

3 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This chapter describes the general approach to the environmental analysis, relevant environmental and regulatory setting information, and the results of the analysis of direct and indirect significant environmental impacts of the proposed project (project modifications). Section 3.1 discusses the general approach to the environmental impact analysis. The remainder of the chapter, Sections 3.2 through 3.5, describes by issue area the regulatory and environmental setting, significance criteria, and impacts and mitigation measures.

3.1 APPROACH TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This SEIR supplements and makes adequate the information provided in the 2007 Landside EIR for purposes of consideration by the SAFCA Board of proposed modifications to the Phase 2 Project. As discussed in Section 1.4, “Documents Incorporated by Reference,” the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (State CEQA Guidelines) encourage incorporation by reference of previously analyzed and publicly circulated information (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15150). Where material is incorporated by reference, the relationship of the referenced material to the analyses in this document is explained. New environmental setting information is provided to evaluate new environmental impacts or to support updates of previously analyzed impacts due to proposed modifications to the Phase 2 Project. The documents incorporated by reference in this SEIR, the Local Funding EIR (State Clearinghouse Number 2006072098) and the 2007 Landside EIR (State Clearinghouse Number 2007062016), are available in electronic format on SAFCA’s web site and in hard copy at SAFCA’s office, located at 1007 7th Street, 7th Floor, Sacramento, California 95814. Interested parties may review these documents online or at SAFCA’s office during normal business hours.

In accordance with Sections 15126.2 and 15163 of the State CEQA Guidelines, this SEIR identifies and focuses on the significant direct and indirect environmental effects on the physical environment of the proposed modifications to the Phase 2 Project, giving due consideration to both its short-term (temporary) and its long-term effects. Short-term effects are generally temporary and associated with construction of the project. Long-term effects, or permanent effects, are generally associated with operation of flood control facilities. Updates to setting, impact, and mitigation discussions are provided only where information or project components have been modified and where discussion of these changes is necessary to provide sufficient analysis of impacts.

This chapter addresses the following issue areas:

- ▶ Section 3.2, “Hydrology and Water Quality”
- ▶ Section 3.3, “Terrestrial Biological Resources”
- ▶ Section 3.4, “Cultural Resources”
- ▶ Section 3.5, “Noise”

Sections 3.2 through 3.5 follow the same general format:

“Regulatory Setting” identifies the federal, state, regional, and local plans, policies, laws, regulations, and ordinances that are relevant to each issue area.

“Environmental Setting” provides, in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15125, a description of the existing physical conditions in the project area at the time the notice of preparation (NOP) was published (October 2, 2008) that could be affected by implementation of the proposed project (e.g., modifications to the Phase 2 Project).

“Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures” lists the significance criteria used in the impact analysis and identifies the direct and indirect impacts of the proposed project on the environment, in accordance with State

CEQA Guidelines Sections 15126, 15126.2, and 15143. The significance criteria (sometimes called “thresholds of significance”) used in this SEIR are based on the checklist presented in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, best available data, professional judgment, and/or regulatory standards of federal, state, regional, and local agencies. The level of each impact is determined by comparing the effects of the proposed project to the existing physical conditions (the environmental setting) at the time the NOP for the SEIR was published.

The SEIR must describe any feasible measures that could avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate for significant adverse impacts on the physical environment, and the measures are to be fully enforceable through incorporation into the project (Public Resources Code Section 21081.6[b]). Mitigation measures are not required for effects that are found to be less than significant. Where feasible mitigation for a significant impact is available, it is described following the impact. Each identified mitigation measure is labeled numerically to correspond with the number of the impact that would be mitigated by the measure. Where sufficient feasible mitigation is not available to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level, the impacts are identified as “significant and unavoidable.”