

3.0 OVERVIEW

The following sections include an analysis, by issue area, of the proposed action's potential effects on the environment. Each environmental issue area includes the following subsections:

- Affected Environment
- Regulatory Framework
- Criteria for Significance of Effects
- Project Effects
- Mitigation Measures
- Significance Summary

Environmental effects are characterized as direct, indirect, and cumulative. Definitions of these impact categories are described below.

Direct: Direct effects are caused by the proposed action and occur at the same time and place as the action. Direct effects typically arise from construction activities associated with the proposed action or alternatives. For example, removal of vegetation at a site to allow for construction of a proposed facility would be considered a direct effect (40 C.F.R. 1508.8[a]).

Indirect: Indirect effects are reasonably foreseeable effects caused by the proposed action or alternatives, but occur later in time or are further removed from the project site than direct effects. Indirect effects may be growth-inducing or otherwise related to changes in land use patterns, population density, or growth rate, and may affect air, water, or other natural systems. For example, future automobile pollution from employees driving to a building is a reasonably foreseeable indirect effect of constructing a building (40 C.F.R. 1508.8[b]).

Cumulative: Cumulative effects result from a proposed action's incremental impacts when these impacts are added to the impacts of other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of the agency or person who undertakes them. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor, but collectively significant actions that take place over time. For example, numerous small sources of air pollution in the same air basin may result in cumulatively significant violations of ambient air quality standards (40 C.F.R. 1508.7). The analysis in the EA considers the proposed facilities because construction of effects would be inseparable from the proposed action.

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