

Chapter 2 Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Chapter 2 describes the existing affected environment for the Interstate 5 (I-5) Widening Project from SR-73 to El Toro Road (proposed project). The affected environment is the base condition on which environmental effects of the alternatives are evaluated in this Mitigated Negative Declaration/Finding of No Significant Impact (MND/FONSI).

The sections in Chapter 2 include the regulatory setting applicable to the environmental topic, the methodology of impact analysis, a description of the affected environment, environmental effects resulting from the Build and No Build Alternatives, and measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects of the Build Alternatives. Photographs, graphic exhibits, and data matrices are included throughout Chapter 2 where applicable to support the impact analyses.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) uses the terms “impact,” “effect,” and “consequences” synonymously. For an action to affect the environment, it must have a causal relationship with the environment. NEPA distinguishes three types of causal impacts: direct, indirect, and cumulative. “Cumulative impact” is defined, and the contribution of the Build Alternatives to cumulative effects is analyzed in Section 2.21 of this MND/FONSI. Direct and indirect effects are defined below and analyzed in Sections 2.1 through 2.22 of this MND/FONSI.

- Direct effects are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1508.8).
- Indirect effects are caused by the action and occur later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth-inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density, or growth rate, as well as related effects on air, water, and other natural systems, including ecosystems (40 CFR 1508.8).

As part of the environmental analysis conducted for the project, the following environmental resources were considered, but no potential for adverse effects to these

resources was identified. Consequently, there is no further discussion regarding these resources identified in this document.

- **Farmlands and Timberlands:** There are no timberlands or prime, unique, or soils of local significance for farmlands within the Study Area.
- **Coastal Zone:** The proposed project is located outside of the Coastal Zone and is not anticipated to have any effects on coastal resources. Therefore, it would not affect coastal resources, and no further discussion is necessary.
- **Mineral Resources:** There are no mineral resources located within or adjacent to the Study Area.
- **Wild and Scenic Rivers:** There are no rivers listed in the National Inventory of Wild and Scenic Rivers located near the Study Area.
- **Energy:** When balancing energy used during construction and operation against energy saved by relieving congestion and other transportation inefficiencies, the proposed project would not have a substantial energy impact.