

6. Other Required CEQA Sections (Phases 1 and 2)

PG&E submitted a Development Plan/Coastal Development Permit and Conditional Use Permit Application to the County of San Luis Obispo Department of Planning and Building to decommission the Diablo Canyon Power Plant (DCPP). The Proposed Project includes decommissioning, decontaminating, and dismantlement of the majority of the plant at the expiration of its current 10 Code of Federal Regulations Part 50 facility operating licenses. Decommissioning would occur over two phases:

- Phase 1 (2024 through 2031): Pre-planning and Decommissioning Project Activities, and
- Phase 2 (2032 through 2039): Completion of Soil Remediation, Final Status Surveys, and Final Site Restoration.

Approximately two-thirds of the decommissioning activities at the DCPP site would occur within the California Coastal Zone which is within the jurisdiction of the County of San Luis Obispo, under the County's certified Local Coastal Program, and the California Coastal Commission (CCC). Other portions of the DCPP site are within the original jurisdiction of the CCC and the jurisdiction of the California State Lands Commission (CSLC), specifically DCPP components in tidelands and submerged lands. The remainder of the site is located outside of the Coastal Zone. Separately, the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has exclusive jurisdiction and regulatory authority over the radiological aspects of decommissioning nuclear power plants in the United States.

As lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the County of San Luis Obispo prepared this EIR to evaluate the potential significant environmental effects associated with the Proposed Project. Descriptions of the Project components are provided in Section 2, *Project Description (Phases 1 and 2)*.

The State CEQA Guidelines state in part that an EIR shall:

- Identify and focus on the significant environmental effects of a proposed project (§15126.2, subd. [a]),
- Describe any significant impacts, including those that can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance (§ 15126.2, subd. [b]),
- Identify significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by a proposed project should it be implemented (§ 15126.2, subd. [c]),
- Identify effects found not to be significant (§ 15128), and
- Identify any growth-inducing impacts of a proposed project such as the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment (§ 15126.2, subd. [d]).

These elements are discussed in Sections 6.1 through 6.4 below.

6.1 Significant Environmental Effects that Cannot be Avoided

Section 4, *Environmental Impact Analysis*, includes a detailed discussion of the significant environmental impacts anticipated as a result of the Proposed Project, along with mitigation measures (MMs) to reduce or avoid significant impacts. State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2,

subdivision (b), requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of feasible MMs. As shown in Table 6-1, multiple significant unavoidable impacts (i.e., an impact that cannot be reduced to a level of insignificance) of the Proposed Project were identified. Table 6-1 lists the significant and unavoidable impacts of the Proposed Project and provides a summary discussion of why the impact remains significant.

Table 6-1. Summary of Proposed Project Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

Issue Area (Section)	Impact Number and Statement	Discussion
4.4 Biological Resources – Marine	<p>MBIO-1: Destroy or degrade marine habitat(s) during decontamination and dismantlement activities including habitat of state or federally listed endangered, threatened, rare, protected, or candidate species, or a Species of Special Concern or federally listed critical habitat.</p> <p>MBIO-2: Harm or disturb marine special-status invertebrate, fish, reptile, bird, or mammal.</p> <p>MBIO-4: Release pollutants into receiving water during decommissioning activities.</p>	<p>These significant and unavoidable impacts are a result of the uncertainty associated with the success of relocation of black abalone, which may be required with implementation of MMs MBIO-4 and MBIO-5 associated with Discharge Structure removal and restoration activities in Phases 1 and 2 of the Proposed Project. As such, the mitigation may not fully mitigate the impacts to black abalone.</p>
4.5 Cultural Resources – Archaeology	<p>CUL-1: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5.</p> <p>CUL-2: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5.</p> <p>CUL-3: Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.</p>	<p>These significant and unavoidable impacts are a result of the sensitive nature of the DCPD site and the potential for encountering unanticipated buried resources that could be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or encountering human remains.</p>
4.6 Cultural Resources – Tribal Cultural Resources	<p>TCR-1: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of the Tribal Cultural Resource that is either listed or eligible for listing in the CRHR or in a local register of historical resources, or determined by the CEQA lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant.</p>	<p>Through AB52 consultation, two known historical resources have been identified as Tribal Cultural Resources by consulting tribes. Due to the sensitive nature of the DCPD site, the potential for encountering unanticipated buried resources is highly probable even in previously disturbed areas.</p>

6.2 Significant Irreversible Changes Caused by the Project If Implemented

Significant irreversible environmental changes that would be involved with a proposed project may include the following (State CEQA Guidelines, § 15126.2, subd. [c]).

- Uses of non-renewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project, which would be irreversible because a large commitment of such resources makes removal or non-use thereafter unlikely.
- Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts which commit future generations to similar uses.

- Irreversible damage, which may result from environmental accidents associated with the project.

The Proposed Project includes dismantling and removing the majority of infrastructure at the DCPP. The Proposed Project would retain the existing energy-infrastructure (230 and 500 kilovolt switchyards), primary and secondary access roads, Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI), raw water reservoirs, and construct a new security building, firing range, and Greater Than Class C (GTCC) waste storage facility. PG&E also proposes to retain the existing Eastern and Western Breakwaters and Intake Structure.

Some non-renewable and locally limited resources such as fossil fuels would be consumed; however, in the context of local, regional, and global energy consumption, the proposed use of non-renewable fossil fuels associated with Proposed Project implementation would not be considered a large commitment for the use of such resources and would not contribute to the continued use of and reliance upon such non-renewable resources.

The Proposed Project's primary impacts are short-term effects associated with the dismantling and decontamination of the DCPP site, including the use of the Pismo Beach Railyard and the Santa Maria Valley Railyard facility. By their nature, most of these impacts would not have lasting effects and would cease when decommissioning is completed. As a result, they would not adversely affect future generations.

Implementation of the Proposed Project would result in various forms of environmental damage to the land from dismantling and demolition activities. This damage would occur during implementation of the Proposed Project and may persist for a short time afterwards until the site is fully stabilized and restored. None of this damage is irreversible. Although cut and fill activities would alter the landscape, site restoration activities during Phase 2 would regrade and revegetate affected areas. Restored areas would closely blend in with the local natural topography and minimize erosion and promote natural drainage. In addition, as described in the discussion of Impact HAZ-8 in Section 4.10.4, decommissioning activities associated with the Proposed Project could potentially adversely affect the health of workers and the public as a result of radiation exposure. Industry standard practice and mitigation measures to contain or manage contaminated surfaces, airborne fugitive dust, contaminated soils, or liquid effluents can avoid such exposures. Radiological exposures to workers and the public are expected to be below NRC and US Environmental Protection Agency thresholds.

6.3 Effects Found Not to be Significant

Based on an initial review and analysis, the Proposed Project would have no impact or a less-than-significant impact on certain environmental issues. Reasons why no significant impacts are expected related to these issues, which this EIR does not review, are discussed below as required pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15128.

6.3.1 Mineral Resources

The US Geologic Survey Mineral Resources Data System identifies the locations of mineral resources and classifies records based on completeness, consistency, and quality of reference sources. Records are graded A through E, with A indicating most complete and consistent records,

to E indicating records lacking important information. One “D Record” mineral resource, Betteravia Plant, owned by the Union Sugar Company, is located at Betteravia Industrial Park (SMVR-SB). As described in Section 2.2.2.3, *Santa Maria Valley Railyard*, SMVR-SB used to be a sugar factory before being used by the SMVR as a railyard. As such, this mineral resource is no longer actively used at the SMVR-SB site, and the Proposed Project would have no effect on this mineral resource. No mineral resources are identified to be located within the DCPD or PBR sites (USGS, 2022). Therefore, the Proposed Project would have no impact on mineral resources because it would not result in the loss of availability of (1) a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State or (2) a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan.

6.3.2 Population and Housing

As presented in Section 2, *Project Description*, an estimated peak workforce of approximately 870 workers is anticipated in Phase 1 and approximately 270 workers in Phase 2 at the DCPD site. A portion of this workforce would be PG&E staffing, which is expected to have a peak of 490 workers and an average of 420 workers in Phase 1, and a peak of 165 workers and an average of 160 workers in Phase 2. Staffing would continue to decrease during decommissioning until the main plant site remediation is complete. After remediation, the only staff needed on site at DCPD would be those required to monitor and protect the ISFSI and GTCC Waste Storage Facility. At the SMVR-SB facility, approximately 24 temporary employees would be on site to support waste transport activities during Phase 1. No additional employees are anticipated to be required at the PBR facility. Most of the workforce conducting Project-related activities would be from the local area. Workers from outside the local area would likely stay in rental housing in Avila Beach, Los Osos, Pismo Beach, or other nearby communities. This could indirectly increase activity in local retail establishments if construction workers patronized local establishments but would not significantly increase the population in the area, induce employment, or displace local businesses or residents.

Upon completion of the Proposed Project, the majority of the DCPD site would be restored. The Marina would be retained and leased and/or sublet (or other arrangement) to a third party for reuse for recreational, educational, and/or commercial purposes. Further, any reuse operations at the Marina would be subject to future CEQA review and require separate permitting. These future uses would not impact population and housing or cause indirect growth-inducing impact because they are not expected to:

- Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure);
- Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere; or
- Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

6.4 Growth-Inducing Impacts of the Proposed Project

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2, subdivision (d), states that growth-inducing impacts of the project must be discussed in the EIR. In general terms, a project may induce spatial, economic, or population growth in a geographic area if it meets any one of the four criteria identified below:

- Removal of an impediment to growth (e.g., establishment of an essential public service or the provision of new access to an area)
- Economic expansion or growth (e.g., changes in revenue base or employment expansion)
- Establishment of a precedent-setting action (e.g., an innovation, a change in zoning, or general plan amendment approval)
- Development or encroachment in an isolated area or one adjacent to open space (i.e., being different from an “infill” type of project)

The Proposed Project does not involve the construction of any new facilities or infrastructure that would result in the removal of an impediment to growth. Rather, the Proposed Project consists of the removal of a major utility facility. The removal of this facility does not involve the establishment of any new public services; it could provide access to previously inaccessible areas, but this access would be limited given the nature and sensitivity of the Project area. As a result, the Proposed Project would not remove an impediment to growth nor provide facilities or services to support growth.

The Proposed Project is not expected to induce workers to relocate to the local area on any permanent basis. Employees are expected to be drawn largely from the large existing pool of skilled workers in San Luis Obispo County and Santa Barbara County. Since DCPD would no longer be an operating power facility upon completion of decommissioning, the substantial economic activity associated with its former operation, including employment of workers, would be substantially reduced. Therefore, the economic activity associated with decommissioning is minor and not significant as DCPD’s economic importance to the local area and region will decline as decommissioning is completed.

The Proposed Project has no precedent-setting action that would lead to growth. Upon completion of decommissioning, the existing Owner-Controlled Area, where access is limited by PG&E, would be reduced to only encompass the remaining facilities, except for the Eastern and Western Breakwaters and Intake Structure. Activities within the Owner-Controlled Area would be limited to ISFSI and GTCC Waste Storage Facility operations until an off-site interim storage facility or permanent repository is available. The Marina would be retained and leased and/or sublet (or other arrangement) to a third-party for reuse for recreational, educational, or commercial purposes. However, as discussed in Section 6.3.2, *Population and Housing*, these future uses would not induce growth as they would not construct new homes, expand existing infrastructure, or displace existing housing or people.

The DCPD site is surrounded by non-urbanized land uses, and adjacent areas, including Montaña de Oro State Park, used for public recreation. The Proposed Project does not include development outside of the existing DCPD footprint. Adjacent areas would remain as open space and park lands for the foreseeable future. Concepts for the future reuse of the power plant property

are described in Section 8, *Potential Site Reuse Concepts (Phase 3)*. These concepts are all based on the use of the DCPD site (the 585 acres owned by Eureka Energy Company, and the 165 acres owned by PG&E). Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in the development of or encroachment into an isolated area or area of open space.

6.5 Known Areas of Controversy and Unresolved Issues

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15123, subdivision (b)(2), an EIR shall contain a summary identifying areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency including issues raised by agencies and the public. The public has expressed concern about the potential hazards associated with the storage of radioactive materials at DCPD and the loss of electrical generation from closure of DCPD. These are not new concerns as DCPD has been transferring spent fuel to the on-site ISFSI since 2009, and the loss of electrical generation would occur with or without the Proposed Project, as PG&E has decided to retire DCPD and transition the facility to a “decommissioning” status. Information regarding the storage of radioactive materials is discussed in Section 4.10, *Hazardous and Radiological Materials*. The following summary represents areas of controversy identified during public scoping in late 2021, as well as unresolved issues.

- **DCPD Site Closure.** The decision to shut down the DCPD site and the loss of clean energy due to the closure of the plant is controversial. There is strong support as well as dissent for the decision to close the DCPD site due to concerns over radiological hazards, radiological waste management and storage, climate change, and clean energy production. The approval to close the DCPD was authorized by the CPUC in decision (D.) 18-01-022 in 2018 in response to PG&E’s application (A.) 16-08-006 proposing to retire Diablo Canyon upon the expiration of its NRC licenses. However, as discussed in Section ES.1, per Senate Bill 846 adopted in September 2022 (more than a year after PG&E submitted the application to decommission DCPD to the County), PG&E is now pursuing, in parallel, a path to continue operations of DCPD for up to five additional years. As such, a delayed decommissioning alternative (Alternative 7) has been included in the EIR (see Section 5.4.7).
- **Radiological and Hazardous Waste Transport and Long-Term Storage.** The public expressed concern about the long-term storage of radiological waste and how it would be safeguarded from terrorism and natural disasters. There are concerns regarding health risks from transporting hazardous and radiological materials and the need to identify and describe the safest transportation, storage, and monitoring methods of these materials. Refer to Appendix G2 for more information.
- **CSLC Alternatives.** Section ES.5 describes two alternatives evaluated at the request of the CSLC: Alternative 2 (CSLC No Project Alternative) and Alternative 8 (CSLC Full Removal Alternative). Because CSLC has jurisdiction over all structures within offshore portions of State-owned sovereign land adjacent to the DCPD site, there is uncertainty over the future condition of Project components within the CSLC jurisdiction until CSLC has considered an application for a new lease or an amendment to the current CSLC lease PRC 9347.1.

Additional concerns were expressed during the scoping period for the EIR and are presented in Appendix B1, *Summary of Comments Received During Scoping Period*. However, none of these additional concerns were expressed in such quantity or detail to be considered particularly controversial.