fish and Game] under the state Endangered Species Act; animals designated as "Fully Protected," "Species of Special Concern," or "Rare," by the CDFW; and those species on the Special Vascular Plants, Bryophytes, and Lichens List. This latter document includes the CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California, Sixth Edition as updated online. Those plants contained on the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Lists 1 and 2 are considered special status species in this EIR.*

squirrel, giant kangaroo rat, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, California tiger salamander, California condor, and several plants. CNDDB also lists 13 sensitive natural communities including Northern Claypan Vernal Pools, Serpentine Bunchgrass, Valley Needlegrass Grassland, Coastal and Valley Freshwater Marsh, Coastal Brackish Marsh, Northern Coastal Brackish Marsh, Central Dune Scrub, Central Foredunes, Monterey Pine Forest, Northern Interior Cypress Forest, Central Maritime Chaparral, Valley Sink Scrub, and Valley Oak Woodland (CNDDB, 2014).

b. Thresholds of Significance. As identified in the 2009 COSE EIR, potentially significant impacts would occur if the proposed Program would result in any of the following (based on *State CEQA Guidelines*, Appendix G):

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

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS;

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

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; or

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.

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR determined that implementation of the COSE Consolidation and Update would have a beneficial impact on biological resources as implementation would add greater protection and preservation of San Luis Obispo County's species and habitat by requiring land use restrictions, design guidelines, and discretionary project review consistent with, and more stringent than, prior plans programs and policies adopted by the County.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

a) The proposed Program would prohibit certain uses of water in urban and rural areas deemed to meet the definition of water wasting and identification of a series of BMPs aimed at reducing water waste in agricultural practices. The Program would further require new urban and rural development within certified LOS III groundwater basins and new or more intensively irrigated agricultural development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin) to offset new water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. The Agricultural Offset program

would facilitate the planting of new agriculture on currently uncultivated land and/or the intensification of irrigation on currently cultivated land overlying the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin) by allowing the potential grower to purchase water credits from an existing grower. The grower selling the credits would replace, reduce or eliminate crops on their property to account for the offset. The Agricultural Offset program may result in changes to activities on existing agricultural lands including planting of new crop types, reduced irrigation and/or the partial or complete fallowing of agricultural fields. While some special status animal species may travel through or utilize agricultural fields when moving between habitats or foraging, agricultural lands are not likely to support special status animal species, as they are frequently disturbed by agricultural operations. As such, fallowing of agricultural fields would not result in direct impacts to or loss of habitat for special status animals.

Fallowing of agricultural fields overlying the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin) may also result in the incidental increase in non-native weeds or invasive plants in areas that were previously covered by active agricultural. While non-native weeds and invasive plants may sometimes compete with and/or displace native and/or sensitive plant species, agricultural fields are not likely to support special status plants, as they are frequently disturbed by agricultural operations. As such, fallowing of agricultural fields would not result in direct impacts to or loss of habitat for special status plants.

The proposed Program would provide a pathway for future urban and rural development to occur within groundwater basins certified at LOS III for water supply and new or more intensively irrigated agricultural development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), but would not alter existing land use or zoning designations nor would it facilitate development beyond that accommodated by the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. Impacts would be less than significant.

b, c) Implementation of the proposed Program would not affect riparian habitat, sensitive natural communities, federally protected wetlands, or other natural areas within the county. While the proposed Program would require new urban and rural development within certified LOS III groundwater basins and new or more intensively irrigated agriculture within the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin) to offset new water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio, it would not alter existing land use or zoning designations nor would it facilitate development beyond that accommodated by the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. Impacts would be less than significant.

d) The proposed Program may result in changes to agricultural irrigation patterns and/or the fallowing of agricultural fields overlying the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), which may alter the suitability of the land for wildlife travelling through agricultural fields. While some wildlife may utilize agricultural fields as movement corridors, the fallowing of these fields would not impede or substantially interfere with such movement. As noted in Section 4.3.1, *Aesthetics*, fallowed fields are common aspects of the pastoral

landscape and are already present throughout the agricultural areas of the county, including the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin). As such, fallowing of agricultural fields would not 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. Impacts would be less than significant.

e) The San Luis Obispo County COSE includes goals, policies, and implementation strategies to identify and protect the county's biological resources. Specifically goals aim to protect threatened, rare, endangered, and sensitive species, and preserve, enhance, and restore native habitat and biodiversity including native woodlands, forests and trees, the natural structure and function of streams and riparian habitat, wetlands, fisheries and aquatic habitat, and marine resources. The proposed Program has been developed as a result of the implementation strategies included in the COSE, including WR 2.1.2 and WR 4.1.2. In addition, the proposed Program would not alter existing land use or zoning designations nor would it facilitate development beyond that accommodated by the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. Impacts would be less than significant.

f) The County of San Luis Obispo is currently preparing, but has not yet adopted, a Communitywide Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the community of Los Osos (the area covered by the HCP is approximately 3,560 acres). The primary intent of the HCP is the long-term protection of at least four threatened or endangered species found within the Los Osos area including Morro shoulderband snail, Morro manzanita, Morro Bay kangaroo rat, and Indian Knob mountain balm. The proposed Program does not include any specific development that would conflict with the provisions of an adopted HCP, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan either in Los Osos or in any other area of the County. WNND requirements may facilitate new urban and rural development within groundwater basins certified at LOS III (including the Los Osos Groundwater Basin), if that development could offset its water use by a minimum ratio of 1:1. However, any development facilitated by this component of the Program would be subject to existing land use and zoning designations. In addition, future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. Impacts would be less than significant.

e. Findings. No potentially significant impacts related to biological resources would occur with Program implementation.

4.3.4 Cultural Resources

a. Setting. San Luis Obispo County possesses a rich and diverse cultural heritage. Throughout the county, there are sites and buildings associated with Native Americans, Spanish missionaries, immigrant settlers, and military branches of the United States as well as archaeological and sacred sites, paleontological sites, historic structures, streetscapes and landscapes, which have special cultural significance. Native American peoples are known to

have occupied the county dating back at least 9,000 years and the Chumash, Salinan, and Yokut are known to have lived in the area (County of San Luis Obispo, 2010).

The Office of Historic Preservation lists 35 historically recognized places within San Luis Obispo County, and 12 of those landmarks are located in the unincorporated county (refer to Table 4.3-1 below). Listed resources include nine properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, two properties listed as California Historical Landmarks, and one property listed as a California Points of Historical Interest. There are no properties listed on the California Register of Historical Resources located within San Luis Obispo County.

Table 4.3-1
Federal and State Landmarks Within Unincorporated San Luis Obispo County

Resource Name	Location
National Register of Historic Places	
Caledonia Adobe (N101)	San Miguel
Carrizo Plain Rock Art Discontiguous District (N2133)	California Valley
Dana Adobe (N91)	Nipomo
Eight Mile House (N1905)	Santa Margarita
Guthrie House (N853)	Cambria
Hearst San Simeon Estate (N182)	San Simeon
Mission San Miguel (N102)	San Miguel
Old Santa Rosa Catholic Church and Cemetery (N1154)	Cambria
Piedras Blancas Light Station (N1726)	San Simeon
California Historical Landmarks	
Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument (640)	San Simeon
Rios-Caledonia Adobe (936)	San Miguel
California Points of Interest	
Oceano Depot (P739)	Oceano

Source: California Office of Historic Preservation, 2014.

State planning law requires cities and counties to consult with California Native American tribes during the local planning process for the purpose of protecting Traditional Tribal Cultural Places. SB 18 (Chapter 905, Statutes of 2004) requires cities and counties to contact, and consult with California Native American tribes prior to amending or adopting any general plan or specific plan, or designating land as open space. As the proposed Program includes revisions to the Agriculture Element and Conservation and Open Space Element of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan, consultation in compliance with SB 18 is required. The Notice of Preparation for the proposed Program was sent to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), and a letter was received on August 21, 2014 documenting the NAHC's recommendations and the details of tribes that should be contacted for consultation. Letters were sent to each of the tribes in November 2014. No tribes sought consultation within the 90-day consultation period which closed on March 2, 2015. During the public review period for the

Draft SEIR, the County will request consultation and comments on the proposed program from Native American tribes and organizations in compliance with the requirements of SB 18.

b. Thresholds of Significance. As identified in the 2009 COSE EIR, pursuant to Public Resources Code Sections 21083.2 and 21084.1, and Section 15064.5 and Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, the County considers cultural resource impacts to be significant if the proposed Program would:

a) *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource or an historical resource as defined in Public Resources Code section 21083.2 and CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5, respectively;*

b) *Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature; or*

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

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR determined that implementation of the COSE Consolidation and Update would have a beneficial impact on cultural resources as implementation would add greater protection and preservation of San Luis Obispo County's cultural and historic resources by requiring cultural education, outreach, acquisition, preservation and protection measures consistent with, and more stringent than, plans programs and policies currently adopted by the County.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

a-c) The proposed Program does not propose any specific development that would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical, archaeological, or paleontological resource. WNND requirements may facilitate new urban and rural development within groundwater basins certified at LOS III and new or more intensively irrigated agricultural development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), if that development could offset its water use by a minimum 1:1 ratio; however, any development facilitated by these components of the WNND requirements would be subject to existing land use and zoning designations and other County policies related to identification and preservation of archaeological and historic resources. In addition, future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. Impacts would be less than significant.

e. Findings. No potentially significant impacts related to cultural resources would occur with Program implementation.

4.3.5 Geology/Soils

a. Setting. San Luis Obispo County is located within the Coast Range physiographic province. The county is generally divided into three geologic provinces that are separated by two major northwest-trending faults. The northeast province is bounded on the southwest by the San Andreas fault zone, the central province is bounded on the northeast by the San Andreas fault zone and on the southwest by three segments of the Rinconada Fault System, and

the southwest province is bounded on the northeast by the Rinconada Fault System (County of San Luis Obispo, 2010).

The San Andreas Fault, located along the easterly edge of the county, is classified as active and is capable of producing a maximum credible earthquake of 8.0 to 8.5 magnitude, with ground displacement as great as 20 to 30 feet. The Nacimiento Fault, Rinconada Fault, and offshore Hosgri Fault are also considered seismically active. The Los Osos Fault has potential for seismic events as high as 6.75 on the Richter Scale. A number of lesser faults are likely inactive and are considered to pose little or not likely threat to the county (County of San Luis Obispo, 2010).

Landslides generally occur on steep slopes that have been undercut by erosion or on slopes where the bedding planes of the bedrock are inclined down the slope. The prevalence of rolling or mountainous terrain places approximately 60 percent of the county into the slope range of 30 percent or greater. Another 23 percent occupies slopes ranging from 10 to 30 percent, leaving only about 17 percent of the total county land area with level to gently sloping terrain on slopes of less than 10 percent (County of San Luis Obispo, 2010).

Other geologic hazards include subsidence, liquefaction, tsunamis, and seiches (seismically induced waves in a closed body of water such as a reservoir). Ground subsidence has been identified in areas of recent stream alluvium and bay muds. These types of areas also have other associated hazards such as storm surge and flooding. The potential for a seiche to occur is low in San Luis Obispo County. Along the coast, a potential tsunami (tidal wave) would not be expected to exceed the tidal range. However, a hazard could occur if a tsunami occurred at the same time as a high tide (County of San Luis Obispo, 2010).

b. Thresholds of Significance. As identified in the 2009 COSE EIR, potentially significant impacts would occur if the proposed Program would result in any of the following (based on *State CEQA Guidelines*, Appendix G):

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,*
   ii. *strong seismic ground shaking,*
   iii. *seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction, or*
   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; or*

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.*

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR did not identify any impacts related to geology/ soils as potentially significant and no mitigation measures were required.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

a) The proposed Program does not propose any specific development that would expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction, or landslides. WNND requirements may facilitate new urban and rural development within groundwater basins certified at LOS III and new or more intensively irrigated agricultural development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), if that development could offset its water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. However, any development facilitated by this component of the Program would be subject to existing land use and zoning designations as well as other County policies addressing geologic/soils hazard and the seismic requirements of the Uniform Building Code. In addition, future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. Impacts would be less than significant.

b) The proposed Program would limit the application of water to outdoor landscapes and require new urban and rural development within certified LOS III groundwater basins and new or more intensively irrigated agricultural development to offset new water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. The Agricultural Offset program would facilitate the planting of new agriculture on currently uncultivated land and/or the intensification of irrigation on currently cultivated land overlying the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin) by allowing the potential grower to purchase water credits from an existing grower. The grower selling the credits would replace, reduce or eliminate crops on their property to account for the offset. As such, the proposed Program could result in reduced irrigation and/or the partial or complete fallowing of some agricultural lands overlying the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), which could result in increased exposure of topsoil to erosion. ~~However, land designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland would not be permitted to be fallowed as offset credits under the proposed program as required under Mitigation Measure AG-1, which would limit the potential loss of topsoil from fallowed fields.~~ While the Agricultural Offset program may result in an increase in the fallowing of some agricultural areas, fallowing of fields is a typical agricultural practice and occurs regularly throughout the county. The Program would not substantially increase this practice countywide. Therefore, ~~I~~impacts would be less than significant.

c-e) The proposed Program does not propose any specific development that would be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, expansive soil, or soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. As discussed above, ground subsidence has been identified in some areas of the county. Groundwater extraction can increase subsidence potential. Because an objective of the proposed Program is to substantially reduce increases in groundwater extraction in basins that have been certified at Level of Severity III, it would decrease potential for ground subsidence in some areas. WNND requirements may facilitate new urban and rural development within groundwater basins certified at LOS III and new or more intensively irrigated agricultural development in the Paso

Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), if that development could offset its water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. However, any development facilitated by this component of the Program would be subject to existing land use and zoning designations as well as other County policies related geologic and soil hazards. In addition, future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed.

e. Findings. No potentially significant impacts related to geology and soils would occur with Program implementation.

4.3.6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

a. Setting. Climate change is the observed increase in the average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere and oceans along with other substantial changes in climate (such as wind patterns, precipitation, and storms) over an extended period of time. Gases that absorb and re-emit infrared radiation in the atmosphere are called greenhouse gases (GHGs). GHGs are emitted by both natural processes and human activities. Of these gases, carbon dioxide (CO_2) and methan (CH_4) are emitted in the greatest quantities from human activities. The accumulation of GHGs in the atmosphere regulates the Earth's temperature. However, it is believed that emissions from human activities, particularly fossil fuel combustion for electricity production and transportation, have elevated the concentration of these gases in the atmosphere beyond the level that occurs naturally.

Globally, climate change has the potential to affect numerous environmental resources through potential impacts related to future air temperatures and precipitation patterns. According to the California Environmental Protection Agency's (CalEPA) *2010 Climate Action Team Biennial Report*, potential impacts of climate change in California may include loss in snow pack, sea level rise, more extreme heat days per year, more high ozone days, more large forest fires, and more drought years (CalEPA, 2010).

In 2006, the County conducted a baseline inventory of GHG emissions from county operations and communitywide activities. The 2006 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Baseline Inventory found that, in the baseline year 2006, the community (unincorporated San Luis Obispo County) emitted approximately 1,506,163 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO_2e). The transportation sector was by far the largest emitter (64.8 percent), producing approximately 976,585 metric tons of CO_2e in 2006. Emissions from the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors accounted for a combined 23.4 percent of the total while emissions from livestock and agricultural equipment comprised 9.7 percent of the total (County of San Luis Obispo, 2010).

In 2011, the County adopted an EnergyWise Plan which outlined the County's approach to reducing GHG emissions through a number of goals, measures, and actions that provide a road map to achieving the County's GHG reduction target of 15 percent below baseline levels by 2020. The EnergyWise Plan builds upon the goals and strategies of the COSE to reduce local GHG emissions resulting from buildout forecasted in the San Luis Obispo County General Plan.

b. Thresholds of Significance. At the time the 2009 COSE EIR was prepared, no air district in California, including SLOAPCD, had identified a significance threshold for GHG

emissions or a methodology for analyzing air quality impacts related to GHG emissions. The state had identified achievement of 1990 GHG emission levels as a goal through adoption of AB 32. Therefore, the 2009 COSE EIR based its determination of GHG impact significance on the whether the COSE update's contribution to global climate change would be inconsistent with AB 32's goal of reducing 2020 GHG emissions to 1990 levels from sources associated with projected growth (i.e., motor vehicles, direct energy use, waste-related activities). In addition, the 2009 COSE EIR examined whether the COSE update would expose persons to significant risks associated with the effects of global climate change.

In March 2012, SLOAPCD adopted GHG thresholds in order to help lead agencies assess the significance of GHG impacts of new projects subject to CEQA SLOAPCD's CEQA guidance identifies three different types of GHG thresholds designed to accommodate various development types and patterns:

1) *Qualitative Reduction Strategies (e.g., Climate Action Plans): a qualitative threshold that is consistent with AB 32 Scoping Plan measures and goals;*
2) *Bright-Line Threshold: numerical value to determine the significance of a project's annual GHG emissions;*
3) *Efficiency-Based Threshold: assesses the GHG efficiency of a project on a per capita basis.*

SLOAPCD recommends that lead agencies within the county use the adopted GHG thresholds of significance when considering the significance of GHG impacts of new projects subject to CEQA. Further, projects with GHG emissions that exceed the thresholds will need to implement mitigation to reduce the impacts to a less than significant level.

For the purposes of this analysis, the more recent thresholds adopted and recommended for use by SLOAPCD, rather than those listed in the 2009 COSE EIR, were used to determine whether GHG impacts associated with implementation of the proposed Program would be potentially significant. Specifically, threshold 1) would be most relevant to the proposed Program and has been used as the basis for this analysis, with the County EnergyWise Plan being used as the Qualitative Reduction Strategy against which the proposed Program is being compared for consistency.

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR determined that implementation of the COSE Consolidation and Update would have a beneficial impact on GHG emissions as the COSE would help implement the County's Strategic Growth Principles, energy efficiency measures, and other strategies that would help reduce GHG emissions from transportation, energy, and other source categories over time.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

1) The proposed WWP program would result in a net decrease in water use countywide, but would not alter development potential. The extent of this decreased demand would depend on the extent to which county residents change their behaviors, as well as the effectiveness of violation reporting and enforcement for the ordinance component of the WWP program. A net decrease in water use would result in decreased energy use, and therefore decreased GHG

emissions. In addition, water conservation is consistent with the following goals of the San Luis Obispo County EnergyWise Plan:

- *Energy Conservation: Address future energy needs through increased conservation and efficiency in all sectors*
- *Water Conservation: Reduce emissions from potable water use by 20% from per capita baseline levels by 2020 by prioritizing water conservation before development of new water resources*

WNND requirements would not alter existing land use or zoning designations nor would it facilitate development beyond that accommodated by the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. As such, the proposed Program would not result in an increase in GHG emissions nor would it conflict with the San Luis Obispo County EnergyWise Plan. Impacts would be less than significant.

e. Findings. No potentially significant impacts related to GHG emissions would occur with Program implementation.

4.3.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

a. Setting.

Hazardous Materials. Due to the quantity and frequency with which hazardous materials are shipped throughout San Luis Obispo County, transportation-related accidents pose the most significant hazardous material risk to the residents of the county. Major modes of hazardous material transportation include the use of U.S. Highway 101, various state highways, the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, and numerous underground pipelines. In addition to the potential for transportation-related releases of hazardous materials, potential exposure of the public to hazardous materials can result from their use by industry, agriculture, commercial, and service establishments. Household use of hazardous materials also has the potential to result in their release into the environment (County of San Luis Obispo, 1999).

The transportation, storage and use of pesticides in home, agricultural and commercial settings in San Luis Obispo County also pose potential hazards to the public. The transportation, storage and use of pesticides applied by agricultural and structural pest control businesses is governed by comprehensive regulations. The County Agricultural Commissioner's office is the enforcement agency for these regulations and a resource for information about pesticide identification; labeling; storage; transportation and disposal; use; application methods and equipment; and knowledge about local pesticide use practices (County of San Luis Obispo, 1999).

Wildland Fire Hazards. Wildfires usually result from the ignition of dry grass, brush or timber and commonly occur in areas that are characterized by steep, heavily vegetated hillsides. Most wildfires are ignited by human action, and may result from direct acts of arson, carelessness, or accidents. Many fires originate adjacent to roads and highways, often as a result of the disposal of cigarettes or other burning objects from passing automobiles. As urban development moves into areas susceptible to wildfire hazards, risks to human safety and property increase.

Wildland areas are defined as areas where urban development has been located in proximity to open space. San Luis Obispo County is exposed to a variety of wildfire hazard conditions ranging from very low levels of risk along the coastal portions of the county, to extreme hazards in the inland and chaparral covered hillsides of the Santa Lucia Mountains.

Within San Luis Obispo County, wildfires are addressed at the state and local level. These agencies work together to develop and implement fire and resource management programs that promote safety and retain resources. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is responsible for fire protection for over 31 million acres of California's privately owned wildlands. CAL FIRE has mapped the relative wildfire risk in state responsibility areas (SRAs).[2] The fire hazard severity zones assigned to SRAs for fire protection are dependent upon the historic climate, fuel conditions (vegetation), and topography. The Fire Hazard Severity Zone map for SRAs in San Luis Obispo County shows three risk levels: moderate, high, and very high (CAL FIRE, 2007). Classification of a zone as moderate, high or very high fire hazard is based on a combination of how a fire will behave and the probability of flames and embers threatening buildings.

Figure 4.3-1 shows the Fire Hazard Severity Zones overlain by the boundary of the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin). The majority of land overlying the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin that is given a fire hazard designation is designated as a high risk level. Only a very small portion of land is designated as a very high risk level. These areas are concentrated on the southern tips of the basin, with one area on the eastern border just south of the San Luis Obispo County line.

b. Thresholds of Significance. As identified in the 2009 COSE EIR, potentially significant impacts would occur if the proposed program would result in any of the following (based on *State CEQA Guidelines*, Appendix G):

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;*

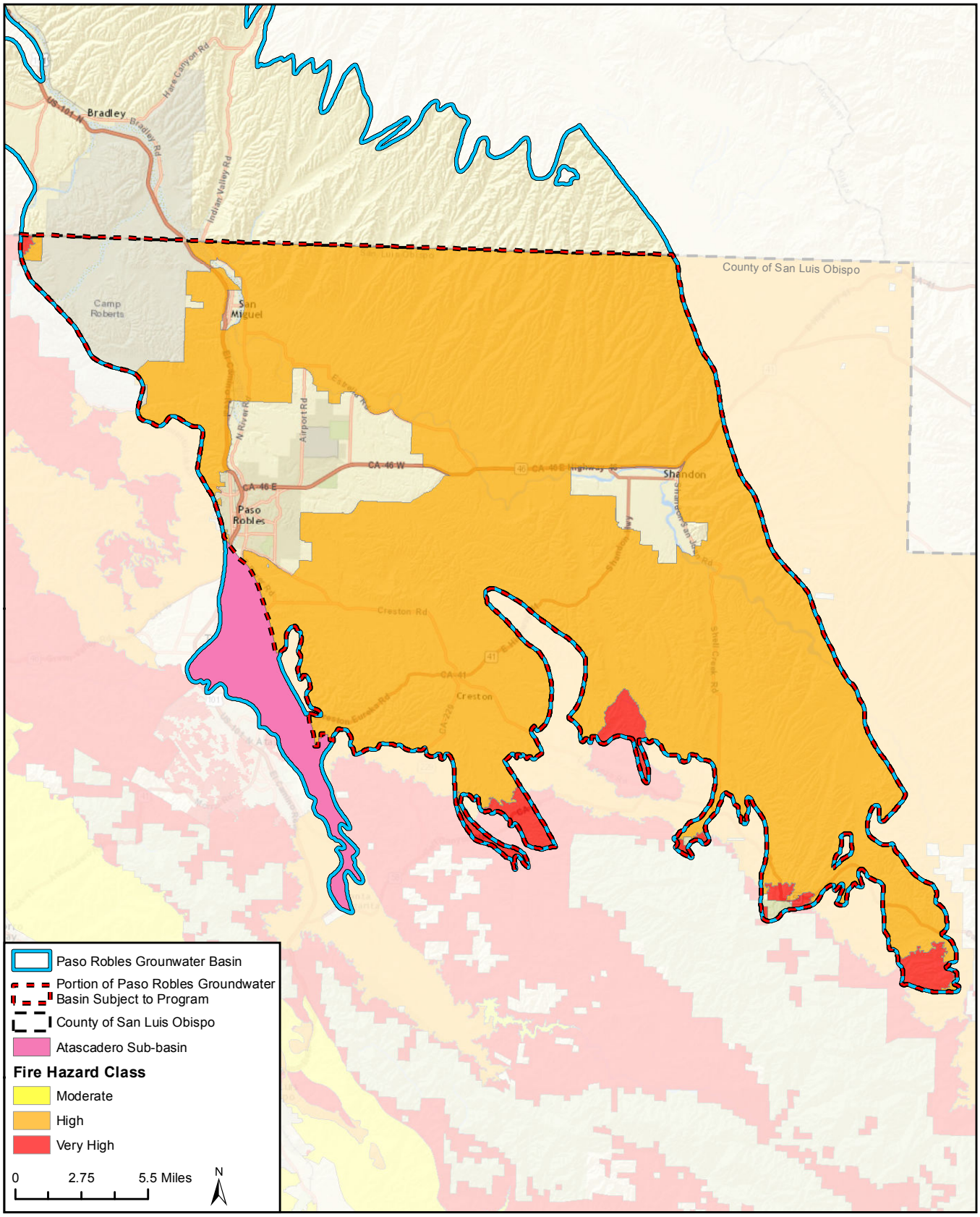
c) *Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within ¼ mile of an existing or proposed school;*

d) *Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous material 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; or*

f) *Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.*

[2] *To qualify as an SRA, the area typically has the following elements: lands covered by vegetation (e.g., trees, brush, grass); lands are used for forage, range, or wildlife habitat; non-federal; and unincorporated.*



Imagery provided by ESRI and its licensors © 2014.
Hazard Zones by CALFIRE, 2014.

Fire Hazard Severity Zones:
Paso Robles Groundwater Basin

Figure 4.3-1

The following two thresholds, which are also included in Appendix G of the *2014 State CEQA Guidelines*, were not specifically addressed in the 2009 COSE EIR:

g) 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; or

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.

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR did not identify any impacts related to hazards/hazardous materials as potentially significant and no mitigation measures were required. The 2009 COSE EIR did not specifically address the potential for the COSE Consolidation and Update to expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires. As noted in the 2009 COSE EIR, public services such as fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, and/or other public facilities are addressed in other elements of the General Plan (Parks and Recreation, Safety et. al). The implementing policies and programs outlined in these elements provide a number of methods by which these service providers will continue to maintain acceptable service levels and therefore no discussion of fire protection services or hazards was included in the 2009 COSE EIR.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

a-g) The proposed Program does not propose any specific development that would include sites contained on the state's "Cortese" list, or other lists of hazardous waste sites maintained by CalEPA as enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. Implementation of the proposed Program would not involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, and would not create reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. Therefore, no impact with regard to hazards to the public or environment, hazardous materials with ¼ mile of a school, development on a hazardous material site, or development near an airport or airstrip would occur. WNND requirements may facilitate new urban and rural development in areas of the county certified at LOS III for water supply and new or more intensively irrigated agricultural development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), if that development could offset its water use at a 1:1 ratio. However, any development facilitated by WNND requirements would be subject to existing land use and zoning designations. Any future development within the county would be subject to subsequent environmental review wherein any site-specific impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials would be addressed accordingly. No impacts would occur.

h) The proposed Program would not directly place any new habitable structures in high or very high fire risk zones. As discussed in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, the proposed Program would not alter existing land use or zoning designations nor would it facilitate development beyond that accommodated by the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan and Zoning Ordinance or beyond that which may occur absent of the proposed Program. Any new development on future sites would be subject to the County of San Luis Obispo and California fire codes and regulations to reduce the risk of building and wildland fire. Furthermore, future

development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed.

Where currently irrigated, properties overlying the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin) in the high and very high fire hazard zones could be eligible to act as creditor sites under the Agricultural Offset program. Fire hazard severity zones are dependent upon the historical climate, fuel conditions (vegetation), and topography. Depending on the management regime in place, fallowed fields that are bare or contain a low fuel load could provide a buffer between adjacent wildlands and urban development, and as such would reduce risk of wildland fire to existing adjacent urban development. As a result, the proposed Program would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires and impacts would be less than significant.

e. Findings. No potentially significant impacts related to hazard and hazardous materials significance thresholds "a-h" would occur with Program implementation.

4.3.8 Hydrology/Water Quality

a. Setting. San Luis Obispo County obtains nearly 80 percent of its water supply from groundwater. Only two percent of the county's supply comes from imported water and the remaining 17 percent of water supply is surface waters. Most of San Luis Obispo County's water quality is greater than many other areas of the state. However, the region also faces water quality challenges, such as wastewater compliance, groundwater pollution, salinity, hardness, and seawater intrusion. Flood control is also a critical issue for several communities in the county due to a lack of infrastructure, such as inadequate channel and culvert capacities and the loss and restriction of floodplain due to development and high peak runoff (County of San Luis Obispo, 2009).

As described in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, San Luis Obispo County is in the midst of an "exceptional drought" that has lowered water levels in surface lakes and reservoirs, and in groundwater basins. The Board of Supervisors has certified three groundwater basins [Nipomo Mesa (part of Santa Maria Groundwater Basin), the Los Osos Groundwater Basin (Los Osos Basin), and the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin] at LOS III for water, which indicates that groundwater demand has met or exceeded the dependable supply. LOS III is the highest level of severity that can be certified for a resource.

b. Thresholds of Significance. As identified in the 2009 COSE EIR, a hydrologic or water quality impact associated with the implementation of the proposed Program would be considered significant if it would result in any of the following actions (based on Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*):

Water Quality

a) *Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements;*

b) *Cause a substantial alteration of the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion, siltation, and/or environmental harm on- or off- site.*

c) 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

d) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality.

Groundwater Resources

a) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering or the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted); or

b) Create future groundwater production impacts to surface water conditions would be considered to be substantial if it is demonstrated that groundwater extraction would result in a loss of flow to surface waters (i.e., circumstances where a waterway is currently receiving flows from groundwater discharge) to the extent that it adversely effects existing biological resources (e.g., fisheries and riparian habitat) that are supported by such flows.

Drainage and Flooding

a) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;

b) 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;

c) Expose people or structures to flood hazards as a result of development within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map, or place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows;

d) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam; or

e) Be subject to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR determined that implementation of the COSE Consolidation and Update would have a beneficial impact on water quality, groundwater resources, and drainage and flooding as implementation would require land use restrictions, design guidelines and discretionary project review consistent with, and more stringent than, plans programs and policies currently adopted by the County.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

<u>Water Quality.</u>

a, d) The proposed Program does not propose any specific development that would violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise degrade water quality. WNND requirements may facilitate new urban and rural development within groundwater

basins certified at LOS III for water supply and new or more intensively irrigated agricultural development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), if that development could offset its water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. However, any development facilitated by this component of the Program would be subject to existing land use and zoning regulations. Furthermore, future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. No impacts would occur.

b, c) The proposed Program does not propose any specific development that would alter existing drainage patterns or create or contribute runoff water. However, the proposed Urban/Rural Water Offset requirements would limit the application of water to outdoor landscapes and require new urban and rural development within LOS III groundwater basins to offset new water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. The Agricultural Offset program would facilitate the planting of new agriculture on currently uncultivated land and/or the intensification of irrigation on currently cultivated land overlying the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin) by allowing the potential grower to purchase water credits at a 1:1 ratio from an existing grower. The grower selling the credits would replace, reduce or eliminate crops on their property to account for the offset. As such, the proposed Program could result in reduced irrigation and/or fallowing of agricultural lands, which may result in minor changes to drainage and runoff patterns in localized areas, but these would not differ substantially from existing conditions. In addition, the Program does not propose any specific development that would alter existing drainage patterns or create or contribute runoff water. Impacts would be less than significant.

Groundwater Resources.

a-b) The WWP program would prohibit certain uses of water deemed to meet the definition of water wasting in urban and rural areas and would identify a series of BMPs aimed at reducing water waste in agricultural practices. WNND requirements would require new urban and rural development within certified LOS III groundwater basins and new or more intensively irrigated agriculture within the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin) to offset new water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. Because WNND requirements are focused on offsetting future demand, they would neither increase nor decrease water use over current levels. Rather, they would maintain current water use while allowing for development to occur consistent with the adopted General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. In contrast to WNND requirements, which would allow development to proceed while maintaining current water use, the WWP program would result in a net decrease in water use countywide but would not alter development potential. As such, overall the Program would result in water conservation and would help to reduce the existing strain on the county's groundwater resources. The proposed Program would have a beneficial impact on groundwater resources over the term it is implemented; however, it should be noted that the Agricultural Offset program for the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin would expire upon adoption of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Basin. As noted in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, it is currently estimated that the timeframe for development and adoption of a GSP could be 5 to 7 years, and implementation of a GSP could take 20 years. Therefore, the beneficial impacts from maintenance of current water use under the Agricultural Offset Program would end upon adoption of the GSP, and there could be a substantial lag time between adoption and implementation of the GSP. It is also

unclear whether the GSP would include components to assure the same level of water neutrality as the Agricultural Offset program. But because expiration of the Agricultural Offset program would not create the potential for new or increased impacts above the current baseline, no significant impacts are likely. None of the other components of the Program are subject to a sunset clause and as such the beneficial impacts associated with their implementation would continue indefinitely.

Drainage and Flooding.

a-b) As described above, the proposed Program could result in reduced irrigation and/or fallowing of agricultural lands in areas overlying the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), which may result in minor changes to drainage and runoff patterns in localized areas. ~~Land designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland would not be permitted to be fallowed as offset credits under the proposed Program as required by Mitigation Measure AG-1.~~ However, reducing irrigation and fallowing of fields are typical agricultural practices and occur regularly throughout the county. The Program would not substantially increase these practices countywide. Therefore, drainage patterns and runoff patterns in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin) would not differ substantially from existing conditions. Impacts would be less than significant.

c-d) The proposed Program does not include any proposed development that would directly or indirectly expose people or structures to potential flood hazards or impede or redirect flood flows. WNND requirements may facilitate new urban and rural development within groundwater basins certified at LOS III for water supply and new or more intensively irrigated agricultural development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), if that development could offset its water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. Any development facilitated by the WNND requirements would be subject to existing land use and zoning designations and County policies related to placement of structures in areas subject to flood hazards. In addition, future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. No impacts would occur.

e) The proposed Program does not include any proposed development that would be subject to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. WNND requirements may facilitate new urban and rural development in areas of the County certified at LOS III for water supply and new or more intensively irrigated agricultural development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), if that development could offset its water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. Any development facilitated by this component of the Program would be subject to existing land use and zoning designations as well as County policies related to placement of structures in areas subject to risks from inundation by seiche, mudflow or tsunami. In addition, future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. No impacts would occur.

e. Findings. The proposed Program would have a beneficial impact on groundwater resources and would not result in potentially significant impacts related to water quality or drainage and flooding.

4.3.9 Land Use and Planning

a. Setting. San Luis Obispo County is located on the California Central Coast between Monterey County to the north and Santa Barbara County to the south. The county's coastline spans 96 miles and the land area encompasses over two million acres of mostly agricultural and open space land. The remaining land in the unincorporated county (approximately 9.28 percent) is designated as incorporated city, residential, public facility, recreation, industrial, commercial, office, or multi-use.

b. Thresholds of Significance. As identified in the 2009 COSE EIR, the Program would result in potentially significant land use impacts if it would (based on *State CEQA Guidelines*, Appendix G):

a) Physically divide an established community;

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

c) *Conflict with an adopted conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.*

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR determined that implementation of the COSE Consolidation and Update would have a beneficial impact on land use and planning as implementation would result in better organization, identification and implementation of relevant conservation and open space policies consistent with, and inclusive of, the General Plan, individual Area Plans, Strategic Growth Principles, and new (or anticipated) state requirements.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

a) In urban and rural areas, the WWP program would promote water conservation through the prohibition of water wasting and the threat of fines for non-compliance. This component of the Program would not, however, alter development potential. In contrast, WNND requirements would facilitate new development within groundwater basins certified at LOS III for water supply, while maintaining current water demand. Any development facilitated by this component of the Program would be subject to existing land use and zoning designations. Because the San Luis Obispo County General Plan directs development toward existing and strategically planned communities, this development would not physically divide an established community. No impacts would occur.

b) Impacts related to this threshold are addressed in Section 4.3, *Land Use,* of this SEIR.

c) As described in Section 4.3.3, *Biological Resources*, the Program would not conflict with an adopted conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. No impacts would occur.

e. Findings. No potentially significant impacts related to land use and planning significance thresholds "a" and "c" would occur with Program implementation. Refer to Section 4.3, *Land Use,* for a discussion of significance threshold "b."

4.3.10 Mineral Resources

a. Setting. There are a wide variety of mineral resources found in San Luis Obispo County, although only a few minerals are presently being extracted commercially. Mining has played an important role in the county's history, including a brief gold rush at Pozo in the 1870's and the later discoveries of mercury in the Santa Lucia Range. In recent years, the mineral products of the county have included petroleum, natural gas, mercury, gypsum, sand and gravel, construction stone, and clay. In addition, local mines provide a significant contribution to the county's economy (County of San Luis Obispo, 2010).

b. Thresholds of Significance. As identified in the 2009 COSE EIR, potentially significant impacts would occur if the proposed program would result in any of the following (based on *State CEQA Guidelines*, Appendix G):

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

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.

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR did not identify any impacts related to mineral resources as potentially significant and no mitigation measures were required.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

a, b) The proposed Program does not propose any specific development projects that could result in the loss of mineral resources. WNND requirements may facilitate new urban and rural development within groundwater basins certified at LOS III for water supply and new or more intensively irrigated agricultural development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), if that development could offset its water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. Any development facilitated by this component of the Program would be subject to existing land use and zoning designations as well as County policies related to protection of mineral resource deposits. In addition, future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. No impacts would occur.

e. Findings. No potentially significant impacts related to mineral resources would occur with Program implementation.

4.3.11 Noise

a. Setting. Noise is generally defined as unwanted sound. Noise level (or volume) is generally measured in decibels (dB) using the A-weighted sound pressure level (dBA). The A-

weighting scale is an adjustment to the actual sound pressure levels to be consistent with that of human hearing response, which is most sensitive to frequencies around 4,000 Hertz (about the highest note on a piano) and less sensitive to low frequencies (below 100 Hertz). One of the most frequently used noise metrics that considers both duration and sound power level is the equivalent noise level (Leq). The Leq is defined as the single steady A-weighted level that is equivalent to the same amount of energy as that contained in the actual fluctuating levels over a period of time. Typically, Leq is summed over a one-hour period. The Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) is a measure of the cumulative noise exposure in a community, and consists of a weighted average of the hourly Leqs over a 24-hour period. The weighting includes a 5 dB penalty added to evening (7 p.m. to 10 p.m.) and a 10 dB addition to nocturnal (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.) noise levels to account for the greater disturbance associated with noise during these periods. The Day-Night Average Sound Level, LDN, is essentially the same as CNEL, with the exception that all occurrences during the 3-hour evening time period are grouped into the day-time period with no dB penalty.

Because of the nature of the human ear, a sound must be about 10 dB greater than the reference sound to be judged as twice as loud. In general, a 3 dBA change in community noise levels is noticeable, while 1-2 dBA changes generally are not perceived. Quiet suburban areas typically have noise levels in the range of 40 to 50 dBA, while those along arterial streets are in the 50 to 60+ dBA range. Normal conversational levels are in the 60-65 dBA range and ambient noise levels greater than that can interrupt conversations. Noise levels typically attenuate at a rate of 6 dBA per doubling of distance from point sources such as industrial machinery.

Major sources of community noise within San Luis Obispo County include traffic on state highways and other major roadways, railroad operations, airport operations, military training activities at Camp Roberts, and industrial, commercial and agricultural activities (County of San Luis Obispo, 1992).

Noise exposure goals for various types of land uses reflect the varying noise sensitivities associated with those uses. Noise sensitive land uses that have been identified by the County of San Luis Obispo include: residential development, except temporary dwellings; schools-preschool to secondary, college and university, specialized education and training; health care services (hospitals); nursing and personal care; churches; public assembly and entertainment; libraries and museums; hotels and motels; bed and breakfast facilities; outdoor sports and recreation; and offices (County of San Luis Obispo, 1992).

b. Thresholds of Significance. As identified in the 2009 COSE EIR, potentially significant impacts would occur if the proposed program would result in any of the following (based on *State CEQA Guidelines*, Appendix G):

a) *Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies;*

b) *Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels;*

c) *A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project;*

d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project;

e) For a project located with 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, exposure, by the project, of people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels; or

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, exposure, by the project, of people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels.

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR did not identify any impacts related to noise as potentially significant and no mitigation measures were required.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

a-f) The proposed Program does not propose any specific development that would result in exposure of persons to noise in excess of established standards or groundborne vibration or noise, nor would it result in a temporary, periodic, or permanent increase in ambient noise levels above existing levels. WNND requirements may facilitate new urban and rural development within groundwater basins certified at LOS III for water supply and new or more intensively irrigated agricultural development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), if that development could offset its water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. Depending on the nature of the development, it may result in excess noise exposure or increases in ambient noise levels. However, any development facilitated by this component of the program would be subject to existing land use and zoning designations and County policies related to creation of noise. In addition, future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. No impacts would occur.

e. Findings. No potentially significant impacts related to noise would occur with Program implementation.

4.3.12 Population and Housing

a. Setting. The unincorporated portion of San Luis Obispo County is currently home to 105,869 residents (excluding group quarters) and contains 49,119 housing units (California Department of Finance, 2014). Based on the average household size of 2.58 persons/household (California Department of Finance, 2014), 41,035 housing units would be required to house the current population. As such, there is currently an excess of 8,084 housing units. According to the Housing Element 2014-2019 of the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan, the county population is expected to grow between 0.44-1 percent per year from 2013 through 2018 (an increase of approximately 12,000 persons over the five year period) and countywide residential development is projected to average 1,050 units per year for the next several years (County of San Luis Obispo, 2014).

Vacancy rates are indicators of housing availability. When vacancy rates are high, there is an adequate supply of housing; consequently prospective owners and renters have a wider variety of choice. With fewer vacancies, the choice of housing is conversely limited; demand for housing exceeds supply and contributes to increases in cost. In order to assure adequate choice and availability of housing, while balancing the market for landlords and sellers, the

"desirable" rates of vacancy would range between 4 to 6 percent for rental units and 1 to 3 percent for owner occupied units (according to Federal Housing Administration standards). The current vacancy rate for the unincorporated portion of the county is 16.8 percent (California Department of Finance, 2014), which demonstrates a high degree of housing availability.

The San Luis Obispo County Housing Needs Assessment states that regional shortages of available water, among other factors (e.g., need for key infrastructure development, abundance of protected natural resource areas, and high land costs, etc.), continue to impact housing development and where it may be located. Development in Cambria, Los Osos, Shandon, and Nipomo is currently constrained by a limited water supply, with a LOS III designation in place. The Cambria Community Services District and Nipomo Community Services District are actively pursuing new water sources. In addition, the County is working on improving water supply and has adopted water neutral general plan amendments, mitigation fees for new development to help a supplemental water project, and a communitywide water conservation program.

b. Thresholds of Significance. As identified in the 2009 COSE EIR, potentially significant impacts would occur if the proposed program would result in any of the following (based on *State CEQA Guidelines*, Appendix G):

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; or*

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

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR did not identify any impacts related to population and housing as potentially significant and no mitigation measures were required.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

a) Impacts related to this threshold are addressed in Section 6.1, *Growth Inducement*.

b-c) The WWP program would promote water conservation through the prohibition of water wasting and the threat of fines for non-compliance in urban and rural areas, and through identification of a series of BMPs aimed at reducing water waste in agricultural practices. The WWP program would not, however, increase development potential. In contrast, WNND requirements would maintain current water use while allowing for development to occur consistent with the adopted General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. As such, the proposed Program would not displace existing housing or people. No impacts related to population and housing would occur.

e. Findings. No potentially significant impacts related to population and housing would occur with Program implementation.

4.3.13 Public Services and Utilities

a. Setting.

Fire Protection. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) provides fire protection for the County of San Luis Obispo, the City of Pismo Beach, the Avila Beach CSD, and the Los Osos CSD by cooperative agreements. There are 21 County Cal Fire Stations within the county (County of San Luis Obispo, 2009).

Police Services. The San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department is the law enforcement agency responsible for protecting life and property as well as providing service, security and safety to the unincorporated areas of the county. The Department's current staff includes 159 sworn personnel, 121 correctional staff, and 121 civilian personnel in addition to approximately 400 volunteers (County of San Luis Obispo, 2009).

Emergency Medical Response. The San Luis Obispo County Office of Emergency Services works with state agencies, County departments, and various community groups to coordinate and handle major disasters affecting county residents (County of San Luis Obispo, 2009).

Schools. San Luis Obispo County has over 34,000 students enrolled in over 75 schools in 10 school districts in the county. County schools stretch from Nipomo to Parkfield and from the Lucia Mar Unified School District with over 10,000 students to the Pleasant Valley Joint Union Elementary School District with 125 students. The County Office of Education provides academic and financial support and assistance to all 10 districts (County of San Luis Obispo, 2009).

Parks. San Luis Obispo County currently operates approximately 23 parks, 3 golf courses, and 8 Special Places. Urban Regional Parks account for 644 acres, Rural Regional Parks account for 11,398 acres, and mini, neighborhood and community parks account for 214 acres (County of San Luis Obispo, 2009).

Water. San Luis Obispo County obtains nearly 80 percent of its water supply from groundwater. Only two percent of the county's supply comes from imported water and the remaining 17 percent of water supply is surface waters (County of San Luis Obispo, 2009). As described in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, San Luis Obispo County is in the midst of an "exceptional drought" that has lowered water levels in surface lakes and reservoirs, and in groundwater basins. The Board of Supervisors has certified the ~~NMMA~~ Nipomo Mesa Water Conservation Area, the Los Osos Basin, and the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin, at LOS III, which indicates that groundwater demand has met or exceeded the dependable supply.

Non-local water resources are transmitted to San Luis Obispo County via the Coastal Branch of the State Water Project. The transmission infrastructure is owned by the Department of Water Resources and is operated and maintained by the Central Coast Water Authority. Once inside the county, the water is distributed via County-operated infrastructure. The County-operated water delivery system is overseen by County Public Works and is funded in part by various

county service areas. Other water delivery operators include community service districts or private water companies (County of San Luis Obispo, 2010).

Wastewater. Most of the county's larger unincorporated communities have formed community service districts or sanitary districts to operate and maintain their sewage collection and treatment systems. There are 15 wastewater treatment facilities that accept wastewater from unincorporated communities within the county. Those areas that are not connected to the treatment facilities rely on septic tanks and leachfields, or other acceptable methods to dispose of wastewater (County of San Luis Obispo, 2009).

Solid Waste. Solid waste is accepted at the three landfills in the county: Cold Canyon Landfill in San Luis Obispo, Chicago Grade Landfill north east of Atascadero, and the City of Paso Robles Landfill east of the City of Paso Robles, and in south county at the Nipomo Transfer Station. Curbside recycling is offered in almost all communities throughout the county and several facilities also provide recycling or the ability for reuse of construction material (County of San Luis Obispo, 2009).

b. Thresholds of Significance. As identified in the 2009 COSE EIR, a significant impact to fire protection and emergency services, schools, or social services would occur if implementation of the proposed Program would result in any of the following (based on *State CEQA Guidelines*, Appendix G):

Public Services:

a) *Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: Fire protection, Police protection, Schools, Parks and/or other public facilities.*

Utilities and Service Systems:

a) *Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board;*
b) *Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects;*
c) *Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects;*
d) *Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed;*
e) *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;*

f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs; or

g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR determined that implementation of the COSE Consolidation and Update would have a beneficial impact on water supply and demand and solid waste service and disposal and did not identify any impacts related to public services and utilities as potentially significant and no mitigation measures were required.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

Public Services.

a) The proposed Program would not accommodate additional growth beyond that anticipated by the General Plan and, therefore, would not increase demand for public services or facilities. Implementation of the proposed Program would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts. Impacts would be less than significant.

Utilities and Service Systems.

a- e) The proposed Program would not accommodate growth beyond that anticipated by the General Plan nor does it propose any specific development projects that would increase wastewater generation, water demand, or stormwater runoff. WNND requirements would require new urban and rural development within certified LOS III groundwater basins and new or more intensively irrigated agriculture within the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin) to offset new water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. The proposed Program does not propose any specific development; however, the Program may facilitate new growth anticipated by the General Plan in areas of the County designated at LOS III, if that development could offset its water use. New urban and rural development would continue to be required to demonstrate the availability of sufficient water supplies to serve the project, and would additionally be required to demonstrate compliance with the minimum 1:1 offset ratio. In addition, future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. Impacts would be less than significant.

f-g) The proposed Program would not accommodate growth beyond that anticipated by the General Plan nor does it propose any specific development projects that would increase solid waste generation. No impacts would occur.

e. Findings. No potentially significant impacts related to public services and utilities would occur with Program implementation.

4.3.14 Recreation

a. Setting. Outdoor recreational opportunities range from minimal passive activities such as hiking, to more active local and state parks, recreation facilities such as golf courses, and areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value such as found in the Carrizo Plains Reserve administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The County of San Luis Obispo currently operates approximately 23 parks, 3 golf courses, and 8 Special Places. Urban Regional Parks account for 644 acres, Rural Regional Parks account for 11,398 acres, and mini, neighborhood and community parks account for 214 acres. Within the county's unincorporated areas there are very few neighborhood parks. Many of the county's community parks, such as Los Osos Community Park and San Miguel Park, are below ten acres in size and provide the only park facilities in that community (County of San Luis Obispo, 2006).
California Department of Parks and Recreation ("State Parks"), also provides outdoor recreational facilities in the county which include items such as trails, camping, access to historic facilities, and/or nature appreciation throughout California as well as San Luis Obispo County. Examples of State Parks facilities within San Luis Obispo County include Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument, Montaña de Oro State Park, Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreational Area, and Morro Bay State Park (County of San Luis Obispo, 2006).

The federal government also provides access to passive parkland. Agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Services often provide trail corridors, camping, nature appreciation and in some cases preservation of historic facilities. Examples of federal parks in this area include the Piedras Blancas Light House (near San Simeon), the Carrizo Plains, and the Los Padres National Forest (County of San Luis Obispo, 2006).

b. Thresholds of Significance. The following two thresholds, which are also included in Appendix G of the *2014 State CEQA Guidelines*, were not specifically addressed in the 2009 COSE EIR Potentially significant impacts to recreation would occur if the proposed Program would result in any of the following:

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; or

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

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR did not specifically address impacts related to recreation, however, the EIR did not identify any impacts related to public services, including parks.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

a-b) The proposed Program would not directly generate additional population; therefore, it would not increase the use of neighborhood or regional parks such that substantial deterioration would occur, or such that new or expanded recreational facilities would be needed. The WWP program may limit the application of water to outdoor landscapes in urban and rural areas, which may result in the browning of lawns and other vegetated areas at

recreational facilities within the county. However, this would not affect the availability or use of recreational facilities. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

e. Findings. No potentially significant impacts related to recreation would occur with Program implementation.

4..15 Transportation/Traffic

a. Setting. Transportation and circulation in the county is provided through a variety of choices for residents and visitors depending on their destinations and reasons for transport. According to research by SLOAPCD, short trips (five miles or less) account for over half of all trips in the county. Existing transportation opportunities offer different travel times and levels of safety such as motorized transportation on the county's roadway network and non-motorized transportation on bicycle and pedestrian networks. Rail transportation in the county includes commuter and recreational rail transportation to areas north and south in the state.

b. Thresholds of Significance. For purposes of this program-level SEIR, a transportation impact would be considered significant if it would:

a) *Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit;*

b) *Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of serve standard and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads and highways;*

c) *Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks;*

d) *Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g. sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment);*

e) *Result in inadequate emergency access; or*

f) *Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks).*

The 2009 COSE EIR included standards of significance pertaining to increasing traffic in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system, and exceeding a level of service standard. Since preparation of the 2009 COSE EIR, these thresholds have been replaced with thresholds a and b above. The 2009 COSE EIR also included a standard of significance in which a transportation impact would be considered significant if it would result in inadequate parking capacity. Since preparation of the 2009 COSE EIR, the associated significance threshold was removed from the *State CEQA Guidelines*. As such, this threshold is not analyzed herein.

c. 2009 COSE EIR. The 2009 COSE EIR determined that implementation of the COSE Consolidation and Update would have a beneficial impact on traffic, level of service, and

alternative transportation and did not identify any impacts related to transportation/traffic as potentially significant and no mitigation measures were required.

d. Assessment of Impacts.

a-c) The proposed Program would not alter existing land use or zoning designations nor would it result in a change to the circulation system or congestion management plan, levels of service on county roads, or air traffic patterns. Future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. No impacts would occur.

d-e) The proposed Program does not propose any development projects that would increase hazards or result in inadequate emergency access. WNND requirements may facilitate new urban and rural development within groundwater basins certified at LOS III and new irrigated agricultural development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), if that development could offset its water use. However, any development facilitated by this component of the proposed Program would be subject to existing land use and zoning designations and County policies related to provision of emergency access. In addition, future development within the county would be subject to individual project review and approval by the County, wherein any project-specific impacts would be addressed. No impact would occur.

f) The proposed Program would not alter existing land use or zoning designations nor would it facilitate development beyond that accommodated by the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. As such, the proposed Program would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks). No impacts would occur.

e. Findings. No potentially significant impacts related to transportation/traffic would occur with Program implementation.

4.3.16 Cumulative Impacts

As discussed above, the WWP program would promote water conservation through the prohibition of water wasting in urban and rural areas and identification of a series of best management practices (BMPs) aimed at reducing water waste in agricultural practices, with a threat of fines for non-compliance in non-agricultural areas. This component of the Program would not, however, generate new development. In contrast, WNND requirements may facilitate new urban and rural development within groundwater basins certified at LOS III for water supply and new irrigated agricultural development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), if that development could offset its water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio. As discussed above, neither component of the Countywide Water Conservation Program would alter existing land use or zoning designations. Thus, while WNND requirements would facilitate new development in some areas of the county, it would do so subject to existing San Luis Obispo County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance land use designations and thus would not contribute to cumulative impacts from buildout beyond those

already addressed during the environmental review process for the various General Plan Elements.

While the proposed Agricultural Offset program could result in the partial or complete fallowing of agricultural lands in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (excluding the Atascadero Sub-basin), this would not be considered a conversion to non-agricultural use~~land designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland would not be permitted to be fallowed as offset credits under the proposed Program (Mitigation Measure AG-1)~~. While the fallowing of some properties could represent a change in visual character for individual properties it would not result in cumulative impacts to the aesthetic character of the county given that fallowed lands are a common feature in the pastoral landscape. In addition, the fallowing of lands is a typical practice for agricultural areas in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin. Fallowed land would not substantially increase PM_{10} emissions, result in the loss of topsoil, or result in substantial changes to drainage and runoff patterns.

The WWP program would result in a net decrease in water use countywide, but would not alter development potential. The extent of this decreased demand would depend on the extent to which county residents change their behaviors, as well as the effectiveness of violation reporting and enforcement in urban and rural areas. A net decrease in water use would result in water conservation and would help to reduce the existing strain on the county's groundwater resources as well as result in decreased energy use, and therefore decreases in GHG emissions.

The Program's contribution to cumulative impacts would not be considerable since impacts would be less than significant without mitigation for all of the above addressed issue areas. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to the above addressed issue areas would be less than significant. Cumulative impacts related the program's consistency with existing land use and policy framework, the conversion of agriculture, and risk of wildland fires are addressed in Sections 4.1, *Agricultural Resources*, and 4.2, *Land Use and Planning*, of this SEIR.

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