

7.2 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES THAT WOULD BE CAUSED BY THE PROPOSED PROJECT SHOULD IT BE IMPLEMENTED

According to the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines* § 15126.2(c), “[u]ses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely.”¹ Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts generally commit future generations to similar uses. In addition, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with a proposed project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified. Therefore, the purpose of this analysis is to identify any significant irreversible environmental effects of project implementation that cannot be avoided.

Primary impacts will result from the consumption of non-renewable resources during construction and operation of the East Gateway Project. Non-renewable resources such as sand, gravel, steel, and renewable resources such as lumber will be consumed during project construction. Energy, fossil fuels, oils, and natural gas will be irreversibly committed during construction. These same resources are used for vehicles and heating/cooling equipment during operations. The continued use of these resources associated with project operations represents a long-term obligation. The energy consumed in developing and maintaining the site for urban use may be considered a permanent investment.

Construction of the East Gateway Project would consume limited amounts of certain types of lumber; other raw materials in steel, metals such as copper and lead; aggregate materials used in concrete and asphalt such as sand and stone, water; petrochemical construction materials such as plastic, petroleum-based construction materials, and other similar slowly renewable or nonrenewable resources. Additionally, fossil fuels for construction vehicles and equipment would be consumed. In terms of project operations, the following slowly renewable and nonrenewable resources would be required: natural gas and electricity, petroleum-based fuels, fossil fuels, and water. The consumption of such resources would represent a long-term commitment of those resources.

The commitment of resources required for the construction and operation of the East Gateway Project would limit the availability of such resources for future generations or for other uses during the life of the project. However, continued use of such resources is consistent with anticipated growth in the City of Santa Paula.

¹ 4 CCR § 15126(c).