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5.12 VISUAL RESOURCES

This section presents an evaluation of the potential effects on scenic quality and sensitive viewers that would result from the construction, operation, and maintenance of the SSU6 Project. Tables and figures are at the end of this section. Included is a discussion of the following major components:

- Compliance with CEC requirements and policies related to visual resources, as outlined in CEC Title 20 Appendix B, Siting Regulations, as well as Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- Inventory of the landscape character (i.e., scenic attractiveness), existing scenic integrity levels (ESILs), and sensitive viewing areas within the visual sphere of influence (VSOI).
- Assessment of impacts on scenic attractiveness (in the absence of a viewer) and sensitive viewing areas.
- Compliance with applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards (LORS) associated with the management of visual resources.

The inventory and impact assessment methodology was conducted in compliance with guidelines established by the CEC relating to the inventory and assessment of visual impacts for inclusion in AFCs. Further, the visual resources study was conducted using tenants of the U.S. Department of the Interior (USDI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Visual Resource Management (VRM) Inventory and Contrast Rating System, (BLM Manual 8410-1, January 1986). Additionally, in an effort to describe the existing visual setting, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service Scenery Management System (USDA Handbook 701, 1995) was used.

5.12.1 Affected Environment

The visual resources affected environment is similar for all of the proposed project components. Consequently, the visual impacts analysis is presented for the project as a whole instead of by project component to reduce redundancy. The VSOI for this project was defined as a 5-mile radius from the proposed project site and 3 miles from the assumed centerline of the proposed transmission line corridors and pipelines (Figure 5.12-1). More detail regarding the VSOI and project visibility is provided in following sections. There were no scenic corridors identified within the VSOI.

In an effort to adequately identify and classify the natural and manmade components that create the visual setting within the VSOI, the following variables were considered within the visual resources inventory:

- Characterization of the regional landscape setting.
- Identification of the VSOI (e.g., viewshed analysis and identification of sensitive viewing areas).
- Characterization of the VSOI (e.g., scenic attractiveness and ESILs).

5.12.1.1 Regional Landscape Setting

The proposed geothermal plant site encompasses approximately 80 acres and is situated within a 160-acre parcel on the southeast edge of the Salton Sea in Imperial County, California. Most of the landscape can be characterized as agricultural lands supported by irrigation systems that draw water from the Colorado River. The primary crops grown in the area are fruits, vegetables, wheat, and alfalfa.

The landform within the VSOI can be characterized as generally flat to slightly rolling topography, allowing for open, expansive views of several mountain ranges enclosing the Imperial Valley. Mountains surrounding the Imperial Valley, outside the VSOI, include the Santa Rosa, Fish Creek, Coyote, and Jacumba Mountains to the west; the Chocolate Mountains to the northeast; Algodones Sand Dunes, Picacho Peaks, and Cargo Muchacho Mountains to the southeast; and Palo Verde Peak to the northeast.

The predominant plant community can be classified as cultivated/ruderal, or those plants associated with agricultural practices. “Ruderal” refers to the type of vegetation that grows in response to human disturbance (along roadsides and in canal riparian/levee areas). Species include such plants as cheeseweed, shephards purse, salt cedar, bermuda grass, and other opportunistic plants. Rainfall, roughly 3.5 to 3.7 inches annually, as well as the Valley’s location in the desert, supports such drought-tolerant vegetation as desert scrub, creosote bush, salt bush, and tamarisk. The New River, approximately 5 miles south of the proposed project site, and the Alamo River, approximately 3 miles north of the site, flow from the Salton Sea toward the California/Mexico border.

There are large expanses of open areas within Imperial County, with nearly 50 percent of the land undeveloped or under federal ownership. The largest area is the California Desert Conservation Area, managed by the BLM, over 10 miles southwest of the proposed plant site. The Refuge, immediately north of the plant site, includes approximately 35,484 acres of salt marsh and open water, as well as approximately 2,000 acres of pasture and freshwater marsh. Approximately 40,000 to 60,000 people visit the Refuge each year.

Cultural modifications within the VSOI of the proposed project site and along the alternative transmission line corridors include nine geothermal plants (see Table 3.2-1) and associated facilities within 3.5 miles of the proposed project site. Cultural modifications include, but are not limited to, existing generating plants and associated transmission lines, pipelines, substations, and other large industrial facilities. Several transmission lines that support electricity transmission from these facilities also traverse landscape within the VSOI. Three small residential communities are outside the VSOI. These include the towns of Calipatria (approximately 7 miles southeast), Westmorland (approximately 8 miles south), and Niland (approximately 8 miles northeast of the proposed project site). Specifically, 12 individual residences are intermittently scattered within agricultural fields throughout the VSOI within the foreground viewing threshold (0 to 0.5 miles) of the SSU6 Project. A Class I waste disposal facility (landfill) and prison are immediately adjacent to the proposed transmission line routes.

5.12.1.2 Visual Sphere of Influence

The inventory of visual resources was conducted within a specified geographical VSOI surrounding the proposed project site and the proposed transmission line corridors. This is the

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area that potential impacts from the long-term presence of the project could range from significant to no impact. Levels of potential impact on sensitive viewing areas were established through an analysis of the following two primary components:

- Impact susceptibility – The degree to which a sensitive viewpoint would be impacted by changes within their viewshed.
- Impact severity – The degree of change to the landscape created within a specific viewshed.

As stated previously, the VSOI was determined to be a 5-mile radius from the proposed project site and 3 miles out from the proposed centerline of the transmission line corridors.

The distances established for the VSOI were based primarily on the proposed project description regarding the potential visibility of major project components (e.g., cooling tower, transmission line structure, etc.) from sensitive viewing areas. Once the VSOI was established and the project description refined to include heights and locations of facilities, a viewshed analysis was conducted.

More specifically, the viewshed analysis was developed using USGS 7.5-Minute Digital Elevation Models (DEMs). Seven USGS 7.5-Minute DEMs cover the entire project vicinity (e.g., Kane Spring NE, Obsidian Butte, Niland, Kane Spring, Westmorland W, Iris, and Westmorland E). DEMs in their inherent Spatial Data Transfer Standard (SDTS) format were converted to USGS DEM grid files and imported into an ArcView 3.2a based geographical information system (GIS) using with the Spatial Analyst extension. Once in GIS, the DEMs were mosaiced. From the combined DEM, a triangulated irregular network (TIN) was created. This TIN was used to run viewshed analyses in relation to the proposed site components in Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 11, Units Meters, Clarke 1866 Spheroid, North American Datum 83 (UTM 83). For this project, the centroid of the plant site was used (at 6 feet above existing grade) to run an “existing” viewshed map. Next, a centroid of the plant site’s tallest structure, a gantry crane (99 feet), and the transmission line poles (125 feet) were input and the viewshed model was re-run.

The factors used to conduct this analysis included the following:

- The viewer is 6 feet tall.
- The tallest proposed plant facility (gantry crane) is 99 feet tall.
- The proposed height of the transmission line poles is 125 feet tall.

The results of the viewshed analysis indicated that most sensitive viewing areas within the VSOI may be able to see the proposed project primarily based on the lack of topographic screening elements throughout the VSOI (see Figure 5.12-1). However, some development or topographic screening was identified within the VSOI that will be effective in blocking views of the proposed project from sensitive viewing areas (e.g., Rock Hill for the Red Island Recreation Area). Figures 5.12-2A to 2F provide the location of potential viewers on 1:24,000 scale topographical maps. Views of the proposed project discussed in this visual analysis will occur at varying distances and within varying viewing environments defined below:

- Foreground – 0 to 0.5 miles.
- Middleground – 0.5 to 3 miles.
- Background – 3 to 5 miles.

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5.12.1.3 Visual Study Inventory Components

The following sections detail the visual study inventory components used in the assessment of potential impacts. Three primary components that were inventoried include (1) an evaluation of scenic attractiveness, (2) consideration of ESILs, and (3) the identification of sensitive viewing areas.

5.12.1.3.1 Scenic Attractiveness

When evaluating scenic attractiveness, both natural and the manmade components within the VSOI were considered as they relate to either adding to or detracting from the overall landscape character within a specific setting. Scenic attractiveness levels are established by evaluating the distinctiveness and diversity of a particular landscape setting in relation to the following elements:

- Landform
- Vegetation
- Water
- Color
- Effects of adjacent scenery
- Scarcity of the landscape
- Cultural modifications

The inventory and evaluation of the above elements assist with the characterization of scenic attractiveness within the VSOI. In general, landscapes are characterized by three levels – A through C.

Class A areas have outstanding diversity or interest; characteristic features of landform, water, and vegetation are distinctive or unique in relation to the surrounding region. These areas contain considerable variety in form, line, color, and texture. Class B areas have above-average diversity or interest, providing some variety in form, line, color, and texture. The natural features are not considered rare in the surrounding region but provide adequate visual diversity to be considered fairly unique. Class C areas have minimal diversity or interest where representative natural features have limited variation in form, line, color, or texture in the context of the surrounding region. Discordant cultural modifications (e.g., geothermal plants, transmission lines, and pipelines) can be highly noticeable, which can reduce the inherent value of the natural setting.

The VSOI for the project area was characterized at the B and C levels for scenic attractiveness. No landscapes were considered to have distinctive characteristics as defined for Class A levels. Most landscapes within the VSOI were identified as Class C or as landscapes lacking significant natural amenities.

Scenic Attractiveness Classification Evaluation Forms (see Figures 5.12-3 to 5.12-7) were developed for areas within the VSOI depicted on Figure 5.12-1. The values underlined in the scenic attractiveness rating box on the forms illustrate the assigned values (H – high, M – moderate, L – low) for each natural feature (e.g., landform, vegetation, water, etc.) or negative/positive cultural modification. The combined value of these elements is used to determine in which class the landscape should be characterized. The VRM system is designed to separate the existing landscape and a proposed project into their features and elements and to

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compare each part to the other to identify parts that are incompatible. The outcome of this process is VRM classes, and the following is a summary of the VRM classes:

Class I – The objective of this class is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. Changes to the landscape character should not be evident.

Class II – The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. Changes to the landscape character may attract slight attention but should be subordinate to the visual setting.

Class III – The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. Changes to the landscape character may begin to attract attention but should not dominate the visual setting.

Class IV – The objective of this class is to allow for activities that modify the existing character of the landscape. Changes to the landscape character may attract attention and dominate the visual setting. However, these activities should minimize changes to the landscape where possible.

5.12.1.3.2 Existing Scenic Integrity Levels

The ESILs of a specific landscape setting can be defined as the extent to which natural features have been modified by human actions to the point of degrading the natural setting. An inventory of the ESILs within the VSOI was conducted and varying cultural modifications were documented. Varying cultural modifications included, but are not limited to, existing generating plants and associated transmission lines, pipelines, substations, and other large industrial facilities. The following ESIL criteria was used to evaluate degrees of modifications:

- **High** – The landscape character appears intact. Deviations are present but repeat form, line, color, texture, and patterns common to the landscape character so completely and at such a scale that they are not evident.
- **Moderate** – The landscape character appears slightly altered. Noticeable deviations remain visually subordinate to the landscape character being viewed.
- **Low** – The landscape character appears heavily altered. Deviations strongly dominate the landscape character. Deviations do not borrow from attributes such as size, shape, edge effects, vegetative type changes, or architectural styles within or outside the landscape being viewed (see Figure 5.12-6). Most areas within the VSOI were classified as retaining low existing scenic integrity. Red Island (Figure 5.12-4) is an example of an area with moderate existing scenic integrity, and no areas of high existing scenic integrity were identified within the VSOI.

5.12.1.3.3 Viewer Sensitivity and Sensitive Viewing Areas

Viewer Sensitivity

While conducting this study, no attempt was made to model for varying levels of viewer concern of change within their landscape. Because of the difficulty in inventorying for every individual's sensitivity level, it was determined that all viewers may have a high level of concern related to changes occurring in landscapes within the VSOI. Generally, a viewer's concern level is associated with, but not limited to, the following factors:

- Viewing location, orientation of view, and duration of view.
- Activity the viewer may be engaged in (e.g., water-related recreation activities, bird-watching).
- Visual acuity related to the intensity of visual detail within a landscape setting.
- State of mind or attitude.
- Preconceived expectations related to scenic quality.
- Inherent values related to scenic quality and familiarity within specific landscape settings.

Sensitive Viewing Areas

After discussions with CEC visual staff, the BLM, and a representative of the Refuge, it was determined that sensitive viewing areas within the VSOI consisted of residential and recreational areas, as well as travelers along major routes. The nearest resident to the proposed plant site is approximately 0.75 miles northeast of the proposed plant site (within the Refuge). No roads within the VSOI are designated as federal, state, or county scenic highways or travel routes subject to aesthetic management goals or objectives.

5.12.1.4 Inventory Results

5.12.1.4.1 Scenic Attractiveness

The VSOI is composed primarily of Class C and marginal Class B landscapes. This is because of the high degree of human modifications present within the VSOI and the absence of distinctive natural amenities (e.g., diverse and distinctive natural elements). Areas inventoried along the Salton Sea possess a slightly higher degree of scenic attractiveness because of the marshlands and the presence of large quantities of water. However, the natural amenities of the area adjacent to the Salton Sea have been visually impacted because of the presence of numerous geothermal plants, transmission lines, pipelines, canals, and other similar large industrial facilities.

Within the VSOI, agricultural lands add to the general continuity of the visual setting. Checkerboard parcels of an assortment of crops add to the distinctiveness of the rural setting and openness of the landscape. Background views of several large mountain ranges add variety within the background-viewing threshold.

Natural desert vegetation occurs in areas not used for agricultural purposes (e.g., BLM land). The vegetative pallet within undisturbed desert areas consists mainly of desert scrub bushes and low-lying trees, adding little diversity to the visual setting.

It should be noted that BLM land traversed by the L-line Interconnection alternative was rated as VRM Class IV using BLM VRM criteria (see Section 5.12.3.1). Typically, the BLM manages Class IV land, from a visual resources perspective, as being most compatible for projects of this type.

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5.12.1.4.2 Existing Scenic Integrity Levels

Most landscapes inventoried within the VSOI can be classified as retaining primarily low to moderate ESILs because of the presence of existing geothermal plants, transmission lines, substations, industrial facilities, and pipelines within 5 miles surrounding the plant site and 3 miles from the centerline of the proposed transmission line corridors. Areas near the proposed project site were identified as low ESIL because of existing geothermal plants and other related facilities near the proposed project.

5.12.1.4.3 Sensitive Viewing Areas

Sensitive viewing areas were identified and inventoried within a 5-mile radius of the plant facility and 3 miles on either side of the assumed centerline of the transmission lines. The identification of sensitive viewing areas within the VSOI was conducted through review of existing land use data, agency contacts, and during field reviews. The following is a representative list of sensitive viewing areas that were considered during the inventory:

- Residential areas (see Figure 5.12-1).
- Parks, recreation areas (e.g., Red Island), and wildlife areas (e.g., the Refuge); visitors centers and viewing platforms; or areas used for camping, picnicking, bicycling, boating (e.g., Salton Sea), or other recreational activities.
- Travel routes – Major roads or highways used primarily by origin/destination travelers and designated scenic roads

During field surveys conducted within the VSOI, it was estimated that numerous detached homes are present and may have views of the proposed project site and/or transmission line alternatives.

Additionally, traffic flow was examined for major and secondary travel routes within the VSOI. Average daily road counts are approximately 8,100 vehicles per day (vpd) along Highway 86 and approximately 7,000 vpd along Highway 111. Along secondary travel routes, average daily road counts are as follows:

- Sinclair Road – 1,160 vpd
- Lindsey Road – 1,699 vpd
- Gentry Road – 1,305 vpd
- Eddins Road – 1,354 vpd
- Lack Road – 160 vpd
- Bannister Road – 1,180 vpd

More specifically, three sensitive viewing areas were identified as representative of viewers who would be most susceptible to visual impact within their viewshed as a result of the proposed project. A brief characterization of these areas follows:

Sensitive Viewing Area #1 (Figure 5.12-3)

This image was taken from the residence closest to the proposed project site adjacent to the Refuge headquarters. This residence is at the corner of Sinclair and Gentry Roads, approximately 4,000 feet from the proposed geothermal plant site. A row of trees fully obstructs the view of the proposed geothermal plant site. Additionally, another row of trees within the distant foreground viewing

threshold will partially screen the SSU6 Project. However, the photograph was taken on the opposite of the trees to provide the reader a worst-case viewing condition (i.e., in the absence of vegetative screening). This view represents the longest viewing duration of the proposed project, as well as the highest degree of severity because of the close distance. The proposed project, in the absence of screening, would be highly visible because of the flat, open viewing conditions. Further, the viewshed has been modified with the presence of existing geothermal plants, as well as transmission lines. Several other geothermal plants (not visible in the photo) are also within the viewshed of this area. The ESIL from this area can be characterized as low. It should be noted that the photo was taken in the cooler months of the year to analyze the potential impact of developing steam plumes.

Sensitive Viewing Area #2 (Figure 5.12-4)

The Red Island Recreation Area is frequented by approximately 40,000 to 60,000 visitors during the year mostly through the cooler months (October through April). Boating, bird-watching, and day use activities occur within this area. The proposed SSU6 Project will be partially screened by topography (e.g., Rock Hill) from this recreation site. During cooler months of the year visible steam plumes may be noticeable, but considered a co-dominant contributor as it relates to other plumes occurring within the same viewshed.

Sensitive Viewing Area #3 (Figure 5.12-5)

This image was taken from a residence on the west side of Lack Road, approximately 0.25 miles south of Bowles Road looking northeast toward the proposed geothermal plant site, which is approximately 3.25 miles away. This residence is nearly 3 miles from the proposed project site but may be affected by the addition of the proposed transmission line along the opposite east side of Lack Road. This viewpoint represents the highest degree of visibility expected from a sensitive viewing area with the construction of the proposed transmission line. However, the presence of existing geothermal plants and transmission lines within this viewshed has created a low ESIL.

5.12.2 Environmental Consequences

5.12.2.1 Significance Criteria and Assessment Methodology

The visual resources study included the assessment of impacts on scenic attractiveness and sensitive viewing areas within the VSOI related to the construction, operation, maintenance, and long-term presence of the proposed project.

The consideration of significant visual impacts was based predominantly on the requirements of CEQA. Appendix G of the CEQA guidelines states that potential impacts to visual resources would be significant if a proposed project results in:

- A substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- Substantial damage of scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings.

- Substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
- Creation of a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Additionally, the CEC requires that consideration be given to the following:

- Compliance with laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards.
- Level of viewshed alteration and ground form manipulation.
- Regional effects to visual resources.
- Magnitude of impact related to light and glare.
- Magnitude of back-light scatter during nighttime hours.
- Level of sunlight reduction or increase in shadows in areas used by the public.

Additionally, the matrix presented in Table 5.12-1 aids in the assessment of visual impact significance.

5.12.2.1.1 Visual Simulations

A comparison of existing views with visual simulations, depicted on series Figures 5.12-8b, -8c, -9b, and -10b, aided in verifying project-related impacts. The simulations served to present a representative sample of the existing landscape settings contained within the VSOI, as well as an illustration of how the proposed project may look from specific key viewing locations.

To ensure a high degree of visual accuracy in the visual simulations, computer-aided design (CAD) equipment, GIS, and the use of global positioning systems (GPS) allow for life-size modeling within the computer. This translates to using real world scale and coordinates to locate facilities, other site data, and the actual camera locations corresponding to three-dimensional (3D) simulation viewpoints. The degree of accuracy of the CAD and GIS equipment is absolute; the accuracy for the GPS location data is to within approximately 1 meter, or 3.28084 feet.

A GIS site map is imported as a background reference. CAD drawings of proposed facilities are placed on top of the site map in GIS. GPS locations of sensitive viewing areas are also input into GIS. The GPS camera positioning information is then referenced to the 3D data set. The 3D massing models of both the proposed plant and all ancillary facilities are generated in real world coordinates and scaled and input into GIS.

An electronic camera lens matches the camera lens that was actually used in the field. A 35 mm camera with a 50 mm lens was used consistently throughout the process. This lens selection allows for viewing of the computer-generated model in the same way that the proposed project would be viewed in the field.

Next, the photograph is imported into the 3D database and loaded as an environment within which the view of the 3D model is generated. To generate the correct view relative to the actual photograph, the electronic camera is placed at a location (within the computer) from where the photograph was taken. This is supported by the GPS location. From there, the 3D wire frame model is displayed on top of the existing photo so that proper alignment, scale, angle, and distance can be verified. When all lines of the wire frame model exactly match the photograph, the camera target position is confirmed.

To complete this phase, the sun angle is set, materials and textures are applied, and the composite image is rendered through a computer image process known as RayTracing. Any additional filters required for appropriate atmospheric conditions, (e.g., blur, focus, haze etc.) are applied at this time.

The visual simulations developed for this project have been designed to be viewed 18 inches from the viewer's eye. This distance will portray the most realistic life-size image from the location of the sensitive viewing area.

5.12.2.1.2 Assessing Visual Impact Susceptibility on Sensitive Viewing Areas

Following the identification of the three most sensitive viewing areas within the VSOI, the degree of impact on each area was determined through the analysis of the following components:

- Existing Scenic Integrity Level – The degree of existing disturbance within the natural setting.
- Viewer Sensitivity – All identified viewers were considered high sensitivity viewers.
- Project Visibility – An assessment of the viewing angle, potential screening, lighting conditions, and time of day.
- Viewer Exposure – An assessment of the distance from the proposed project, number of viewers, and duration of views.

Table 5.12-2 illustrates the level of visual impact susceptibility anticipated for each sensitive viewing area based on an evaluation of the previously stated factors.

5.12.2.1.3 Assessing Visual Impact Severity on Sensitive Viewers

The severity of the impact (high to low) on sensitive viewers was assigned a severity level proportionate to the amount of anticipated change created within a specific viewshed. The primary criteria for project impacts include:

- The degree of project contrast (e.g., form, line, color, and texture).
- Scale and spatial dominance.
- Extent of view blockage/screening (i.e., topographic and/or vegetative) and night lighting.

Table 5.12-3 describes levels designated to each variable above as they relate to the degree of visual impact severity anticipated on representative sensitive viewing areas.

The final evaluation conducted in the impact assessment was the assignment of potential impact levels on representative sensitive viewing areas by combining viewer susceptibility and severity levels at key and characteristic viewing locations.

5.12.2.2 Visual Impact Assessment Results

This section discusses the affected visual resources for the SSU6 Project. A description of the potential impacts on scenic attractiveness and on sensitive viewers is provided. A detailed description of the proposed project is in Section 3. The following project description elements are some of the more important project features related to the visual impact assessment:

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- The proposed SSU6 Project power plant site is approximately 1,000 feet from the southeastern edge of the Salton Sea. This region of the Imperial Valley is used mostly for agriculture and geothermal power production.
- Nine geothermal plants are currently within 2 miles of the project area.
- The Refuge's Headquarters is approximately 2,500 feet from the nearest well pad (Production Well Pad OB1).
- The proposed power plant site is currently undeveloped agricultural land. The surrounding area is used as wildlife habitat, agriculture practices, and geothermal electrical power production. Elevation at the site is roughly 230 feet below sea level.
- The site arrangement for the major facilities are depicted in more detail on Figures 3.3-1a and 3.3-1b. See Figure 3.3-6 for a visual simulation of the proposed plant site and major facilities. The tallest structures on the geothermal plant site will be the gantry crane, at 99 feet tall, and the crystallizers and cooling towers, at 58 feet tall. Painted surfaces within the power plant will be tan in color to blend with the existing natural, surrounding environment; however, certain equipment that would be delivered with finished surfaces (e.g., gantry crane) would not be refinished.
- Fencing will be constructed of non-reflective materials or will be treated or painted to reduce visual effects on sensitive viewing areas. Additionally, reflectivity of surfaces will be reduced by using non-reflective elements where practical.
- Transmission poles will be 125 feet tall and made of steel, as depicted on Figures 5.12-10B and Figure 6.1-4b in the alternatives section.
- The proposed 15.8-mile-long L-Line Interconnection will traverse approximately 2.8 miles of BLM land.
- The proposed IID Midway Interconnection would be a new 15.0-mile, double-circuit 161kV transmission line (built at 230 kilovolts [kV]) and would be constructed from the proposed SSU6 Project site east to the existing Midway Substation.
- Production and injection pipelines will be constructed in a 100-foot-wide ROW (50 feet for construction and 50 feet for the road) for the length of the pipeline, except for a 320-foot ROW for intermittent expansion joints (160 feet x 200 feet). Permanent access roads for the pipelines are assumed to be 20 feet wide on each side of the pipeline. The proposed pipelines will be approximately 5 feet above grade.

5.12.2.2.1 Direct Impacts

The following sections describe direct impacts related to the proposed project.

Visual Impact Significance on Scenic Attractiveness

The proposed power plant and transmission facilities would be visible from numerous locations in the area. Given the highly homogeneous landscape pattern (i.e., agricultural lands), lack of significant topographic features, and degree of existing modification and landscape degradation (e.g., geothermal plants and transmission lines, injection wells, pipelines, etc.) within the VSOI,

no significant impacts on scenic attractiveness would occur. Ground-disturbing activities at the proposed project site, along transmission line alternative and pipelines, as well as at well sites, would occur in areas previously disturbed and within areas classified as retaining low distinctive or diverse natural amenities or lacking substantial positive cultural modifications. For BLM lands traversed by the L-Line Interconnection, the SSU6 Project would comply with VRM Class IV visual management objectives. Therefore, no significant impacts would occur.

Visual Impact Significance on Sensitive Viewing Areas

Tables 5.12-2, -3, and -4 illustrate the visual impact susceptibility, visual impact severity, and resultant visual impact significance on sensitive viewing areas, respectively. As illustrated in Tables 5.12-2 through 5.12-4, no significant impacts will occur on sensitive viewers from the proposed power plant or transmission lines associated with the construction, operation, maintenance, or long-term presence of the SSU6 Project.

Lighting

Adequate lighting will be provided for operation, safety, and security around the proposed project, specifically in the following areas:

- Building interior, office, control, and maintenance areas
- Building exterior entrances
- Outdoor equipment platforms and walkways
- Transformer areas
- Power island perimeter roads
- Parking areas
- Entrance gate

Lighting on the project site will be limited to areas required for operations and safety, directed on site to avoid back-scatter, and shielded from public view to the extent practical. Lighting not required to be on during nighttime hours will be controlled with sensors or switches operated such that lighting will be on only when needed.

No FAA beacons will be required or installed at the proposed project site. It should be noted that during construction-related activities, slightly higher amounts of backscatter lighting may be apparent to the casual observer. This condition is due to providing for safety of construction workers during this phase of the project. Upon completion of construction, night lighting at the site will be substantially reduced and less noticeable to the casual observer. It also should be noted that residential areas do not exist within 0.25 miles of the site and will not be adversely impacted during or after construction-related activities.

Night Lighting and Light Glare

Direct impacts resulting from night lighting and glare would range from less than significant to no impact for all sensitive viewing areas. Currently, light glare is produced by existing geothermal plants in the general vicinity of the proposed project site; the addition of the proposed

project would not significantly increase the impact created by existing night lighting, back-scatter light, or glare that a viewer would experience when looking toward the site.

Visible Plumes

The potential exists for white vapor plumes (water vapor condensation) to be generated from the atmospheric flash tank (AFT), cooling towers, and diesel engines. The frequency, visibility, and size of visible plumes are dependent on the atmospheric conditions during viewing. Per the plume modeling process, it was noted that winds blow typically from the west. Worst-case plume conditions define each cooling tower plume with approximate dimensions: 70 to 80m length, 30 to 40m height above tower, and 30 to 40m width. This data was modeled and added to visual simulations for two sensitive receptors, the residence near the Refuge (Figure 5.12-8C), and Red Island Recreation Area (Figure 5.12-9B).

The diesel engines would be run only during emergency conditions and for a short test period a few times per month. The plume generated by these engines would be nearly indiscernible.

Given the number of existing facilities producing plumes within the VSOI, the addition of the proposed project would not create a significant change in the viewing conditions. The visual impacts on sensitive viewers resulting from plumes generated by the facility would range from less than significant to no impact. The major factor that leads to this conclusion is the presence of existing plumes generated within the VSOI by other facilities.

Landscaping

Landscaping will not be incorporated into the project description so as not to add incrementally to the overall change in viewsheds.

5.12.2.2 Indirect and Construction Related Impacts

Indirect impacts associated with the construction, operation, and long-term presence of the proposed project and ancillary facilities may include impacts associated with fugitive dust plumes, night lighting, and presence of construction equipment (e.g., cranes, scaffolding). These impacts were considered temporary and insignificant.

The primary contributors to visual impact during construction would be (1) the presence of construction cranes, (2) the gradual emergence of the facilities on the horizon of the view, and (3) fugitive dust created by ingress and egress of construction vehicles. It is anticipated that at least three distinct construction spreads will be used during the construction phase of the project. One spread would consist of work associated with the plant site proper, a second spread would conduct efforts associated with the construction of the transmission lines, and a third spread would focus on efforts associated with the pipelines. As stated earlier, potential visual impacts associated with the construction of the SSU6 Project were considered temporary and less than significant.

5.12.3 Cumulative Impacts

The following projects have been identified within the cumulative impacts assessment in relation to the proposed project (see Section 5.17):

- IID Water Conservation and Transfer Project/Habitat Conservation Plan.
- State Route 78/111 Expressway (Brawley Bypass).
- Solar Evaporation Pond Pilot Project.

The areas within the VSOI and greater Imperial County are generally characterized by desert open space and agricultural uses supported by small towns and other sparsely populated communities. Accordingly, the number, size, and scale of cumulative projects in the area are substantially less than in other more-urbanized portions of California.

The proposed project, associated transmission lines, and other ancillary facilities will contribute to the overall industrial nature of this landscape setting. The VSOI has already experienced a significant amount of cultural modifications, and the addition of any of these projects, when considered with the SSU6 Project, will not significantly affect the visual setting within the VSOI. Based on a review of the projects listed, no significant cumulative impacts have been identified as a result of the construction, operation, maintenance, or long-term presence of the SSU6 Project. The transmission line corridors generally parallel existing corridors or access roads, therefore limiting the amount of new access roads that will be created and vegetation that will be disturbed. The addition of the proposed project will not significantly dominate the landscape or alter the visual setting and therefore will not create a substantial additive impact to the general character of the area.

5.12.4 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required, because project design elements listed below would reduce potential project visual impacts to below a level of significance. Significant impacts related to visual resources and sensitive viewers were not identified during this study. A contributing factor to this determination is design features included in the SSU6 Project to mitigate potential visual impact. These design features have been used as a means of minimizing impact on sensitive viewing areas and on scenic attractiveness as a result of the proposed project. A detailed description of the proposed design features that minimized visual impact is provided on Table 3.7-1.

Gas and Water Pipelines

After construction, areas stripped of vegetation will be revegetated or returned to agricultural use.

Transmission Line

Structures and conductors will be treated to reduce sun reflectivity. New transmission lines will parallel existing linear features, to the extent practical, for most of their overall lengths.

Lay-down Yard

Upon completion of the project, the lay-down yard will be returned to agricultural use or revegetated.

5.12.5 Applicable Laws, Ordinances, Regulations, and Standards

Applicable visual resources LORS are summarized in Table 5.12-5 and described below. Agency contacts are provided in Table 5.12-6.

SECTION FIVE**5.12.5.1 Federal and State**

The L-Line Interconnection would run through BLM-managed lands, and the proposed project would be required to comply with BLM aesthetic management objectives. This visual study was conducted in compliance with the BLM VRM and was determined to comply with aesthetic management objectives (BLM Class IV) along the approximate 2.5-mile portion from the intersection of Bannister Road and Highway 86 to the existing “L” transmission line.

State-designated scenic highways or highways eligible for designation were not identified within the VSOI. Further, no other area managed by the state by which the proposed project would be required to adhere to aesthetic LORS were identified. Therefore, compliance with state aesthetic LORS is inapplicable.

5.12.5.2 Local

The proposed project and all ancillary facilities have been sited to minimize potential visual impacts on sensitive viewing areas and scenic attractiveness. Numerous geothermal facilities occur in proximity to the proposed site within the VSOI. Additionally, the Imperial County Planning Department has designated this area specifically for the siting of geothermal plants. The proposed transmission line corridors would be sited along existing linear facilities, where practical, as well as within areas that currently have similar electric transmission facilities. Table 3.7-1 outlines project design elements that have been incorporated into the project description that will be effective in minimizing visual impacts. The proposed project will conform to all applicable local LORS related to the preservation of areas identified as retaining high scenic value. Based on the inventory of scenic attractiveness and ESILs, areas retaining high scenic value were not identified within the VSOI.

5.12.5.3 Permits Required and Permit Schedule

A ROW grant would be required from the BLM. No other permits are required pertaining to visual resources

5.12.6 References

Bureau of Land Management. Visual Resource Management Inventory and Contrast Rating System, 1986.

California Department of Transportation Website – California Scenic Highway System: List of Eligible and Officially Designated Routes.

California Department of Transportation, 1992; AFC, p.5.9-1.

Imperial County General Plan, 1989.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Landscape Aesthetics – A Handbook for Scenery Management. USDA Handbook 701, 1995.

**Table 5.12-1
VISUAL IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE MATRIX – SENSITIVE VIEWING AREAS**

Visual Impact Severity	High Susceptibility	Moderate Susceptibility	Low Susceptibility
High Impact Severity	Significant	Less Than Significant	No Impact
Moderate Impact Severity	Less Than Significant	No Impact	No Impact
Low Impact Severity	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact

**Table 5.12-2
VISUAL IMPACT SUSCEPTIBILITY – SENSITIVE VIEWING AREAS**

	Existing Scenic Integrity Level	Viewer Sensitivity	Project Visibility	Viewer Exposure	Visual Impact Susceptibility
Sensitive Viewing Area#1 (Figures 5.12-8B and 5.12-8C) – of proposed geothermal plant with and without plumes	Low	High	High	Moderate	Moderate
Sensitive Viewing Area#2 (Figure 5.12-9B) – of proposed geothermal plant with plume	Low	High	Moderate	Low	Moderate
Sensitive Viewing Area#3 (Figure 5.12-10B) – of proposed transmission line	Low	High	Moderate	High	Moderate

**Table 5.12-3
VISUAL IMPACT SEVERITY – SENSITIVE VIEWING AREAS**

	Form Contrast	Line Contrast	Color Contrast	Texture Contrast	Scale Dominance	Spatial Dominance	View Blockage Night Lighting	Visual Impact Severity
Sensitive Viewing Area#1 (Figures 5.12-8B and 5.12-8C) – of proposed geothermal plant with and without plumes	Low	Low	Low	Low	Co-Dominant	Subordinate	High Low	Low
Sensitive Viewing Area#2 (Figure 5.12-9B) – of proposed geothermal plant with plume	Low	Low	Low	Low	Co-Dominant	Subordinate	Low Low	Low
Sensitive Viewing Area#3 (Figure 5.12-10B) – of proposed transmission line	High	High	Moderate	High	Dominant	Co-Dominant	Low N/A	High

**Table 5.12-4
VISUAL IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE – SENSITIVE VIEWING AREAS**

	Description	Visual Impact Susceptibility	Visual Impact Severity	Visual Impact Significance
Sensitive Viewing Area#1 (Figures 5.12-8B and 5.12-8C) – of proposed geothermal plant with and without plumes	Sensitive Viewing Areas #1 was taken from the residence closest to the proposed project site, the caretaker facilities at the Refuge headquarters, approximately 4,000 feet from the proposed plant site. This residence is situated at the corner of Sinclair Road and Gentry Road. It should be noted that existing vegetative screening has contributed to reduce visibility. (Note that Figures 5.12-8B and 5.12-8C were taken on the opposite side of the screening vegetation. The proposed project would be seen from the access road.	Moderate	Low	No Impact
Sensitive Viewing Area#2 (Figure 5.12-9B) – of proposed geothermal plant with plume	The Red Island Recreation Area is frequented by approximately 40,000 to 60,000 people annually. Boating, birdwatching, and day use activities occur within this area. The proposed SSU6 Project will be partially screened by topography at this recreation site. During cooler months of the year visible plumes may be noticeable, but considered a co-dominant contributor as it relates to other plumes occurring within the same viewshed.	Moderate	Low	No Impact
Sensitive Viewing Area#3 (Figure 5.12-10B) – of proposed transmission line	Sensitive Viewing Area #3 is taken from a residence on the west side of Lack Road, approximately 0.25 miles south of Bowles Road. This resident is nearly 3 miles from the proposed project site, but may be impacted by the addition of the proposed transmission line along the opposite side of Lack Road.	Moderate	Moderate	Less Than Significant

**Table 5.12-5
SUMMARY OF LAWS, ORDINANCES, REGULATIONS, AND STANDARDS**

Jurisdiction	LORS	Requirements	Conformance Section	Administering Agency	Agency Contact
5.12 Visual Resources					
Federal					
	California Desert Conservation Area Plan – 1980 (as amended): Energy Production and Utility Corridors Element	The BLM will focus on the same factors affecting the public lands and their resources as those used by the CEC, including visual quality.	5.12	BLM	1
State LORS related to visual resources are not applicable					
Local					
	Land Use Regional Vision <i>Goal 3</i>	Achieve balanced economic and residential growth while preserving the unique, natural, scenic, and agricultural resources of Imperial County.	5.12	Imperial County Planning Department	2
	Land Use Regional Vision <i>Objective 3.4</i>	Protect and improve the aesthetics of Imperial County and its communities.	5.12	Imperial County Planning Department	2
	Circulation & Open Space Scenic Highways <i>Objective 4.3</i>	Protect areas of outstanding scenic beauty along the highways and protect the aesthetics of those areas.	5.12	Imperial County Planning Department	2
	Circulation & Open Space Scenic Highways <i>Objective 4.5</i>	Develop standards for aesthetically valuable sites. Design review may be required so that structures, facilities, and activities are properly merged with the environment.	5.12	Imperial County Planning Department	2
	Conservation & Open Space <i>Goal 7</i>	The aesthetic character of the region shall be protected and enhanced to provide a pleasing environment for residential, commercial, recreational, and tourist activity.	5.12	Imperial County Planning Department	2
	Conservation & Open Space <i>Objective 7.1</i>	Encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the desert and mountain landscape.	5.12	Imperial County Planning Department	2
	Conservation & Open Space <i>Goal 10</i>	Open space shall be maintained to protect the aesthetic character of the region, protect natural resources, provide recreational opportunities, and minimize hazards to human activity.	5.12	Imperial County Planning Department	2

**Table 5.12-5 (continued)
SUMMARY OF LAWS, ORDINANCES, REGULATIONS, AND STANDARDS**

Jurisdiction	LORS	Requirements	Conformance Section	Administering Agency	Agency Contact
	Geothermal Transmission Goal 5	When planning and designing transmission lines, the County will consider the following impacts to agricultural lands, wildlife, and the natural desert landscape: Require all major transmission lines to be located in designated corridors. Design lines for minimal impacts on agriculture, wildlife, urban areas, and recreational activities.	5.12	Imperial County Planning Department	2

**Table 5.12-6
AGENCY CONTACT LIST FOR
LAWS, ORDINANCES, REGULATIONS, AND STANDARDS**

Federal			
1	U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management El Centro Resource Area, 1661 South 4 th Street El Centro, CA 92243 Dallas Meeks, Outdoor Recreational Planner (760) 337-4453		
State			
	Not Applicable		
Local			
2	Imperial County Planning Department 939 Main Street, Suite B-1 El Centro, CA 92243 Jurg Heuberger, Planning Director (760) 482-4236		
3	Sonny Bono/Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge 906 West Sinclair Road Calipatria, CA 92233 Sylvia Pelizza, Project Leader (760) 348-5278		

SECTION FIVE

**Figure 5.12-3
SCENIC ATTRACTIVENESS EVALUATION FORM FOR
SENSITIVE VIEW AREA #1**

Landform	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	M/L (2)	<u>L (1)</u>
Vegetation	H (5)	H/M (4)	<u>M (3)</u>	M/L (2)	L (1)
Water	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	<u>M/L (2)</u>	L (1)
Color	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	<u>M/L (2)</u>	L (1)
Adjacent Scenery	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	<u>M/L (2)</u>	L (1)
Scarcity	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	M/L (2)	<u>L (1)</u>
Modifications*	H (2)	H/M (1)	M (0)	<u>M/L (-2)</u>	L (-4)
Scenic Attractiveness Class C (9)					

<p>Scenic Quality Classifications A = 19 or more B = 12 to 18 C = 11 or less</p>

Notes:

Evaluation score is bold and underlined

H = High; M = Moderate; and L = Low

* = Explains cultural modifications present in the landscape, ranging from negative intrusions (-4) to those which complement the scenic quality and promote visual harmony (2)



Narrative Landscape Description and Photograph. The photo was taken approximately 1 mile northeast of the proposed plant site (see Figure 5.12-1), on Sinclair Road, approximately 700 feet west of Gentry Road, near the Refuge residence. This location is just in front of natural screening at the closest residence to the proposed plant site, looking southwest toward the proposed site. Topographic relief across the setting is minimal, adding limited visual appeal to form and line characteristics. Very distant views of the mountains add slight interest to the setting. Moderately diverse vegetation consists of agricultural lands with intermittent desert scrub bushes and larger trees. Water is present in the irrigation canals that supply water to the crops. This landscape is modified by the presence of distant geothermal plants and transmission lines.

SECTION FIVE

**Figure 5.12-4
SCENIC ATTRACTIVENESS EVALUATION FORM FOR
SENSITIVE VIEW AREA #2**

Landform	H (5)	H/M (4)	<u>M (3)</u>	M/L (2)	L (1)
Vegetation	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	M/L (2)	<u>L (1)</u>
Water	H (5)	<u>H/M (4)</u>	M (3)	M/L (2)	L (1)
Color	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	<u>M/L (2)</u>	L (1)
Adjacent Scenery	H (5)	H/M (4)	<u>M (3)</u>	M/L (2)	L (1)
Scarcity	H (5)	H/M (4)	<u>M (3)</u>	M/L (2)	L (1)
Modifications*	H (2)	H/M (1)	<u>M (0)</u>	M/L (-2)	L (-4)
Scenic Attractiveness Class B (16)					

<p align="center">Scenic Quality Classifications</p> <p align="center">A = 19 or more</p> <p align="center">B = 12 to 18</p> <p align="center">C = 11 or less</p>

Notes:

Evaluation score is bold and underlined

H = High; M = Moderate; and L = Low

* = Explains cultural modifications present in the landscape, ranging from negative intrusions (-4) to those which complement the scenic quality and promote visual harmony (2)



Narrative Landscape Description and Photograph. The photo was taken approximately 2.25 miles northeast of the proposed plant site (see figure 5.12-1), on Red Island looking southwest across the Salton Sea, toward the proposed plant site. The terrain is moderately varied in this distinctive setting. Unique forms are created by the mountains in the back/midground. Vegetation is void in this landscape, offering little diversity to the visual setting. Natural rockforms are present and Salton Sea adds to the uniqueness of the area. Cultural modifications include a recreational area and boat dock, as well as several geothermal plants in the background.

SECTION FIVE

**Figure 5.12-5
SCENIC ATTRACTIVENESS EVALUATION FORM FOR
SENSITIVE VIEW AREA #3**

Landform	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	M/L (2)	<u>L (1)</u>
Vegetation	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	<u>M/L (2)</u>	L (1)
Water	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	<u>M/L (2)</u>	L (1)
Color	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	<u>M/L (2)</u>	L (1)
Adjacent Scenery	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	<u>M/L (2)</u>	L (1)
Scarcity	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	M/L (2)	<u>L (1)</u>
Modifications*	H (2)	H/M (1)	M (0)	<u>M/L (-2)</u>	L (-4)
Scenic Attractiveness Class C (8)					

<p>Scenic Quality Classifications A = 19 or more B = 12 to 18 C = 11 or less</p>

Notes:

Evaluation score is bold and underlined

H = High; M = Moderate; and L = Low

* = Explains cultural modifications present in the landscape, ranging from negative intrusions (-4) to those which complement the scenic quality and promote visual harmony (2)



Narrative Landscape Description and Photograph. The photo was taken on Lack Road, just north of Bowles Road, looking northeast toward the proposed plant site (see Figure 5.12-1). This photo was taken from the second nearest resident to the proposed plant site, approximately 3.25 miles southwest of the proposed plant site, immediately adjacent to the proposed transmission line that will run approximately 150-foot east of the existing transmission line, on the eastern side of Lack Road. Topographic relief across this setting is minimal and offers little diversity to form and line characteristics. Distant views of the mountains contribute to the visual interest of the natural setting. The homogeneous vegetative pallet consists of intermittent desert scrub bushes lining agricultural land. Water is present in the form of an irrigation canal. The setting is highly modified by the existence of distant geothermal plants, transmission lines, a dirt road, and irrigation canal.

SECTION FIVE

**Figure 5.12-6
SCENIC ATTRACTIVENESS EVALUATION FORM FOR VIEW FROM
INTERSECTION OF UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD LINES AT NILAND**

Landform	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	<u>M/L (2)</u>	L (1)	Scenic Quality Classifications A = 19 or more B = 12 to 18 C = 11 or less
Vegetation	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	M/L (2)	<u>L (1)</u>	
Water	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	M/L (2)	<u>L (1)</u>	
Color	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	M/L (2)	<u>L (1)</u>	
Adjacent Scenery	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	M/L (2)	<u>L (1)</u>	
Scarcity	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	M/L (2)	<u>L (1)</u>	
Modifications*	H (2)	H/M (1)	M (0)	<u>M/L (-2)</u>	L (-4)	
Scenic Attractiveness Class C (5)						

Notes:

Evaluation score is bold and underlined

H = High; M = Moderate; and L = Low

* = Explains cultural modifications present in the landscape, ranging from negative intrusions (-4) to those which complement the scenic quality and promote visual harmony (2)



Narrative Landscape Description and Photograph. The photo was taken at the intersection of the Union Pacific Railroad lines at Niland (see Figure 5.12-1). This picture was taken approximately 8.75 miles from the proposed plant site looking directly north and approximately 5 miles from the proposed IID Midway Interconnection running along Harbor Road. Minimum topographic relief is present across the landscape, adding few natural form and line features. Mountains visible in the distance offer some distinctive visual qualities to the landscape. The sparse vegetation consists of native desert scrub brush, characteristic of those areas of the study area not used for agricultural purposes. Water and rockforms are absent from this setting. Cultural modifications include existing transmission lines and the Niland Substation (not visible in photograph).

SECTION FIVE

**Figure 5.12-7
SCENIC ATTRACTIVENESS EVALUATION FORM FOR VIEW NORTH FROM
GENTRY ROAD NEAR LINDSEY ROAD**

Landform	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	<u>M/L (2)</u>	L (1)
Vegetation	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	<u>M/L (2)</u>	L (1)
Water	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	<u>M/L (2)</u>	L (1)
Color	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	<u>M/L (2)</u>	L (1)
Adjacent Scenery	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	M/L (2)	<u>L (1)</u>
Scarcity	H (5)	H/M (4)	M (3)	M/L (2)	<u>L (1)</u>
Modifications*	H (2)	H/M (1)	M (0)	M/L (-2)	<u>L (-4)</u>
Scenic Attractiveness Class C (6)					

<p>Scenic Quality Classifications A = 19 or more B = 12 to 18 C = 11 or less</p>

Notes:

Evaluation score is bold and underlined

H = High; M = Moderate; and L = Low

* = Explains cultural modifications present in the landscape, ranging from negative intrusions (-4) to those which complement the scenic quality and promote visual harmony (2)



Narrative Landscape Description and Photograph. The photo was taken on Lindsey Road between Gentry Road and Krueger Road (see Figure 5.12-1) looking directly north toward the Elmore Plant facilities. This photo was taken approximately 1.75 miles southwest of the proposed plant site and approximately 0.5 miles south of the proposed Redundant line. Topographic relief across the setting is minimal, with form and line characteristics resulting from the symmetrical rows created by agricultural practices. Background mountain views add some distinctive qualities to the landscape. Typically, the vegetation associated with agriculture is homogeneous, adding little distinctive qualities to the color and texture of the landscape. Water consists of irrigation ditches bordering the agricultural land. The setting is highly modified by the presence of a geothermal plant and associated transmission lines.