

Growth Inducement and Other Indirect Effects

This chapter addresses the direct and indirect growth inducement potential of the BDCP alternatives. Assessing growth inducement potential involves determining whether project implementation would directly or indirectly support economic expansion, population growth, or residential construction, and if so, determining the magnitude and nature of the potential environmental effects of that growth. Although some of these effects could be characterized as being direct effects, most of them are *indirect*. “Direct effects” are “caused by the action [or project] and occur at the same time and place,” while “indirect effects” are “caused by the [action or project] and... later in time or farther removed in distance, but...still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect or secondary effects may include growth-inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density, or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.”¹ With respect to ascertaining what is reasonably foreseeable over a substantial time period (here, approximately 50 years), “[d]rafting an EIR...necessarily involves some degree of forecasting. While foreseeing the unforeseeable is not possible, an agency must use its best efforts to find out and disclose all that it reasonably can.”²

In general, an action would be considered growth inducing if it caused or contributed to economic or population growth. Growth-inducing actions result in more economic or population growth than would have occurred otherwise from other factors. Thus, a growth-inducing action would promote or encourage growth beyond that which could be attributed to other factors known to have a significant relationship to economic or population growth. Although a project may have growth inducing potential, it may not result in growth. Each municipality or county controls growth at the local level through land use policies in each jurisdiction. Decision-makers alone are able to transform growth-inducing potential or pressure, created by economic or social conditions, into actual growth.

As it relates to this document, growth will occur, with or without the proposed project. One of the objectives of the BDCP is to increase the reliability of the water supplied by the State Water Project (SWP) and the Central Valley Project (CVP). Water supply is one of the primary public services needed to support urban development and the production of agricultural products upon which people depend. A water service deficiency could constrain future development in the state of California, particularly if coupled with policies that constrain growth relative to water supply. Adequate water supply, treatment, and conveyance would play a role in supporting additional growth in areas dependent on this water supply, but it would not be the single impetus behind such growth. Other important factors influencing growth are: economic factors (such as employment opportunities); capacity of public services and infrastructure (e.g., wastewater, public schools, roadways); local land use policies; and land use constraints such as floodplains, sensitive habitat areas, and seismic risk zones. Discussion of whether additional water supplies and/or improvements in water supply reliability could induce growth often results in differences of opinion; therefore, this topic is considered an area of controversy as used in NEPA and CEQA. Because this issue cannot be predicted with certainty, the analysis in this document makes the

¹ CEQA Guidelines, § 15358(a)(2).

² CEQA Guidelines, § 15144; 40 CFR 1508.8(b).

assumption that any increase in water supplies and/or improvements in water supply reliability associated with the proposed BDCP will stimulate growth, as discussed in Section 30.3, Environmental Consequences.

30.3 Environmental Consequences

30.3.1 Methods for Analysis

30.3.1.1 Direct Growth Inducement Potential

Alternatives 1A through 9 involve the construction and operation of water supply conveyance facilities. The analysis of direct growth inducement potential looked at whether the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, directly in the surrounding environment. (CEQA Guidelines 15126.2(d)) The analysis compared the number of construction and permanent operations and maintenance jobs associated with the alternatives with the labor force located in the Delta vicinity and evaluated the capacity of the local labor force to meet project-generated employment demand.

30.3.1.2 Indirect Growth Inducement Potential

To determine indirect growth inducement potential, the analysis looked at whether the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, indirectly in the surrounding environment. (CEQA Guidelines 15126.2(d)) Alternatives were evaluated for their potential to stimulate additional housing development and the need for services by (1) increasing water deliveries to SWP/CVP contractors that could support additional population in their service areas³; (2) constructing new access roads in the vicinity of project facilities, thereby removing lack of roadway infrastructure as an obstacle to development; and/or (3) reducing the risk of flooding, thereby removing flood risk as an obstacle to development. New housing and expansion of public services can result in adverse effects on the environment (such as increased traffic or noise levels).

30.3.2 Effects and Mitigation Approaches

30.3.2.4 Potential for Increases in Water Deliveries to Agricultural Contractors to Remove Obstacles to Growth

Changes in the amount, cost or reliability of water deliveries could affect agricultural production within SWP and/or CVP contractor service areas. As described in Chapter 5, *Water Supply*, and shown in Table 30-14, deliveries to agricultural contractors are projected to increase under some alternatives. To the extent that the lack of sufficient, reliable water supplies currently poses a

³ As stated in Chapter 2, Purpose and Need, the proposed project is intended only to “restore and protect the ability of the SWP and CVP to deliver up to full contract amounts, when hydrologic conditions result in the availability of sufficient water, consistent with the requirements of state and federal law and the terms and conditions of water delivery contracts held by SWP contractors and certain members of San Luis Delta Mendota Water Authority, and other existing applicable agreements.” However, for purposes of this analysis, this document makes the assumption that any increase in water supplies and/or improvements in water supply reliability associated with the proposed BDCP will stimulate growth.

1 constraint to agricultural production, then increased reliable supplies have the potential to support
 2 increased agricultural production. Increased reliability of supplies (e.g., increased supplies to
 3 agricultural contractors during dry years) may support additional agricultural production. Where
 4 and how such increases would occur likely could vary from one farming interest to another.
 5 Increased agricultural production could support an increase in seasonal and permanent on-farm
 6 employment as well as increased economic activity in the larger agricultural industry (associated
 7 with agricultural inputs, processing, transport, etc.). The ability of local labor pools to support
 8 seasonal and permanent increases in employment would likely vary from region to region. However,
 9 as described in Chapter 14, Agricultural Resources, construction of the water conveyance facilities as
 10 well as habitat restoration and channel margin habitat enhancement under Alternatives 1A through
 11 9 would occupy agricultural lands, directly precluding future agricultural use. Construction activities
 12 associated with Alternatives 1A through 9 may also result in temporary conversion of agricultural
 13 lands.

14 30.3.7 Conclusions

15 With respect to direct growth inducement potential, construction and operation of BDCP facilities
 16 would not foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing
 17 contribute to the creation of additional housing or jobs within the study area because of the limited
 18 number of new jobs created to construct and operate the facilities relative to the available labor pool
 19 and housing stock.

20 With respect to indirect growth inducement potential associated with facility construction and
 21 operation, construction and operation of BDCP facilities could foster economic or population
 22 growth, or the construction of additional housing, indirectly in the surrounding environment.

23 Construction of proposed permanent roads would not remove an obstacle to growth. The proposed
 24 roads would not provide access to substantial areas of undeveloped or agricultural land not already
 25 served by area roadways.

26 With respect to the indirect growth inducement associated with water delivery, this analysis
 27 makes several conservative assumptions, including the assumption that any increases in M&I
 28 deliveries would support population increases (rather than be used for other purposes). Under the
 29 No Action Alternative, M&I deliveries would decrease; however, assuming conditions favorable to
 30 growth were present, growth would likely still occur absent projected increases in deliveries under
 31 the BDCP. Contractors would seek to develop alternative supplies. Consequently, the impacts of
 32 growth would likely still occur but would be attributable to other water supply projects.

33 Implementation of Alternatives 1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3, 5 and (for select hydrologic regions)
 34 Alternative 9 would increase M&I deliveries to SWP contractors. While an adequate water supply is
 35 not an impetus to growth, it is a primary public service needed to support growth. Other important
 36 factors influencing growth include: economic factors (such as employment opportunities); capacity
 37 of public services and infrastructure (e.g., wastewater, public schools, roadways); local land use
 38 policies; and land use constraints such as floodplains, sensitive habitat areas, and seismic risk zones.

39 Growth is projected to occur in the hydrologic regions, and the above alternatives would remove a
 40 potential constraint to that growth: lack of adequate, reliable, water supplies. The analysis estimates
 41 potential increases in population based on increases in average annual M&I deliveries. This analysis
 42 makes several conservative assumptions, including the assumption that any increases in M&I
 43 deliveries would support population increases (rather than be used for other purposes).

1 Alternatives 6 and 7 (and for some hydrologic regions Alternative 9) would decrease supplies
2 relative to either the Existing Conditions or the No Action Alternative; consequently, these
3 alternatives are not considered growth inducing.

4 ~~Developing housing and implementing the services needed for population increases would generate~~
5 ~~impacts at locations where that growth would occur. Identifying the specific locations and~~
6 ~~characteristics of that growth—and, consequently, the specific environmental impacts of that~~
7 ~~growth—would be speculative. However, the impacts associated with such development can be~~
8 ~~characterized generally based on reviews of environmental impacts on general plans in the areas~~
9 ~~where this growth could occur.~~

10 ~~Under the No Action Alternative, M&I deliveries would decrease; however, assuming conditions~~
11 ~~favorable to growth were present, growth would likely still occur absent projected increases in~~
12 ~~deliveries under the BDCP. Contractors would seek to develop alternative supplies. Consequently,~~
13 ~~the impacts of growth would likely still occur but would be attributable to other water supply~~
14 ~~projects.~~

15 Reductions in SWP and CVP deliveries to agricultural and M&I contractor export service areas
16 resulting from implementation of the BDCP could result in a range of potential responses, including
17 increased groundwater pumping and surface water storage, fallowing of agricultural land, increased
18 use of water transfers, curtailment of certain water uses, and expansion of water recycling and
19 desalination. While past responses to extended droughts and increased water costs provide insights
20 into the potential indirect effects of reduced SWP/CVP deliveries in export areas, such effects are
21 speculative at this time.

22 ~~Developing housing and implementing the services needed for population increases would generate~~
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25 ~~growth—would be speculative. However, the impacts associated with such development can be~~
26 ~~characterized generally based on reviews of environmental impacts on general plans in the areas~~
27 ~~where this growth could occur.~~

28 DWR and Reclamation lack the authority to approve or deny development projects or to impose
29 mitigation to address significant environmental impacts associated with development projects; that
30 authority resides with local cities and counties. In addition, numerous federal, state, regional and
31 local agencies are specifically charged with protecting environmental resources, and ensuring that
32 planned development occurs in a sustainable manner. Together, these agencies exercise the
33 authority to reduce the effects of development on the environment; however, unavoidable impacts
34 would still be expected to occur.
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