

## Chapter 14 Agricultural Resources

### 14.1 Summary Comparison of Proposed Project

A summary comparison of quantifiable impacts on agricultural resources is provided in Figure 14-0. This figure provides information on the impact of conversion of Important Farmland and farmlands subject to Williamson Act contracts. The proposed project would result in greater amounts of Williamson Act lands and Important Farmland being permanently converted to nonagricultural use compared with the approved project but would result in fewer acres of temporarily converted agricultural land compared with the approved project.

**Figure 14-0. Comparison of Impacts on Agricultural Resources**

Chapter 14 – Agricultural Resources		Approved Project	Proposed Project (Total)	Proposed Project (Increment)
Impact AG-1: Temporary Conversion, Short-Term Conversion, and Permanent Conversion of Important Farmland or of Land Subject to Williamson Act Contracts or in Farmland Security Zones as a Result of Constructing the Modified Water Conveyance Facility (Acres)	Temporary and Short-term Conversion of Important Farmland	1,269	1,183	-86
		Significant and unavoidable/adverse	Remains significant and unavoidable/adverse. No change from the approved project.	
	Permanent Conversion of Important Farmland	3,624	4,305	684
		Significant and unavoidable/adverse	Remains significant and unavoidable/adverse. No change from the approved project.	
	Temporary and Short-term Conversion of Williamson Act Lands	875	884	9
		Significant and unavoidable/adverse	Remains significant and unavoidable/adverse. No change from the approved project.	
	Permanent Conversion of Williamson Act Lands	1,914	2,128	214
		Significant and unavoidable/adverse	Remains significant and unavoidable/adverse. No change from the approved project.	

As depicted in Figure 14-0, the proposed project would not result in new significant impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant agricultural resource impacts. This chapter contains the information necessary to make the Final EIR/EIS<sup>1</sup> adequate for the approved project as revised.

<sup>1</sup> The July 2017 document titled *Developments after Publication of the Proposed Final Environmental Impact Report* included modifications and additions to the proposed Final EIR/EIS. In this chapter, references to “the Final EIR/EIS” should be understood to include changes made to the December 2016 document as set forth in the July 2017 document.

## 14.2 Environmental Setting/Affected Environment

Although the proposed project's footprint differs from the footprint of the approved project, the Existing Conditions of agricultural resources that would be affected by construction and operation of the proposed project are the same as described in Final EIR/EIS Chapter 14, *Agricultural Resources*, Section 14.1, *Environmental Setting/Affected Environment*. The Final EIR/EIS provides a discussion of farmland classifications, crop types, and production values found within the agricultural resources study area. The modifications to the approved project would be located entirely within the previously analyzed project area; therefore, the Existing Conditions have not changed.

## 14.3 Environmental Consequences

This section describes the potential effects of the modifications to the approved project on agricultural resources within the study area. Effects are evaluated for severity and, where appropriate, mitigation measures are identified. This section describes potential direct and reasonably foreseeable indirect effects on agriculture that would result with implementation of the proposed project. The analysis describes effects relating to Important Farmland and conversion of land subject to Williamson Act contracts or in Farmland Security Zones related to the physical and structural components of water conveyance facilities. Operational impacts on agricultural resources are not addressed because the approved project and proposed project operations would be identical and no change related to operating conveyance facilities would occur under the proposed project. Similarly, impacts of Environmental Commitments are not addressed because the Environmental Commitments under the approved and proposed projects would be approximately the same and their effects on agricultural resources would be similar. Where mitigation measures identified in the Final EIR/EIS remain sufficient, references to mitigation measures in the Final EIR/EIS are provided and mitigation measure text is not repeated.

Direct or indirect effects on agricultural resources in areas upstream of the Delta are not anticipated; thus, agricultural resources in these areas are not discussed further in this section. Potential effects on upstream areas are discussed in Chapter 5, *Water Supply*, and Chapter 8, *Water Quality*. See Chapter 30, *Growth Inducement*, of the Final EIR/EIS, for a general discussion of potential effects on agricultural resources in the SWP/CVP Export Service Areas region.

### 14.3.1 Methods for Analysis

The methods applied to the analysis of impacts on agricultural resources are the same as indicated in the Final EIR/EIS. This section considers impacts on Important Farmland (Prime, Unique, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Farmland of Local Importance), and on farmland under Williamson Act contract or within Farmland Security Zones. The section also describes potential impacts resulting from changes in water quality and groundwater elevations. Impacts on agricultural resources were classified as temporary/short-term or permanent.

### 14.3.2 Determination of Effects

The impact thresholds used to determine if impacts under CEQA would be significant and effects under NEPA would be adverse are the same as indicated in the Final EIR/EIS.

## 1 14.3.3 Effects and Mitigation Approaches

### 2 14.3.3.1 No Action Alternative

3 Under the No Action Alternative, the new Byron Tract Forebay, reusable tunnel material (RTM)  
4 storage, and other footprint changes described for the proposed project would not occur. For the  
5 purposes of this Supplemental EIR/EIS, the No Action Alternative, against which this proposed  
6 project is compared, is consistent with the No Action Alternative Early Long-Term in the Final  
7 EIR/EIS. No differing effects on agricultural resources would result along the proposed project  
8 alignment from what was previously described in the No Action Alternative Early Long-Term in the  
9 Final EIR/EIS if the No Action Alternative were to occur.

### 10 14.3.3.2 Proposed Project

11 The proposed project would result in temporary and permanent effects on land use in the study area  
12 associated with the construction of conveyance facilities. Relocation of RTM storage areas and  
13 construction of the Byron Tract Forebay and conveyance would alter land uses at work or staging  
14 areas, and in areas needed for concrete batch plants, fuel stations, and appurtenant facilities.

#### 15 **Impact AG-1: Temporary Conversion, Short-Term Conversion, and Permanent Conversion of** 16 **Important Farmland or of Land Subject to Williamson Act Contracts or in Farmland Security** 17 **Zones as a Result of Constructing the Modified Water Conveyance Facility**

##### 18 ***RTM Storage***

19 Changes related to moving RTM storage from Zacharias Island to the vicinity of the intermediate  
20 forebay, Byron Tract, and on Bouldin Island under the proposed project would result in more  
21 conversion of Williamson Act lands and Important Farmland than would occur under the approved  
22 project. Approximately 2,290 acres of Important Farmland and 1,453 acres of Williamson Act  
23 contract lands would be converted at these facility sites (compared with 2,239 acres of Important  
24 Farmland and 1,338 acres of Williamson Act land conversions under the approved project). There  
25 would be 1,203 acres of Important Farmland would be converted on Bouldin Island, 344 acres  
26 would be converted in the vicinity of the intermediate forebay, and 743 acres would be converted on  
27 Byron Tract. Under the approved project there would be 1,207 acres of Important Farmland  
28 conversion on Bouldin Island, 300 acres in the vicinity of the intermediate forebay, and 732 acres  
29 around Clifton Court Forebay. In the vicinity of the intermediate forebay, the permanent conversion  
30 of Williamson Act lands would be 250 acres, compared with permanent conversion of 131 acres  
31 surrounding Zacharias Island under the approved project. On Bouldin Island, there would be 1,203  
32 acres of conversion of Williamson Act lands compared with 1,207 under the approved project.  
33 Williamson Act lands would not be affected by the RTM storage areas on Byron Tract under either  
34 the approved or the proposed project.

##### 35 ***Byron Tract Forebay and Conveyance***

36 Changes related to creating a new forebay and conveyance to connect with the California Aqueduct  
37 and Delta-Mendota Canal would result in more conversion of agricultural land, including Important  
38 Farmland and Williamson Act lands, than under the approved project. Under the proposed project,  
39 approximately 1,351 acres of Important Farmland (1,279 acres permanently and 71 acres  
40 temporarily) and 132 acres (77 acres permanently, 54 acres temporarily) of Williamson Act contract

1 lands would be converted at this facility site, compared with 874 acres of Important Farmland (720  
2 acres permanently, 155 acres temporarily), and 120 acres (50 permanently, 70 temporarily) of  
3 Williamson Act lands under the approved project.

4 **NEPA Effects:** The proposed facility changes would convert more agricultural land to  
5 nonagricultural uses than described for the approved project in Final EIR/EIS Section 14.3.4.2,  
6 *Alternative 4A*. A total of 4,305 acres of Important Farmland and 2,128 acres of Williamson Act  
7 contract lands would be permanently converted by facility changes under the proposed project.  
8 Temporary proposed project Important Farmland and Williamson Act contract land conversion for  
9 all of the modified facilities would be 1,183 acres and 884 acres, respectively. This effect is  
10 considered adverse (as well as this impact under the approved project) because the permanent  
11 conversion of a total of 4,305 acres of Important Farmland under the proposed project is a  
12 substantial amount of agricultural land and conveyance facility construction would be expected to  
13 have adverse effects on agricultural operations that could reduce agricultural production. Mitigation  
14 Measure AG-1 has been adopted to reduce the extent of this adverse effect, but the effect would  
15 remain adverse.

16 **CEQA Conclusion:** Construction of physical structures associated with the water conveyance facility  
17 under the proposed project would occupy Important Farmland and land subject to Williamson Act  
18 contracts or in Farmland Security Zones, directly precluding agricultural use for the duration of  
19 construction. Temporary and short-term construction of facilities would convert approximately  
20 1,183 acres of Important Farmland and 884 acres of land subject to Williamson Act contracts or in  
21 Farmland Security Zones to other uses. Physical structures would also permanently convert  
22 approximately 4,305 acres of Important Farmland and 2,128 acres of land subject to Williamson Act  
23 contracts or in Farmland Security Zones to other uses. This agricultural land conversion is  
24 considered to be a significant impact (as was this impact under the approved project) because  
25 construction activities would convert a substantial amount of Important Farmland and land subject  
26 to Williamson Act contracts or in Farmland Security Zones to nonagricultural uses. Implementation  
27 of Mitigation Measure AG-1 would reduce these impacts by implementing activities such as siting  
28 project footprints to encourage continued agricultural production; avoiding, relocating or replacing  
29 agricultural infrastructure in support of continued agricultural activities; engaging counties,  
30 owners/operators, and other stakeholders in developing optional agricultural stewardship  
31 approaches; and/or preserving agricultural land through offsite easements or other agricultural  
32 land conservation interests. However, these impacts would remain significant and unavoidable after  
33 implementation of this measure for the same reasons provided under the approved project. For  
34 further discussion of potential incompatibilities with land use designations, see Chapter 13, *Land*  
35 *Use*.

36 **Incremental Impact:** The proposed project would result in the temporary conversion of 86  
37 fewer acres of Important Farmland, but would result in permanent conversion of 684 more  
38 acres of Important Farmland than would the approved project. Similarly, the proposed project  
39 would result in the temporary conversion of 9 fewer acres of Williamson Act lands, but would  
40 result in permanent conversion of 214 more acres of Williamson Act lands than would the  
41 approved project. As under the approved project, this impact would remain significant and  
42 unavoidable (CEQA) with implementation of the proposed project.

1           **Mitigation Measure AG-1: Develop an Agricultural Lands Stewardship Plan (ALSP) to**  
2           **Maintain Agricultural Productivity and Mitigate for Loss of Important Farmland and Land**  
3           **Subject to Williamson Act Contracts or in Farmland Security Zones**

4           Please see Mitigation Measure AG-1 in Chapter 14 of the Final EIR/EIS.

5           **Mitigation Measure AG-1a: Promote Agricultural Productivity of Important Farmland to**  
6           **the Extent Feasible**

7           Please refer to Mitigation Measure AG-1a in Chapter 14 of the Final EIR/EIS.

8           **Mitigation Measure AG-1b: Minimize Impacts on Land Subject to Williamson Act Contracts**  
9           **or in Farmland Security Zones**

10          Please see Mitigation Measure AG-1b in Chapter 14 of the Final EIR/EIS.

11          **Mitigation Measure AG-1c: Consideration of an Optional Agricultural Land Stewardship**  
12          **Approach or Conventional Mitigation Approach**

13          Please see Mitigation Measure AG-1c in Chapter 14 of the Final EIR/EIS.

14          **Impact AG-2: Other Effects on Agriculture as a Result of Constructing the Proposed Water**  
15          **Conveyance Facility**

16          Effects associated with construction of the water conveyance facility under the proposed project  
17          would be similar to those of the approved project in terms of effects related to seepage from  
18          forebays and from disruption of drainage and irrigation facilities during construction of water  
19          conveyance facilities. Intermediate forebay reservoir seepage issues would be the same as those  
20          described for the approved project. Potential reservoir seepage issues at the new Byron Tract  
21          Forebay would similar to those described for the approved project but would occur in a different  
22          location. The conveyance alignment constructed under the proposed project (including RTM  
23          relocations and the new Byron Tract Forebay and related canals) would cross or interfere with  
24          approximately 53 miles of agricultural delivery canals and drainage ditches (compared with 44  
25          miles under the approved project). These activities could create indirect but adverse effects on  
26          agriculture by converting substantial amounts of Important Farmland and through disruption of  
27          drainage and irrigation facilities. Compared with the approved project, the proposed project would  
28          result in disruption of 5 more miles of agricultural delivery canals and drainage ditches. Agricultural  
29          effects of operating the proposed project conveyance facilities would be identical to those described  
30          for the approved project in Final EIR/EIS Section 14.3.4.2, *Alternative 4A*.

31          **NEPA Effects:** Construction of the proposed project water conveyance facility could create indirect  
32          but adverse effects on agriculture by converting substantial amounts of Important Farmland to  
33          other uses through changes to groundwater elevation near the proposed Byron Tract Forebay and  
34          disruption of drainage and irrigation facilities. Implementation of Mitigation Measures AG-1, GW-1,  
35          GW-5 and WQ-11 would reduce the severity of these adverse effects, but they would remain adverse  
36          even after mitigation.

37          **CEQA Conclusion:** Proposed project facility construction could create a significant impact on  
38          agriculture by converting substantial amounts of Important Farmland to other uses through changes  
39          to groundwater elevation in localized areas and disruption of drainage and irrigation facilities.  
40          Implementation of Mitigation Measures AG-1, GW-1, and GW-5, would reduce the severity of these

1 impacts by implementing activities such as siting project footprints to encourage continued  
2 agricultural production; monitoring changes in groundwater levels during construction; offsetting  
3 water supply losses attributable to construction dewatering activities; monitoring seepage effects;  
4 avoiding, relocating or replacing agricultural infrastructure in support of continued agricultural  
5 activities; engaging counties, owners/operators, and other stakeholders in developing optional  
6 agricultural stewardship approaches; and/or preserving agricultural land through offsite easements  
7 or other agricultural land conservation interests. The impact related to conversion of Important  
8 Farmland would remain significant and unavoidable (for the same conclusion as for the approved  
9 project) after implementation of these measures and for the same reasons provided under Impact  
10 AG-1.

11 **Incremental Impact:** The proposed project would interfere with an additional 9 miles of  
12 agricultural delivery canals and drainages ditches. As under the approved project, the impact  
13 would remain significant and unavoidable (CEQA) with implementation of the proposed project.

14 **Mitigation Measure AG-1: Develop an Agricultural Lands Stewardship Plan (ALSP) to**  
15 **Maintain Agricultural Productivity and Mitigate for Loss of Important Farmland and Land**  
16 **Subject to Williamson Act Contracts or in Farmland Security Zones**

17 Please see Mitigation Measure AG-1 in Chapter 14 of the Final EIR/EIS.

18 **Mitigation Measure GW-1: Maintain Water Supplies in Areas Affected by Construction**  
19 **Dewatering and Conveyance Operations**

20 Please see Mitigation Measure GW-1 in Chapter 7, *Groundwater*, of the Final EIR/EIS.

21 **Mitigation Measure GW-5: Agricultural Lands Seepage Minimization**

22 Please see Mitigation Measure GW-5 in Chapter 7, *Groundwater*, of the Final EIR/EIS.

### 23 **14.3.4 Cumulative Analysis**

24 The Final EIR/EIS found that there was potential for the approved project to have a cumulative  
25 effect on agricultural resources due to the conversion of Important Farmland and land subject to  
26 Williamson Act contracts or in Farmland Security Zones to nonagricultural uses, while also creating  
27 indirect effects on agriculture. The analysis for cumulative effects for agricultural resources remains  
28 the same as described in the Final EIR/EIS with consideration of the proposed project modifications.  
29 Although mitigation would be available to minimize these cumulative effects, construction  
30 associated with proposed project modifications would still convert Important Farmland and land  
31 subject to Williamson Act contracts or in Farmland Security Zones to nonagricultural uses. Taken  
32 together, the proposed project, along with the projects listed in Table 14-12 in Chapter 14 of the  
33 Final EIR/EIS, would result in a significant cumulative adverse effect. The proposed project would  
34 continue to have a cumulatively considerable incremental effect on agricultural resources as a result  
35 of constructing and operating the proposed water conveyance facility.

## 36 **14.4 References Cited**

37 None.