5.4 Agricultural Resources

This section evaluates the potential impacts of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative on agricultural resources. The evaluation includes an assessment of the direct, indirect, short-term, long-term, and cumulative effects of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative on Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance, including potential conflicts with *Williamson Act* contracts. The evaluation is based on the Community Impact Assessment for the San Vicente Dam Raise Carryover Storage Project (CIC Research, 2007), which is included as Appendix H to this EIR/EIS, a review of land uses in the Moosa 50K study area, and the map of San Diego County Important Farmland 2000 (California Department of Conservation, 2002).

5.4.1 Affected Environment

The SV 50K study area would be a subset of the larger SV 100K study area, and the Moosa 50K study area would be a subset of the larger Moosa 100K study area. Therefore, the following discussion refers to Section 3.4.1 (Agricultural Resources for the Proposed Action) and Section 4.4.1 (Agricultural Resources for the Moosa 100K Alternative) of this EIR/EIS for information on the Affected Environment as it applies to the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative.

5.4.1.1 Environmental Setting

The environmental setting for the SV 50K component of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative would be the same as described in Section 3.4.1.1 (Agricultural Resources for the Proposed Action) of this EIR/EIS, and the setting for the Moosa 50K component would be the same as described in Section 4.4.1.1 (Agricultural Resources for the Moosa 100K Alternative) of this EIR/EIS.

5.4.1.2 Regulatory Setting

Refer to Section 3.4.1.2 (Agricultural Resources for the Proposed Action) of this EIR/EIS for a discussion of the regulatory setting that applies to both the SV 50K and Moosa 50K components of this alternative.

5.4.2 Project Design Features

There are no General Conditions and Standard Specifications or Project Design Features that specifically address reducing potential impacts on agricultural resources.

5.4.3 Direct and Indirect Effects

5.4.3.1 Thresholds of Significance

The thresholds of significance used to evaluate potential impacts on agricultural resources for the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative are the same as those used to evaluate impacts for the Proposed Action and the Moosa 100K Alternative. The thresholds are based on applicable criteria in the State CEQA Guidelines (CCR §§15000-15387), Appendix G. A significant impact on agricultural resources would occur if the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative would:

1. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use.
2. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a *Williamson Act* contact.
3. Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use.

5.4.3.2 Impact Analysis

Methodology

The methodology used to evaluate impacts on agricultural resources at the SV 50K footprint is the same as described in Section 3.4.3.2 (Agricultural Resources for the Proposed Action) of this EIR/EIS, and the methodology used to evaluate impacts on agricultural resources at the Moosa 50K footprint is the same as described in Section 4.4.3.2 (Agricultural Resources for the Moosa 100K Alternative) of this EIR/EIS.

The SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative footprint was overlaid on soil type maps. The significance of the conversion was evaluated based on consultation with NRCS and completion of Form AD-1006 to determine the level of protection that should be given to the farmable land in the SV 50K and Moosa 50K study areas.

Analysis

Threshold 1: Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use

SV 50K

As analyzed in Section 3.4.3 (Agricultural Resources for the Proposed Action) of this EIR/EIS, the SV 100K study area does not encompass mapped Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. There would be no impact on mapped Farmlands from the

SV 50K component of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative. Therefore, there would be no impacts from the SV 50K component on agricultural resources.

Moosa 50K

Within the Moosa 50K study area, the following acres of farmland and soil types would be converted to non-agricultural uses from inundation for the Moosa 50K reservoir:

- 1.2 acres of Prime and Unique Farmland soils
- 85.6 acres of Statewide and Local Importance Farmland soils

The converted Prime and Unique Farmland soils consist of Greenfield (GrC) sandy loam (5 to 9 percent slopes); and Visalia sandy loam (VaA) (2 to 5 percent slopes). The potentially converted Statewide and Local Importance Farmland soils consist of Greenfield sandy loam (GrD) (9 to 15 percent slopes); Fallbrook sandy loam (5 to 9 percent slopes eroded); and Tujunga sand (TuB), (0 to 5 percent slopes). The resulting total farmland soils converted would be approximately 87 acres. As shown in Table 3.4-1, this is approximately 0.03 percent of the County's total of 273,176 acres in agricultural production in 2005. Based on consultation with the National Resources Conservation Service and completion of Form AD-1006 (Farmland Conversion Impact Rating), the farmland rates "a high level of consideration for protection." Based on the site assessment criteria for the 12 impact categories, the overall farmland conversion impact rating for the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative would be 186, which is above the significance rating threshold of 160. Therefore, impacts on agricultural resources from the Moosa 50K component would be significant.

Combined Impacts

The SV 50K/Moosa 50K study area encompasses approximately 5,694 total acres. There would be no impact on mapped Farmland under the SV 50K component of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative, but the Moosa 50K component of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative would convert approximately 133 acres of Farmland soils to non-agricultural use, and would not offset this loss. Therefore, the combined impacts of the SV 50K and Moosa 50K components would be significant.

*The SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative would convert mapped Farmland to non-agricultural use and would not offset this loss. Therefore, impacts of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative would be significant (**Impact SV/M/AG 1**).*

Threshold 2: Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract

SV 50K

As analyzed in Section 3.4.3 (Agricultural Resources for the Proposed Action) of this EIR/EIS, the Proposed Action would not affect agriculturally zoned areas or any property under a

Williamson Act contract. Therefore, the SV 50K component would not impact any such areas or properties.

Moosa 50K

The Moosa 50K Alternative would not result in any impact on agricultural zoning, for the reasons described in Section 4.4.3.2 (Agricultural Resources for the Moosa 100K Alternative) of this EIR/EIS. Identical to the Moosa 100K Alternative (refer to Section 4.4.3 [Agricultural Resources for the Moosa 100K Alternative] of this EIR/EIS), the Moosa 50K component would affect two *Williamson Act* contract parcels (total of 58 acres) that would be located within the inundation limits. Therefore, impacts of the Moosa 50K component would be significant.

Combined Impacts

Impacts on agriculturally zoned land and Williamson Act contract lands would not occur for the SV 50K component. However, the impacts from the Moosa 50K component would be significant. Therefore, the combined impacts of the SV 50K and Moosa 50K components would be significant.

*The SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative would conflict with Williamson Act lands. Therefore, impacts of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative would be significant (**Impact SV/M/AG 2**).*

Threshold 3: Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use

SV 50K

As discussed in Section 3.4.3 (Agricultural Resources for the Proposed Action) of this EIR/EIS, approximately 46 acres of soils representing potential Farmland would be converted to non-agricultural use due to the Proposed Action. The converted farmland represents only 0.04 percent of farmable land in the county and rated "a minimal level of consideration for protection." Because this acreage rated a minimal level of consideration for protection, impacts would be less than significant. Therefore, impacts from the SV 50K component would be less than significant.

Moosa 50K

As described above in the analysis for Thresholds 1 and 2, the Moosa 50K component would result in the conversion of approximately 87 acres of agricultural uses to non-agricultural uses, and conflict with two *Williamson Act* contract parcels (58 total acres). These impacts would be significant. Additional agricultural land would be affected during the construction of the Moosa 50K reservoir. However, these agricultural lands would be restored to crop-ready conditions, except along the pipeline corridor to protect it from root damage (see Section 4.4.3 [Agricultural Resources for the Moosa 100K Alternative] of this EIR/EIS). The temporary impacts would be less than significant.

As discussed in Section 4.4.3 (Agricultural Resources for the Moosa 100K Alternative) of this EIR/EIS, impacts on adjacent avocado groves from potential spread of root-rot would be significant. The Moosa 50K component would require the same construction operations through agricultural lands for the pipeline and pump stations as the larger Moosa 100K Alternative. Therefore, impacts from the Moosa 50K component would be significant.

Combined Impacts

Impacts on agricultural land would be less than significant for the SV 50K component. However, the impacts from the Moosa 50K component due to the potential increase in the spread of root-rot would be significant. Therefore, the combined impacts of the SV 50K and Moosa 50K components would be significant.

*The SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative could temporarily impact adjacent avocado groves due to the potential increase in the spread of root-rot. This impact would be significant (**Impact SV/M/AG 3**).*

5.4.3.3 Mitigation Measures

To reduce significant impacts on agricultural resources from the SV 50K/Moosa 100K Alternative, the Water Authority will implement the following mitigation measures.

Conversion of Farmland and Williamson Act Parcels

Impacts on Farmland (***Impact SV/M/AG 1***) and *Williamson Act* contract parcels (***Impact SV/M/AG 2***) from the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative would remain significant and unmitigable due to the lack of available contiguous parcels of high-quality agricultural land that could be assembled in the project region, as well as rising costs and competition for use of land for commercial and residential uses (see also Section 4.4.3.3 [Agricultural Resources for the Moosa 100K Alternative] of this EIR/EIS).

Avocado Root-Rot

The recommended mitigation measures to reduce impacts on adjacent avocado groves from the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative to below a level of significance would be the same as those described for the Moosa 100K Alternative. Please refer to Section 4.4.3.3 (Agricultural Resources for the Moosa 100K Alternative) of this EIR/EIS for mitigation for avocado root-rot that would apply to the Moosa 50K component of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative.

5.4.3.4 Residual Impacts after Mitigation

Impacts on Prime and Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, and *Williamson Act* contract parcels would remain significant and unmitigable. A Statement of Overriding

Considerations for impacts on agricultural resources would be required for approval for the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative.

Potential impacts on adjacent avocado groves from the Moosa 50K component would be reduced to below a level of significance through implementation of the recommended mitigation measures. Therefore, there would be no residual impacts from the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative on adjacent avocado groves from the spread of root-rot after implementation of the recommended mitigation measures.

5.4.4 Cumulative Effects

5.4.4.1 Other CIP Projects

CIP projects that would contribute to cumulative agricultural resources impacts of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative would include those projects that would also impact the Proposed Action and the Moosa 100K Alternative identified in Sections 3.4.4.1 and 4.4.4.1, respectively, of this EIR/EIS. These projects would include the Slaughterhouse Terminal Reservoir, Hubbard Hill Flow Regulatory Structure, North County Distribution Pipeline Flow Regulatory Structure, and Second Crossover Pipeline. The PEIR for the Regional Water Facilities Master Plan concluded that the proposed projects could result in the conversion of sensitive farmland. Cumulative agricultural impacts would be expected to be long-term in nature and consist of the permanent conversion of agricultural land to non-farmland. However, the CIP projects in the vicinity of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative identified above are not expected to contribute substantially to the cumulative conversion of sensitive farmland. With the implementation of mitigation measures identified in the PEIR, impacts on agricultural resources due to these projects are expected to be minimal. Therefore, cumulative agricultural resources impacts due to the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative, when combined with the short-term (construction related) and long-term (operational) agricultural resources impacts associated with the CIP projects listed above, would be less than significant. The above conclusions regarding cumulative agricultural resources impacts for the four CIP projects described above are incorporated into the cumulative analysis in Section 5.4.4.3 below.

5.4.4.2 ESP Projects

ESP project components that would be in the vicinity of the SV 50K component would include the San Vicente Pipeline, the San Vicente Pump Station, and the San Vicente Surge Control Facility. The ESP EIR/EIS concluded cumulative agricultural impacts would be less than significant. The above conclusions regarding agricultural impacts for the ESP projects are incorporated into the cumulative agricultural analyses in Section 5.4.4.3 below.

5.4.4.3 Other Planned Projects with CIP and ESP Projects

This section evaluates the cumulative agricultural impacts of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative when considered in conjunction with the other planned projects listed in Table 5.2-1, and

incorporates the cumulative agricultural impacts associated with the CIP and ESP projects described in the above sections. The following cumulative agricultural analysis addresses each of the three significance thresholds listed in Section 5.4.3 above.

Cumulative Threshold 1: Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use

As discussed in section 5.4.4.2 above, implementation of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative would convert approximately 87 acres of designated Prime and Unique Farmland and Farmland of Statewide and Local Importance to non-agricultural uses (0.08 percent reduction from County inventory), including two *Williamson Act* contract parcels. The SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative would convert mapped Farmland to non-agricultural use. The Water Authority has determined that replacing the converted agricultural lands would be infeasible, and thus a significant and unmitigable impact. Therefore, cumulative agricultural impacts due to the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative, when combined with farmland conversion impacts from the CIP, ESP, and other planned cumulative projects listed above, would be significant and unmitigable ***(Impact SV/M/AG 1C)***.

Cumulative Threshold 2: Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract

Implementation of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative would convert two *Williamson Act* contract parcels to non-farmland, a significant and unmitigable impact on agricultural resources. Since several cumulative projects in the vicinity of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative would also convert agricultural land to residential land uses, it is possible that these projects could also affect *Williamson Act* contract parcels. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to *Williamson Act* contract parcels due to the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative, when combined with farmland conversion impacts from the CIP, ESP, and other planned cumulative projects listed above, would be significant and unmitigable ***(Impact SV/M/AG 2C)***.

Cumulative Threshold 3: Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use

The SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative could permanently impact adjacent avocado groves due to the potential increase in the spread of root-rot in avocado trees through the temporary disturbance of soil contaminated with the root-rot fungus. This would be a significant but mitigable impact. Cumulative projects in the vicinity of the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative may also have the potential to spread root-rot if the temporary disturbance of soil or grading is planned to occur. It is expected that the cumulative projects would also mitigate for this potential impact. Therefore, cumulative agricultural impacts due to the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative, when combined with the spread of root-rot impacts from the CIP, ESP, and other planned cumulative projects listed above, would be significant but mitigable ***(Impact SV/M/AG 3C)***.

*Cumulative impacts on agricultural resources due to the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative, when combined with the short-term (construction related) and long-term (operational) agricultural resources impacts associated with the ESP and CIP projects listed above, and planned cumulative projects listed in Table 5.2-1, would be significant and unmitigable (**Impacts SV/M/AG 1C** and **SV/M/AG 2C**). A Statement of Overriding Considerations would be required.*

*The SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative and the proposed cumulative projects could affect avocado groves through the spread of root-rot, which could result in the discontinued production of the agricultural land. However, with implementation of Mitigation Measures M/AG 3-1, M/AG 3-2, and M/AG 3-3, this impact could be mitigated through the proper handling of contaminated soil. Therefore, cumulative impacts due to the SV 50K/Moosa 50K Alternative on avocado trees, when combined with the agricultural impacts associated with the ESP and CIP projects listed above, and planned cumulative projects listed in Table 5.2-1, would be less than significant (**Impact SV/M/AG 3C**).*