3.12 Effects Determined Insignificant

California Public Resources Code Section 21003(f) states: "…it is the policy of the state that…all persons and public agencies involved in the environmental review process be responsible for carrying out the process in the most efficient, expeditious manner in order to conserve the available financial, governmental, physical, and social resources with the objective that those resources may be better applied toward the mitigation of actual significant effects on the environment." This policy is reflected in State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15126.2(a), which states that "an EIR [environmental impact report] shall identify and focus on the significant environmental impacts of the proposed project" and Section 15143, which states that "the EIR shall focus on the significant effects on the environment." State CEQA Guidelines Section 15128 requires that an EIR contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR. This section discusses the following issue areas where impacts were determined to be insignificant:

- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Transportation and Traffic

POPULATION AND HOUSING

In terms of construction, Tier 3 solar electric facility (SEF) projects would average approximately 40 personnel, while Tier 1 and 2 SEF projects would average fewer personnel depending on the construction schedule and phasing. Construction of wind energy conversion systems (WECS) would require between three and five people per tower. For construction projects of this magnitude and duration, the workforce generally comprises workers that commute to job sites rather than relocate their household to any significant degree. As such, implementation of the Renewable Energy Streamlining Program (RESP or Program) is not anticipated to result in either an in-migration or a relocation of employees to satisfy the need for temporary construction-related employment. Therefore, no increase in temporary population would occur resulting from temporary workers relocating to the immediate area. Additionally, the RESP does not include a residential component that would directly induce new population growth. In fact, during construction of the SEFs and WECs associated with the implementation of the RESP, short-term employment could result in a beneficial impact on the local economy due to an increase in demand for products, services, and supplies found in the county.

PUBLIC SERVICES

SCHOOLS AND PARKS

Since the RESP does not include the development of residential land uses that would result in an increase in population or student generation, construction and operation of the SEFs and WECS facilities would not result in an increase in student population in any school district that would serve the project sites. Therefore, the proposed projects would have no impact on San Luis Obispo County schools. Similarly, without an increase in population, existing park facilities would serve the project sites, and the Program would not require additional parks or recreational facilities.

POLICE AND FIRE PROTECTION

In addition to the solar electric systems, SEFs can include additional on-site facilities such as electrical substations while WECS include but are not limited to wind turbines, mounting posts, on-site transmission lines, operations and maintenance buildings, and other accessory structures. However, the projects approved in association with the RESP would require minimal construction and operational staff. As such, adequate police and fire protection services currently exist to serve future sites; therefore, the Program would not result in the need for additional police and fire personnel or facilities.

Wildland fire issues are addressed in Section 3.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials.

WASTEWATER

SEFs and WECS under the Renewable Energy Streamlining Program would generate minimal volume of wastewater during construction and operational phases. Wastewater generated by the operations and maintenance buildings associated with WECS would be minimal and could be treated via on-site septic systems. As a result, SEFs and WECS would not exceed the wastewater treatment requirements of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. Additionally, neither the SEFs nor the WECS are anticipated to require new storm drainage facilities because the facilities approved for construction would not generate a significant amount of runoff water during operations. Water from the SEF panels would continue to percolate through the ground, as the majority of surfaces associated with larger SEF projects would remain pervious.

SOLID WASTE

Waste generation during construction and operation associated with the SEFs and WECS would be minor. Solid waste will be disposed of using locally licensed waste hauling services. The San Luis Obispo Integrated Waste Management Authority operates three landfills in the county: Cold Canyon Landfill, Chicago Grade Landfill, and Paso Robles Landfill. Cold Canyon Landfill is located about 6 miles south of the City of San Luis Obispo on State Route 227 and has a capacity of 200,000 to 499,999 tons per year. Chicago Grade Landfill is located 4 miles northeast of Atascadero off of State Route 41 with a capacity of 100,000 to 199,999 tons per year. Paso Robles Landfill is located 8.5 miles east of Paso Robles off of State Route 46 East. Based on the capacity at these landfills, there is ample capacity throughout the county to receive the minor amount of solid waste generated by SEF and WECS projects (CalRecycle).

Additionally, the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939) requires every city and county in the state to prepare a Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE) to its Solid Waste Management Plan that identifies how each jurisdiction will meet the mandatory state waste diversion goals of 25 percent by 1995 and 50 percent by 2000. The purpose of AB 939 is to "reduce, recycle, and re-use solid waste generated in the State to the maximum extent feasible." During decommissioning, much of the solid material (e.g., concrete and masonry, steel, reflecting mirrors, power cable, pipes, pumps) of the SEF and WECS facilities could be recycled and sold as scrap or used in road building or bank restabilization projects; the remaining nonhazardous waste would be sent to permitted disposal facilities. As such, SEF and WECS facilities would comply with waste reduction and recycling requirements.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

There are over 1,900 miles of roadway countywide ranging from freeways to unsurfaced roads. The county road system contains 1,300 miles, with the remaining mileage in the incorporated cities (San Luis Obispo County 2011). There are 341 miles of state highways in the county.

Travel in the county is a function of the distribution and size of population and economic activity within and outside the Coastal Zone as well as throughout the county. Travel patterns and vehicle trip volumes in the county are affected by the dispersal of housing in relation to economic activity.

Implementation of SEFs and WECS would require a variety of transportation activities over the life of a project. Most of these transportation activities would involve the movement of workers, materials, and equipment to the specific development project site during the construction phase. The types and amounts of materials and equipment would depend on the technology type as well as site-specific characteristics. Construction of renewable energy projects would result in temporary increases in traffic trips on local roads and highways in the vicinity of a proposed renewable energy project site. Construction-related traffic would include worker vehicles and trucks delivering materials and supplies to the specific renewable energy project site. Construction of SEF and WECS facilities would vary in size; however, the size and magnitude projects permitted under the RESP would not result significant impacts on local roadways.

Ongoing operations and maintenance of SEF and WECS facilities would require worker commutes and deliveries of supplies. Accordingly, transportation activities during operations would be limited to a small number of trips by personal vehicles and a few truck shipments. Given the small number of traffic trips generated by operations of solar energy projects, the associated negligible increase in trips on local roadways and highways would not adversely impact the local transportation system or otherwise degrade level of service operations.

REFERENCES

CalRecycle (California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery). 2014a. Chicago Grande Landfill. Accessed October 7. http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/SWFacilities/Directory/40-AA-0008/Detail/.

———. 2014b. City of Paso Robles Landfill (40-AA-0001). Accessed October 7. http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/SWFacilities/Directory/40-AA-0001/.

———. 2014b. Cold Canyon Landfill. Accessed October 7. http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/SWFacilities/Directory/40-AA-0017/Detail/.

SLO County (County of San Luis Obispo). 2011.