

5.0 Growth Inducement

5.1 Requirements for the Analysis of Growth Inducement

Section 15126.2(d) of CEQA Guidelines, as amended, requires the discussion of the ways in which a proposed project could either directly or indirectly foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects that would remove obstacles to population growth, and project characteristics which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment either individually or cumulatively. CEQA additionally states that growth in any area should not be assumed to be necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment. Growth inducement may be addressed under NEPA as indirect and/or cumulative effects, as appropriate, but no federal guidelines or criteria specific to growth inducement are applicable.

In accordance with section 15126.2(d), a project can be considered to foster spatial, economic, or population growth in an area if it directly or indirectly results in:

- Removal of an impediment to growth (e.g., the establishment of an essential public service or the provision of new access to an area);
- Foster economic expansion or growth (e.g., construction of additional housing, changes in revenue base, employment expansion, etc.);
- Establishment of a precedent-setting action (e.g., an innovation, a change in zoning or general plan designation); or
- Development or encroachment in an isolated or adjacent area of open space (being distinct from an “infill” type of development).

Should a project meet any of the above conditions, it can be considered growth inducing.

5.1.1 Other Related Environmental Documents

This draft EIR/EIS tiers from, and incorporates by reference, the Regional Water Facilities Master Plan Program EIR (State Clearinghouse #2003021052). Tiering is a process provided under both CEQA and NEPA, pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15152 and CEQA Regulations at 40 CFR 1502.2. As discussed in CEQA Guidelines section 15152, “tiering” refers to using the analysis of general matters

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contained in a broader EIR with later EIRs. Tiering is accomplished by incorporating by reference the general discussions from broader EIRs. Tiering allows the subsequent environmental document to focus on those issues most relevant to its preparation. State CEQA Guidelines section 15150 and CEQ Regulations at 40 CFR 1502.2 provide guidance for incorporation by reference, and require that relevant information be summarized in the subsequent environmental document and that the broader (tiered) environmental documents be made available for review by the public. This document is available to the public for review at the Water Authority office.

5.1.2 Regional Water Facilities Master Plan Program EIR

The Water Authority was the Lead Agency under CEQA for the Master Plan Program EIR, which evaluated the projects identified in the Master Plan on a broader or program level. The Water Authority's Board certified the Master Plan Final Program EIR on November 20, 2003. The Master Plan did not describe every facility in detail, but rather described the types of facilities needed to help the Water Authority achieve its mission of providing a safe and reliable water supply to the San Diego region. Therefore, only a broader environmental analysis of these planned facilities was achieved. The Master Plan Program EIR identified and included analysis, to the extent possible, of the Planned Projects identified on Table 2.2. However, the Program EIR recognized that detailed evaluations of specific projects would need to be conducted as part of future site-specific design and CEQA review. The Master Plan Program EIR is available to the public for review at the Water Authority office and on the Water Authority's website (www.sdcwa.org).

5.2 Analysis of Growth Inducement

5.2.1 Removal of an Impediment to Growth

Under the proposed project and alternatives, the Water Authority would construct, operate, and maintain water service facilities throughout its Service Area, and acquire and manage the properties and rights-of-way to support these facilities. The Water Authority develops and implements new facilities to increase the reliability and flexibility of the water delivery system. New facilities are located and sized based on the need to provide water to the Member Water Agencies, whose supply requirements respond to land use and zoning (i.e., development) decisions by local jurisdictions. Pipeline projects, for example, are necessary to increase capacity, relieve bottlenecks, and make the delivery system more reliable. Many other activities and projects are routine maintenance and management activities that the Water Authority has conducted in the past, and would continue to conduct in the future. These actions are deemed necessary

to serve the Water Authority mission of providing a safe and reliable water supply to the San Diego region. While this constitutes the provision of an essential public service and the removal of an impediment to growth (i.e., water supply), its effects can be considered to be growth accommodating rather than growth inducing.

The Water Authority is not a land use agency and does not make decisions regarding the timing, location, or magnitude of growth and development. However, the Water Authority plans and executes CIP projects and O&M Activities to meet current and future water demands derived from population projections and analysis conducted by SANDAG and the local general purpose governments. The Water Authority reviews and adjusts its CIP program on an annual basis to reflect changes in water demand projections, which can result in timing, capacity, or location changes for future water delivery facilities. The Water Authority CIP thus functions as a dynamic program that can be adapted to accommodate and reflect the changing environment of the area. Its activities can be viewed as accommodating existing and projected future water supply demands rather than providing excess capacity for unplanned growth.

The proposed Plan would provide a streamlined process for the Water Authority to comply with state and federal regulatory policies regarding sensitive biological resources. Because the action is issuance of permits, the alternatives considered involve alternatives to the permitting process. Therefore, none of the alternatives would have growth-inducing effects. Based on the environmental evaluation of individual projects under the No Action/No Permit Alternative (Section 2.3.1), compliance with the ESA and CESA would involve issuance of one or more section 7 or 10(a)(1)(B) and 2080.1 or 2081.1 permits, respectively, for impacts to listed species. The proposed Plan (Section 2.3.2), Full Species List Alternative (Section 2.3.3), and Reduced Plan Area Alternative (Section 2.3.4) would address the incidental take of covered species under section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA and section 2835 of the Fish and Game Code in compliance with the ESA and NCCPA.

The proposed Plan and alternatives would not have significant direct or indirect growth-inducing effects. Water Authority Covered Activities, i.e., the development and maintenance of facilities, respond to, and do not induce, population and economic growth. Issuance of permits for incidental take under section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA and section 2835 of the Fish and Game Code would allow incidental take of Covered Species in compliance with the ESA and NCCPA. Activities to be covered under the Plan include the construction, operation, and maintenance of facilities that are currently or potentially necessary to provide water to the Member Water Agencies. In the event of an annexation to the Water Authority's Service Area, the Plan Area may be modified to align the Plan Area to the Water Authority expanded Service Area boundary. An expansion of the Plan Area and any new take of Covered Species would be processed as a Major Amendment to the Plan, requiring subsequent CEQA and NEPA compliance, and if approved, a modification to the Permits. However, the Plan Area boundary

adjustment would not necessarily require the Water Authority to undertake any Covered Activities in the annexed area, or necessarily result in any change in Take associated with the Permits.

5.2.2 Economic Growth

The proposed Plan and alternatives would not directly induce long-term employment or population growth in the region. Coincident with Water Authority activities, short-term construction and other employment opportunities would be generated. It is likely that current and potential future Water Authority employees, both short-term and long-term, would originate within and reside in the San Diego region. These employees would be expected to commute to the different Water Authority activity sites from their permanent residences rather than relocate from other areas.

5.2.3 Precedent-Setting Action

Precedent-setting actions include, but are not limited to: a change in zoning, a change in general plan designation, a change in general plan text, and approval of exceptions to regulations that could have implications for other properties or actions. None of these actions is within the purview of the Water Authority nor is a part of the proposed action. The proposed Plan and alternatives involve the Water Authority conducting its currently planned activities in compliance with state and federal environmental laws and endangered species acts, and therefore would not result in precedent-setting actions that could induce the development of other projects. The proposed Plan and alternatives would have no effect on local jurisdiction policies, nor result in a precedent-setting action.

5.2.4 Development of or Encroachment into Isolated Open Space

Under the proposed Plan and alternatives, the Water Authority would construct, operate, and maintain water service facilities and rights-of-way within the Plan Area. The majority of these activities would occur within the PIZ, a long, narrow corridor comprising existing Water Authority infrastructure and right-of-ways (see Figure 1-2). Most of the disturbance from these activities would be confined to previously disturbed landscapes, although some impacts are expected to occur in undisturbed sensitive habitats. New encroachment into isolated open space from additions to and replacement of portions of the water supply delivery system will be avoided or minimized. In addition, the Plan directs impacts to areas of lesser sensitivity by proposing higher mitigation ratios within those areas that support rare vegetation types and species, greater species diversity, or are part of core areas of habitat, linkages or corridors identified as BSRAs.