

4. Environmental Setting and Impact Analysis (Phases 1 and 2)

This section examines the changes in the environment resulting from the decommissioning of the DCPP facility and modifications and operation of railyards based on the Proposed Project as detailed in Section 2, *Project Description (Phases 1 and 2)*. For each of the issues listed below, the methodology presented in Section 3 was used to assess direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts associated with the Proposed Project.

Analyzed in EIR Section 4 (by Section Number)

4.1 Aesthetics	4.9 Greenhouse Gas Emissions
4.2 Air Quality	4.10 Hazardous and Radiological Materials
4.3 Biological Resources – Terrestrial	4.11 Hydrology and Water Quality
4.4 Biological Resources – Marine	4.12 Land Use and Planning
4.5 Cultural Resources – Archeology and Built Environment	4.13 Noise
4.6 Cultural Resources – Tribal Cultural Resources	4.14 Public Services and Utilities
4.7 Energy	4.15 Recreation and Public Access
4.8 Geology, Soils, and Coastal Processes	4.16 Transportation
	4.17 Wildfire

Addressed in EIR Section 6

Mineral Resources

Population and Housing

The Proposed Project would have no impact or a less-than-significant impact on certain environmental issues including Mineral Resources and Population and Housing. Section 6, *Other Required CEQA Sections (Phases 1 and 2)*, describes the reasons why no significant impacts are expected related to these two issues, consistent with State CEQA Guidelines §15128.

4.1 Aesthetics

This section addresses the changes to aesthetics resulting from the Proposed Project. The environmental setting information provided in Section 4.1.1 identifies the Area of Visual Effect for the DCPP site and the proposed railyard sites and describes the visual quality for each of these sites. Section 4.1.2 identifies local regulations and policies relevant to aesthetic resources, Section 4.1.3 provides the significance criteria, and Section 4.1.4 analyzes impacts to visual quality from the Proposed Project activities.

Scoping Comments Received. During the scoping comment period for the EIR, written and verbal comments were received from agencies, organizations, and the public. These comments identified various substantive issues and concerns relevant to the EIR analysis. Appendix B includes all comments received during the scoping comment period. The following scoping comment is applicable to this issue area and considered in preparing this section:

- Analyze the impact of bright lighting at the Pismo Beach Railyard (PBR) from decommissioning activities during coastal fog events.

4.1.1 Environmental Setting

This section describes the Areas of Visual Effect (AVEs) for the Proposed Project. AVEs are the areas from which Proposed Project activities would be visible. Each AVE considers the quality of the public viewpoint and sensitive visual resources within the surrounding landscape. The quality and sensitivity of the AVE will be used in Section 4.1.4 to evaluate the level of severity of Proposed Project impacts.

The AVEs for the Proposed Project include views of the DCPP site and waste transport activities, as well as the proposed railyard sites (PBR and SMVR-SB). The following is a description of the landscape and aesthetic features for each AVE.

DCPP Site AVE

The 750-acre NRC-licensed DCPP site is located within a larger approximately 12,000-acre owner-controlled property (i.e., existing Owner-Controlled Area [OCA]) that extends from Point Buchon (4 miles northwest of the DCPP site) to Point San Luis (6 miles southeast of the DCPP site), as shown in Figure 2-8. The existing OCA is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the south and southwest and by the Irish Hills to the north and northeast. The DCPP site itself and the area immediately north and south of the site are located on a coastal terrace, with elevations ranging from 85 feet above sea level (for the power block) to 310 feet above sea level (for the ISFSI). The landscape surrounding the DCPP consists primarily of undisturbed grasslands with distant views of the Irish Hills.

The 750-acre DCPP site comprises a tightly clustered group of buildings dominated by the distinctive twin containment domes (i.e., DCPP Units 1 and 2), surrounded by parking areas, access roads, and transmission lines.

The visual quality of the DCPP AVE can be characterized by the following:

- **Surrounding Landscape.** The terraces north and south of the DCPP site are within San Luis Obispo County's combining designation for the Coastal Terrace of Irish Hills Sensitive Resource Area (SRA); the northern terrace is identified as having outstanding scenic quality (San Luis Obispo, 2009).¹⁰ A remote section of the Irish Hills (within the existing OCA, northeast of the DCPP site) is within San Luis Obispo County's combining designation for the Upper Diablo Canyon SRA, which includes a waterfall on Diablo Creek that is identified as having significant scenic value (San Luis Obispo, 2009).
- **DCPP Site.** The DCPP site is extensively developed with electrical infrastructure. While the DCPP property is highly disturbed, the existing infrastructure is surrounded by natural hillsides, including an undeveloped north-facing slope in the northeastern portion of the DCPP site that would be the location for the proposed SE Borrow Site. There are no planning area standards for the 750-acre DCPP site that are specific to scenic resources (San Luis Obispo, 2009).
- **Public Views.** As there are no public roads within or adjacent to the existing OCA, the DCPP site is mostly isolated from adjacent public and private viewing areas in the County of San Luis

¹⁰ Combining designations are special overlay land use categories that denote hazardous conditions or special resources. In some cases, specific standards have been adopted for an area where a combining designation is applied (San Luis Obispo, 2009).

Obispo. The DCPP site would be visible from fishing and recreational vessels that operate out of Morro Bay Harbor and Port San Luis Harbor. The only publicly accessible, land-based area from which the DCPP site is visible is a short section of the Point Buchon Trail approximately 2 miles northwest of the DCPP site.

Avila Beach AVE

The coastal community of Avila Beach is situated along San Luis Bay (i.e., Port San Luis Harbor). Avila Beach is a popular site for tourism, particularly for beach access. Decommissioning activities at the DCPP site would not be visible from Avila Beach. However, empty barges used for waste removal may be temporarily staged for up to two weeks in the outer moorings of San Luis Bay. Waste transport via truck would also utilize the local road network through the Avila Beach community. A discussion of the affected communities located along truck transport routes is included in Section 4.12, *Land Use, Planning, and Agriculture*.

The visual quality of the Avila Beach AVE can be characterized by the following:

- **Surrounding Landscape.** The Avila Beach community is identified as highly scenic with its coastal views of San Luis Bay and its backdrop of open hillsides (San Luis Obispo, 2007). The former site of the Unocal Oil Tank Farm is located immediately east of Avila Beach's commercial center; the tank farm was decommissioned in 1997 and the last above ground petroleum storage tank was dismantled in 1999 (San Luis Obispo County, 2015). Because this site sits on a coastal bluff, remaining structures onsite (water tanks and vacant buildings) are not visible from public access points within Avila Beach.
- **Bay/Harbor.** Activity within San Luis Bay includes commercial and recreational fishing and boating, which utilizes Harford Pier (i.e., Port San Luis Pier) and is visible from the Avila Beach shoreline. Approximately every 15 years, a barge is stationed in Port San Luis Harbor for up to 6 months during needed repairs to the breakwater (see discussion in Section 4.15, *Transportation*). Any activity that occurs within Port San Luis Harbor would be subject to planning area standards specific to maintaining compatibility with the Port's character and with the surrounding scenic resources (San Luis Obispo, 2009).
- **Public Views.** Vessel activity within Port San Luis Harbor is currently visible along the coastal areas of the Avila Beach community, which includes residential, recreational, commercial, and resort areas.

PBR Site AVE

The PBR site is located approximately 0.3 mile north of US-101 within the City of Pismo Beach and is accessible via Price Canyon Road and Bello Street (see Figure 2-3). This 25.5-acre site is owned by PG&E, and a portion of the site is actively used for parking, storage, and rail transport. The site is surrounded by development with residences to the southwest, a wastewater treatment plant to the south, the Union Pacific Railroad to the east, and agriculture and residences further east. Price Canyon Road travels west and north of the site. A middle school, church, police station, and fire station are located within the Pismo Heights planning area, which is further west of the site (west of Price Canyon Road).

The visual quality of the PBR AVE can be characterized by the following:

- **Surrounding Landscape.** The unincorporated San Luis Obispo County area located north and west of the Pismo Heights planning area is within the County’s visual area combining designation and is subject to the County’s scenic protection standards (San Luis Obispo, 2010 and 2022). US-101, through the City of Pismo Beach, is designated as an Eligible State Scenic Highway by the California Department of Transportation due to its views of the Pacific Ocean and the Santa Lucia Range (Caltrans, 2019). Price Canyon Road is identified as a scenic corridor by the City of Pismo Beach due to its views of the steeply sloped hillsides and open space within Price Canyon (Pismo Beach, 1993).
- **PBR Site.** The PBR site is adjacent to a scenic corridor (Price Canyon Road), and any development within the site would be subject to design review by the City of Pismo Beach (Pismo Beach, 1993).
- **Public Views.** The PBR site and the Union Pacific Railroad can be seen in the foreground from Price Canyon Road, with a background of the more extensive and scenic landscape of Price Canyon. The PBR site is not visible from US-101.

SMVR-SB Site AVE

The SMVR-SB site is located in a rural area of the County of Santa Barbara approximately 4.5 miles west of US-101 and is accessible by Betteravia Road (see Figure 2-4). The 28.4-acre site is currently used by the Santa Maria Valley Railroad and contains abandoned transloading facilities, warehouse space, and food grade storage silos. As noted in Section 2, *Project Description*, this site was previously operated as a sugar factory.

- **Surrounding Landscape.** The surrounding landscape consists primarily of agricultural fields and commercial agricultural development. The landscape is not identified by the County of Santa Barbara as a scenic resource (Santa Barbara, 2009).
- **SMVR-SB Site.** There are no planning area standards specific to scenic resources that are applicable to the SMVR-SB site; however, the site would be subject to the County of Santa Barbara’s development standards for outdoor lighting (see discussion in Section 4.1.2).
- **Public Views.** The SMVR-SB site is visible from Betteravia Road. The views of the SMVR-SB site are similar to other land uses in the field of view (i.e., storage and truck transport associated with commercial agriculture).

4.1.2 Regulatory Setting

This section describes the relevant local laws, regulations, and policies for aesthetics. Appendix C includes a summary of the relevant federal and State laws, regulations, and policies that pertain to the Proposed Project.

Local Plans

County of San Luis Obispo

County of San Luis Obispo General Plan, Conservation and Open Space Element. The Conservation and Open Space Element (Chapter 9) includes policies to protect the County of San Luis

Obispo’s scenic resources. Applicable policies address scenic resources, nighttime lighting, and utility infrastructure.

County of San Luis Obispo Local Coastal Program, Coastal Plan Policies. The County of San Luis Obispo Local Coastal Program has specific policies to protect visual resources within the coastal zone, including policies applicable to construction and restoration activities.

County of San Luis Obispo, San Luis Bay Area Plan, Coastal. The San Luis Bay Planning Area of San Luis Obispo County includes visual standards for new development within the Upper Diablo Canyon SRA, as well as policies for maintaining the scenic quality and character of Port San Luis.

County of San Luis Obispo Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance. Section 23.04.320 of the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance identifies standards for outdoor lighting.¹¹

City of Pismo Beach

City of Pismo Beach General Plan and Local Coastal Program. The City’s General Plan Design Element and Conservation/Open Space Element identify policies for protecting visual resources, particularly within Price Canyon.

City of Pismo Beach Municipal Code. Section 17.24.100 of the City of Pismo Beach Municipal Code identifies the standards for outdoor lighting and glare.

County of Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Element. The Land Use Element includes policies to protect scenic qualities within certain rural and undeveloped areas of the County of Santa Barbara. One applicable policy requires compatibility of new structures within designated rural areas.

Santa Barbara County Land Use and Development Code. Section 35.30.120 of the Santa Barbara County Land Use and Development Code identifies standards for outdoor lighting.

Policy Consistency

Table 4.1-1 contains a list of local regulations and policies relevant to aesthetics, as well as an evaluation of the Proposed Project's consistency with each of these regulations and policies.

Table 4.1-1. Consistency with Applicable Aesthetic Plans, Policies, and Standards

Plan/Policy	Consistent?	Discussion
County of San Luis Obispo General Plan		
Policy VR 1.1: Adopt Scenic Protection Standards Protect scenic views and landscapes, especially visual Sensitive Resource Areas from incompatible development and land uses.	Consistent	The DCPD site is not located within an SRA for visual resources, and there are no planning area standards for the DCPD site that are specific to scenic resources.

¹¹ Outdoor lighting standards are applicable to all outdoor night-lighting sources installed after the effective date of Title 23 (1988), except for street lights located within public rights-of-way and all uses established in the Agriculture land use category. No land use permit is required for lighting facilities, though Title 19 of this code may require an electrical permit.

Table 4.1-1. Consistency with Applicable Aesthetic Plans, Policies, and Standards

Plan/Policy	Consistent?	Discussion
<p>Policy VR 7.1: Nighttime Light Pollution Protect the clarity and visibility of the night sky within communities and rural areas, by ensuring that exterior lighting, including streetlight projects, is designed to minimize nighttime light pollution.</p>	Consistent	The DCPP site is currently installed with lighting that is required for 24-hour operations, and the installation of additional lighting may be required as part of security infrastructure and to facilitate nighttime decommissioning activities. Given the remoteness of the DCPP site, the installation of additional nighttime lighting would not increase illumination to a degree that would be noticeable to the public.
<p>Policy VR 9.2: Utility Service Lines Utility companies should prepare long-range corridor plans for service lines in consultation with local organizations and government agencies. New transmission lines that would be visually damaging should be designed to minimize visual effects. In addition, access roads and right-of-way clearing should be kept to the minimum necessary where new installation or repair of existing installations occurs.</p>	Consistent	Phase 1 activities would remove DCPP structures and components that are not essential for ISFSI and GTCC Storage operations (i.e., internal plant transmission lines and support poles) and Phase 2 would restore the demolished areas to a more natural condition. These proposed decommissioning and restoration activities would support the requirement for long-range plans for utility lines.
<p>County of San Luis Obispo Local Coastal Program, Coastal Plan Policies</p>		
<p>Visual and Scenic Resource Policy 1: Protection of Visual and Scenic Resources Unique and attractive features of the landscape, including but not limited to unusual landforms, scenic vistas and sensitive habitats are to be preserved protected, and in visually degraded areas restored where feasible.</p>	Consistent	Phase 2 activities involve final site restoration of disturbed areas to a more natural state, which would substantially improve the visual quality of the DCPP site above existing conditions. While restoration activities would require the creation of the SE Borrow Site, this site would not be visible from the Point Buchon coastal access trail. Furthermore, the SE Borrow Site would be revegetated as part of the Proposed Project’s revegetation plan. Proposed activities would support this policy to preserve and restore visual resources.
<p>Visual and Scenic Resource Policy 5: Landform Alterations Grading, earthmoving, major vegetation removal and other landform alterations within public view corridors are to be minimized. Where feasible, contours of the finished surface are to blend with adjacent natural terrain to achieve a consistent grade and natural appearance.</p>	Consistent	Phase 2 activities involve final site restoration of disturbed areas to a more natural state, which would substantially improve the visual quality of the DCPP site above existing conditions. Restoration would utilize the SE Borrow Site to reestablish the natural terrain of the outdoor Firing Range. The SE Borrow Site would not be visible from a public view corridor (i.e., Point Buchon coastal access trail), and would be revegetated as part of the

Table 4.1-1. Consistency with Applicable Aesthetic Plans, Policies, and Standards

Plan/Policy	Consistent?	Discussion
		Proposed Project’s revegetation plan. Proposed activities would support this policy to preserve and restore visual resources.
County of San Luis Obispo, San Luis Bay Area Plan (Coastal)		
Chapter 8: Planning Area Standards		
<p>SRA 11. Upper Diablo Canyon-Transmission Lines Future transmission lines in upper Diablo Canyon shall be confined to the existing corridor. All exposed grading cuts (except for actual roadways and structure sites) and areas of vegetation removal shall be graded and replanted to blend with existing terrain.</p>	Consistent	Phase 1 activities would remove DCPD structures and components that are not essential for ISFSI and GTCC Storage operations (i.e., internal plant transmission lines and support poles), and Phase 2 would restore the demolished areas to a more natural state. The SE Borrow Site created during Phase 2 would be revegetated as part of the Proposed Project’s revegetation plan. The proposed decommissioning and restoration activities would support this planning area standard.
<p>Port San Luis District-wide Policies: Visual and Scenic Resources Policy 1. Waterfront Character. Protect scenic qualities including the time-honored character of Port San Luis and compatibility with surrounding uses and views.</p>	Consistent	Temporary staging of empty barges in Port San Luis Harbor would be short-term (up to two weeks at a time) and would not introduce new structures or activities that would alter the character of the Port. Barge staging would be compatible with marine activities within the Port.
<p>Harford Pier Planning Sub-Area: Policy 1. Historic Character Maintain and improve Harford Pier in accordance with the historic character and use of the facility. The heavy timber wharf character shall be used as the basis for design of any additional structures and improvements consistent with the adopted Harford Pier Design Guidelines of June 1990.</p>	Consistent	During staging, barges would utilize outer moorings within Port San Luis Harbor. No staging activities would occur at the Harford Pier.
County of San Luis Obispo Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance		
<p>Section 23.04.320: Outdoor Lighting Illumination only: Outdoor lighting is to be used for the purpose of illumination only and is not to be designed for or used as an advertising display. Light directed onto lot: Light sources are to be designed and adjusted to direct light away from any road or street, and away from any dwelling outside the ownership of the Applicant. Minimization of light intensity: No light or glare shall be transmitted or reflected in such concentration or intensity as to be detrimental or harmful to persons, or to interfere with the use of surrounding properties or streets.</p>	Consistent	The DCPD site is currently installed with lighting that is required for 24-hour operations. Installation of additional lighting may be required as part of security infrastructure and to facilitate nighttime decommissioning activities during Phase 1. However, nighttime lighting at the DCPD site would not noticeably increase above existing conditions. Given the site’s remote location, new lighting would not be transmitted or reflect toward any public road or residence.

Table 4.1-1. Consistency with Applicable Aesthetic Plans, Policies, and Standards

Plan/Policy	Consistent?	Discussion
<p>Light sources to be shielded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ground illuminating lights: Any light source used for ground area illumination except incandescent lamps of 150 watts or less and light produced directly by the combustion of natural gas or other fuels, shall be shielded from above in such a manner that the edge of the shield is level with or below the lowest edge of the light source. Where any light source intended for ground illumination is located at a height greater than eight feet, the required shielding is to extend below the lowest edge of the light source a distance sufficient to block the light source from the view of any residential use within 1,000 feet of the light fixture. ▪ Elevated feature illumination: Where lights are used for the purpose of illuminating or accenting building walls, signs, flags, architectural features, or landscaping, the light source is to be shielded so as not to be directly visible from off-site. <p>Height of light fixtures: Free-standing outdoor lighting fixtures are not to exceed the height of the tallest building on the site.</p> <p>Street Lighting: Street lighting shall be designed to minimize light pollution by preventing the light from going beyond the horizontal plane at which the fixture is directed.</p>		<p>During Phase 2, nighttime lighting would only be associated with the continued ISFSI/GTCC operations. Removal of DCPP buildings and associated infrastructure would contribute to a reduction in illumination, and Phase 2 would not create a new source of light or glare at the DCPP site.</p> <p>No outdoor lighting would be required for temporary barge staging in Port San Luis Harbor.</p>
City of Pismo Beach General Plan and Local Coastal Program		
<p>CO-22: Price Canyon Open Space and Study Area Any development in Price Canyon and the surrounding hills shall emphasize the open space aspects of the Price Canyon corridor. Preferred views from Price Canyon Road shall be of open space rather than development. Pismo Beach, in cooperation with San Luis Obispo County and affected property owners, shall prepare a visual and open space study for the Price Canyon corridor [as illustrated in Figure CO-2 from the City of Pismo Beach General Plan and LCP]. This plan shall focus on retaining the corridor as a scenic entrance to Pismo Beach and an open space corridor separating Pismo Beach from the Route 227 corridor.</p>	Consistent	<p>PBR site modifications would occur in previously disturbed areas, and no new structures would be constructed. Use of the PBR site for waste transport activities would be compatible with ongoing activities at PBR and would not alter the scenic quality of the Price Canyon area.</p>
<p>D-24: Price Canyon Road Price Canyon Road for a distance of 4.7 miles from the intersections with Highway 227 to U.S. 101 is hereby designated as a Pismo Beach scenic highway. Price Canyon Road is a scenic entryway to Pismo Beach from the interior of San Luis Obispo County. Scenic views consist of steeply sloped hillsides with oak woodland and streamside riparian</p>	Consistent	<p>No new structures would be constructed within the PBR site that could alter the character of Price Canyon Road. Use of the PBR site for waste transport activities would be compatible with ongoing activities at PBR.</p>

Table 4.1-1. Consistency with Applicable Aesthetic Plans, Policies, and Standards

Plan/Policy	Consistent?	Discussion
<p>vegetation. Its character is derived from the undeveloped rural nature of the canyon that it traverses. To implement this policy the City shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request San Luis Obispo County to designate Price Canyon Road as a County Scenic Highway. ▪ Conduct a special design study of this corridor (see Conservation Element CO-22, Price Canyon Open Space & Study Area, City of Pismo Beach General Plan and LCP). <p>Require design review for development on all properties abutting the road right-of-way.</p>		
City of Pismo Beach Municipal Code		
<p>Section 17.24.100: Outdoor Lighting and Glare All exterior lighting on private property within the City shall comply with the requirements of this section.</p> <p>Application Materials. Applications for land use permit approval for multi-family dwellings, non-residential uses, and outdoor recreation and athletic facilities including sport courts shall include complete photometric plans in addition to all other information and materials required by the department.</p> <p>Lighting Standards. All new exterior lighting shall comply with the following requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lighting shall be energy-efficient and shielded or recessed so that direct glare and reflections are confined to the maximum extent feasible within the boundaries of the site and shall be directed downward and away from adjoining properties and public rights-of-way. ▪ No permanently installed lighting shall blink, flash, or cast more than 1.0 foot-candle of illumination on lighted areas. ▪ All lighting fixtures shall be appropriate in scale, intensity, and height to the use they are serving. ▪ Security lighting shall be provided at all entrances/exits, except in the residential zoning districts. <p>Exterior lighting within the V overlay zoning district shall be limited to that necessary for safety and security, as determined by the director.</p>	Consistent	The Proposed Project would not install nighttime lighting within the PBR site, nor would it install new structures that could create a source of glare.
Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan		
<p>Land Use Element, Visual Resource Policy 2 In areas designated as rural on the land use plan maps, the height, scale, and design of structures shall be compatible with the character of the surrounding natural environment, except where technical requirements dictate otherwise. Structures shall be subordinate in appearance to natural landforms; shall be designed to follow the</p>	Consistent ¹	The SMVR-SB site is an operational railyard that contains transloading, storage, and rail facilities. Proposed modifications would be limited to a new 900-foot rail spur, access road improvements, and temporary use of heavy equipment. None of the modifications would be of a height or scale

Table 4.1-1. Consistency with Applicable Aesthetic Plans, Policies, and Standards

Plan/Policy	Consistent?	Discussion
natural contours of the landscape; and shall be sited so as not to intrude into the skyline as seen from public viewing places.		that would be incompatible with the character of the surrounding rural environment. Furthermore, a temporary 8-foot-high chain link perimeter fence with an attached privacy screen would be temporarily installed to shield the site from adjacent uses.
Santa Barbara County Land Use and Development Code		
Section 35.30.120: Outdoor Lighting All exterior lighting shall be hooded and no unobstructed beam of exterior light shall be directed toward any area zoned or developed residential. Lighting shall be designed so as not to interfere with vehicular traffic on any portion of a street.	Consistent ¹	Temporary lighting would be installed at the SMVR-SB site to accommodate nighttime activities. New lighting could spill-over onto adjacent properties. As noted in Section 2, <i>Project Description</i> , the project includes the installation of an 8-foot fence with privacy screening. In addition, the analysis presented below (Section 4.1.4) requires Mitigation Measure AES-1 for a lighting plan, which would further reduce impacts from lighting and glare on adjacent properties.

Sources: Pismo Beach, 1993, 2021; San Luis Obispo, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2019; Santa Barbara, 2016, 2020.

¹ As described in Section 1.3.3.2, *Surface Transportation Board*, railroads are under the jurisdiction of the federal government such that local agencies are preempted from exercising jurisdiction over railyards (e.g., SMVR-SB).

4.1.3 Significance Criteria

The significance criteria used to evaluate the Proposed Project’s impacts to aesthetics are based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. According to Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a significant impact would occur if the Proposed Project would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- Substantially damage scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, natural landforms, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway.
- In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the public views of the site and its surroundings (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points).
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.

4.1.4 Environmental Impact Analysis and Mitigation

Impact AES-1: Adversely affect a scenic vista (Class III: Less than Significant).

Phase 1

DCPP Project Site

As described in Section 4.1.1, the existing OCA surrounding the DCPD site is characterized as having outstanding scenic quality. However, the DCPD site is not within a designated scenic vista given its remoteness from public and private viewing areas. None of the Proposed Project activities would occur within the visual resource SRAs located in the surrounding landscape. No impact to a scenic vista would occur from Phase 1 activities at the DCPD site.

Barge Staging

Project activity within Port San Luis Harbor may include staging empty barges within the Port's outer moorings for up to two weeks. While these barges would be visible from Avila Beach, they would not substantially alter scenic views from the coast. The presence of the barges would be short-term and would be consistent with existing views of commercial and recreational fishing and boating. Furthermore, a barge is currently stationed within the Port approximately every 15 years for repair activities. The Proposed Project would not install new structures or other permanent features within Port San Luis Harbor that would alter the character of the Port. Impacts to a scenic vista would be less than significant (Class III).

Railyards

Pismo Beach Railyard. The PBR site is within the foreground views from a scenic corridor (i.e., Price Canyon Road). Rail transport activities would occur in previously disturbed areas, and modifications at the PBR site would be limited to refurbishing approximately 1,100 feet of existing track. There would be no new structures or other permanent features that could noticeably alter scenic views from Price Canyon Road. Impacts to a scenic vista would be less than significant (Class III).

SMVR-SB. The SMVR-SB site is not within a designated scenic vista, and there are no planning area standards specific to scenic resources that are applicable to the site. No impact to a scenic vista would occur from rail transport activities within the SMVR-SB site.

Phase 2

Phase 2 activities would include demolition of remaining utilities and structures (i.e., structures not essential for ISFSI and GTCC Storage operations), creation of the SE Borrow Site to support DCPD site restoration, and final surveys. These activities would not occur within a designated scenic vista, and they would not be visible outside of the existing OCA. No impact to a designated scenic vista would occur during Phase 2 activities within the DCPD site. As there would be no Phase 2 activities at the railyards, no impact would occur at those sites.

Post-Decommissioning Operations

New Facility Operations. Following Phase 2, activities at the DCPP site associated with the Proposed Project include operation of the new GTCC Storage Facility, Security Building, indoor Firing Range, and Storage Buildings. These activities would not occur within a designated scenic vista, and they would not be visible outside of the existing OCA. No impact to a designated scenic vista would occur during these post-decommissioning operational activities within the DCPP site.

Future Actions. Marina operations would not occur within a designated scenic vista. There would be no impact to a scenic vista during future marina use.

Mitigation Measures for Impact AES-1. No mitigation measures are required.

Impact AES-2: Substantially damage sensitive scenic resources (No Impact).

Phase 1

DCPP Project Site

The DCPP site is developed with nuclear energy generation equipment and supporting infrastructure and does not contain sensitive scenic resources. While sensitive scenic resources are located in the surrounding OCA (i.e., Coastal Terrace of Irish Hills SRA and Upper Diablo Canyon SRA), no Phase 1 activities would occur at or near those sites. No impact to a sensitive scenic resource would occur from Phase 1 activities within the DCPP site.

Barge Staging

Temporary staging of empty barges within Port San Luis Harbor would not damage a sensitive scenic resource. The barges would utilize the Port's outer moorings in a manner that is consistent with previous barge activities within the Port. There would be no staging activities that would create a permanent change to scenic resources in Port San Luis Harbor. No impact to a sensitive scenic resource would occur.

Railyards

Pismo Beach Railyard. The PBR site is an operating PG&E material and storage facility that does not contain sensitive scenic resources. Phase 1 activities would be limited to the current operations at the PBR site and would not impact sensitive scenic resources associated with Price Canyon. No impact to a scenic resource would occur from Phase 1 activities within the PBR site.

SMVR-SB. The SMVR-SB site is an operational railyard that contains transloading, storage, and rail facilities. This railyard does not contain sensitive scenic resources, and there are no identified scenic resources within the surrounding landscape. No impact to a scenic resource would occur from Phase 1 activities within the SMVR-SB site.

Phase 2

Phase 2 activities would primarily occur within the DCPP site, which does not contain a sensitive scenic resource. No Phase 2 activities would occur at or near scenic SRAs within the OCA. There would be no impact to scenic resources during Phase 2 activities.

Post-Decommissioning Operations

New Facility Operations. Following Phase 2, post-decommissioning activities (i.e., operation of the GTCC Storage Facility, Security Building, indoor Firing Range, and Storage Buildings) would occur within the DCPP site, which does not contain a sensitive scenic resource. None of these activities would occur at or near scenic SRAs within the OCA. There would be no impact to scenic resources during new facility operations.

Future Actions. Marina operations would not occur at or near scenic SRAs within the OCA. There would be no impact to scenic resources during future marina use.

Mitigation Measures for Impact AES-2. No mitigation measures are required.

Impact AES-3: Substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings (Class III: Less than Significant).

Phase 1

DCPP Project Site

As discussed in Section 4.1.1, the DCPP AVE includes the electrical generation infrastructure within the 750-acre site, surrounded by a relatively undeveloped landscape. The AVE north and south of the DCPP site is considered to have substantial scenic quality. While Phase 1 would involve extensive demolition, waste removal, and construction activities within the DCPP site, these activities would not extend outside of the developed and disturbed areas currently utilized by the DCPP. New buildings constructed as part of the Proposed Project, including the GTCC Storage Facility, Security Building, indoor Firing Range, Storage Buildings (Security Building, Vertical Cask Transporter [VCT] Warehouse, Security Warehouse), and temporary decommissioning office building would be constructed in developed areas of the DCPP site and would blend in with the existing character of the site. No alteration would occur to the natural landscape north and south of the DCPP site. Impacts to the visual character of the DCPP AVE would be less than significant (Class III).

Barge Staging

Temporary staging of empty barges within Port San Luis Harbor would not have the potential to degrade the visual character or quality of the Avila Beach AVE. Barges would utilize the existing outer moorings within the Port, and there would be no new structure that would create a permanent change or alter the visual character of Port San Luis Harbor. Given the short-term nature of barge staging activities, there would be no impact to the visual character or quality of Avila Beach and its surroundings.

Railyards

Pismo Beach Railyard. The PBR AVE includes the scenic area of Price Canyon. Although Phase 1 activities within the PBR site would be visible from a scenic corridor (i.e., Price Canyon Road), the extensive and scenic landscape of Price Canyon would remain the dominant feature within the AVE during Phase 1 activities. Currently the PBR site is used for transport, and Phase 1 activities would occur in previously disturbed areas with minimal modifications to the site (i.e., refurbishment of approximately 1,100 feet of existing track). There would be no new structures or other permanent features that could degrade the visual character or quality of the surrounding Price Canyon area. Impacts to visual character from public views along Price Canyon Road would be less than significant (Class III).

SMVR-SB. The AVE for the SMVR-SB site is characterized by ongoing transloading and warehouse activity, and adjacent fields and commercial agricultural development. During Phase 1, activities within the SMVR-SB site would require infrastructure modifications that include the refurbishment of existing rail spurs, access road improvements, and temporary use of heavy equipment for loading and unloading waste materials. The SMVR-SB site modifications would be screened by a temporary 8-foot-high chain link perimeter fence with an attached privacy screen. With installation of the proposed privacy screening, Phase 1 activities would not alter the AVE for the SMVR-SB site and impacts to the visual character would be less than significant (Class III).

Phase 2

Phase 2 activities would occur after the removal of DCPD buildings that are not essential for ISFSI and GTCC Storage operations. Phase 2 involves final site restoration of disturbed areas to natural conditions, which would require creation of the SE Borrow Site as a source of fill material. Areas that may be visible to the public following Phase 2 would be largely restored to their original contour and would appear as a more natural condition from a public vantage point (i.e., Point Buchon coastal access trail). While the SE Borrow Site would not be visible from these public vantagepoints, this Borrow Site would be revegetated as part of the Proposed Project's revegetation plan. Over the long-term, the visual quality of the DCPD site would be substantially improved above existing conditions. Improvements to the visual character and quality of the DCPD site would be beneficial, and no adverse impact would occur. No impact would occur at the railyards as there would be no Phase 2 activities at those sites.

Post-Decommissioning Operations

New Facility Operations. Following Phase 2, activities at the DCPD site (i.e., operation of the GTCC Storage Facility, Security Building, indoor Firing Range, Storage Buildings) would not alter the long-term improvement of the visual quality of the DCPD above existing conditions. Improvements to the visual character and quality of the DCPD site would remain beneficial during new facility operations, and no adverse impact would occur.

Future Actions. Marina operations would not alter the long-term improvement of the visual quality of the DCPD above existing conditions. No adverse impact to the character of the DCPD site would occur during future marina use.

Mitigation Measures for Impact AES-3. No mitigation measures are required.

Impact AES-4: Create new sources of light and glare (Class II: Less than Significant with Mitigation).

Phase 1

DCPP Project Site

As an existing nuclear generating station, the DCPD site is currently installed with lighting that is required for 24-hour operations. Installation of additional lighting may be necessary for security infrastructure and to facilitate nighttime decommissioning activities. However, given the remoteness of the DCPD site from public view, additional nighttime lighting is not expected to notably increase the site's illumination. Similarly, on-site equipment required for decommissioning would not be visible to the public, and therefore would not create a new source of glare. Impacts associated with light and glare would be less than significant (Class III).

Barge Staging

Temporary staging of empty barges within Port San Luis Harbor would not create a new source of light or glare. Use of the Port's outer moorings would be short-term (up to two weeks at a time), and staging activities would not install new structures or other permanent features within the Port. Furthermore, barge staging would not require the use of nighttime lighting. No light or glare impact would occur.

Railyards

Pismo Beach Railyard. The PBR site is an operating PG&E material and storage facility. Modification of the PBR site would be limited to refurbishing approximately 1,100 feet of existing track. The Proposed Project would not install nighttime lighting within the PBR site, nor would it install new structures that could create a source of glare. There would be no impact associated with a new light or glare source at the PBR site.

SMVR-SB. Temporary lighting would be installed at the SMVR-SB site to accommodate nighttime activities, which would include unloading overnight truck shipments of waste and loading this waste onto rail cars. The SMVR-SB site would be screened from adjacent land uses by an 8-foot-high fabric covered fencing (see Section 4.11, Table 4.11-1, for a list of land uses near the railyards). To ensure lighting used during nighttime operations would not spill-over onto adjacent properties, MM AES-1 (*SMVR Lighting Guidelines*) is required. Implementation of MM AES-1 would control any temporary or permanent lighting at the SMVR site in order to prevent a measured increase in illumination onto adjacent properties.¹² Impacts from a new source of nighttime lighting at the SMVR-SB site would be less than significant with mitigation (Class II).

¹² Sensitive receptors such as residences are particularly sensitive to nuisance effects from construction (e.g., nighttime lighting, noise, dust, traffic). Section 4.11, Table 4.11-1, includes a list of sensitive receptors within 0.25 mile of the Proposed Project.

Phase 2

Following the decommissioning and removal of DCPD buildings during Phase 1, nighttime lighting would only be associated with the continued ISFSI/GTCC operations. Removal of DCPD buildings and associated infrastructure would contribute to a reduction in illumination, and Phase 2 would not create a new source of light or glare at the DCPD site. As there would be no Phase 2 activities at the railyards, no impact would occur at those sites.

Post-Decommissioning Operations

New Facility Operations. Following Phase 2, activities at the DCPD site (i.e., operation of the GTCC Storage Facility, Security Building, indoor Firing Range, Storage Buildings) would not require an increase in nighttime lighting or glare above existing conditions. An overall reduction in illumination would occur at the DCPD site due to the removal of DCPD buildings and associated infrastructure during Phase 1. There would be no impact associated with a new light or glare source from new facility operations.

Future Actions. Marina operations would not require an increase in nighttime lighting or glare above existing conditions. There would be no impact associated with a new light or glare source during future marina use.

Mitigation Measures for Impact AES-4.

AES-1 SMVR Lighting Guidelines. The Applicant or its designee shall develop a Lighting Plan for the SMVR-SB site that must be submitted to the San Luis Obispo County Planning and Building Department and Santa Barbara County for review and approval prior to installation of new lighting at the SMVR-SB site. The Lighting Plan must show the location and height of all exterior lighting fixtures with arrows showing the direction of light being cast by each fixture, as well as a description of the lamp or bulb type, wattage, lumen output, beam angle, and shielding. The Lighting Plan shall require all new exterior lighting to meet the following standards:

- Must be energy-efficient;
- Shielded or recessed so that direct glare and reflections are confined to the maximum extent feasible within the boundaries of the site;
- Directed downward and away from adjoining properties and public rights-of-way;
- Must not blink or flash (except as mandated for railroad operations); and
- Must not cause illumination in adjacent residential communities to exceed 0.5 foot-candle.

4.1.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Geographic Extent Context

A cumulative aesthetic impact has the potential to occur from the construction and operation of multiple projects that would be located in the same AVE as the Proposed Project. Projects within the same AVE could affect the same sensitive visual resources or public viewpoints to a degree that the combined impact could be cumulatively considerable. Cumulative projects that would be applicable to this aesthetics analysis include those projects listed in Table 3-1 that are

geographically located within the Proposed Project AVE, which includes views of the DCPD site, barge staging, and the railyard sites. The following cumulative projects are in proximity to the Proposed Project's AVE for visual resources and are further discussed in this analysis:

Diablo Canyon Power Plant

- Orano System ISFSI Modifications (#1)

Offshore/Energy Projects

- Vandenberg Offshore Wind Energy Projects (#18)
- South Ellwood Project (#19)
- Rincon Onshore and Offshore Facilities (#20)
- Morro Bay Wind Energy Area (#22)
- Port San Luis Breakwater Repair (#25)

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Phase 1

While the Orano System ISFSI Modifications (#1) would occur within the DCPD AVE, this cumulative project site would be located at the existing ISFSI site. Construction activities to install this cumulative project would not extend outside of the developed and disturbed areas currently utilized by the DCPD. As discussed in Section 4.1.4 above, the DCPD site is not within a designated scenic vista (Impact AES-1) and does not contain sensitive scenic resources (Impact AES-2). No alteration would occur to the natural landscape north and south of the DCPD site during construction of the Orano System (Impact AES-3). Any nighttime lighting required for the Orano System is not expected to notably increase the DCPD site's illumination and would not create a new source of light or glare (Impact AES-4). Therefore, the Orano System ISFSI Modifications would not combine with other Phase 1 activities within the DCPD AVE to create a visual effect that is cumulatively considerable.

Cumulative projects that may require use of a barge during construction, repair, or decommissioning include future offshore wind projects (Vandenberg Offshore Wind Energy Projects, #18 and Morro Bay Wind Energy Area, #22), Port San Luis Breakwater Repair (#25), and other proposed offshore activities (South Ellwood Project, #19 and Rincon Onshore and Offshore Facilities, #20). As discussed in Section 4.1.4 above, the temporary use of a barge during Proposed Project decommissioning would not alter scenic vistas from Avila Beach (Impact AES-1), would not create a permanent change to scenic resources in Port San Luis Harbor (Impact AES-2), and would not alter the visual character or quality of Avila Beach and its surroundings (Impact AES-3). Furthermore, barge staging during Proposed Project decommissioning would not require the use of nighttime lighting (Impact AES-4). Currently, the proposed offshore wind projects are not anticipated to require barge staging in Port San Luis Harbor. Given that the barge-staging activity for the Proposed Project would not install any new structures or permanent features and would be short-term (i.e., up to two weeks at a time), any potential overlap of these barge activities with the construction of other cumulative projects would not be cumulatively considerable.

Phase 2

As discussed in Section 4.1.4, the Proposed Project would improve the visual quality of the DCPP in the long term. Phase 2 activities at the DCPP would not contribute an adverse effect to aesthetics that is cumulatively considerable. Phase 2 activities would not occur at the railyards and therefore no cumulative impact would occur at those sites.

Post-Decommissioning Operations

The Proposed Project would improve the visual quality of the DCPP in the long term, and new facility operations, including future Marina use, would not alter this long-term improvement of aesthetics above existing conditions. Post-decommissioning operations would not contribute an adverse effect to aesthetics that is cumulatively considerable.

4.1.6 Summary of Significance Findings

Table 4.1-2 presents a summary of the environmental impacts, significance determinations, and mitigation measures for the Proposed Project.

Table 4.1-2. Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures – Aesthetics

Impact Statement	Impact Significance Class				Mitigation Measures	
	Phase 1		Phase 2			Post-Decom
	DCPP	PBR/SB	DCPP	Ops/Marina		
AES-1: Adversely affect a scenic vista	III	III/NI	NI	NI/NI	None required	
AES-2: Substantially damage sensitive scenic resources	NI	NI/NI	NI	NI/NI	None required	
AES-3: Substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings	III	III/III	NI	NI/NI	None required	
AES-4: Create new sources of light and glare	III	NI/II	NI	NI/NI	AES-1: SMVR Lighting Guidelines	
Cumulative Impact	Not cumulatively considerable		Not cumulatively considerable		None required	

Acronyms: PBR = Pismo Beach Railyard, SB = Betteravia Industrial Park (Santa Barbara County), Post-Decom = Post-Decommissioning, Ops = Long-Term Operations, Class I = Significant and Unavoidable, Class II = Less than Significant with Mitigation, Class III = Less than Significant, Class IV = Beneficial, NI = No Impact.