

SECTION 1.0

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The County of Siskiyou (County) has prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to provide the general public and interested public agencies with information about the potential environmental impacts of the Crystal Geysers Water Bottling Plant Project (Proposed Project). This Draft EIR was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Public Resources Code [PRC] §§21000-21178), and the CEQA *Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14). The Proposed Project entails renovations to a former bottling plant in unincorporated Siskiyou County (Plant) adjacent to the City of Mt. Shasta (City) for the production of sparkling water, flavored water, juice beverages, and teas. This Draft EIR assesses the expected environmental impacts resulting from construction of the proposed renovations and ancillary infrastructure and operation of the Plant. At the public's request, the Draft EIR further considers impacts resulting from construction and renovation that previously occurred at the Plant after Crystal Geysers acquired the facility in 2013. Assessment of these environmental impacts is beyond what is required by the CEQA, and is undertaken with the agreement of Crystal Geysers Water Company (CGWC) in order to meet the public's request for additional environmental assessment.

As described in CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15121(a), an EIR is an informational document that assesses potential environmental impacts of a proposed project, as well as identifies mitigation measures and alternatives to the proposed project that could reduce or avoid adverse environmental impacts. As the CEQA Lead Agency for this project, the County is required to consider the information in the EIR along with any other available information in deciding whether to approve the project. The County has prepared this EIR for the following purposes:

- To satisfy the requirements of the CEQA, and the CEQA Guidelines;
- To inform the general public, the local community, responsible agencies, other interested public agencies, and the County's decision makers regarding the potential environmental effects resulting from implementation of the Proposed Project, as well as possible measures to mitigate significant effects, and alternatives to the Proposed Project;
- To enable the County to consider environmental consequences when deciding whether to approve the Proposed Project; and
- For use by responsible agencies (described in **Section 1.2.1**) in support of requested permits and approvals.

In summary, the EIR is an informational document used in the planning and decision-making process. It is not the intent of an EIR to recommend either approval or denial of a project. This EIR is a "Project EIR," pursuant to CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15161. A Project EIR examines the environmental impacts of a specific project. This type of EIR focuses on the changes in the environment that would result from implementation of the project, including construction and operation.

1.2 EIR PROCESS

1.2.1 LEAD AGENCY

In accordance with CEQA *Guidelines* Sections 15050 and 15367, the County has been designated the “Lead Agency,” which is defined as the “public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or disapproving a project.” The Lead Agency is also responsible for determining the scope of the environmental analysis, preparing the EIR, and responding to comments received on the Draft EIR. Prior to making a decision whether to approve a project, the Lead Agency is required to certify that the EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, that the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information in the EIR, and that the EIR reflects the independent judgment of the Lead Agency.

Known Responsible and Trustee Agencies

“Responsible agency” means a public agency that proposes to carry out or approve a project for which a lead agency is preparing or has prepared an EIR or Negative Declaration. For the purpose of CEQA, the term responsible agency includes all California public agencies other than the lead agency that have discretionary approval power over the project or an aspect of the project. The following agencies are identified as potential responsible agencies:

- Siskiyou County Air Pollution Control District
- City of Mt. Shasta
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

“Trustee agency” means a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project, which are held in trust for the people of the state of California. The only known possible trustee agency is the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

1.2.2 NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND SCOPING

In accordance with CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15082, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was circulated to the public, local, state and federal agencies, and other known interested parties for a 30-day public and agency review period on June 24, 2016 (included as **Appendix A**). The purpose of the NOP was to provide notification that an EIR for the Crystal Geyser Water Bottling Plant Project was being prepared and to solicit public input on the scope and content of the document.

Pursuant to CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15082 the Lead Agency held a scoping meeting for the EIR on July 20, 2016, in the Sisson School Gymnasium. Agencies and members of the public were invited to attend and provide input on the scope of the EIR. Comments from agencies and the public provided at the scoping meeting and in written comments submitted in response to the NOP are included within **Appendix A**. Issues raised during the scoping process are summarized in **Section 1.3**.

1.2.3 DRAFT EIR AND PUBLIC REVIEW

This Draft EIR is being circulated for public review and comment for a period of 45 days. During this period, the general public, organizations, and agencies can submit comments to the Lead Agency on the

Draft EIR's accuracy and completeness. Release of the Draft EIR marks the beginning of a 45-day public review period pursuant to CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15105. The public can review the Draft EIR at the County's website at <https://www.co.siskiyou.ca.us/content/community-development-crystal-geyser-project>, or at following address during normal business hours:

County of Siskiyou, Community Development Department
806 Main Street
Yreka, CA 96097

All comments regarding the Draft EIR should be addressed to:

Analytical Environmental Services
c/o Ryan Lee Sawyer, Project Manager
1801 7th Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95811
crystalgeyser@analyticalcorp.com

1.2.4 FINAL EIR AND EIR CERTIFICATION

Upon completion of the public review period, a Final EIR will be prepared that will include written comments on the Draft EIR received during the public review period and the County's responses to those comments. The Final EIR will also include the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) prepared in accordance with Section 21081.6 of the Public Resource Code. The Final EIR will address any revisions to the Draft EIR made in response to public comments. The Draft EIR and Final EIR together will comprise the EIR for the Proposed Project. Before the County can approve the project, it must first certify that the EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, that the County Planning Commission has reviewed and considered the information in the EIR, and that the EIR reflects the independent judgment of the County. The County Planning Commission also will be required to adopt Findings of Fact, and for any impacts determined to be significant and unavoidable, adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations.

1.3 ISSUES AND CONCERNS RAISED DURING SCOPING

Listed below is a summary of issues and concerns raised during the scoping process.

1.3.1 BASELINE

Multiple parties requested a modified baseline in favor of analyzing potential impacts starting when the property was purchased, as opposed to when the NOP was published as established in CEQA Guidelines Section 15125[a]. This baseline is more conservative than is required by CEQA in that using it captures potential environmental impacts from construction and renovations that predate publication of the NOP.

*These comments are addressed in **Section 4.0, Baseline**, of the Draft EIR.*

1.3.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Commenters requested a description of the full project buildout within the EIR from the time CGWC purchased the property. Commenters also requested that the County establish legal limitations to expansion of the Plant beyond the scope of this EIR and potential truck trips transporting bulk water.

*These comments are addressed in **Section 3.5, Description of Proposed Project**, of the Draft EIR.*

1.3.3 AESTHETICS

The City of Mt Shasta (City) requested that best management practices be utilized in facility and/or sign lighting in accordance with City code to adhere with the City's General Plan and sign ordinance.

*The proposed lighting plan is described in **Section 3.5.5, Lighting Plan**, and impacts associated with lighting are addressed in **Section 4.1, Aesthetics**, of the Draft EIR.*

Private residents requested a discussion of the potential impacts of on-site lighting on the local views of the City of Mt. Shasta's night sky and a review of other dark sky ordinances. Residents also requested potential mitigation to shield the exterior building from the local view sheds including private residents and local recreational areas.

*Impacts associated with lighting and aesthetics are addressed in **Section 4.1, Aesthetics**, of the Draft EIR.*

Additional concerns were raised about glare if the Plant was to utilize a solar array.

*A solar array is not proposed as a component of the Proposed Project; however, mitigation presented in **Section 4.6, Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change**, recommends that CGWC install a solar array as an option for reducing the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the project. Refer to **Section 5.1.3** for a discussion of secondary effects of proposed mitigation measures.*

1.3.4 AIR QUALITY

Commenters requested a discussion of the potential impacts to air quality, including odor, from aseptic cleaning and plant operations and mitigation measures to capture any pollutant emissions or fumes. Residents requested a discussion of potential emissions from the on-site propane tanks, if they would be taken off-line after transmission line upgrades, and the regulating bodies of such actions. A discussion of mobile emissions from truck trips and employee trips was also requested. Residents asked that air quality impacts be weighed by their proximity to nearby sensitive receptors including residential uses.

*Impacts to air quality are addressed in **Section 4.2, Air Quality**, of the Draft EIR. A description of the propane tanks and their proposed use is included in **Section 3.0, Project Description**.*

1.3.5 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Private residents requested a discussion of the potential impacts to wildlife from possible noise generation and or water reduction in local streams from plant operations.

*These comments are addressed in **Section 4.3, Biological Resources**, of the Draft EIR.*

1.3.6 CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Winnemem Wintu Tribe (Tribe) stated that the project would have an adverse effect on tribal cultural resources and requested Assembly Bill (AB) 52 consultation. Commenters requested a discussion of the potential impacts to the ancestral lands of the Tribe.

*These comments are addressed in **Section 4.4, Cultural Resources**, of the Draft EIR.*

1.3.7 GEOLOGY, SOILS, AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Commenters requested a discussion of the local soil's capability and suitability to function as a leach field.

*These comments are addressed in **Section 4.5, Geology and Soils**, of the Draft EIR.*

1.3.8 GREENHOUSE GASES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Commenters requested a discussion of the potential impacts to climate change from truck traffic, employee trips, and the use of the on-site propane tanks. Residents also requested a discussion of the project's compliance with the Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32) and Executive Order (EO) S-3-05.

*These comments are addressed in **Section 4.6, Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change**, of the Draft EIR.*

1.3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Commenters requested a discussion of accidental industrial spills. An investigation and discussion of existing hazardous waste sites was also requested. Commenters requested that California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) be consulted on the potential fire hazards posed by the on-site propane tanks, and the ability of local emergency services to respond to a catastrophic fire as a result of the on-site propane tanks. Details regarding all safeguards and safety producers regarding potential spills or fires were also requested.

*These comments are addressed in **Section 4.7, Hazards and Hazardous Materials**, of the Draft EIR.*

1.3.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

The City requested that impacts to existing and planned municipal wells be analyzed and discussed. Commenters requested that hydrologic studies, pumping limits, commitments from CGWC to take

responsibility for reductions in groundwater levels, and land owner compensation for reduction in well levels be included in the EIR. Commenters also voiced opposition to the leach field, and requested a discussion of a leach field monitoring plan of water quality impacts. The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) requested detailed evaluation of the preferred wastewater treatment option, and evidence that it meets the standards set forth in the State Water Quality Control Board Resolution 68-16. Specifically the CVRWQCB requested that the EIR illustrate that the proposed discharges from the facility not degrade water quality in the vicinity of the Plant, any change in water quality be to the maximum benefit of the people of the State, not unreasonably affect beneficial uses, and not result in water quality in violation of any applicable plan or policy.

Private residents requested a discussion of the potential impacts to local well water levels from groundwater extraction along with the compounding effects of drought and pumping induced cones of depression, along with potential monitoring of these wells. Residents also requested that these impacts be studied beyond the confines of Big Springs Aquifer, and that indirect effects of lowered groundwater levels be addressed, such as impacts to trees and soil depressions. In addition, residents requested an analysis of the effects of privatizing water. Commenters requested analysis of the impacts to water quality and groundwater recharge from industrial wastewater, the use of flavorings/tea, and potential containments within the leach field site. In addition, residents requested a discussion of the compatibility of CGWC's industrial effluent and the current permits and associated technology held by the City for operation of the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP).

Commenters requested that the analysis include: an explanation of the volcanic geology and uncertainties surrounding it, mapping of the scope of the underlying aquifers, a quantification of the anticipated reduction in the Big Springs flow from DEX-6, extraction data and estimated use of the domestic well, pumping comparisons between Dannon and CGWC, a description of the existing water quality, an estimation of recharge times to the local aquifers after heavy pumping, a DEX-6 tracer test, a quantification in the water reductions from the aseptic bottle rinsing, an explanation around any legal limits of CGWC's right to groundwater, and a description of the wastewater discharge permits required. Commenters also requested the following data: historic pumping rates from both the domestic well and DEX-6, previous wastewater flow data from the City, and oral history of DEX-6. Suggestions regarding hydrology and water quality mitigation included: active tracking of both CGWC's pumping rates and local well levels, and restrictions on pumping in drought conditions.

*Impacts associated with water quality, groundwater supply, and hydrology are addressed in **Section 4.8, Hydrology and Water Quality**, of the Draft EIR and with **Appendix P, Hydrogeologic Evaluation Report**. Appropriate mitigation has been recommended, where necessary to reduce any potentially significant effects to less than significant levels. Adherence to wastewater discharge permit requirements is discussed in **Section 4.12, Utilities**, and in **Section 4.8, Hydrology and Water Quality**. The suitability of soils to support leach field operations is addressed in **Section 4.5, Geology and Soils**, of the Draft EIR.*

1.3.11 LAND USE

Commenters requested a discussion of the compatibility of the Proposed Project with the project site's industrial zoning and Woodland Production Overlay, along with the potential of the Proposed Project to divide the community. Commenters also requested a discussion regarding compatibility with surrounding land use and zoning designations, the consistency of the Proposed Project with the County's 1997 General Plan Land Use Policies, and any required planning permits including general plan amendments.

*These comments are addressed in **Section 4.9, Land Use**, of the Draft EIR.*

Commenters requested a discussion of any applicable consultation with Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo).

LAFCo consultation and approval is not required as part of the Proposed Project because no elements require the formation of a community services district or community annexation, and no further analysis in the EIR is warranted.

1.3.12 NOISE AND VIBRATION

The City requested that City noise standards be utilized when assessing impacts to residences within City limits. Furthermore, the City requested the EIR establish a standard for vibration. Commenters requested a discussion of the potential increases in local noise and vibration and the associated impact on nearby residential sensitive receptors especially during nighttime hours. A discussion of potential increases in noise from truck trips was also requested. Potential mitigation for nighttime noise generation, such as sound barriers, was also requested.

*These comments are addressed in **Section 4.10, Noise**, and **Appendix T, Noise Impact Analysis**, of the Draft EIR.*

1.3.13 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

The City requested that City's level of service (LOS) standards be utilized at intersections inside City limits. Furthermore, the City requested that the Traffic Impact Report identify mitigation, and that the EIR allow for fair share impact fees. Commenters requested a discussion of potential impacts to traffic safety, as well as CGWC's responsibility in funding road improvements both prior to operation and maintenance of roads from increased truck traffic. Commenters requested a discussion of delays that could potentially occur on North Mt. Shasta Boulevard because of the lack of a left hand turn lane onto CGWC drive, and around the site from employee traffic. Clear designation of the proposed truck routes, alternative routes, and potential mitigation to help ensure that trucks limit their use to those routes and do not inadvertently impact downtown or the surrounding neighborhoods was also requested. Commenters requested estimates of truck trips utilizing Highway 89. In addition, commenters requested discussion of consultation with Caltrans regarding truck traffic and the utilization of the Interstate 5 (I-5) exit and any improvement plans.

*These comments are addressed in **Section 4.11, Transportation and Circulation**, and **Appendix U, Traffic Impact Analysis**, of the Draft EIR.*

1.3.14 RECREATION

Residents were concerned about trail closures and interference with local recreation projects such as ‘rail-to-trails’ and community events, as a result of the Proposed Project, and requested a discussion on the impact to recreation facilities.

*No trails or other recreation facilities would be closed in either construction or operation of the Proposed Project. Potential impacts to recreation facilities are addressed in the Recreation Section of the Initial Study (IS) Checklist (**Appendix C**).*

1.3.15 UTILITIES

The City requested that the industrial wastewater permit currently being drafted by the City is incorporated into the EIR. The City also requested that the EIR address off-site sewer improvements. The CVRWQCB requested a discussion of potential impacts to the City’s WWTP and any improvements needed for the City to maintain compliance with its sanitary sewer system discharge requirements or its national pollution discharge elimination system permits. Additionally, the CVRWQCB requested that the EIR assess the volume of industrial discharge and if the nature and or volume may cause inhibition or pass-through of pollutants, sludge contamination, or upsets at the WWTP.

*Impacts associated with wastewater treatment are addressed in **Section 4.12, Utilities**, and **Section 4.8, Hydrology and Water Quality**, of the Draft EIR. A copy of the draft industrial wastewater permit is included as **Appendix I** of this EIR. Off-site sewer improvements are described in **Section 3.0, Project Description**, and analyzed through the EIR.*

Commenters requested a discussion and equal analysis of the wastewater options. A description of any improvements to either the City’s water/wastewater infrastructure, or PacifiCorp’s transmission lines, was also requested. Commenters asked for an explanation of mechanisms and responsible parties to fund the necessary improvements. Additionally, residents requested a discussion regarding the local landfill’s capacity to accept the type and amount of plastic waste generated on site and the City’s sewer pipes capability to resist degradation from industrial wastewater.

*The wastewater treatment options are described in **Section 3.5.8** and impacts associated with wastewater treatment, electrical utilities, and solid waste are addressed in **Section 4.12, Utilities**, of the Draft EIR.*

1.3.16 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

Private residents requested a discussion of the potential indirect economic effects of the Proposed Project on the local economy and tourism industry from either aesthetics or unforeseen incidents at the Plant, including potential impacts to property values and public service rates.

Under CEQA, economic or social effects are not considered significant effects on the environment. Rather, these effects are considered in the context of their potential linkage or

*indirect connections between the Proposed Project and physical environmental effects. A brief discussion of the potential for the proposed project to result in “urban decay” is provided in **Section 5.0, Other CEQA Considerations.***

1.3.17 ALTERNATIVES

Commenters requested a full analysis of the no project alternative. The following were suggested as potential alternative uses for the site: reduced intensity, using glass as an alternative bottling material, and an aquaponics facility.

*Alternatives are described and analyzed in **Section 6, Analysis of Alternatives**, of the Draft EIR.*

1.3.18 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Additionally the following comments were received during the scoping process:

- The political effects of the presence of a large company in a small community;
- The City requested that a fiscal impact study be developed to analyze the fiscal demand on public services and utilities.

Under CEQA, economic or social effects are not considered significant effects on the environment. These issues are beyond the scope of analysis required by CEQA and are not addressed further within this EIR.

In addition, residents requested that the EIR address the production and shipping of plastic bottles off site, pollution from littering of plastic bottles, and landfill/ recycling center capacity to accept associated waste. Private residents also requested an analysis of the effects of plastics on public health.

*The Proposed Project does not include the manufacturing of plastic bottles. Air quality and GHG emissions associated with transporting unblown preform bottles to the site, and bottled water from the project site to distributors are addressed in **Sections 4.2 and 4.6**. The potential for pollutant emissions or fumes during the bottling process is described in **Section 4.2, Air Quality**. Impacts associated with solid waste are addressed in **Section 4.12.2**. Recycling rates for plastic bottles vary between communities depending on their access to curbside recycling and materials accepted by local facilities. In 2015, California had a 77 percent redemption and recycling rate of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles (Cal Recycle, 2016a). Oregon has an 80 percent recycling rate for beverage containers, but does not have data that specifically addresses the recycling rates of PET (OBRC, 2016). Washington State does not have data on recycling rates on PET or beverage containers. PET recycling rates depend on market prices for both virgin and recycled materials. California and Oregon both have bottle deposit laws, where each plastic bottle has an additional tax of 5 to 10 cents to fund recycling efforts. The environmental impacts associated with littering of plastic bottles as a result of the Proposed Project are speculative and beyond the scope of analysis required by CEQA.*

1.4 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15150 allows for incorporation by reference of “all or portions of another document which is a matter of public record or is generally available to the public.” Incorporation by reference is used principally as a means of reducing the size of EIRs. This EIR relies, in part, on information previously prepared by the City of Mt. Shasta, CVRWQCB, and other agencies for areas within the project vicinity or infrastructure improvements necessary to serve the project site.

The documents listed below are incorporated by reference, as source documents for this EIR. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15150 (e) and (f), these documents were used primarily to describe the environmental setting, provide general background material, or communicate descriptive technical material. These documents are available for public review and inspection during normal business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday) at the County of Siskiyou, 806 Main Street, Yreka, CA 96097, and <https://www.co.siskiyou.ca.us/content/community-development-crystal-geyser-project>.

- City of Mt. Shasta State-Mandated Wastewater Treatment and Outfall Improvement Project Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND; November 2015; SCH # 2015112045)

The City of Mt. Shasta State-Mandated Wastewater Treatment and Outfall Improvement Project is located at the City’s WWTP approximately 3 miles southwest of Proposed Project was approved in November 2015. As discussed in the 2015 Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), expansion of the WWTP could result in potentially significant impacts associated with biological resources and cultural resources. As concluded within the 2015 IS/MND, all potential impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels with mitigation identified in the 2015 IS/MND and adopted within the City’s MMRP. This EIR incorporates pertinent information provided in the MND that remains up to date and is relevant to the analysis of the Proposed Project. In particular, this EIR incorporates by reference the analysis of improvements to the WWTP needed to comply with CVRWQCB requirements and increase the capacity of the treatment facility to meet future demand of the WWTP’s service area (see **Section 3.5.8.3**).

As stated in the IS/MND:

With respect to Crystal Geyser, the scope of this Initial Study is limited to addressing the potential full-buildout volume of wastewater that could be generated by existing and foreseeable growth, i.e., 1.05 million gallons per day (MGD). The City’s approval of this Initial Study and adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration would not include or constitute approval for Crystal Geyser to connect to the City’s wastewater system. Rather, the current CEQA coverage would allow the City to proceed with the State-mandated treatment and disposal improvements. The results of this Initial Study could also be included in a broader environmental document addressing the whole of the Crystal Geyser project. It is the City’s intent, following CEQA approvals, to improve the WWTP to meet the new discharge requirements and provide a capacity of 0.9 MGD. Further improvements to increase the capacity to 1.05 MGD would be made only following separate CEQA approval for connection of Crystal Geyser to the City’s

wastewater system and receipt of financial assurance from Crystal Geyser that they would cover the cost of the expansion.

- On-site Leach Field and Facility Expansion Project for the Dannon Natural Spring Water Bottling Facility MND (July 2001, SCH# 2001082005)

The On-site Leach Field and Facility Expansion Project consisted of the construction and operation of a leach field for discharging bottle and rinse water at the Dannon Natural Spring Water Bottling Facility, which previously operated on the project site for the Proposed Project. The MND was adopted by the CVRWQCB in support of the adoption of a Wastewater Discharge Requirement (WDR) for the operation of the leach field. The leach field was subsequently permitted by the CVRWQCB and constructed within the project site of the Proposed Project. This EIR incorporates pertinent information provided in the MND that remains up to date and is relevant to the analysis of the Proposed Project. In particular, this EIR incorporates by reference the analysis of the leach fields, which would be utilized by the Proposed Project under Wastewater Treatment Options 2 through 4 (see **Section 3.5.8.3**).

- Lassen Substation Project Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA; October 2015), Amended PEA (July 2016), and Draft IS/MND (November 2016, SCH# 2016112057)

PacifiCorp submitted an application for the Lassen Substation Project to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) on November 2, 2015, accompanied by a PEA (CPUC, 2016). The Lassen Substation Project consists of removing the existing Mt. Shasta Substation and replacing it with a new substation, Lassen Substation, on an approximately 4.5-acre site adjacent to the existing Mt. Shasta Substation, located approximately 1.0 mile south of the Proposed Project. Additionally the Lassen Substation Project would involve transmission line upgrades and the upgrade of two existing distribution lines. The project has not been approved, and is currently in the public review process, which closes December 23, 2016. In compliance with CPUC guidelines, the 2015 PEA evaluates potential environmental impacts that could result from the construction and operation of the Lassen Substation Project (PacifiCorp, 2015), as well as provides Applicant Proposed Measures (APM) to reduce any potential impacts to a less-than-significant level. On July 16, 2016, PacifiCorp submitted an amendment to the application accompanied by an amended PEA for the updated elements of the proposed project. On November 23, 2016, the Draft IS/MND was published. This EIR incorporates pertinent information provided in the PEA, amended PEA, and IS/MND that remains up to date and is relevant. In particular, this EIR incorporates by reference the analysis of infrastructure improvements proposed by PacificCorp, the local utility that would serve the Proposed Project (see **Section 3.7**).

1.5 SCOPE OF THE EIR

In accordance with CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15063, an IS (**Appendix C**), in conjunction with comments received during scoping (**Appendix B**), was used to focus the EIR on effects determined to be potentially significant. The following environmental resources were determined to have the potential to be

significantly affected by the Proposed Project and have therefore been addressed in detail in this Draft EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use
- Noise and Vibration
- Transportation and Circulation
- Utilities
- Energy

Potential impacts associated with the following issues were identified through the IS as being not significant, less than significant, or less than significant with mitigation:

- Agriculture Resources
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation

1.5 TERMINOLOGY USED IN THE EIR

This EIR uses the following terminology to describe environmental effects of the Proposed Project and Alternatives:

- **Significance Criteria:** A set of criteria used by the Lead Agency to determine at what level or “threshold” an impact would be considered significant. Significance criteria used in this Draft EIR include factual or scientific information; regulatory standards of local, state, and federal agencies; and/or guiding and implementing goals and policies identified in local plans.
- **Less-Than-Significant Impact:** A less than significant impact would cause no substantial change in the environment (no mitigation required).
- **Less-Than-Significant Level:** The level below which an impact would cause no substantial change in the environment (no mitigation required).
- **Potentially Significant Impact:** A potentially significant impact may cause a substantial change in the environment; however, it is not certain that effects would exceed specified significance criteria. For CEQA purposes, a potentially significant impact is treated as if it were a significant impact. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to reduce project effects to the environment.
- **Significant Impact:** A significant impact would cause a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions of the environment. Significant impacts are identified by the evaluation of effects using specified significance criteria. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to reduce or avoid project effects to the environment.

- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact:** A significant and unavoidable impact would result in a substantial change in the environment that cannot be avoided or mitigated to a less-than-significant level if the project is implemented.
- **Cumulative Significant Impact:** A cumulative significant impact would result in a substantial change in the environment from effects of the project as well as surrounding projects and reasonably foreseeable development in the surrounding area. To be considered significant a project's impact must be a cumulatively considerable contribution to a substantial change in the environment.
- **Mitigation:** Mitigation includes measures recommended in the Draft EIR and imposed as conditions of approval by the Lead Agency that:
 - avoid the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
 - minimize impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;
 - rectify the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
 - reduce or eliminate the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and
 - compensate for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

1.6 REPORT ORGANIZATION

The Draft EIR is split into nine sections, each of which are described briefly below.

- **Section 1.0, Introduction** – Provides an introduction and overview of the EIR, describes the review and certification process, lists documents incorporated by reference, describes issues raised in scoping, describes the scope of the analysis in the EIR, and defines the evaluation terminology.
- **Section 2.0, Executive Summary** – Summarizes the elements of the project and the environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the Proposed Project, and provides a table, which lists impacts, describes proposed mitigation measures, and indicates the level of significance of impacts after mitigation.
- **Section 3.0, Project Description** – Provides a detailed description of the Proposed Project, including its location, background information, major objectives, and technical characteristics.
- **Section 4.0, Environmental Analysis** – Describes the baseline environmental setting and provides an assessment of impacts for each issue area presented in **Section 1.5**. Each section

is divided into four sub-sections: Introduction, Existing Environmental Setting, Regulatory Background, and Impacts and Mitigation Measures.

- **Section 5.0, Other CEQA Considerations** – Provides discussions required by CEQA regarding impacts that would result from the Proposed Project, including a summary of cumulative impacts, secondary impacts, including potential impacts resulting from growth inducement, and significant irreversible changes to the environment.
- **Section 6.0, Analysis of Alternatives** – Describes and compares alternatives to the Proposed Project and associated environmental consequences.
- **Section 7.0, Report Preparation** – Lists report authors and agencies consulted for technical assistance in the preparation and review of the EIR.
- **Section 8.0, References** – Provides bibliographic information for all references and resources cited.
- **Section 9.0, Acronyms** – Provides a list of definitions for all acronyms used in the EIR.
- **Appendices** – Includes various documents and data directly related to the analysis presented in the Draft EIR.