

CHAPTER 7.0

Other Topics Required by CEQA

This chapter contains other required CEQA statutory sections that evaluate the potential growth-inducing impacts and significant irreversible and irretrievable impacts.

7.1 Growth-Inducing Impacts and Secondary Effects of Growth

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines [Section 15126.2(d)] require that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) evaluate the growth inducing impacts of a proposed project. The EIR should:

Discuss the ways in which a proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion of a wastewater treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Also discuss the characteristic of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

A project can have direct and/or indirect growth inducement potential. Direct growth would result if a project involved construction of new housing. A project can have indirect growth inducement if it would establish substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial or governmental enterprises) or if it would involve a substantial construction effort with substantial short-term employment opportunities and indirectly stimulate the need for additional housing and services to support the new employment demand. A project would also have an indirect growth inducement effect if it would remove an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint on a required public service.

The proposed project would not involve an increase in population or employment, or construction of new housing. Short-term project activities would involve workers for the course of the breaching activity at the Russian River Estuary. Long-term activities under the proposed project would involve adaptive management strategy to balance flood protection and habitat restoration objectives established by the National Marine Fisheries Services' (NMFS) Russian River Biological Opinion (see **Chapter 2.0, Project Description**). There is no substantial change in the

existing activities of the Water Agency that would increase housing, population, or employment. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a direct increase in population or employment or new housing.

To determine indirect growth inducement potential, the proposed project was reviewed to ascertain whether it would remove an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint on a required public service. Therefore, to assess whether the proposed project would induce growth indirectly, it must be determined whether the project removes an obstacle for growth.

The project activities are located near the community of Jenner in unincorporated Sonoma County. As described in **Chapters 1.0, Introduction, and 2.0, Project Description**, the Water Agency will adhere to conditions of and implement strategies established in the NMFS Russian River Biological Opinion and adopt lagoon management practices as part of the proposed project. The adaptive management practices include maintaining an outlet channel and minimizing breaching activities during the lagoon management period and enable the Water Agency to comply with the requirements of the Biological Opinion and to meet the objectives of enhancing fisheries habitat while simultaneously minimizing flood risk to the low-lying properties adjacent to the Estuary.

As part of the proposed Estuary Management Project, the Water Agency's activities would involve continued provision of flood control services and support for existing and planned land uses and would not involve altering the land use or economic constraints to the surrounding floodplain. The proposed project would not directly or indirectly support economic expansion, population growth, or residential construction in the Estuary Management Project area. The purpose of the adaptive management practice is habitat restoration in the Estuary while also providing for flood protection, which does not remove any obstacle to growth. The proposed outlet channel creation and maintenance during the lagoon management period (see **Chapter 2.0, Project Description**) along with the ongoing breaching activity during the rest of the year do not increase the population-serving capacity of the Water Agency, and are not considered growth-inducing.

The Water Agency's activities under the proposed project would involve an adaptive management strategy which supports existing and planned land uses and would not alter the land use or economic constraints in the surrounding floodplain. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in growth inducement.

7.2 Irreversible Environmental Changes and Irretrievable Commitments

Section 15126.2 of the CEQA Guidelines states that an EIR should discuss significant irreversible environmental changes from the project or any irreversible damage from any environmental accidents associated with the project. The EIR should also evaluate any irretrievable commitments of resources, which are those that cause either direct or indirect use of natural resources such that the resources cannot be restored or returned to their original condition. For example, the extirpation of a species from an area is an irreversible commitment.

Types of resources generally considered in an irretrievable or irreversible commitment of resources analysis includes resources like fossil fuels, natural gas, minerals, or timber. As described in **Chapter 2.0, Project Description**, the Estuary Management Project would involve short-term outlet channel formation activity at the Estuary which would require operation of construction equipment such as an excavator or bulldozer. Operation of such equipment would increase the short-term use of refined petroleum products during the operation of the equipment (primarily gas, diesel, and motor oil). However, the energy consumption for the activity would not result in long-term depletion of non-renewable energy resources and would not permanently increase reliance on energy resources that are not renewable. The outlet channel formation activities would not reduce or interrupt existing electrical or natural gas services such that existing supplies would be constrained. Therefore, the Estuary Management Project would not result in an irretrievable and irreversible commitment of natural resources through direct consumption of fossil fuels and use of materials for outlet channel formation during the adaptive management period. The use of the nonrenewable resources is expected to account for a minimal portion of the region's resources and would not affect the availability of these resources for other needs within the region. There would no greater energy or resources consumed than that under the existing conditions.

The Estuary Management Project activities would not involve long-term operation activities that would result in irreversible and irretrievable commitment of energy and material resources (i.e. associated with operations like gravel mining or timber harvesting); however it is recognized that implementation of the Estuary Management Project may affect other resources besides these typically considered in an irretrievable or irreversible commitment of resources analysis, and that those effects could be detrimental. For example, the Estuary Management Project may reduce or eliminate the availability of conditions that support surfing waves; however this is not an irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources because the process could be reversed.