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DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

LAFCO 3076



# LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS

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# 5.0 LONG TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

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## 5.1 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSABLE OR IRRETRIEVABLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

The *CEQA Guidelines* mandate that the EIR must address any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be involved in the proposed action, should it be implemented (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.2[c]). An impact would fall into this category if:

- The project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources;
- The primary and secondary impacts of the project would generally commit future generations to similar uses;
- The project involves uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental incidents associated with the project; or
- The proposed consumption of resources is not justified (e.g., the project results in wasteful use of energy).

As stated previously (Section 4.0 of this EIR), LAFCO concluded that the consolidation of the Conservation District with Valley District would not result in direct or indirect changes in the physical environment that could be considered potentially significant. No physical construction of new facilities, or renovation of existing facilities, would occur as part of the Project. In addition, no changes (i.e., to land use or zoning designations) to the affected lands within the jurisdiction of Valley District and the Conservation District are proposed with the Project. Existing land uses would remain unchanged for the foreseeable future and therefore, the Project would not limit the range of other uses that could be implemented on the affected properties.

Determining whether the proposed Project would result in significant irreversible environmental changes requires a determination of whether key resources would be degraded or destroyed such that there would be little possibility of restoring them. No such degradation or destruction of resources is forecast to occur as a result of the proposed Project. No important natural resources would be lost as the result of Project implementation, and the proposed consolidation would not impact current water conservation activities. Recharge activities currently conducted by the Conservation District are governed by various agreements, judgments, MOUs and related documents. Valley District would be governed by the same or similar documents, and will be conditioned to devote revenues related to Conservation District assets toward groundwater management.

As the Project does not propose physical construction of facilities and, rather, represents consolidation of the two existing districts, the use of natural resources, in the form of

construction materials and energy resources, would not be required for construction and would, therefore, not result in significant long-term shortfalls in the availability of such resources. Short-term or long-term consumption of energy for operational purposes is also not required as part of the Project, and therefore, the Project would not contribute to local or regional energy shortfalls.

In addition, the long-term management of water resources within Valley District is addressed in a number of documents aimed at protecting water supply and water quality within Valley District boundaries. These plans include, but are not limited to, the County of San Bernardino General Plan, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District Master Plan and EIR, the Santa Ana Water Right Applications for Supplemental Water Supply Final EIR, the Upper Santa Ana River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, and numerous water-related agreements, judgments, MOUs and similar documents (excerpts of key documents are provided as appendices to this EIR). Refer also to Section 3.0, *Project Description*, for additional discussion.

Based on the foregoing, the proposed Project is not anticipated to result in significant, irreversible environmental changes.

## **5.2 GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS**

### **5.2.1 DEFINITION OF GROWTH INDUCEMENT**

CEQA requires a discussion of the ways in which a proposed project could be an inducement to growth. The *CEQA Guidelines* [Section 15126.2d)] identify a project to be growth-inducing if it fosters economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. As an example, population growth resulting from proposed residential development projects and new employees hired for proposed commercial and industrial development projects represent direct forms of growth. Examples of projects that are indirectly growth-inducing are the expansion of urban services into a previously un-served or underserved area, the creation or extension of transportation links, or the removal of major obstacles to growth. It is important to note that direct forms of growth have secondary effects of expanding the size of local markets and attracting additional economic activity to the area.

A project could also indirectly induce growth by reducing or removing barriers to growth, or by creating a condition that attracts additional population or new economic activity. However, a project's potential to induce growth does not automatically result in growth. Growth can happen only through capital investment in new economic opportunities, by either the private or public sectors. Development pressures are a result of economic investment in a particular locality. These pressures help to structure the local politics of growth and the local jurisdiction posture on growth management and land use policy. Land use policies of local municipalities and counties largely regulate growth at the local level.

In general terms, a project may foster spatial, economic or population growth in a geographic area if it meets any one of the following criteria:

- Removal of an impediment to growth (e.g., establishment of an essential public service or the provision of new access to an area);
- Foster economic expansion or growth (e.g., changes in revenue base, employment expansion, etc.);
- Foster population growth (i.e., the construction of additional housing), either directly or indirectly;

- Establishment of a precedent-setting action (e.g., an innovation, a change in zoning, or general plan amendment approval); or,
- Development of or encroachment on an isolated or adjacent area of open space (being distinct from an “infill” type of project).

Should a project meet any one of the above listed criteria, it may be considered growth-inducing. The potential growth-inducing impacts of the proposed Project are evaluated against these five criteria in this section.

Under CEQA, growth inducement is not necessarily considered detrimental, beneficial, or of little significance to the environment. Typically, the growth-inducing potential of a project would be considered significant if it fosters growth or a concentration of population in excess of what is assumed in pertinent master plans, land use plans, or projections made by regional planning agencies such as the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Significant growth impacts could also occur if the project provides infrastructure or service capacity to accommodate growth *beyond* the levels currently permitted by local or regional plans and policies. In general, growth induced by a project is considered a significant impact if it directly or indirectly affects the ability of agencies to provide needed public services, or if it can be demonstrated that the potential growth significantly affects the environment in some other way.

## 5.2.2 EXISTING WATER SUPPLIES

The area served by Valley District encompasses an estimated 325 square miles with an approximate population of 600,000 people. The service area includes Bloomington, Colton, East Highlands, Grand Terrace, Highland, Loma Linda, Mentone, Redlands, Rialto, Yucaipa, and San Bernardino, as well as portions of Fontana and Riverside Counties.<sup>1</sup>

Water sources for Valley District are divided between imported, surface, and reclaimed water supplies. The Valley District's primary source of imported water is from the California State Water Project (SWP) through the East Branch of the State Aqueduct via Lake Silverwood.<sup>2</sup> Valley District has also filed a water right application with the State Water Resources Control Board to obtain authorization to divert water from the Santa Ana River. Valley District acts as a water wholesaler, selling water to the majority of the retail water agencies within the District's boundaries. The retail agencies subsequently provide water to the end consumer.

Valley District is responsible for planning long-range water supply and for importation of supplemental water supply, for the San Bernardino Valley. Valley District provides imported water through participation in the SWP and is responsible for managing groundwater storage within its established boundaries. Valley District also manages groundwater extraction over the amount specified in the existing water judgments; refer to Section 3.0, *Project Description*, for additional discussion. Valley District is responsible for monitoring groundwater supplies in the San Bernardino and Rialto-Colton Sub-basin and for maintaining flows at the Riverside Narrows on the Santa Ana River. The District is responsible for the importation of water through the SWP for direct delivery and groundwater recharge and for coordinating the delivery of water to the appropriate retail agencies within its service area. The District actively replenishes its

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<sup>1</sup> San Bernardino Valley Water District. [http://www.sbvmd.com/frequently\\_asked\\_questions/](http://www.sbvmd.com/frequently_asked_questions/). Accessed April 10, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> San Bernardino Valley Water District. [http://www.sbvmd.com/frequently\\_asked\\_questions/](http://www.sbvmd.com/frequently_asked_questions/). Accessed April 10, 2008.

groundwater supply by taking delivery of SWP water at the Devil Canyon Power Plant Afterbay. Water is conveyed 17 miles eastward to spreading grounds and/or agricultural and wholesale users within the San Bernardino Basin. Water is also conveyed westward for direct delivery in the Colton-Rialto Sub-basin.

Valley District is required to provide a flow equivalent of approximately 15,250 acre-feet (AF) per year at the Riverside Narrows on the Santa Ana River.<sup>3</sup> Approximately 25,000 AF of treated wastewater from the Cities of San Bernardino, Colton, and Rialto are used annually to meet this requirement through discharge to the Santa Ana River. This recycled water, therefore, represents an important source in meeting area water demand requirements.

### 5.2.3 REMOVAL OF AN IMPEDIMENT TO GROWTH

The provision of additional supplemental water can be characterized as reducing a barrier to growth. Senate Bills 221 and 610 were signed into law in 2001 and took effect January 1, 2002. The two senate bills amended State law to better link information on water supply availability to certain land use decisions by cities and counties and require that new developments meeting certain size criteria have adequate long-term water supplies.

With the proposed Project, no new facilities would be constructed by Valley District (relative to LAFCO 3076) and no additional supplemental water supply will be made available. No changes to the physical environment would occur with the Project. No specific changes in facilities have been identified, and it is assumed that, if the proposed consolidation is approved, prior to modification of any existing facilities or construction of any new facilities, Valley District would be required to conduct a separate environmental review for compliance with CEQA. Any other future changes in physical facilities or operations by either agency would also require such compliance with CEQA. For the above reasons, the proposed Project is not considered to induce growth as the result of removal of an impediment to growth.

### 5.2.4 ECONOMIC EXPANSION

The proposed Project is intended to provide for more efficient water resource operations within San Bernardino Valley, consistent with the findings of LAFCO 2919. This includes elimination of the Groundwater Assessment currently levied and collected by the Conservation District along with an anticipated net reduction in staff over time, while providing for the same or similar services currently provided by the Conservation District. No new staff or construction of facilities are proposed that would result in or enable economic expansion within Valley District or the surrounding region. The Project is not intended to provide new economic opportunities; however, the Project would eliminate the duplication of certain responsibilities and management tasks, thereby creating a financial benefit for Valley District and its member agencies. In addition, as of December 2007, 868,000 people were employed within San Bernardino County, with a 5.9% unemployment rate.<sup>4</sup> Project implementation would not appreciably affect the projected employment figures for the years 2004-2014 of approximately 621,000 new jobs within the County.<sup>5</sup> For these reasons, the proposed Project would not induce growth as the result of economic expansion.

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<sup>3</sup> San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District. [http://www.sbvmd.com/what\\_we\\_do/](http://www.sbvmd.com/what_we_do/) Accessed February 22, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> California LaborMarketInfo. <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/> Accessed February 21, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> California LaborMarketInfo. [http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/indproj/rive\\$\\_highlights.pdf](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/indproj/rive$_highlights.pdf) Accessed February 21, 2008.

### 5.2.5 POPULATION GROWTH AND HOUSING

The California Department of Finance (DOF) estimates that the population of the County of San Bernardino was 1,974,206 as of July 1, 2005, and increased to 2,016,277 as of July 1, 2006.<sup>6</sup> Between 2000 and 2007, the population of the County of San Bernardino increased from approximately 1,710,139 to 2,039,467. The County's population is projected to grow to approximately 2,958,939 million by 2030. In addition, DOF estimates that, as of 2006, there were approximately 668,377 housing units in the County of San Bernardino, with a countywide housing vacancy rate of approximately 11.86%.

Water demand for the region is expected to increase as a direct function of the anticipated growth in population and the related housing and employment markets. At the same time that water demand within the region is increasing as a result of increasing regional growth, imported water supplies are becoming more constrained. This is due to growth in other regions that draw water from the same import sources (Colorado River and State Water Project), while environmental regulations are placing increased pressures on imported water supplies, causing regional and local water agencies to develop strategies to increase non-imported water sources to meet demand and to provide a more reliable long-term water supply.

The Project would not directly result in an increase in the water supply available to serve users within the boundaries of Valley District and the Conservation District jurisdictions. No housing or substantial employment opportunities would result from implementation of the Project. Therefore, no increase in demand for water supply would occur with the Project. With implementation of the proposed Project, the available water supply would remain the same and therefore, no increase in water availability that could directly or indirectly result in population growth or demand for housing within the boundaries of Valley District or within the surrounding area is anticipated.

### 5.2.6 ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRECEDENT SETTING ACTION

The proposed Project would not result in changes to the existing San Bernardino or Riverside County General Plans or zoning ordinances or other land use plans or policies affecting lands within the Districts' service area. No variances, conditional use permits, or other potential precedent-setting actions would be required for approval of the proposed Project.

Most LAFCO projects that involve consolidations only result in changes in the physical environment if the services can no longer be provided, because of budget or other reasons, or if the services will be reduced to a point that the service no longer achieves its purpose or function. Other future proposals for consolidations of service districts within San Bernardino or Riverside Counties would be considered on a case-by-case basis for their intent and potential adverse effects, as well as for their potential to induce growth. As such, the proposed consolidation of Valley District and the Conservation District is not anticipated to establish a precedent setting action that would induce future growth.

### 5.2.7 ENCROACHMENT ON OPEN SPACE

As stated previously, no physical construction is proposed with the Project. Although the service area boundaries of MWD and the Conservation District may include areas of designated open space, the Project would not result in changes in land use within these boundaries. Valley

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<sup>6</sup> California Department of Finance. [http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/FS\\_DATA/profiles/sanbernardino.xls](http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/FS_DATA/profiles/sanbernardino.xls). Accessed 2/20/08.

District would continue to operate in its current manner, subsequent to the proposed consolidation. No changes to the San Bernardino County General Plan or zoning ordinance, or other land use plans or policies that pertain to the area within the existing District boundaries, are proposed with the Project. As such, the Project would not result in growth inducement due to encroachment on existing open space.

### **5.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

Sections 15130 and 15065(c) of the *CEQA Guidelines* require the discussion of cumulative impacts when they are significant. The EIR is required to identify and discuss cumulative impacts that may result from the proposed project when considered with other closely related projects and reasonably foreseeable future projects. As discussed at length in this EIR, LAFCO has not identified any significant Project impacts; therefore, no “cumulatively considerable” impacts are expected to occur with respect to the Project.

The *CEQA Guidelines* define cumulative effects as “two or more individual effects that, when considered together are considerable, or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” The Guidelines further state that the individual effects can be the various changes related to a single project or the change involved in a number of other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15355). The Guidelines allow the use of two alternative methods to determine the scope of projects for the cumulative impact analysis:

- List Method – A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the lead agency.
- General Plan Projection Method – A summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document that has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130).

For purposes of this EIR, the General Plan Projection Method has been used.

#### **5.3.1 GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE**

This EIR evaluates cumulative impacts on both a local and regional level. The local analysis focuses primarily on cumulative impacts that may result with implementation of the proposed Project along with other proposed projects within the project area. The regional analysis focuses on cumulative impacts as a result of implementation of the proposed Project, as well as other existing and proposed projects that may occur within the Project vicinity.

#### **5.3.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACT METHODOLOGY**

The EIR relies upon regional planning programs for cumulative impact analysis. Only those impacts that might compound or interrelate with those of the project at hand require evaluation. As discussed above, LAFCO has not identified any significant impacts associated with the proposed Project; therefore, no significant cumulative impacts are forecast to occur.

Quantification of cumulative impacts is difficult, as it requires speculative estimates of impacts that are limited by factors such as:

- The geographic diversity of impacts (impacts of future development may affect different areas);
- Variations in time of impacts (many project impacts would occur at different times, and would be reduced or removed before other impacts occurred);
- Complete data for all future development; and,
- Changes in data related to future development may change following subsequent approvals.

However, every attempt has been made in this EIR to make a qualitative judgment of the combined effects of, and relationships between, all identifiable and foreseeable cumulative projects.

### 5.3.3 SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY VALLEY MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT MASTER PLAN EIR

The Master Plan EIR considers potential impacts as the result of implementation of the Master Plan including air quality, agricultural resources, biological resources, geological hazards, hazardous materials, and groundwater. All impacts were determined to be either less than significant or de minimus, with exception of potential impacts to groundwater resources. As the EIR prepared for the Master Plan was a Program EIR, and therefore, provides a programmatic evaluation of the intended actions, certain elements of the Groundwater Management Program have not yet been defined to the degree where an accurate evaluation of potential cumulative effects may be achieved. As such, potential cumulative effects will be assessed through subsequent evaluation, pursuant to the requirements of CEQA. LAFCO 3076 would not affect the type or phasing of facilities addressed within the Master Plan EIR.

### 5.3.4 UPPER SANTA ANA RIVER WATERSHED INTEGRATED REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRWMP), NOVEMBER 2007

The Upper Santa Ana Water Resources Association has developed an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) to address water management issues for the communities of the Upper Santa Ana River (SAR) watershed, which include resources within Valley District. The Plan identifies, defines, and establishes strategies for water management opportunities in the present or future within the region to improve water supply reliability and self-reliance for future water supplies.

#### 5.3.4.1 Future Population Growth in the Region and Valley District Service Area

Within the IRWMP, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) predicts County Population Projections for the years 2010-2025. Riverside County is expected to grow from approximately 1,551,943 in 2000 to 2,876,300 in 2025, or an increase of 3.4%; San Bernardino County is anticipated to grow from approximately 1,718,312 in 2000 to 2,558,700 in 2025 or an increase of 2% (SCAG 2001).<sup>7</sup>

In 2000, the Valley District service area had a population of 585,000, 583,482 of which lived in San Bernardino County; the remainder resided in Riverside County. Over the period 2000 to 2025, and using SCAG county-level population projections, the number of residents in the

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<sup>7</sup> Upper Santa Ana River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, November 2007.

service areas of Valley District and the IRWMP area is projected to increase by approximately 199,500 and 297,800, respectively.

#### **5.3.4.2 Applied Water Demands**

The IRWMP applied water demands developed for the water budget are based on the demand projections by water agency. Per the Urban Water Management Planning Act, water demands are required to be broken down into separate categories, based on anticipated water use. For the San Bernardino region, the following categories were considered: Residential, Commercial/Industrial, Agricultural, and Other (uses such as unaccounted-for system losses, water sales to other agencies, and water used in construction). According to the IRWMP, total demand for the Region is expected to increase by approximately 50 percent from 349,200 acre-feet (AF) in 2005 to 519,700 AF in 2030.<sup>6</sup>

The proposed Project would not increase the available water supply. No additional housing is proposed as part of the Project. As such, the Project would not result in changes in local or regional water demand or effects on the available supply, and therefore, the Project would not contribute to potential cumulative effects on water resources when considered with present or existing development locally or on a regional level. Although population is projected to continue to grow within the area served by Valley District, the Project would not contribute to significant direct or indirect cumulative effects on water resources.

#### **5.3.5 COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO GENERAL PLAN, APRIL 2007**

The County of San Bernardino General Plan provides for the long-term planning of resources and future growth and development and establishes economic and social goals and policies as they relate to land use and development. The General Plan provides land use designations used to describe the extent of the uses of land within the County, which include standards of population density and building intensity, in conformance with Section 65302(a) of the Government Code, to allow for long-term planning for future development within the County.

Goal CO-5 of the Conservation Element states the County will protect and preserve water resources for the maintenance, enhancement, and restoration of environmental resources. In addition, Chapter X, Implementation Program, indicates that the County may develop master plans such as a “conjunctive groundwater surface water management program” to construct, operate, and maintain various water facilities. Preparation of such master plans will allow for the implementation of the water policies presented in the General Plan.

The proposed Project will be consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan with regard to water conservation and long-term protection within Valley District, and therefore, would not contribute to potential adverse cumulative effects on County water resources. No physical development is proposed as part of the Project. If additional facilities or improvements related to water infrastructure are required in the future, potential cumulative effects would be assessed at that time.

#### **5.3.6 SANTA ANA RIVER WATER RIGHTS APPLICATION EIR (MARCH 2007)**

The Final EIR prepared for the Santa Ana River Water Rights project evaluates the potential environmental impacts from the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (Valley District) and Western Municipal Water District (WMWD) joint application with the State Water Resources Board to divert a maximum of 200,000 acre feet per year of water from the Santa Ana River to the local area in order to provide an increase in water supply reliability by reducing dependence

on imported water via the CWP and meet future demand needs through a long-term water supply and operational flexibility. An excerpt of this EIR is provided as Appendix E to this EIR. As the proposed Project is a consolidation of districts, the proposed Project would not result in changes in local or regional water demand or effects on the existing or future availability of water supply. As such, if the Santa Ana River Water Rights Application were approved, the proposed Project would not contribute to an increase in demand for water including the supply of the water delegated to the area from the application approval. Therefore the proposed project would not result in the water potential cumulative effects on water resources when considered with present or existing development locally or on a regional level.

### 5.3.7 LOCAL CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Valley District includes approximately 352.2 square miles and is generally bounded by the Sphere of Influence boundary of the Inland Empire Utilities Agency (formally know as the Chino Basin Municipal Water District) on the west, the Crestline-Lake Arrowhead Water Agency and the Big Bear Municipal Water District boundaries on the north; section, quarter section and half section lines on the east; and parcel boundaries along the south which include a portion of the Riverside/San Bernardino County line. The Conservation District is approximately 77.9 square miles in size and is generally bordered on the east by a combination of parcel boundaries and full and partial section lines within the Cities of Redlands, Loma Linda, and Colton, excluding the area of the Santa Ana River, from a point near the Guthrie Interchange easterly to the State Highway 30 Bridge. The Conservation District boundaries are encompassed entirely within the boundaries of Valley District. The Project area spans the eastern two-thirds of the San Bernardino Valley, the Crafton Hills, and a portion of the Yucaipa Valley and includes the cities and communities of San Bernardino, Colton, Loma Linda, Redlands, Rialto, Bloomington, Highland, East Highland, Mentone, Grand Terrace, and Yucaipa.

As determined in Section 4.0, *Environmental Analysis*, the proposed Project would not result in significant environmental impacts. The proposed consolidation would not result in changes to land use or zoning designations

The proposed consolidation would involve no physical construction of facilities or other activities that would potentially cause significant adverse effect on resources at the local level. As such, the proposed Project is not anticipated to contribute to cumulative impacts at the local level.

### 5.3.8 REGIONAL CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The proposed Project is not considered to have a significant contribution to regional cumulative impacts because it does not conflict with the land use and planning goals and policies of other jurisdictions in the region, nor will it result in significant regional impacts on natural resources. The Project would not result in changes in or contributions to such regional issues as air quality either from daily operation and management or construction activities. In addition, no changes to existing hydrology or water quality would occur that may potentially contribute to drainage or water quality issues within water bodies within the surrounding region.

Mitigation of cumulative impacts is best accomplished by region-wide mitigation programs that conform to the adopted general plan designations and zoning, and by implementation of project-specific mitigation measures where appropriate. However, as no significant impacts were identified with the Project, no mitigation for cumulative impacts is required.

### **Global Climate Change**

Global Climate Change is a broad concept related to potential future changes in global climate. In the context of CEQA documents, this discussion typically is focused on the anthropogenic causes of global climate change (from “greenhouse gas emissions”) and the potential effects of global climate change upon projects (sea level rise, etc). Although there are presently no specific significance thresholds for evaluating Global Climate Change issues within a CEQA document, several agencies, including the State Office of Planning and Research and South Coast Air Quality Management District, are in the process of developing guidelines and thresholds. In addition, there have been several court cases that provide insight into the appropriate level of CEQA review. In the case of LAFCO 3076, no Project-specific or cumulative impacts are anticipated with respect to Global Climate Change, as no significant Project impacts have been identified, there is no planned construction that would generate temporary emissions, there is no planned construction of new facilities that would generate long-term emissions, and no facilities are proposed that could be subject to adverse effects of global climate change. In fact, through the proposed Consolidation and associated improved efficiencies in operations and staffing, there may be a slight reduction in greenhouse gas emissions due to consolidation.