

4.10 Socioeconomics

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Impacts would be considered significant if the proposed action would:

- Affect population in an area, either directly or indirectly, so that the projected County growth rate is decreased
- Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere (a “substantial number” refers to one housing unit)
- Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere (a “substantial number” refers to one person)
- Substantially impact the economies of those communities affected by the proposed project or take a significant amount of land from owners
- Cause a disruption in the balance between employment opportunities and available housing in the area
- Disproportionately affect low-income and minority populations

METHODOLOGY

Impacts analysis for the project is based on projected increases or decreases to the population, housing availability, employment, income and sales, and public finance from the project within the Town of Canby and Modoc County. Projected impacts on identified socioeconomic characteristics are compared to baseline conditions identified in 3.10 Socioeconomics. Determination of environmental justice effects is based on potential impacts to low income or minority populations in close proximity to the study area or on utilization by these populations of resources affected by the project. Compliance with applicable federal, state, or local regulations regarding socioeconomics is also considered.

IMPACT OVERVIEW

Socioeconomic impacts of the proposed project would be less than significant as the project would have minimal or no effects on demographic or economic characteristics of Canby or Modoc County. The proposed project is not expected to disproportionately affect any minority or low-income populations.

EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVE A

Population

It is anticipated that 6 to 10 workers will be employed at any one time during the construction phase of the project. Workers would be obtained from the local population. One new employee would be needed during operation of the proposed facilities. The personnel requirement of the proposed project would not be a significant impact on the population of Modoc County.

A near-future substantial population growth at the I'SOT community is not anticipated to result from the proposed project. Population growth can be viewed as a beneficial impact on Modoc County as the county has experienced a general decline in population in the recent decades.

Housing

The project workers would reside in Canby at their homes. The project would not displace any resident. The project would benefit the community residents, as implementation of the district heating system would lower dependency on the high cost of propane for heating. The housing requirement of the proposed project would not be a significant impact on the housing of Modoc County.

Employment

About 6 to 10 workers would be employed during the construction phase, which would last about 3.5 months, assuming no delays. One new employee would be needed during operation of the proposed facilities, projected to last about 50 years. Workers would be obtained from within the I'SOT community. Because of the relatively small number of workers needed, no "boom-bust" type of impact would be expected on the local labor pool or economy. Impacts on employment would be less than significant.

Income and Sales

An estimated three or less tractor-trailer loads of construction material would be needed for the project. These materials would be purchased from appropriate vendors outside of Modoc County. Construction equipment would be maintained at the I'SOT Auto Shop, located a half-mile away on industrially zoned I'SOT property.

I'SOT spends between \$21,000-\$42,000 annually in propane costs for residential space heating and domestic hot water (Merrick 2002). This project would create the direct-use system to reduce costs and dependence on propane for power up to 95%. The project would have a positive economic impact on the I'SOT community.

Construction of the discharge pipeline would not significantly affect agricultural production as the disturbed surface along the pipeline route would be covered and returned to its original condition after the 20-30 working day construction period (See Land Use, Section 3.6).

Public Finance

Funding for the project would be obtained from the California Energy Commission and the Department of Energy. The project currently does not require public funding from Modoc County; no impacts are anticipated.

Environmental Justice

The proposed project would be located on privately owned lands in the Town of Canby in Modoc County. The project would have minimal environmental impacts. The proposed project is not expected to disproportionately affect any minority or low-income populations. The Town of Canby is not considered a low-income community relative to average income in the County. No low-income communities would be affected by the project.

The I'SOT project would not directly affect the environmental or human health conditions of any Native Americans or other minority communities. Potential for impacts on Native American tribes in the area have been reduced through appropriate scoping and consultations. Opportunities for public participation have been and will continue to be provided through the public scoping process, on-going consultation with Native American tribes in the project vicinity, and the public comment process.

Implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in Section 4.5 Cultural Resources would be required and would further reduce project impacts to Native American tribes. The potential for project effects on the local Native Americans, tribal land use and associated spiritual values, and the results of consultations with the Pit River Tribe are described in Section 4.5 Cultural Resources.

MITIGATION MEASURES

The project would reduce I'SOT's costs for water and space heating. No mitigation is required for socioeconomic impacts from the project.

EFFECTS OF THE NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

If the project were not constructed due to lack of DOE funding, there would be no adverse socioeconomic effects from Alternative B, the "No Action" alternative; however, the project could proceed without DOE funding contingent upon alternative funding, with effects from Alternative A potentially worse without DOE participation because no mitigation would be required (except NPDES required items). Without funding by DOE, I'SOT would not be reimbursed for costs resulting from permitting efforts, engineering consultation, and system installation costs. No data gathering system would be installed for DOE research and development (R&D) purposes.

