3.9. LAND USE AND PLANNING

3.9.1. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Westlands Solar Park

Conditions within the WSP Plan Area

The WSP plan area consists almost entirely of agricultural land covered with field crops, fallow land, pasture, and some tree crops. The plan area is essentially level and lacking in topographical features except for irrigation canals and ditches with adjacent levees (see Figures AE-1a through AE-1e). There are no structures within the plan area apart from wells, piping and pump works associated with agricultural irrigation.

The WSP plan area is traversed by three improved County Roads including Avenal Cutoff Road, Laurel Avenue, and Nevada Avenue, in addition to shorter segments of other County roads. Several high voltage transmission corridors pass through the plan area, including 230-kV and 115-kV transmission lines in the northwest corner of the plan area, and a 70-kV transmission line that follows the 25th Avenue alignment through the eastern half of the plan area.

There is an active natural gas pipeline, owned and operated by Southern California Gas Company, which runs parallel and southeast of Avenal Cutoff Road through the plan area. A branch pipeline splits off at Laurel Avenue and runs eastward along the south side of Laurel to the community of Stratford.

There is one existing solar PV project within WSP. Located in the northeast corner of the WSP, at Avenal Cutoff Road and 25th Avenue, this 22 MW solar PV project (Westside Solar) was approved by Kings County in 2015. The 2 MW first phase was completed in 2016, and the remaining 20 MW is planned for construction in 2018. Currently, there is a second solar PV project proposed within the WSP plan area that is pending CUP approval by Kings County. This is the 250 MW Aquamarine Solar project, planned on a 1,860-acre site located on both sides of Laurel Avenue at the 25th Avenue alignment. The Aquamarine project is expected to receive County approval in late 2017, and is scheduled to commence construction in 2018.

Adjacent and Surrounding Land Use

The lands immediately surrounding the WSP plan area consist almost entirely of agricultural land, with occasional ranches and rural dwellings, and several newly constructed solar PV generating facilities (see Figure PD-2).

Ranches and Rural Residences

Adjacent to the plan area, there are two ranch complexes with dwellings, outbuildings, equipment yards, and associated landscaping. The Shannon Ranch complex, which is located just outside the plan area at the southwest corner of Avenal Cutoff Road and Lincoln/Gale Avenue, includes 20 residential units and a

number of ranch operations buildings (see Figure AE-1c). The Shannon Ranch also includes an airstrip located to the north across Gale Avenue. The second adjacent ranch is the Stone Land Company Ranch, which is located on the south side of Nevada Avenue, approximately 1.4 miles east of Avenal Cutoff Road, and includes two dwellings (see Figure AE-1d).

The lands surrounding the plan area are sparsely settled, with very few dwellings located within one mile of the WSP boundary (see Figure PD-2). In addition to the Shannon Ranch and Stone Land Company Ranch, next nearest dwellings are as follows: 4 dwellings at the Westlake Farms complex located on the east side of SR-41, one mile south of Nevada Avenue, and just over a half mile east of the southeastern WSP boundary; 2 dwellings at an unnamed ranch complex located on the east side of SR-41, one mile north of Nevada Avenue, and just over one mile east of the WSP plan area; and a series of 6 residences along and near 22nd Avenue which runs north-south about one mile from the WSP boundary. Also notable is the base housing area of NAS Lemoore located on the north side of SR-198, over 2 miles north of the plan area.

In summary, there are 34 existing rural residences located within approximately one mile of the WSP plan area. These include the 20 dwellings at the Shannon Ranch and 2 dwellings at the Stone Land Company Ranch located adjacent to the plan area, plus 12 other dwellings located to the east of the plan area.

Existing Solar PV Generating Facilities

There are 4 solar generating facilities within 1 mile of the WSP plan area. Immediately to the north along 25th Avenue are three Recurrent Energy projects (Mustang, Orion, and Kent South) totaling 200 MW on 1,822 acres, all of which are complete and operational. The fourth nearby solar project (Kettleman – 20 MW) is located on 220 acres on the west side of SR-41 immediately southeast of the southern-most portion of the WSP plan area. Located 3 miles north of Kettleman City, this solar project is also complete and operational. There are three additional solar facilities located between 2.5 and 5 miles east of WSP. These include the completed 20 MW Kansas and 20 MW Kansas South solar projects, located approximately 2.5 and 4 miles northeast, respectively, and the completed 136 MW Henrietta solar project which is located adjacent to SR-41 approximately 3 miles northeast of the WSP plan area (see Figure PD-2). As discussed above, there are also two pending and approved solar projects within the WSP plan area itself.

Other Surrounding Land Uses

Other notable land uses within one mile of the WSP plan area include: the Omaha Ranch, a dairy operation located on Omaha Avenue west of SR-41; and a vacant tomato processing plant located 0.4 miles north of WSP on the east side of 25th Avenue.

Notable land use features in the wider surrounding area include: Naval Air Station Lemoore, located two miles to the north; PGE's Henrietta Substation and GWF's natural gas peaker plant, located 1.5 miles northeast; the community of Stratford located 2.5 miles to the east; the City of Huron, located 6 miles west; PGE's Gates Substation, located 6 miles southwest; and the community of Kettleman City, located 2.5 miles south of the southern tip of the plan area. In addition, the San Luis Canal/California Aqueduct passes west of the WSP plan area, within 2.5 miles at its nearest point. Interstate 5 passes within 8 miles of the WSP plan area to the west. State Highways passing through the immediate vicinity

include SR-41 to the east, SR-198 to the north and SR-269 to the west. The major power transmission line in the vicinity is the 230-kV Henrietta-Gates line which passes through the northwest corner of the plan area.

WSP Gen-Tie Corridors

The land uses in the vicinity of the two WSP gen-tie corridors are described below. Existing residences within one mile of the corridors are numbered and listed in Table PD-7 and shown in Figure PD-7 in Chapter *2. Project Description*.

WSP-South to Gates Gen-Tie Corridor

As shown in Figure PD-7, this approximately 11.5-mile long 230-kV gen-tie corridor commences from the junction of Nevada Avenue and the 25th Avenue alignment, approximately midway between Avenal Cutoff Road and SR-41, in the central portion of the WSP plan area. From this location, the corridor heads west along the north side of Nevada Avenue alongside agricultural fields for a distance of about 5 miles to Avenal Cutoff Road and the Kings/Fresno county line where the roadway becomes Jayne Avenue in Fresno County. The Stone Land Company Ranch, described above, is located 1.4 miles east of the Fresno County line. Approximately 1 mile west of the county line, the corridor shifts northward about 800 feet to avoid the Giovannetti cooling facility and then shifts south to again run parallel to Jayne Avenue. The corridor continues westward across the San Luis Canal/California Aqueduct and along agricultural fields along Jayne Avenue for 4 miles to the junction of Lassen Avenue/SR-269. A row of 8 ranch dwellings is located on the south side of Jayne Avenue, approximately 1.3 miles east of SR-269. The gen-tie corridor extends an additional 1 mile through along agricultural fields to the Gates Substation.

WSP-North to Gates Gen-Tie Corridor

As shown in Figure PD-7, this approximately 11.5-mile long 230-kV gen-tie corridor commences from the northern portion of the WSP plan area, and heads southwestward along the south side the existing Henrietta-Gates 230 kV transmission line. The corridor passes through agricultural fields and orchards, crossing the San Luis Canal/California Aqueduct after 7 miles, and then crossing Lassen Avenue/SR-269 after an additional 3 miles, and then extends an additional 1.5 miles to the Gates Substation on the north side of Jayne Avenue. Within 1 mile of this gen-tie corridor, there are a total of 10 ranch dwellings, located at distances of 0.3 to 0.9 miles from the corridor.

3.9.2. REGULATORY SETTING

Federal

Naval Air Station Lemoore Joint Land Use Study

The NAS Lemoore Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) involved a multi-agency effort managed by the Department of Defense (DOD) for cooperative land use planning between NAS Lemoore and adjacent communities to provide for compatibility between future community growth and the training and operational missions of the military installation. The purpose of the JLUS is to protect the health and

safety of the civilian communities relative to aircraft approach and departure routes, and to discourage incompatible development in high noise areas and accident potential zones. The JLUS includes mapping of clear zones, accident potential zones (APZs), and flight corridors where the resulting aircraft noise levels on the ground are incompatible with noise-sensitive land uses. Since DOD has no regulatory authority for local land use outside the boundaries of the naval air station, the JLUS also includes planning recommendations for consideration by local jurisdictions. The findings and recommendations of the JLUS, as they pertain to the development of the WSP, are discussed in detail under Impact LU-3 below.

The JLUS mapping indicates that the southern end of the NAS Lemoore runway is 2.5 miles north of SR-198, and no designated clear zones or accident potential zones extend south of SR-198. The noise contour mapping prepared for the JLUS shows bands of noise contours exceeding 60 dB CNEL which correspond closely to the flight corridors surrounding the airfield (JLUSPC 2011). The aircraft noise corridor is reflected in the 2035 Kings County General Plan Land Use Map, which designates lands within a 3-mile buffer zone from the naval installation, plus the noise-impacted areas (exceeding 70 dB CNEL) south of the buffer zone, as "Exclusive Agriculture – 40 acre." The intent of this land use designation is to provide a safety buffer zone around the base by limiting and discouraging intensive agricultural and structure-based land uses that may pose increased risks to inhabitants and base operations (Kings County 2010a, p. LU-37). The AX land use designation generally corresponds to the "AX Exclusive Agriculture" zoning which applies to a 3-mile buffer zone south of NAS Lemoore where minimal structures are permitted and dairies are not permitted due to the potential effects of night lighting on flight operations. The JLUS also identifies height obstruction limits near NAS Lemoore, with the limits in a given area depending on its location relative to landing approach zones. The northern portion of the WSP plan area is partially within Height Restriction Zones "D" and "G" which both have height limits for ground structures of 500 feet above the ground surface (JLUSPC 2011, p. 2-24).

The JLUS included recommendations for implementation at the local level. For Kings County, the JLUS recommended the establishment of three "NASL Overlay District Zone" designations, with each zone corresponding to different set of land use compatibility concerns. Overlay Zone I covers lands immediately adjacent to NASL on the east and west. Overlay Zone II encompasses the 3-mile buffer zone plus surrounding areas where aircraft noise corridors exceed 70 dB CNEL. Overlay Zone III encompasses a broader area extending beyond Overlay Zone II by 1 to 5 miles. JLUS Recommendation 17 states: "Establish Minimum Technical Standards for Renewable Energy Facilities Located within NASL Overlay Zones I, II, and III (JLUSPC 2011, p. 2-51). This addresses the concern with "solar farms creating excessive glare from the reflection of the sun" (JLUSPC 2011, p. 2-9). The main concern is with concentrated solar power technologies which utilize as lenses or mirrors on a large scale with their reflective characteristics and tall tower collectors. However, "if there is no central collection tower, the new solar panels can be made non-reflective and arrays could be installed to not cause any height or reflective issues. Prior to the development of solar arrays within flight-sensitive areas, the height and effect of these installations along with the distribution system proposed to transmit the power from the source (solar farm) should be carefully considered" (JLUSPC 2011, p. 2-12). The potential hazard to flight operations is addressed in Impact LU-3 below.

State

Williamson Act

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly known as the Williamson Act, enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of placing lands within "Agricultural Preserves" thus restricting the use of those lands to agricultural or related open space use. The relevant provisions of the Williamson Act, including the 2011 amendments added by SB 618, are discussed in detail in Section *3.2. Agricultural Resources*.

Other State Regulatory Requirements and Programs

There are no other State of California land use regulatory requirements applicable to the project or the project site. The project is not located within two miles of a public use airport, or within an airport planning or noise hazard zone and therefore is not covered by the State Aeronautics Act. The project site is not located within the Coastal zone, and therefore is not subject to the California Coastal Act. Other State regulatory requirements or programs which may be applicable to the project are discussed under the corresponding environmental topic discussions in this EIR. For example, the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act and Seismic Hazard Mapping Act are discussed in Section *3.6. Geology and Soils*.

California Public Utilities Commission

Transmission projects that are to be constructed by or for an investor-owned utility (IOU), such as PG&E, are subject to the sole permitting jurisdiction of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Under CPUC General Order 131-D, Section XIV.B, …"local jurisdictions are preempted from regulating electric power line projects, substations, or electric facilities constructed by public utilities subject to the Commission's jurisdiction. However, in locating such projects, the public utilities shall consult with local agencies regarding land use matters (CPUC 1995). Transmission lines that may be privately owned (such as gen-ties) are not under CPUC jurisdiction, and thus are subject to local jurisdiction and may require the issuance of a conditional use permits from the Kings County and Fresno County.

Kings County

2035 Kings County General Plan

There are two agricultural general plan land use designations that together cover the Westlands Solar Park. These include "General Agriculture – 40 acre" which covers approximately 65 percent of the plan area, and "Exclusive Agriculture – 40 acre" which covers approximately 35 percent of the plan area. The General Agriculture designation generally applies to areas south of Kansas Avenue, and the Exclusive Agriculture designation applies to areas within the flight paths of the Naval Air Station Lemoore. Both of these designations fall under the broader General Plan category of Agricultural Open Space. In addition to a range of agricultural uses and ancillary activities, the General Plan allows solar voltaic generating facilities within the Agricultural Open Space areas of the County, as set forth in LU Policy B7.1.3, which is reproduced below. Energy producing facilities are allowed in the Exclusive Agriculture zone where such facilities would not create a hazard for aircraft, as set forth in RC Policy A1.2.4, as shown below (Kings County 2010a).

The 2035 Kings County General Plan includes the following goals, objectives and policies related to land use that are relevant to the Westlands Solar Park:

Land Use Element

B. Agricultural Open Space

LU GOAL B7 *Community benefiting non-agricultural uses remain compatible within the County's Agricultural Open Space area, and are supported for their continued operation and existence.*

LU OBJECTIVE B7.1 *Allow compatible Open Space and Public uses of land within the Agriculture Open Space area of the County.*

LU Policy B7.1.3: Power generation facilities for commercial markets shall be allowed and regulated through the Conditional Use Permit approval process, and include thermal, wind, and solar photovoltaic electrical generating facilities that produce power.

Resource Conservation Element

G. Energy Resources

RC OBJECTIVE G1.2 *Promote the development of sustainable and renewable alternative energy sources, including wind, solar, hydroelectric and biomass energy*.

RC Policy G1.2.2: Encourage and support efforts to develop commercial alternative energy sources in lower priority agricultural lands within Kings County, when appropriately sited.

RC Policy A1.2.4: Coordinate the siting of alternative energy facilities within the Exclusive Agriculture (AX) Zone District with the Naval Air Station Lemoore to ensure such facilities will not have the potential to create a hazard for aircraft (e.g., reflective solar panels).

RC Policy A1.2.5: Site new large-scale alternative energy facilities where they can be served by existing electrical transmission lines, or where such lines can be located and designed to minimize visual, environmental, and agricultural disturbances.

RC Policy A1.2.7: Require commercial solar and wind energy systems to be reviewed as a conditional use permit pursuant to the procedures of the Kings County Zoning Ordinance (superseded by the Kings County Development Code).

Kings County Development Code

Agricultural Zoning

The Kings County Zoning Plan is incorporated by reference in Section 201 of the Kings County Development Code. As designated in the Kings County Zoning Plan, the majority of WSP plan area is currently zoned as "AG-40 General Agriculture-40," except for approximately 930 acres north of the Kansas Avenue alignment which are zoned "AX Exclusive Agriculture" (Kings County 1964). As provided in Article 4 of the Kings County Development Code, both of these agricultural zoning districts specifically allow utility-scale photovoltaic electricity generation as a conditionally permitted use. Under Section 1112.B.2 of the Development Code, all solar photovoltaic electrical facilities for commercial sales and distribution of electrical power in agricultural zones are required to meet the following standards for CUP approval:

a. *The proposed site shall be located in an area designated as either "Very Low Priority," "Low Priority," or "Low-Medium Priority" land according to Figure RC-13 Priority Agricultural Land (2035 Kings County General Plan, Resource Conservation Element, page RC-20). "Medium Priority" land may be considered when comparable agricultural operations are integrated, the standard mitigation requirement is applied, or combination thereof.*

b. *The proposed site shall be located within 1 mile of an existing 60 KV or higher utility electrical line. Small community commercial solar projects (less than or equal to 3 MW) may be located more than 1 mile from a 60 kV or higher transmission line subject to the following findings:*
   - *The project site is located on low or very low priority farmland.*
   - *The project site is not restricted by a Williamson Act or Farmland Security Zone contract.*
   - *The project will connect to existing utility infrastructure without building new power lines.*
   - *The project will not result in any additional easements on agricultural land, other than access easements or easements within the public Right-of-Way.*

c. *Agricultural mitigation shall be proposed for every acre of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance converted for a commercial solar facility. The agricultural mitigation shall preserve at a ratio of 1:1 an equal amount of agricultural acreage of equal or greater quality in a manner acceptable to the County for the life of the project. Agricultural mitigation on land designated "Medium-High" or higher priority land shall preserve an equivalent amount of agricultural acreage at a ratio of 2:1.*

d. *The project shall include a reclamation plan and financial assurance acceptable to the County that ensures the return of the land to a farmable state after completion of the project life, and retains surface water rights.*

e. *The project shall include a pest management plan and weed abatement plan to protect adjacent farmland from nuisances and disruption.*

f. *The project shall space internal access driveways per Kings County Fire Department Standards.*

Discussion. As required, each WSP solar project would space internal access driveways *per Kings County Fire Department Standards* intervals of 300 feet or less. Therefore, this standard would be met for each WSP solar project.

g. The project shall include a solid waste management plan for site maintenance and disposal of trash and debris.

h. The project site shall not be located on Williamson Act or Farmland Security Zone contracted land, unless it meets the principles of compatibility under Government Code section 51238.1(a). Otherwise, the contract shall be proposed for cancellation.

A detailed analysis of the ability of WSP solar development to satisfy each of the above standards is presented in Section *3.2. Agricultural Resources*, under Impact AG-2.

In addition, utility structures are permitted uses in both Agricultural zoning districts covering the WSP plan area (Kings County 2016b).

Since the primary objective of agricultural zoning districts is to protect agricultural operations, Section 402 of the Development Code sets forth the agriculture protection policy. This policy is intended to ensure that non-agricultural uses in agricultural zones are aware that their non-agricultural uses in agricultural zones are subservient to permitted agricultural pursuits and that the undertaking of normal, customary, and legal agricultural activities may result in inconveniences to them due to their location in areas of commercial agricultural activities and operations. (See also "Right-to-Farm Ordinance" below.)

Conditional Use Permit Procedures

Article 17 of the Kings County Development Code sets forth the detailed submittal requirements and review and approval procedures for Conditional Use Permits. The Planning Commission has the authority to grant conditional use permits and to impose appropriate conditions. The Planning Commission's decisions on conditional use permits are subject to appeal and review by the County Board of Supervisors.

Right-to-Farm Ordinance

The Kings County Code of Ordinances Section 14-38 requires the approvals of rezonings, land divisions, zoning permits, and residential building permits include a condition that notice and disclosure be provided, which is to be recorded with the property title, that specifically acknowledges and notifies all future owners that they are in proximity to agricultural uses, and lists the types of operations and possible nuisances or inconveniences associated with farming such as equipment and animal noises; farming activities conducted on a 24-hour, 7-day a week basis; odors from manure, fertilizers, pesticides, chemicals, or other sources; the aerial and ground application of chemicals and seeds, dust; flies and other insects; and smoke. The ordinance states that the County does not consider normal farming operations involving these activities and effects to be a nuisance. This right-to-farm disclosure and acknowledgement establishes the primacy of agricultural operations over other land uses, and would reduce the potential for conflict which could adversely affect the continued viability of such adjacent agricultural operations (Kings County 2002a).

Fresno County

Fresno County General Plan

All lands crossed by the WSP gen-tie segments in Fresno County are designated "Agriculture" in the Fresno County General Plan. The Agriculture and Land Use Element of the General Plan allows electrical substations in Agriculture-designated lands, but transmission lines are not specifically mentioned (Fresno County 2000c).

Fresno County Zoning Code

The gen-tie segments crossing Fresno County are all zoned as either "AE 20 Exclusive Agricultural" or "AE 40 Exclusive Agricultural" (Fresno County 2017c). The Fresno County Zoning Code permits electrical substations in agricultural zones subject to Director's review and approval. Utility structures such as transmission lines are permitted with an Unclassified Conditional Use Permit under Zoning Code Section 853(B)14 (Fresno County 2011).

3.1.3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Based on the State CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, the project would be considered to result in a significant land use and planning impact if it would:

a. Physically divide an established community. (Impact LU-1)

b. Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental impact. (Impact LU-2)

c. Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. (Impact LU-4)

In addition, a WSP solar project or WSP gen-tie project would result in a significant land use impact if it would:

d. Result in conflicts or incompatibility with existing land uses or planned developments in the vicinity. (Impact LU-3)

IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Impact LU-1. Physically Divide an Established Community

***Westlands Solar Park*. The WSP plan area is not located within or near any established community; therefore, WSP solar development would not physically divide an established community. (*No Impact*)**

***WSP Gen-Tie Corridors*. The lands traversed by the gen-tie corridors consist entirely of rural lands and include no established communities; therefore, the WSP gen-tie projects would not physically divide an established community. (*No Impact*)**

This impact analysis addresses significance criterion 'a' above.

Westlands Solar Park

The WSP plan area is located in a rural area within unincorporated Kings County. The nearest established communities are the unincorporated community of Stratford located 2.5 miles east of the plan area, the unincorporated community of Kettleman City located 2.5 miles south of the plan area, and the City of Huron located 7 miles west of the plan area. The Westlands Solar Park is not located within or near any other established communities. Therefore, the WSP solar development would have *no impact* in terms of its potential to physically divide an established community.

WSP Gen-Tie Corridors

The lands traversed by the gen-tie corridors consist entirely of rural lands and include no established communities. The nearest community is the City of Huron which is located 2.6 miles from the WSP-North to Gates Gen-Tie. Therefore, the WSP gen-tie projects would have no impact in terms of potential to physically divide an established community.

Mitigation Measures:

***Westlands Solar Park*. No mitigation is required.**

***WSP Gen-Tie Corridors*. No mitigation is required.**

Impact LU-2. Conflict with Applicable Land Use Plan, Policy, or Regulation

***Westlands Solar Park*. The WSP solar development is consistent with applicable Kings County General Plan designations and policies, and zoning regulations; therefore, the WSP solar development would not conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation. (*No Impact*)**

***WSP Gen-Tie Corridors*. The gen-tie projects are consistent with applicable General Plan designations and policies, and zoning regulations of Kings County and Fresno County; therefore, the WSP gen-tie projects would not conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation. (*No Impact*)**

This impact analysis addresses significance criterion 'b' above.

Westlands Solar Park

General Plan

Land Use Designations

The 2035 Kings County General Plan applies two agricultural land use designations to the WSP plan area. These include "General Agriculture – 40 acre" which covers approximately 65 percent of the plan area, and "Exclusive Agriculture – 40 acre" which covers approximately 35 percent of the plan area. The General Agriculture designation generally applies to areas south of Kansas Avenue, and the Exclusive Agriculture designation applies to areas within the flight paths of the Naval Air Station Lemoore. Both of these designations fall under the broader General Plan category of Agricultural Open Space. In addition to a range of agricultural uses and ancillary activities, the General Plan allows solar voltaic generating facilities within the Agricultural Open Space areas of the County, as set forth in LU Policy B7.1.3 (see Section *3.9.2. Regulatory Setting* above). Therefore, the planned installation of solar PV generating facilities within the WSP plan area would be consistent with the General Plan Land Use Element.

General Plan Policies

The following discussion addresses the consistency of WSP solar development with the major General Plan policies that relate to solar development.

LU Policy B7.1.3 provides that solar power generation facilities shall be allowed and regulated through the Conditional Use Permit approval process. Proponents for solar PV generating facilities planned within the WSP plan area would submit applications for CUP approval and would implement the conditions of approval specified by the County. As such, the solar facilities to be developed within the WSP plan area would be consistent with this policy, and this would represent a *less than significant* impact in terms of consistency with General Plan policy.

RC Policy G1.2.2 encourages and supports development of commercial alternative energy sources in lower priority agricultural lands within Kings County. According to the Resource Conservation Element Figure RC-13 (Priority Agricultural Land), over 91 percent of the WSP plan area is categorized as Very Low, Low, or Low-Medium Priority Agricultural Land, with 7 percent in Medium Priority, 2 percent in Medium-High

Priority, and 0.0 percent in High Priority Agricultural Land. Since 91 percent of the WSP plan area is in the lower 3 of the 6 priority categories, the development of the WSP plan area for solar PV generating facilities is largely consistent with the policy that encourages such development in lower priority agricultural lands. This would represent a *less than significant* impact in terms of consistency with General Plan policy.

Under RC Policy A1.2.4, the siting of alternative energy facilities within the "AX Exclusive Agriculture" Zone District is to be undertaken in coordination with the Naval Air Station Lemoore to ensure such facilities will not have the potential to create a hazard for aircraft (e.g., reflective solar panels). As discussed under "Zoning" below, approximately 930 acres north of the Kansas Avenue alignment are zoned "AX Exclusive Agriculture." This comprises less than 1.5 sections of land in the northern tier of the WSP plan area, or less than 5 percent of the total WSP land area. As discussed in detail in Section 3.7. *Hazards and Hazardous Materials* (under Impact HAZ-10), solar PV employs panels that are designed to maximize absorption and minimize reflection in order to increase electricity production efficiency. To limit reflection, solar PV panels are constructed of dark, light-absorbing materials, and are given an anti-reflective coating or textured surface. With the addition of the anti-reflective coating or treatment, the reflectivity can be reduced to less than 4 percent of incoming sunlight. Since the solar panels would have low reflective intensity and would be covered with anti-reflective coating, any resulting glare effects would minimal and would not disrupt aircraft operations in the area.

As discussed in Section *3.1.2. Regulatory Setting* above, the NAS Lemoore Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) addresses concerns with aviation hazards from reflection and glare. Solar facilities are mentioned specifically for their potential to produce reflective surfaces, but the JLUS acknowledged that the main concern was with highly reflective mirrors used in concentrated solar facilities. The JLUS acknowledges that "if there is no central collection tower, the new solar panels can be made non-reflective and arrays could be installed to not cause any height or reflective issues." In summary, the solar PV panels to be installed within the WSP plan area would not pose a potential hazard to aircraft operations at NAS Lemoore due to reflected glare. As such, future coordination with NAS Lemoore regarding the siting of solar facilities in the northern portions of the WSP plan area are expected to result in concurrence with this finding, in that the installation of solar PV generating facilities would not be found to be inconsistent with the General Plan RC Policy A1.2.4 regarding siting of alternative energy facilities in proximity to NAS Lemoore flight patterns. Therefore, the development of solar PV generating facilities within the WSP plan area would not be inconsistent with RC Policy A1.2.4, and the impact regarding plan consistency would be *less than significant*.

RC Policy A1.2.5 provides that new large-scale alternative energy facilities should be sited near existing electrical transmission lines, or where such lines can be located and designed to minimize visual, environmental, and agricultural disturbances. As discussed, the WSP solar development would be served by two new generation-interconnection tie-lines ("gen-ties") which would convey WSP solar generation to the Gates Substation located 11 miles to the west. The "WSP-North to Gates Gen-Tie" would run parallel to the existing 230-kV Henrietta-Gates line that passes through the northwest corner of the plan area. The "WSP-South to Gates Gen-Tie" would run along the Nevada/Jayne Avenue roadway corridor from the central plan area to the Gates substation. These planned gen-tie routes conform with the State's Garamendi Principles for siting of new transmission lines, which encourages new transmission lines to be routed parallel to existing transmission lines or roadway corridors. As discussed in Sections *3.1. Aesthetics, 3.2. Agricultural Resources, and 3.4. Biological Resources,* the construction of these planned gen-tie lines would result in less-than-significant impacts to agricultural

and biological resources, and would not result in significant visual impacts. Since the WSP generating facilities would utilize gen-tie transmission routes along existing transmission or roadway corridors where they would minimize visual, environmental, and agricultural disturbances, WSP solar development would be consistent with RC Policy A1.2.5, and the impact in terms of plan consistency would be *less than significant*.

In summary, the solar development of the WSP plan area would be consistent with the major General Plan policies that specifically apply to alternative energy development. Therefore, the impact of WSP solar development in terms of General Plan consistency would be *less than significant*.

It is noted that there are a number of other General Plan policies applicable to WSP solar development that are contained in General Plan elements related to Resource Conservation, Open Space, Circulation, Health and Safety, Noise, and Air Quality. These General Plan policies are enumerated in the sections of this EIR where those environmental topics are addressed. For example, the applicable agricultural policies of the Resource Conservation Element are contained in Section *3.2. Agricultural Resources*.

Zoning

Under the Kings County Development Code, the majority of WSP plan area is currently zoned as "AG-40 General Agriculture-40," except for an area of approximately 930 acres north of the Kansas Avenue alignment which is zoned "AX Exclusive Agriculture." As provided in Article 4 of the Kings County Development Code, both of these agricultural zoning districts specifically allow utility-scale photovoltaic electricity generation as a conditionally permitted use. Both zoning districts have a general minimum parcel size requirement of 40 acres, except that parcel sizes as small as one acre are permitted for a range of uses, including solar voltaic generating facilities, subject to the granting of a conditional use permit. The sponsors of solar PV generating facilities within the WSP plan area would submit applications for Conditional Use Permits for those projects. It is expected that County staff would ensure that other applicable zoning standards would be adhered to and that conditions of approval would be implemented in conjunction with the solar projects. As such, the solar facilities installed within the WSP plan area would be consistent with the Kings County Development Code, and the impact regarding zoning consistency would be *less than significant*.

Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan Review

As discussed in Section *3.9.2. Regulatory Context* above, solar development under the WSP Master Plan will be subject to the County's Conditional Use Permit approval process. This process encompasses matters addressed in this EIR but also entails a level of detail that will not be available until submittal of detailed site plans and supporting material. It is expected that the County staff will ensure that all County requirements applicable to the design and operation of the individual solar projects within WSP will be fully reflected in the approved plans and conditions of approval.

In summary, planned WSP solar development is consistent with the County's land use plans, policies, and regulations. It is anticipated that County staff will ensure that applications for solar development projects within WSP will adhere to the requirements of the County's Conditional Use Permit application process and will implement conditions of project approval specified by the County. As such, the planned WSP solar development would be consistent with the County's applicable land use plans, policies, and

regulations. Therefore, the impact of solar development within the WSP plan area with regard to consistency with plans, policies, and regulations would be *less than significant*.

WSP Gen-Tie Corridors

Kings County

The eastern segments of both WSP gen-tie corridors are located in Kings County. The WSP-South to Gates Gen-Tie corridor crosses lands designated "General Agriculture – 40 acre" and "Exclusive Agriculture – 40 acre." The WSP-North to Gates Gen-Tie corridor traverses lands designated "Exclusive Agriculture – 40 acre." The corresponding zoning districts are the "AG-40 General Agriculture-40" district and "AX Exclusive Agriculture" district. As provided in Article 4 of the Kings County Development Code, both of these agricultural zoning districts allow utility structures such as transmission lines and substations as permitted uses. As such, the construction of the Kings County segments of the gen-tie projects would be consistent with the applicable Kings County General Plan and Development Code provisions.

Fresno County

The major portions of both WSP gen-tie corridors are located in Fresno County. The lands traversed by the gen-tie corridors are designated "Agriculture" in the Fresno County General Plan, and are zoned as either "AE 40 Exclusive Agricultural" or "AE 40 Exclusive Agricultural in the County's Zoning Code. The Agriculture and Land Use Element of the General Plan allows electrical substations in Agriculture-designated lands. Electrical transmission lines are not specifically mentioned in the General Plan, but are assumed to be allowed since the Fresno County Zoning Code permits utility structures such as transmission lines with an Unclassified Conditional Use Permit. As such, the construction of the Fresno County segments of the transmission corridors would be consistent with the applicable Fresno County General Plan and Zoning Code provisions.

In conclusion, the WSP gen-tie projects are consistent with the applicable General Plans and Development Code/Zoning Ordinance of Kings County and Fresno County. Therefore, the impact of the WSP gen-tie projects regarding consistency with plans, policies, and regulations would be *less than significant*.

Mitigation Measures:

***Westlands Solar Park*. No mitigation is required.**

***WSP Gen-Tie Corridors*. No mitigation is required.**

Impact LU-3. Results in Conflicts or Incompatibility with Existing Land Uses

***Westlands Solar Park*. The WSP solar development would occur within the flight operations area of NAS Lemoore, and would occur in proximity to existing residences; however, WSP solar development**

would not result in significant conflicts or incompatibility with these activities and land uses. The WSP solar development may adversely affect nearby agricultural operations through increased dust generation during construction, and through potential introduction of weedy species during operation. . (*Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation*)

***WSP Gen-Tie Corridors*. The gen-tie projects would occur in proximity to existing agricultural operations and existing residences; however, the WSP gen-tie projects would not result in significant conflicts or incompatibility with existing residences. However, the construction of the gen-tie lines would result in the permanent loss of farmland, possible destruction of existing crops and damage to farming infrastructure, as well as restricted access to farmlands during construction. (*Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation*)**

This impact analysis addresses significance criterion 'd' above.

Westlands Solar Park

Compatibility with Naval Air Station Lemoore

The northern boundary of the WSP plan area is 2 miles south of and parallel to the southern boundary of Naval Air Station Lemoore (see Figure PD-2). As discussed in Section *3.9.1. Regulatory Setting* above, in 2011 the Department of Defense (DOD) completed the NAS Lemoore Joint Land Use Study (JLUS), a multi-agency effort for cooperative land use planning between NAS Lemoore and adjacent communities to provide for compatibility between future community growth and the training and operational missions of the military installation (JLUSPC 2011). The purpose of the JLUS is to protect the health and safety of the civilian communities relative to aircraft approach and departure routes, and to discourage incompatible development in high noise areas and accident potential zones. The JLUS includes mapping of clear zones, accident potential zones (APZs), and flight corridors where the resulting aircraft noise levels on the ground are incompatible with noise-sensitive land uses.

The JLUS included recommendations for implementation at the local level. For Kings County, the JLUS recommended the establishment of three "NASL Overlay District Zone" designations, with each zone corresponding to different set of land use compatibility concerns. Overlay Zone I covers lands immediately adjacent to NASL on the east and west, and reflects areas within the APZs. Overlay Zone II encompasses the 3-mile buffer zone plus surrounding areas where aircraft noise corridors exceed 70 dB CNEL. Overlay Zone III, which includes the remainder of the JLUS study area, which extends 11 miles south of SR-198. No portion of the WSP plan area is included in Zone I, while Zones II and III cover the northern and central portions of the plan area. These overlay zones relate to potential incompatible uses that could affect operations at the military installation. Of particular concern are accident potential, height obstructions and reflection and glare, which are discussed in turn below.

Accident Potential Zones

The JLUS mapping indicates that the southern end of the NAS Lemoore runway is 2.5 miles north of SR-198, and no designated clear zones or accident potential zones (APZs) extend south of SR-198. This is reflected in the Zone I coverage, which is entirely north of SR-198. Since the nearest boundary of Zone I

is at least 2 miles north of the WSP plan area, the potential for aircraft accidents is not a concern for solar facilities within WSP.

Aircraft Noise

The noise contour mapping prepared for the JLUS shows bands of noise contours exceeding 60 dB CNEL which correspond closely to the flight corridors surrounding the airfield (JLUSPC 2011). In the JLUS, this area is designated as Overlay Zone II. The aircraft noise zone is reflected in the 2035 Kings County General Plan Land Use Map, which designates lands within a 3-mile buffer zone from the installation, plus the noise-impacted areas (exceeding 70 dB CNEL) south of the buffer zone, as "AX, Exclusive Agriculture – 40-acre minimum." The intent of this land use designation is to provide a safety buffer zone around the base by limiting and discouraging intensive agricultural and structure-based land uses that may pose increased risks to inhabitants and base operations (Kings County 2010a, p. LU-37). As noted previously, approximately 35 percent of the WSP plan area is included in the AX General Plan designation that is reflective of the high noise contours associated with the naval aircraft flight patterns. Solar PV generating facilities have a very low intensity of human activity, and are not noise sensitive land uses. Thus WSP solar development would not be incompatible with high noise levels from overhead flight operations. This is reflected in the AX General Plan designation, which allows large scale solar generation facilities as conditionally permitted uses.

Height Obstruction Limits

The JLUS also identifies height obstruction limits near NAS Lemoore, with the limits in a given area depending on its location relative to landing approach zones. The northern portion of the WSP plan area is partially within Height Restriction Zones "D" and "G" which both have height limits for ground structures of 500 feet above the ground surface (JLUSPC 2011, p. 2-24). The tallest facilities associated with the WSP solar facilities would be the following: transmission towers, which may be as high as 175 feet; power collection poles, which may be as high as 70 feet; some substation elements, which may reach a height of 125 feet; the O&M buildings, which may be as high as 20 feet; the inverters, which may be as high as 12 feet; and the solar arrays, which may reach as high as 10 feet at their maximum inclination. Thus all structures associated with WSP solar facilities would be well below the NAS Lemoore 500-foot limit for this area and would not create operational obstructions.

Reflected Glare

JLUS Recommendation 17 states: "Establish Minimum Technical Standards for Renewable Energy Facilities Located within NASL Overlay Zones I, II, and III (JLUSPC 2011, p. 2-51). The concern is with "solar farms creating excessive glare from the reflection of the sun" (JLUSPC 2011, p. 2-9). The specific concern is with concentrated solar power technologies which utilize lenses or mirrors on a large scale to focus reflected sunlight on tall tower collectors, which can reach heights of over 400 feet. However, "if there is no central collection tower, the new solar panels can be made non-reflective and arrays could be installed to not cause any height or reflective issues. Prior to the development of solar arrays within flight-sensitive areas, the height and effect of these installations along with the distribution system proposed to transmit the power from the source (solar farm) should be carefully considered" (JLUSPC 2011, p. 2-12). The JLUS acknowledges that "if there is no central collection tower, the new solar panels can be made non-reflective and arrays could be installed to not cause any height or reflective issues." The potential for reflected glare to pose an aviation hazard is analyzed in detail in Section *3.7. Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, where it is concluded that the PV solar panels are light-absorptive and produce very

little reflectivity. Therefore, the PV solar development within WSP would not pose a reflectivity or glare hazard to flight operations at NAS Lemoore.

In summary, the solar PV development planned for WSP would not result in any land use conflicts, incompatibility, or an increase in hazardous conditions with respect to flight operations at the Lemoore Naval Air Station. Therefore, the potential land use impacts associated with WSP solar development relative to NAS Lemoore would be *less than significant*.

Compatibility with Nearby Agricultural Land Uses

The WSP plan area is largely surrounded by active agricultural operations. Non-agricultural land uses can have potentially adverse effects on existing agricultural operations; and conversely, agricultural operations can result in impacts to non-agricultural development. The potential for land use conflicts between the WSP solar generating facilities and adjacent agricultural operations is discussed in detail in Section *3.2. Agricultural Resources* (under Impact AG-3), and summarized below.

Potential Impacts of Solar Development on Agriculture

Due to the relatively low intensity of the solar facility operations, the potential for impacts to adjacent agricultural lands is generally low. The primary concerns are with windblown dust and potential introduction of invasive weedy species, as discussed in turn below.

Grading and construction for solar facility development would expose soils to wind erosion and increase the potential for dustfall on agricultural crops located downwind. Increased dustfall could inhibit photosynthesis and result in reduced crop yields. However, implementation of dust control measures during construction, as specified in Mitigation Measure AQ-1, and as required for each WSP solar project under measures specified in Dust Control Permits issued by the SJVAPCD would reduce potential dust impacts to *less-than-significant* levels. Therefore, this impact would be *less than significant with mitigation*. (For a full discussion, see Section *3.3. Air Quality and Climate Change* [under Impact AQ-1].)

Development of the solar facilities could also result in the introduction of invasive weed species to the area, which could interfere with nearby crops. However, the potential for invasive weed species would be minimized at each WSP solar project through implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-1 which requires that an Agricultural Management Plan (AMP) be prepared and implemented for each solar project. The AMPs would require revegetation with weed-free seed mix and weed free mulch, and sheep grazing to control vegetation growth. The introduction of weeds would be further minimized through implementation of the Weed Abatement Plan required under Article 11, Section 1112.B.2.e of the Kings County Development Code. These measures would reduce the potential impact of invasive weed species to less-than-significant levels. Therefore, this impact would be *less than significant with mitigation*. (For a full discussion, see Section *3.2. Agricultural Resources* [under Impact AG-1].)

Potential Impacts of Agricultural Activities on Solar Facilities

The potential for agricultural operations to affect the WSP solar facilities would be limited to occasional dustfall due to plowing of adjacent fields, and possibly some pesticide drift due to spraying of nearby orchards. Since solar generating facilities are less sensitive to occasional dust, pesticide drift, noise, and odors than other land uses such as residential development, the potential for adverse effects to solar

facilities is relatively low. The primary concern would be with windblown dust from nearby agricultural fields, which WSP solar facilities would address through regular panel washings as part of their routine operations and maintenance activities. The regular panel washing would minimize the potential reduction in solar generating efficiency resulting from panel soiling. Therefore, the potential impacts on WSP solar facilities resulting from nearby agricultural operations would be *less-than-significant*.

In summary, the potential land use conflicts posed by dust generation during solar development and potential introduction of invasive weedy species would be mitigated through implementation of MM AQ-1 and MM AG-1, respectively, which would require dust mitigation and agricultural management measures to be implemented in conjunction with each solar project. Therefore, the potential impact of WSP solar development in terms of compatibility with existing agricultural uses in the area would be *less than significant with mitigation*.

WSP Compatibility with Nearby Residential Land Uses

As discussed in Section *3.9.1. Environmental Setting*, there are 34 existing rural residences located within approximately one mile of the WSP plan area. These include 20 dwellings at Shannon Ranch and 2 dwellings at Stone Land Company Ranch, located adjacent to the plan area, plus 12 other dwellings located from ½ mile to one mile east of the plan area (see Figure PD-2).

The principal sources of conflicts or incompatibility that might arise between the WSP solar facilities and nearby residences include aesthetics, lighting, and noise. The potential visual and lighting impacts are addressed in detail in Section *3.1. Aesthetics*, and the potential noise impacts are addressed in Section *3.10. Noise*. These discussions are summarized below as they apply to the residential properties that are potentially affected by WSP solar development.

Shannon Ranch

Located at the southwest corner of Avenal Cutoff Road and Lincoln/Gale Avenue, the ranch includes 20 single-family residences along with a number of operations buildings (e.g., office, machine shop, storage barns, etc.). The WSP solar arrays would be installed on the east side of Avenal Cutoff Road opposite the Shannon Ranch, and also along the north side of a short segment of Lincoln/Gale Avenue. Six of the Shannon Ranch residences are located along the Avenal Cutoff Road frontage and would be approximately 200 feet from the nearest solar arrays across the road to the east. One dwelling is located along the Lincoln/Gale Avenue frontage and would be located approximately 130 feet from the nearest solar arrays. The remaining 13 dwellings would be at located 400 to 700 feet from the nearest solar arrays. Along both roadway frontages, densely planted and tall landscaping would almost completely screen the Shannon Ranch residences from the planned solar arrays (see Figure AE-1c (photo 5). Given the screening effect of the existing landscaping and the distances separating the dwellings from the planned solar arrays, the visual impacts to the Shannon Ranch would be less than significant.

With respect to lighting, the WSP solar facilities would include permanent lighting only at the substations and operations yards, with the solar fields remaining unlit except for times when mobile lighting would be used for nighttime repairs. During construction, the staging areas would have security lighting, and mobile lighting would be necessary when construction continues into nighttime hours. Since it is not anticipated that any substations or operations centers would be located near the Shannon Ranch, the existing ranch dwellings may be subject to temporary night lighting during construction and occasional repair activity.

Any lighting at the nearby solar facilities would be largely screened by the existing dense landscaping along the ranch perimeter. Therefore, the potential lighting impacts at Shannon Ranch would be less than significant.

Regarding potential noise impacts, solar facilities generate very low levels of noise during operation. During construction, relatively high noise levels would be generated by heavy equipment and vehicles. However, construction activity would be progressive and take place for relatively short periods at any given location. Construction activity would occur in proximity to the nearest dwellings at Shannon Ranch and would be noticeable to the residents. However, as discussed in Section *3.10. Noise*, the noise impacts at the nearest sensitive receivers within Shannon Ranch would be less than significant.

Stone Land Company Ranch

This large ranch complex is located on the south side of Nevada Avenue, opposite the WSP plan area and approximately 1.4 miles east of Avenal Cutoff Road. The ranch includes 2 single-family dwellings that are each located approximately 150 feet from the roadway centerline, and would be at least 215 feet from the nearest solar arrays. The residential views of the solar arrays would be largely screened by a number of existing mature landscape trees planted in the front yards of these dwellings (see Figure AE-1d (photo 7)). Given the distance separating these two residences from the nearest solar arrays, and the visual screening provided by the existing residential landscaping at the ranch, the visual impact to these ranch dwellings would less than significant.

Regarding potential lighting impacts, it is not expected that any facilities with permanent lighting, such as substations and operations yards, would be located near the Stone Land Company Ranch. While temporary lighting may be required during construction and occasionally during facility operations, the visual screening provided by the dense landscaping along the ranch frontage would minimize any lighting impacts.

Regarding potential noise impacts, the highest noise levels associated with solar development in the vicinity of the dwellings at Stone Land Company Ranch would occur temporarily while construction activity is ongoing nearby. However, as discussed in Section *3.10. Noise*, the noise impacts at the sensitive residential receivers within Stone Land Company Ranch would be less than significant.

Other Residences in the WSP Vicinity

Other residences within about one mile of the WSP plan area include the following: 4 dwellings at the Westlake Farms complex located on the east side of SR-41, one mile south of Nevada Avenue, and just over a half mile east of the southeastern WSP boundary; 2 dwellings at an unnamed ranch complex located on the east side of SR-41, one mile north of Nevada Avenue, and just over one mile east of the WSP plan area; and a series of 6 residences along and near 22nd Avenue which runs parallel to the WSP boundary about one mile to the east. At these distances, some solar facilities, such as the taller structural elements of the substations or the gen-tie towers, might be visible, but the lower profile solar arrays would not be visible. The overall visual effect of the WSP solar facilities on these residences would be negligible at these distances.

With respect to lighting, these residences would be too far from the WSP plan area to be adversely affected by the low levels of lighting anticipated from the solar facilities.

Regarding potential noise impacts, construction noise from WSP solar development may be audible at these residences, but at distances of at least ½ mile from the nearest noise sources, the noise impact at any of these dwellings would be less than significant.

In summary, the potential land use conflicts associated with potential visual, lighting, or noise impacts from WSP solar development would be less than significant for all nearby residences. Therefore, the potential impact of WSP solar development in terms of compatibility with existing residential uses in the area would be *less than significant*.

WSP Gen-Tie Corridors

Compatibility with Agricultural Uses

As discussed in Section *3.2. Agricultural Resources*, almost all of the lands traversed by the gen-tie corridors are under cultivation for row crops or tree crops. As discussed, the construction of the gen-tie lines would result in the permanent loss of farmland, possible destruction of existing crops and damage to farming infrastructure, as well as restricted access to farmlands during construction. These permanent and temporary impacts to agricultural operations would be avoided or mitigated to the extent feasible through implementation of Mitigation Measures AG-4 and AG-5. Therefore, the impact of gen-tie construction upon existing agricultural operations would be *less than significant with mitigation.* (For a full discussion, see Section *3.2. Agricultural Resources* [under Impact AG-2].)

Upon completion of gen-tie lines, agricultural operations could continue within the transmission easements and around the towers, although minor adjustments to agricultural operations would likely be needed. Farming activities would require additional passes for tilling, planting, and harvesting to maneuver around tower structures. Aerial applicators (crop dusters) would likely need to make additional passes around transmission lines and towers to achieve full coverage of application. However, these effects would be minimized by routing the transmission lines adjacent to existing transmission or roadway corridors, as planned. The overall impact of transmission line operation upon agricultural operations would be *less than significant*.

Compatibility with Existing Residential Uses

As discussed in Section *3.9.1. Environmental Setting*, there are a total of 20 existing rural dwellings within one mile of the gen-tie corridors throughout their combined 23-mile length. These existing residences are listed in Table PD-7 and shown in Figure PD-7. As indicated in Table PD-7, there are existing dwellings within 1,000 feet of the northern gen-tie corridor, and 10 existing dwellings within 1,000 feet of the southern gen-tie corridor. The principal sources of conflicts or incompatibility that might arise between the gen-tie lines and nearby residences are aesthetics, lighting, and noise. The potential visual and lighting impacts are addressed in detail in Section *3.1. Aesthetics*, and the potential noise impacts are addressed in Section *3.10. Noise*. These discussions are summarized below as they apply to the residential properties that are potentially affected by the WSP gen-tie projects.

Aesthetics

The residences within 1,000 feet of the transmission corridors would have full or partial views of the new transmission lines. The northern gen-tie corridor runs parallel and adjacent to an existing 230-kV transmission line. The incremental visual changes resulting from the addition of the planned transmission lines to similar linear structural elements that exist in the settings of the affected residences, all of which are at least 1,000 feet away, would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the their settings.

Along the southern gen-tie corridor there are 10 existing dwellings located from 125 to 180 from the gen-tie corridor along Nevada and Jayne Avenues. This gen-tie corridor does not run parallel to an existing transmission line; however, the visual effect of this gen-tie line upon the proximate residences would be reduced by screening from existing landscape trees, the use of monopoles to minimize the tower profiles, and strategic placement of the monopoles away from existing residences. Thus the completion of the southern gen-tie line would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the settings of the affected residences.

Lighting

The gen-tie projects would produce some light during construction when staging areas would be lighted at night for security, and occasional night work would involve mobile lighting. Construction staging areas would be sited away from existing residences, and temporary mobile lighting would be directed away from nearby residences. Once completed, the gen-tie lines would not include lighting, so no new sources of light would occur. Gen-tie towers and conductors would be constructed of, or coated with, non-reflective materials to avoid reflected glare. Therefore, the WSP gen-tie projects would not result in significant lighting or glare impacts.

Noise

As discussed in Section *3.10. Noise*, the gen-tie projects would generate increased noise during construction. Noise sources would include heavy equipment used for grading and tower assembly, and possible helicopter noise for stringing conductors over features such as the San Luis Canal/California Aqueduct. Given the distances of the nearest residents to the construction areas, the noise levels from conventional construction activity would not exceed maximum permitted noise levels. Helicopter noise is also expected to be below maximum permitted levels. Any noise produced during gen-tie line construction would be brief given the progressive and linear nature of gen-tie line construction.

During operation, the gen-tie lines would emit little noise except for corona discharge which becomes more pronounced during damp or rainy conditions. However, even under these conditions corona noise is audible at the edge of the right-of-way but not far beyond that. At the locations of the nearest affected dwellings, the noise from corona discharge would not be significant.

Since noise levels generated during construction and operation of the gen-tie lines would not be significant at the nearest affected residences, the noise-related land use compatibility impacts associated with construction and operation of the WSP gen-tie projects would be *less than significant*.

Mitigation Measures:

***Westlands Solar Park*. Implement MM AQ-1 (Dust Control) and MM AG-1 (Agricultural Management Plan).**

***WSP Gen-Tie Corridors*. Implement MM AG-4 (Mitigation for Permanent Impacts to Agricultural Operations) and MM AG-5 (Mitigation for Temporary Impacts to Agricultural Operations).**

Impact LU-4. Conflict with a Habitat Conservation Plan or a Natural Communities Conservation Plan

***Westlands Solar Park*. The WSP solar development would not conflict with an adopted habitat conservation plan, a natural community conservation plan, or any other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan. (*No Impact*)**

***WSP Gen-Tie Corridors*. The gen-tie projects would not conflict with an adopted habitat conservation plan, a natural community conservation plan, or any other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan. (*No Impact*)**

This impact analysis addresses significance criterion 'c' above.

Westlands Solar Park

As discussed in section *3.4. Biological Resources*, the WSP plan area is within the boundaries of PG&E's "San Joaquin Valley Operations and Maintenance Habitat Conservation Plan." Although the HCP mainly covers operational and maintenance activities, it also covers small construction projects such as minor extensions of electrical lines (PG&E 2007). While some elements of the WSP solar projects (e.g., substations) may be constructed and/or operated by PG&E, the HCP would not cover construction of these major facilities; therefore, this HCP does not apply to the Westlands Solar Park.

There are no other HCPs or Natural Community Conservation Plans that cover the project area. However, the USFWS has adopted the *Recovery Plan for Upland Species of the San Joaquin Valley* which covers 34 species of plants and animals that occur in the San Joaquin Valley (USFWS 1998). The majority of these species occur in arid grasslands and scrublands of the San Joaquin Valley and the adjacent foothills and valleys. The only species covered in the Recovery Plan that potentially occurs in the WSP vicinity is the San Joaquin kit fox, although no sightings of this species have been recorded in the immediate vicinity of the WSP plan area. The Recovery Plan does not identify the plan area or any other lands in the vicinity as areas that should be protected as either Specialty Reserve Areas, Wildlife-Compatible Farmland to be Maintained, or Areas Where Connectivity and Linkages Should be Promoted (USFWS 1998). .

The WSP plan area is not covered by any other existing Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) or Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), or any other conservation plan adopted at the local, regional, state, or federal level. Therefore, WSP solar development would have *no impact* in terms of potential conflict with any such plans.

WSP Gen-Tie Corridors

The only species covered in *Recovery Plan for Upland Species of the San Joaquin Valley*, discussed above, that potentially occurs in the vicinity of the gen-tie corridors is the San Joaquin kit fox. The Recovery Plan also identifies the Kettleman Hills to Anticline Ridge Movement Corridor, located west of I-5 near the western ends of both gen-tie corridors (at the Gates Substation) as a connectivity and linkage area. The gen-tie projects would be located at least 4 miles east of this wildlife corridor and would not hinder its functionality as a movement corridor. Therefore, WSP gen-tie projects would have *no impact* in terms of potential conflict with the Recovery Plan.

The PG&E San Joaquin Valley Operation and Maintenance HCP is the only HCP that covers the area of the gen-tie corridors. While some or all elements of the gen-tie projects may be constructed and/or operated by PG&E, the HCP would not cover construction of these major facilities, but only their maintenance and repair; therefore, this HCP does not apply to the WSP gen-tie corridors.

The WSP gen-tie corridors area is not covered by any other existing Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) or Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), or any other conservation plan adopted at the local, regional, state, or federal level. Therefore, WSP gen-tie projects would have *no impact* in terms of potential conflict with any such plans.

Mitigation Measures:

***Westlands Solar Park*. No mitigation is required.**

***WSP Gen-Tie Corridors*. No mitigation is required.**

Cumulative Impacts

Impact LU-5. Cumulative Land Use and Planning Impacts

***Westlands Solar Park*. The potential land use impacts associated with the WSP solar development, combined with the land use impacts of other cumulative development, could result in cumulative land use impacts. (*Less-than-Significant Cumulative Impact with Mitigation*)**

***WSP Gen-Tie Corridors*. The potential land use impacts associated with the WSP gen-tie projects, combined with the land use impacts of other cumulative development, could result in cumulative land use impacts. (*Less-than-Significant Cumulative Impact with Mitigation*)**

Geographic Scope of Analysis of Cumulative Land Use Impacts

As discussed in the preceding impact discussions, the potential land use compatibility impacts associated with WSP solar development and the WSP gen-tie projects would be less-than-significant. In general, land use impacts tend to be localized and extend a short distance beyond project boundaries into adjacent lands. Thus the study area for the analysis of cumulative land use impacts is conservatively assumed to extend one mile beyond the WSP boundaries and the WSP gen-tie corridors.

Westlands Solar Park

Near Term

Under near-term conditions, there are 4 pending, approved, and completed projects (or groups of projects) within a one mile radius of the WSP's outside boundaries. (Note: The Westside Solar project and Westlands Aquamarine solar project, shown in Figure PD-9, are located within the WSP plan area. However, since the impacts associated with these projects are addressed in the WSP impact analysis, they are not included again in the list of cumulative projects below.) All 4 of these projects comprise solar PV developments. These solar projects are listed below and described in Section *2.5. Completed, Approved and Pending Projects/ Introduction to Cumulative Impact Analysis*. Their locations are shown in Figure PD-9.

- Mustang/Orion/Kent South
- American Kings
- Mustang 2
- Kettleman

Plan Consistency

In terms of consistency with plans, policies and regulations, the WSP solar development and the other nearby approved and pending projects will be or have been required to conform to the County's General Plan, Development Code, and related standards and requirements. As such, there no plan consistency impacts associated with WSP solar development or any of the cumulative projects, and therefore near term cumulative impact with respect to plan consistency would be *less than significant*.

Compatibility with NAS Lemoore

The northern 3 cumulative projects, and the northern half of the WSP plan area, are located within the Military Influence Area (MIA) of NAS Lemoore and are thus located within the study area of the NASL Joint Land Use Study (JLUS), described in detail under Impact LU-3 above. As with the WSP plan area, portions of those project sites lay within the 70 decibel (dB) noise contour zones associated with NASL flight patterns. However, since solar PV facilities are not noise-sensitive land uses, the development of those project sites for solar generating facilities is not inconsistent with the objectives and recommendations of the JLUS. As with the WSP plan area, none of the other cumulative sites are located within Accident Potential Zones (APZs), and none of the cumulative projects would exceed the 500-foot height obstruction limits established for these lands under the JLUS. As discussed under Impact LU-3 above, the JLUS acknowledges that solar PV panels have a very low potential to create reflected glare and therefore would

not be a hazard to flight operations. In summary, none of the cumulative projects would be incompatible with the operation of NAS Lemoore on an individual project basis. The potential near-term cumulative land use compatibility impacts to NAS Lemoore resulting from the combined development of the cumulative projects, including WSP solar development, would be *less than significant*.

Compatibility with Nearby Agricultural Land Uses

Since all of the cumulative projects consist of solar PV generating facilities, they would raise the same compatibility issues with adjacent agricultural operations as the WSP solar development. The potential for land use conflicts between solar generating facilities and adjacent agricultural operations is discussed in detail in Section *3.2. Agricultural Resources* (under Impact AG-3). To summarize, due to the relatively low intensity of the solar facility operations, the potential for conflicts and incompatibility between these two land uses is generally minimized. However, the construction and grading activities associated with the development of solar facilities would potentially generate windblown dust which would adversely affect neighboring agricultural operations. This potential impact would be mitigated through implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-1, which requires dust control measures during construction (see Section *3.3. Air Quality and Climate Change*, under Impact AQ-1.) Also, solar facilities could result in the potential introduction of invasive weedy species which would also adversely affect agriculture in the vicinity. This potential impact would be addressed by the weed prevention requirements of Mitigation Measure AG-1 (Agricultural Management Plan), and would be further minimized through implementation of the Weed Abatement Plan required under Article 11, Section 1112.B.2.e of the Kings County Development Code (see Section *3.2. Agricultural Resources*, under Impact AG-1). For the other cumulative solar PV projects, the Conditional Use Permit approvals by Kings County and Fresno County would include similar requirements for dust control and site revegetation which would reduce these potential adjacency impacts to less-than-significant levels for each of the cumulative projects. The residual impacts from each cumulative project, including WSP solar development, would not be cumulatively significant. Therefore, the near-term cumulative land use compatibility impacts to nearby agricultural land uses would be *less than significant with mitigation*.

Compatibility with Nearby Residential Land Uses

As discussed under Impact LU-3 above, the WSP solar development would result in less-than-significant compatibility impacts to the two residential properties near the plan area boundaries – the Shannon Ranch and the Stone Land Company Ranch. Cumulative compatibility impacts would occur only if two or more of the cumulative projects each resulted in some compatibility impacts to a common residential property. The other cumulative projects are all at least 3 miles from the Shannon Ranch and 5 miles from the Stone Land Company Ranch. At these distances, any visual, light, or noise effects generated by the other cumulative projects would not be noticeable at the two ranches. Since no two cumulative projects would produce a noticeable cumulative effect at the nearest common residences, the near-term cumulative land use compatibility impact would be *less than significant*.

In summary, the less-than-significant land use compatibility impacts associated with the development of each of the near-term cumulative projects would not combine to result in a cumulatively significant land use compatibility impact to nearby residential uses. Therefore, the cumulative land use compatibility impacts upon nearby residential properties associated with WSP solar development would be *less than significant*.

Summary

The development of the WSP solar facilities and the other cumulative solar projects would combine to produce less-than-significant impacts in terms of plan consistency, compatibility with NAS Lemoore, and compatibility with nearby residential uses. The potential cumulative impacts arising from potential land use conflicts with nearby agricultural operations would be mitigated with implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AG-1. Therefore, the near-term cumulative land use impacts associated with WSP solar development would be *less than significant with mitigation*.

Far Term

For far-term conditions, the cumulative analysis of land use impacts considers the full buildout of land uses within one mile of the WSP plan area, as shown on the 2035 Kings County General Plan. The 'Kings County Land Use Map' of the Land Use Element shows that all lands within one mile of the outside WSP boundaries are designated as either 'General Agriculture 40 ac.' or 'Exclusive Agriculture 40 ac.' These lands are located well outside existing and planned urbanized areas including cities (and their spheres of influence), unincorporated communities (including their planning areas), special districts, rancherias, and military bases. Thus it is reasonable to assume that agricultural production will remain the dominant land use in the adjacent and surrounding lands for the life of the General Plan.

As with the lands within the WSP plan area, the agricultural designations of the 2035 Kings County General Plan on surrounding lands allow the installation of utility-scale PV solar generating facilities (KC 2010a). Thus it is possible that additional solar development projects could be proposed in the WSP vicinity within the 25 year planning horizon of the General Plan. Since the adjacent lands to the west of the WSP site are located within Fresno County, the corresponding General Plan designations for Fresno County lands would guide permitted uses on adjacent lands to the west. Again, all lands within a one mile radius of the WSP plan area to the west are designated 'Agriculture' under the Fresno County General Plan (Fresno County 2000b). While the Fresno County General Plan does not specifically allow PV solar development on agriculturally-designated lands, the County has established a process for considering solar PV development on agriculturally-designated lands, and has approved several solar PV projects under this process (Fresno County 2012c, Fresno County 2016b). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Fresno County would consider proposals for PV solar development on agricultural lands within one mile of the WSP plan area. Thus it is anticipated that any non-agricultural development on nearby lands would consist predominantly, if not exclusively, of solar PV projects.

Compatibility with NAS Lemoore

The northern portion of the far-term study area is located within the Military Influence Area (MIA) of NAS Lemoore, and some of these lands are inside the 70 dB noise contour zones associated with NASL flight patterns. However, since solar PV facilities are not noise-sensitive land uses, the development of the affected lands for solar generating facilities would not be inconsistent with the objectives and recommendations of the JLUS. Since the Accident Potential Zones (APZs) associated with NAS Lemoore are located entirely north of SR-198, no portion of the far-term study area would lie within the APZs. The northern portion of the study area lies within height-limited obstruction zones, but future solar PV facilities would not exceed the 500-foot height obstruction limits established for these lands under the JLUS. As discussed under Impact LU-3 above, the JLUS acknowledges that solar PV panels have a very low potential to create reflected glare and therefore future solar PV development within the study area would not pose a hazard to flight operations. In summary, as with the planned solar PV development under the WSP

Master Plan, the potential future solar development of lands with one mile of the WSP plan area would not be incompatible with the operation of NAS Lemoore. Thus, the far-term cumulative land use compatibility impacts resulting from the combined development of the WSP solar facilities and potential solar development of lands within one mile of the WSP plan area and would be *less than significant*.

Compatibility with Nearby Agricultural Land Uses

Since any cumulative non-agricultural projects proposed under far-term conditions would consist of solar PV generating facilities, they would raise the same compatibility issues with adjacent agricultural operations as the WSP solar development. The potential for land use conflicts between solar generating facilities and adjacent agricultural operations is discussed in detail in Section *3.2. Agricultural Resources* (under Impact AG-3). To summarize, due to the relatively low intensity of the solar facility operations, the potential for conflicts and incompatibility between these two land uses is generally minimized. However, the construction and grading activities associated with the development of solar facilities would potentially generate windblown dust which would adversely affect neighboring agricultural operations. This potential impact would be mitigated through implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-1, which requires dust control measures during construction and decommissioning (see Section *3.3. Air Quality and Climate Change*, under Impact AQ-1.) Also, solar facilities could result in the potential introduction of invasive weedy species which would also adversely affect agriculture in the vicinity. This potential impact would be addressed by the weed prevention requirements of Mitigation Measure AG-1 (Agricultural Management Plan), and would be further minimized through implementation of the Weed Abatement Plan required under Article 11, Section 1112.B.2.e of the Kings County Development Code (see Section *3.2. Agricultural Resources*, under Impact AG-1). At the end of the useful life of each solar facility, the potential impacts with adjacent agricultural operations would be addressed through implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-2 (which requires soil reclamation upon decommissioning), and Mitigation Measure AG-3 (which requires financial assurance for completion of reclamation). For other cumulative solar PV projects, the Conditional Use Permit approvals by Kings County and Fresno County would include similar requirements for dust control and site revegetation, and ultimate site reclamation, which would reduce these potential adjacency impacts to less-than-significant levels for each of the cumulative projects. The residual impacts from each cumulative project, including WSP solar development, would not be cumulatively significant. Therefore, the far-term cumulative land use compatibility impacts to nearby agricultural land uses associated with WSP solar development would be *less than significant with mitigation*.

Compatibility with Nearby Residential Land Uses

As discussed under Impact LU-3 above, the WSP solar development would result in less-than-significant compatibility impacts to the two residential properties near the plan area boundaries – the Shannon Ranch and the Stone Land Company Ranch. Cumulative compatibility impacts would occur only if two or more of the cumulative projects each resulted in compatibility impacts to a common residential property. Under far-term conditions, it is possible but unlikely that currently unknown solar projects would be constructed in proximity to the two nearby ranch complexes. Under such a scenario, solar arrays could be installed as close as 150 feet from the nearest affected dwellings in the ranch complexes. The substantial existing landscaping at both ranch complexes would screen the visual and lighting effects of solar facilities from the nearest ranch dwellings, and construction noise at this distance would brief and less than significant. Therefore, the far-term cumulative land use compatibility impact would be *less than significant*.

In summary, the less-than-significant land use compatibility impacts associated with the development of each of the near-term cumulative projects would not combine to result in a cumulatively significant land use compatibility impact to nearby residential uses. Therefore, the cumulative land use compatibility impacts upon nearby residential properties would be *less than significant*.

Summary

In the far term, the development of the WSP solar facilities and other potential cumulative projects would combine to produce less-than-significant impacts in terms of plan consistency, compatibility with NAS Lemoore, and compatibility with nearby residential uses. The potential cumulative impacts arising from potential land use conflicts with nearby agricultural operations would be mitigated with implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AG-1, AG-2, and AG-3. Therefore, the far-term cumulative land use compatibility impacts associated with WSP solar development would be *less than significant with mitigation*.

WSP Gen-Tie Corridors

Near Term

Under near-term conditions, there are three approved and pending solar projects and two transmission projects on lands in the vicinity of the WSP gen-tie corridors. (Note: The Westside Solar project and Westlands Aquamarine solar project, shown in Figure PD-9, are located within the WSP plan area. However, since the impacts associated with these projects are addressed in the WSP impact analysis, they are not included again in the list of cumulative projects below.) These projects are listed below and shown in Figures PD-10, and described in Section *2.5. Completed, Approved, and Pending Projects/Introduction to Cumulative Impact Analysis*.

- Mustang/Orion/Kent South solar projects
- Central Valley Power Connect transmission project (Gates to Gregg Substation)
- Westside Transmission Project (Gates to Dos Amigos/Los Banos Substation)

Plan Consistency

As discussed under LU-2, the WSP gen-tie projects are consistent with the General Plan designations and policies, and zoning regulations of Kings County and Fresno County. Similarly, the other cumulative transmission projects would be likewise consistent with the applicable plans, policies, and regulations of both counties. The cumulative solar projects will be or will have been required to conform to the plans, policies, and regulations of Kings County in order to be approved. As such, there are no plan consistency impacts associated with the WSP gen-tie projects or any of the cumulative projects, and therefore the near-term cumulative impact associated with the WSP gen-tie projects with respect to plan consistency in the near term would be *less than significant*.

Compatibility with Nearby Agricultural Land Uses

Since two of the cumulative projects comprise transmission projects, they would have similar compatibility issues with adjacent agricultural operations as the WSP gen-tie projects. Some disruption of farming activities and damage to crops would potentially occur during construction, and some cropland would be permanently removed from cultivation at the monopole sites. It is expected that the temporary and

permanent impacts of construction and operation of each cumulative transmission project upon agricultural operations would be mitigated through implementation of measures similar to those identified for the WSP gen-tie projects, i.e., MM AG-4 (Mitigation for Permanent Impacts to Agricultural Operations) and MM AG-5 (Mitigation for Temporary Impacts to Agricultural Operations). Thus the impacts of the individual transmission projects upon adjacent agricultural operations would be less than significant in each case.

The impacts associated with the cumulative solar PV projects would be similar to those resulting from WSP solar development. The main issues with solar PV projects would be the generation of windborne dust during construction and the potential to introduce invasive weedy species. As discussed above under Westlands Solar Park, the potential dust impacts would be addressed in each case through implementation of mitigation measures similar to those specified in Mitigation Measure AQ-1 (dust control measures required under SJVAPCD Regulation VIII). With respect to weed control, it is expected that cumulative solar projects would each be subject to mitigation measures similar to those specified in Mitigation Measure AG-1 (Agricultural Management Plan). Thus the impacts of the individual solar projects upon adjacent agricultural operations would be less than significant in each case. The combined effect of any residual impacts from near-term cumulative transmission and solar projects would not combine to result in a cumulatively significant impact. Therefore, the near-term cumulative land use impact to agricultural operations associated with the WSP gen-tie projects would be *less than significant with mitigation*.

Compatibility with Nearby Residential Land Uses

The main sources of land use compatibility impacts are the result of visual, light, or noise effects of projects. A cumulative impact would occur if the combined effects of two or more cumulative projects result in a cumulatively significant impact to a common residential receiver.

The northern WSP gen-tie corridor runs adjacent to alternative transmission corridors under consideration for the Gates to Gregg transmission project (Central Valley Power Connect). The northern gen-tie corridor also runs parallel and adjacent to the existing Henrietta-Gates transmission line. Along this 11.5-mile corridor, there are 10 rural residences located between 0.3 and 0.9 miles from the corridor. Given the presence of the existing transmission line, the addition of two new parallel transmission lines to a setting that includes an existing linear structural element would not result in a significant visual impact to these residences, particularly since that the nearest residence would be over ¼ mile away. The transmission projects would not introduce new sources of light, and the construction noise levels at these distances would be less than significant and temporary. The southern WSP gen-tie corridor is not near other near-term cumulative projects and thus would not contribute to a cumulative impact. In summary, the near-term cumulative compatibility impacts to existing residences associated with the WSP gen-tie corridors would be *less than significant*.

Summary

The WSP gen-tie projects and the other near-term cumulative projects would combine to produce less-than-significant impacts in terms of plan consistency and in terms of compatibility with nearby residential uses, while the potential conflicts with nearby agricultural operations would be reduced to less-than-significant levels through implementation of Mitigation Measures AG-4 and AG-5. Therefore, the near-

term cumulative land use compatibility impacts associated with the WSP gen-tie projects would be *less than significant with mitigation*.

Far Term

Under far-term conditions, it is assumed that all near-term cumulative projects, including the Central Valley Power Connect transmission project, the Westside transmission project, and the solar projects considered in the near-term analysis, will be completed. The far-term cumulative analysis of land use impacts assumes the full buildout of land uses adjacent to the WSP gen-tie corridors as shown on the General Plans of Kings County and Fresno County. Under both county general plans, the adjacent lands are designated for agricultural uses, and solar PV projects are allowed on agriculturally-designated lands. However, it is not foreseeable which lands, if any, adjacent to the gen-tie corridors would be proposed for solar PV development in the far term. Also, additional transmission facilities or other public utility uses could be planned for adjacent lands, but this eventuality is also unforeseeable at this time. However, this far-term analysis assumes that some solar PV development and additional transmission projects would be constructed in the project vicinity in the far term. It is not anticipated that other non-agricultural development would occur in the vicinity of the WSP gen-tie corridors under far-term conditions.

Plan Consistency

As discussed under LU-2, the WSP gen-tie projects are consistent with the General Plan designations and policies, and zoning regulations of Kings County and Fresno County. Similarly, since transmission facilities and solar PV facilities are allowed on the agriculturally-designated and zoned lands in both counties, any future transmission and solar projects would be likewise consistent with the applicable plans, policies, and regulations, subject to any permit conditions the counties would impose. As such, there would be no far-term plan consistency impacts associated with the WSP gen-tie projects or foreseeable cumulative projects, and therefore the far-term cumulatively impact associated with the WSP gen-tie projects with respect to plan consistency would be *less than significant*.

Compatibility with Nearby Agricultural Land Uses

The potential construction of future transmission projects in proximity to agricultural operations would result in some disruption of farming activities during construction, as well as potential damage to crops and infrastructure , and some cropland would be permanently removed from cultivation at the monopole sites. It is expected that the temporary and permanent impacts of construction and operation of any far-term cumulative transmission project upon agricultural operations would be mitigated through implementation of measures similar to those identified above for the WSP gen-tie projects, i.e., MM AG-3 (Mitigation for Permanent Impacts to Agricultural Operations) and MM AG-4 (Mitigation for Temporary Impacts to Agricultural Operations). Thus the impacts of any far-term transmission projects upon adjacent agricultural operations would be less than significant in each case. The combined effect of any residual impacts from near-term cumulative transmission projects would not combine to result in a cumulatively significant impact. Therefore, the far-term cumulative land use impact to agricultural operations associated with the WSP gen-tie projects would be *less than significant with mitigation*.

The impacts associated with any far-term cumulative solar PV projects would include the generation of windborne dust during construction and the potential to introduce invasive weedy species. As discussed above under Westlands Solar Park, the potential dust impacts would be addressed in each case through implementation of mitigation measures similar to those specified in Mitigation Measure AQ-1 (dust control

measures required under SJVAPCD Regulation VIII). With respect to weed control, it is expected that any far-term cumulative solar projects would each be subject to mitigation measures similar to those specified in Mitigation Measure AG-1 (Agricultural Management Plan). At the end of the useful life of each solar facility, the potential impacts with adjacent agricultural operations would be addressed through implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-2 (which requires soil reclamation upon decommissioning), and Mitigation Measure AG-3 (which requires financial assurance for completion of reclamation). Thus, the far-term impacts of the individual solar projects upon adjacent agricultural operations would be *less than significant* in each case. The combined effect of any residual impacts from far-term cumulative transmission and solar projects would not combine to result in a cumulatively significant impact. Therefore, the far-term cumulative land use impact to agricultural operations associated with the WSP gen-tie projects would be *less than significant with mitigation*.

Compatibility with Nearby Residential Land Uses

The main sources of land use compatibility impacts are the result of visual, light, or noise effects of projects. A cumulative impact would occur if the combined effects of two or more cumulative projects result in a cumulatively significant impact to a common residential receiver.

Any transmission projects planned in the far term would be expected to be routed adjacent and parallel to existing transmission lines or transportation corridors. Since these visual settings would already be somewhat degraded by these existing linear structural features, the new transmission lines would not substantially degrade the existing residential settings. Future transmission projects would not introduce new sources of light or glare, and increased noise would occur only during construction and would occur briefly at any given residential location. Thus the far-term land use impacts to existing residences from individual transmission projects would be *less than significant*.

Any solar PV projects planned in the far term would be low in profile and thus would not substantially degrade the visual setting of residences in the vicinity. Solar projects would not produce glare and would introduce new light sources only in a small percentage of the facilities. The solar projects would involve very low intensity activity and would not produce audible noise beyond their boundaries. Thus the far-term land use impacts to existing residences from individual solar projects would be *less than significant*.
The combined effect of any residual impacts from far-term cumulative transmission and solar projects would not combine to result in cumulatively significant land use impacts to nearby residences. Therefore, the far-term cumulative land use impact to existing residential land uses associated with the WSP gen-tie projects would be *less than significant*.

Summary

In the far term, the development of the WSP gen-tie projects and other potential cumulative projects would not combine to produce cumulatively significant impacts in terms of plan and policy consistency, or in terms of compatibility with nearby residential uses. The potential cumulative impacts arising from potential land use conflicts with nearby agricultural operations would be mitigated with implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and AG-1, AG-2, and AG-3. Therefore, the far-term cumulative land use compatibility impacts associated with the WSP gen-tie projects would be *less than significant with mitigation*.

Mitigation Measures:

***Westlands Solar Park*. Implement MMs AQ-1 (Dust Control), AG-1 (Agricultural Management Plan), AG-2 (Soil Reclamation Plan), and AG-3 (Financial Assurance). No additional mitigation is required.**

***WSP Gen-Tie Corridors*. Implement MMs AQ-1 (Dust Control), AG-4 (Mitigation for Permanent Impacts to Agricultural Operations), and AG-5 (Mitigation for Temporary Impacts to Agricultural Operations). No additional mitigation is required.**

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