CHAPTER 4
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ANALYSIS

The Environmental Impacts Analysis chapter of this Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been divided into sub-sections, as follows:

- **Existing Conditions**: The description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published (baseline physical conditions).

- **Regulatory Setting**: The regulations in force at the time the NOP is published. These are the applicable regulations governing each environmental topic, such as the Clean Air Act and its requirements for maintaining air quality. This is not an exhaustive analysis of the regulations, but rather information to assist the reader in understanding the potential impacts of the project from a regulatory perspective.

- **Thresholds of Significance**: The thresholds used to evaluate each environmental topic usually are based on Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, or are standard procedures related to existing regulations or are standards in the industry.

- **Impact Assessment and Methodology**: Methodology used to determine the impacts associated with the project, such as measurements or field investigative processes.

- **Project-Specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures**: These include the significant environmental effects of the proposed project, as further defined below. The impacts are identified and then are followed by the mitigation measures that can minimize significant impacts; mitigation measures must be enforceable and feasible. Where more than one mitigation measure could be used to reduce significant effect, each should be discussed and rationale given for determining the preferable mitigation measure. In addition, there must be an essential nexus between the mitigation measure and a legitimate governmental interest, and the mitigation measure also must be "roughly proportional" to the impacts of the project.

- **Residual Impacts**: The statement of the level of impact, significant or insignificant, that is residual once mitigation is applied.

- **Cumulative Impacts**: The cumulative effects of the project when the project's effect is cumulatively considerable.

- **Secondary Impacts**: If a mitigation measures would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project as proposed, the effects of the mitigation measure must be discussed but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed. (*Stevens v. City of Glendale* (1981) 125 Cal.App.3d 986).

All residual impacts in the EIR have been classified according to the following criteria (note: CEQA does not recognize a beneficial effect as an impact):

- **Class I – Significant, unavoidable, adverse impacts:** Significant impacts that cannot be fully and effectively mitigated. No measures could be taken to avoid or reduce these adverse effects to insignificant or negligible levels.

- **Class II – Significant, but mitigable impacts:** These impacts are potentially similar in significance to those of Class I, but can be reduced or avoided by the implementation of mitigation measures.

- **Class III – Less than significant impacts:** Mitigation measures may still be required for these impacts as long as there is rough proportionality between the environmental impacts caused by the project and the mitigation measures imposed on the project.

- **Class IV – Beneficial impact:** Project would have a beneficial environmental impact.

The term "significance" is used throughout the EIR to characterize the magnitude of the projected impact. For the purpose of this EIR, a significant impact is a substantial or potentially substantial change to resources in the local proposed project area or the area adjacent to the proposed project. In the discussions of each issue area, thresholds are identified that are used to distinguish between significant and insignificant impacts. To the extent feasible, distinctions are also made between local and regional significance and short-term versus long-term duration. Where possible, measures have been identified to reduce project impacts to less than significant levels. CEQA requires that public agencies should not approve projects as proposed if there are feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen the environmental effects of such projects (CEQA Statute §21002). Included with each mitigation measure are the plan requirements needed to ensure that the mitigation is included in the plans and construction of the project and the required timing of the action (e.g., prior to development of final construction plans, prior to commencement of construction, prior to operation, etc.).