

CALIFORNIA STATE LANDS COMMISSION

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Established in 1938

October 4, 2016

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**NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING**

File Ref: SCH No. 2016101008

CSLC EIR No. 792; W30214

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the California State Lands Commission (CSLC), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and that CSLC staff will conduct a public scoping meeting for the project listed below pursuant to CEQA (Pub. Resources Code, § 21083.9, subd. (a)(2)) and the State CEQA Guidelines (§§ 15082, subd. (c) and 15083).* The meeting will be held in the city of Carpinteria, Santa Barbara County.

Project Title: **BECKER WELL ABANDONMENT AND REMEDIATION PROJECT**

Proponent: California State Lands Commission

Project Location: Summerland, Santa Barbara County, California.

Meeting Information: **Thursday, October 20, 2016** **City of Carpinteria City Hall**
2 PM: Start of Meeting 5775 Carpinteria Avenue
Carpinteria, CA 93013

The CSLC staff has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) in order to obtain agency and the public's views, in writing and at the public meeting, as to the scope and content of the environmental analysis, including the significant environmental issues, range of alternatives, and mitigation measures that should be included in the EIR. Responsible agencies will need to use the EIR when considering related permits or other approvals for the project. This Notice is also available online at www.slc.ca.gov (under the "Information" tab and "CEQA Updates" link).

Written comments must be received or postmarked by Monday, November 7, 2016. (State CEQA Guidelines, § 15103 requires that responses to a NOP must be provided within 30 days after receipt of notice.) Please send your comments at the earliest possible date to:

* CEQA is found in Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq. The State CEQA Guidelines are found in California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15000 et seq.

Eric Gillies, Asst. Chief California State Lands Commission 100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100-South Sacramento, CA 95825	E-mail: CEQA.comments@slc.ca.gov FAX: (916) 574-1885 Phone: (916) 574-1890
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PROJECT SUMMARY

In October 2015, CSLC staff conducted an assessment of the Becker onshore well at Summerland Beach (Phase 1), which is known to leak oil. Based on the assessment, an engineering work plan has been prepared to properly abandon and seal the well (Phase 2). Background information and the Phase 2 Project description that will be subject of the environmental analysis in the EIR are provided in the Attachment to this NOP.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

The scoping meeting noticed above will begin with a brief presentation on the Project. The CSLC staff will then receive comments on potential significant environmental issues, Project alternatives, and mitigation measures to include in the EIR. When all persons present who wish to provide oral comments have done so, staff will close the meeting. Depending on the number of speakers, a 3-minute time limit on oral comments may be imposed.

IMPORTANT NOTES TO COMMENTERS

1. If you submit written comments, you are encouraged to submit electronic copies by email to CEQA.comments@slc.ca.gov and write “**Becker Well NOP Comments**” in the subject line of your email. If written comments are faxed, please also mail a copy to ensure that a readable copy is received by this office.
2. Before including your mailing or email address, telephone number, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please be aware that the entire comment—including personal identifying information—may become publicly available, including in the EIR and posted on the Internet. The CSLC will make available for inspection, in their entirety, all comments submitted by organizations, businesses, or individuals identifying themselves as representatives of organizations or businesses.
3. If you represent a public agency, please provide the name, email address, and telephone number for the contact person in your agency for this EIR.
4. If you require a sign language interpreter or other reasonable accommodation to conduct business with CSLC staff at the scoping meeting for a disability, as defined by the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act and California Fair Employment and Housing Act, please contact the CSLC staff person listed in this NOP at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting to arrange for such accommodation.
5. Please contact the staff person listed in this NOP by phone at (916) 574-1890 or by email at Eric.Gillies@slc.ca.gov if you have any questions.

Signature: _____
Eric Gillies, Asst. Chief
Division of Environmental Planning and Management

Date: October 4, 2016

ATTACHMENT: PROJECT DESCRIPTION **Becker Well Abandonment and Remediation Project**

1.0 PROJECT LOCATION AND BACKGROUND

The Summerland Oil Field is located in and offshore Summerland, Santa Barbara County (Figure 1). The field, which was the first offshore oil development in the United States, was developed in the late 1890s from oil wells in an area of naturally occurring oil and gas seeps, first from onshore and then from piers that extended into the Pacific Ocean (Figures 2-3). In 1898, John Treadwell, a mining engineer, built one of the piers (dubbed the “Treadwell Pier”), which served as a wharf that could anchor oil wells drilled into the ocean floor and as a dock for loading or unloading vessels to transfer materials to or from shore or the rails of the Southern Pacific railroad.¹ By August 1899, 18 wells had been drilled from the Treadwell Pier, with the average production of each well between 2 and 4 barrels of oil per day. When the Treadwell Pier was completed, it supported 20 wells and extended 1,230 feet from the shore.

Other than background information on the Treadwell Pier, few records exist regarding the drilling and abandonment of the wells drilled into the Summerland Oil Field. When production ceased to be economical in the early 1900s, operators left many of the wells and piers to deteriorate. To the extent operators performed well abandonments, they used procedures that do not meet current regulatory requirements. Due to natural seeps or leaks from these improperly abandoned legacy wells, oil sheens are intermittently observed in the water and the beaches near Summerland. For example, oil seepage occurring from the area around one particular well, the “Becker onshore well,” becomes visible approximately 10 days every year (see Figure 4). Recently, anecdotal evidence indicates that leaks in and around the Becker onshore well have increased in regularity.

The hundreds of oil wells drilled in waters offshore Summerland in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were drilled without State authority and while trespassing on State property. Although the State received no revenues from the wells, California State Lands Commission (CSLC) staff has spent significant time and resources to ameliorate legacy coastal hazards, including remnants of piers, oil wells and pilings, and old pipelines (Table 1) (see also www.slc.ca.gov/Programs/Coastal_Hazards.html).

Due to the presence of oil sheens in the ocean and oil on Summerland Beach, CSLC staff has targeted the Becker onshore well in a two-phase project, the first of which, an investigation and assessment of the well, was completed in October 2015 (see Section 2.0 below). The CSLC is also acting as the Project proponent and the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for Phase 2, the Becker Well Abandonment and Remediation Project (Project) (see Section 3.0 below), and is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for this Project.

¹ Most historical maps and documents from the early 1900s refer to the Treadwell Pier as the Southern Pacific Company’s Pier and wells).

Figure 1. Project Location

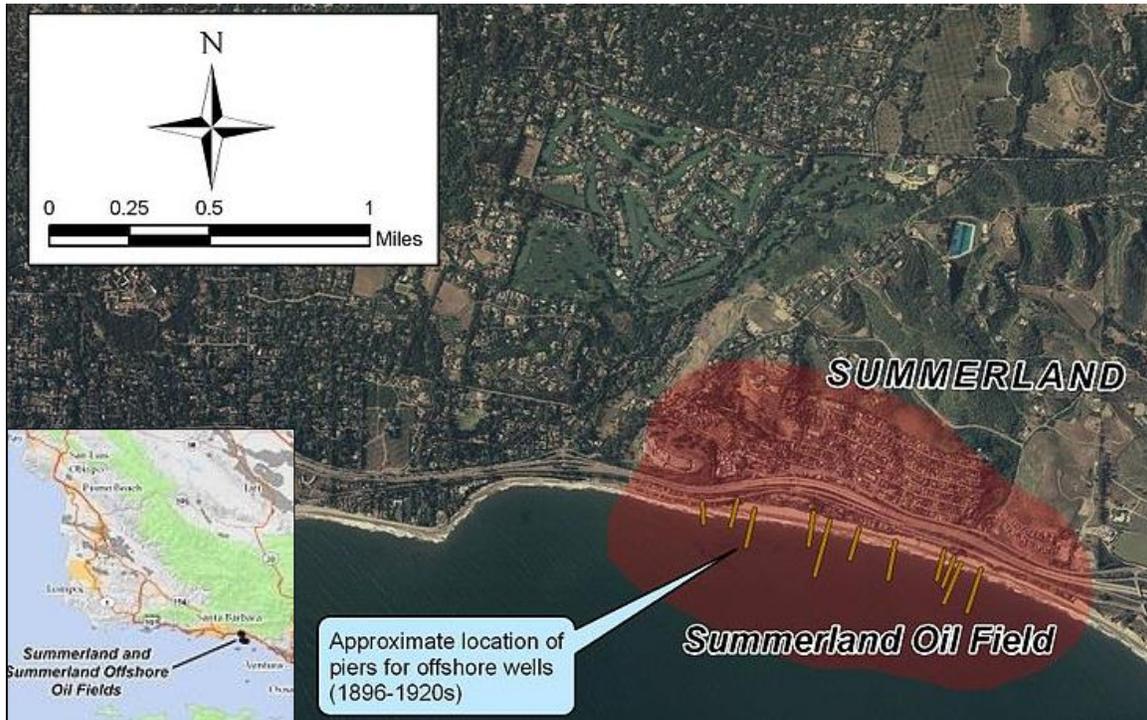


Figure 2. Historic Summerland Oil Field Map with Historic Piers and Wells

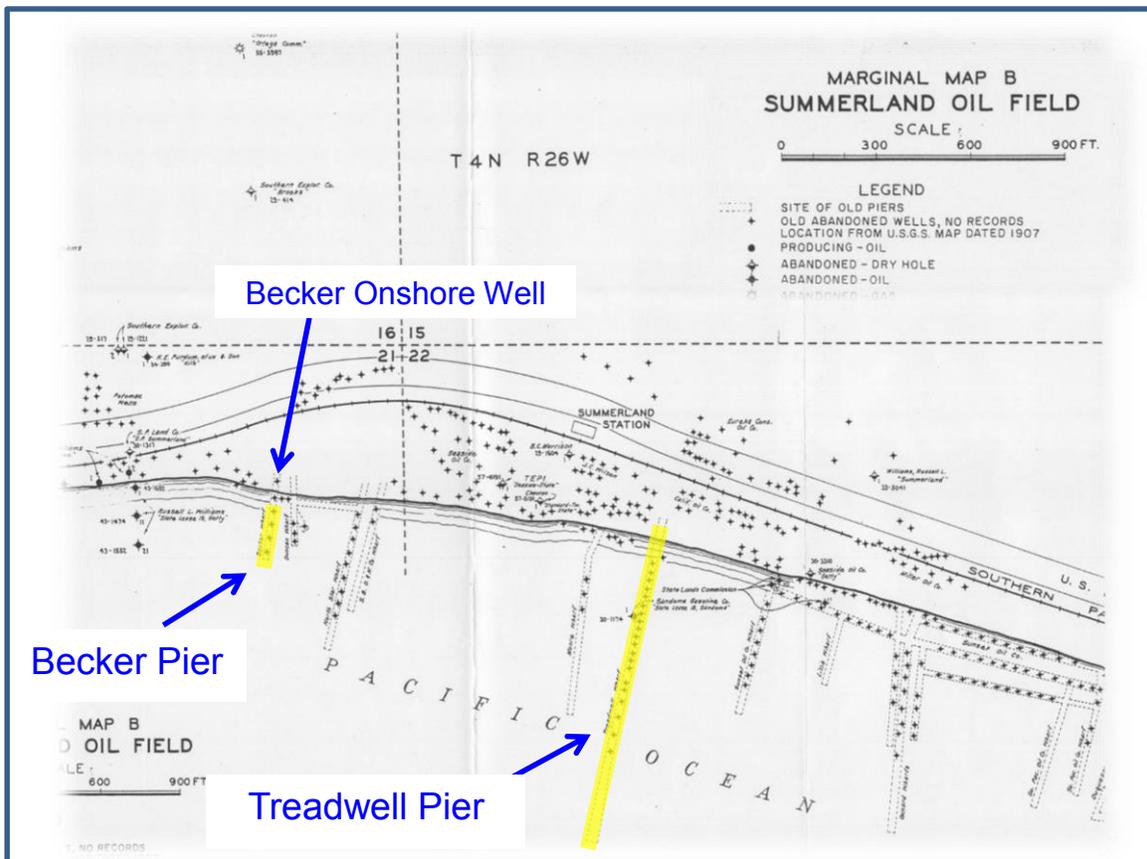


Figure 3. Aerial Photograph of Historic Piers and Becker Well Location



Figure 4. Leaking Becker Well at Low Tide in February 2014 (left) and Exposed Well Casing During Phase 1 Low Tide Excavation in October 2015 (right)



Table 1. CSLC Well Abandonment Activities in Historic Summerland Oil Field Area.

Late 1960s	CSLC staff conducted a Summerland Beach Cleanup Project, which included the abandonment of 60 wells, including the Treadwell Number 10 well, with short (about 5 feet) cement plugs and cutting off of the casings.
1975	Because of oil seepage near the previously abandoned Treadwell Number 10 well, CSLC staff re-abandoned the well using a 6-foot-diameter concrete filled tub to cap the well at the seafloor.
1993	CSLC staff abandoned three wells on Summerland Beach as part of its Summerland Well Abandonment Project, which sought to properly abandon wells that were not properly abandoned in 1907. The three wells differed from the Treadwell Number 10 well because they were located on Summerland Beach and were exposed at low tide and submerged about 3 feet at high tide. The wells were abandoned using a rig mounted on a 20-foot-high steel structure (“Surf Sled Vehicle”). The project was completed for approximately \$863,000.
1994	<p>With natural or artificial oil seepage continuing in the near shore waters at Summerland Beach, the CSLC, Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR), and offices of U.S. Senator Feinstein and State Senator Jack O’Connell requested U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund revenues to re-examine the area and determine if old abandoned wells in the area might be the source of some of the oil. The USCG conducted a two-phase study of the Summerland area seeps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 was a geophysical/ hydrographic sight survey that identified 43 potential targets for further investigation and developed a Summerland area map describing oil well casings, oil seeps, and wharf and pier piling type hazards from survey data. • During phase 2, seven sites were identified to require excavation to determine seep sources; the other sites were identified as a variety of metal wrapped piles from old piers and other remaining infrastructure that was either below the mudline or did not represent a threat. The USCG determined that only one well, called the “Becker well,” could positively be identified as an oil seep source (originally drilled from the long since removed Becker Pier) and which, when excavated, leaked approximately ½ barrel of oil. Additionally, prior surveys noted that the Becker well may leak up to ½ barrel of oil per day when actively seeping and the seepage becomes visible approximately 10 days every year.
2011	After oil was observed leaking on Summerland Beach at very low tide, CSLC staff, along with staffs from the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Services and Planning and Development Department, Energy Division, visited the beach on the next low tide date (April 12, 2011). Oil was not present on this visit, but the location coincided with the onshore Becker well referenced in the 1994 USCG study.
2013	CSLC staff met in August with staff from the offices of State Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson and Assemblymember Das Williams, the Summerland Citizen’s Association (mainly comprised of Summerland residents), and agency staffs (USCG, OSPR, Santa Barbara County, and University of California, Santa Barbara). One positive outcome was the development of a user-friendly, online incident reporting form for Summerland residents to report well leakage and seep activity (see Summerland Beach Seep/Sheen Report at www.sl.c.ca.gov/Forms/Coastal_Hazards/SummerlandSeepRptFrm.pdf). Residents were trained to collect Global Positioning System (GPS) measurements for site-specific incidents such as fresh oil on the beach from the Becker well. CSLC staff maintains this database, and has received 30 incident reports in the last 2 years.
2015	CSLC staff selects contractor to conduct Phase 1 investigation and assessment of the Becker well. See Phase 1 discussion below.

2.0 PHASE 1 (2-DAY OPERATION COMPLETED IN OCTOBER 2015)

In fall 2015, CSLC staff obtained state, federal, and local permits and approvals to conduct Phase 1 of the Project, which was to excavate the Becker onshore well site and assess pipe size, general condition of the casing, and its suitability for conventional abandonment. Because the well site is in the surf zone, in 3 to 4 feet of water, the site is only accessible from the beach at extremely low tide (Figure 3 provides an aerial photo of the approximate location of the Becker onshore well in relation to the adjacent Lookout Park). CSLC staff and its contractor completed Phase 1 during one such low-tide period on October 28 and 29, 2015. Phase 1 work included the following tasks:

- Staging of equipment at Lookout Park, where access to the beach occurred
- Excavation of the beach at low tide to locate and uncover the well (see Figure 4)
- Inspection of the condition of the exposed well casing
- Measurement of the casing circumference and diameter
- Mapping of the exposed well casing using a commercial-grade Trimble GPS
- Placement of a buoy adjacent to the well to help locate the well for Phase 2 work

The following provides the some of the findings of the well investigation and assessment.

- The top of the well casing is 4 feet below the beach surface (see Figure 4).
- CSLC staff discovered a piece of 2-inch pipe buried alongside the well casing. The purpose of this tubing is unknown but it is possible that it was junk left alongside the casing when the well was initially abandoned.
- The Becker well casing was calipered at 7-3/4 inches, but may in fact be 7-5/8 inches, which is a more common pipe size and one that was cited as being used in old Summerland records obtained from the California Oil Museum in Santa Paula, California.
- The pipe appeared to be have good integrity given its age (more than 100 years old). CSLC engineering staff believes that the pipe should support installation of a riser, which is a key component in facilitating proper abandonment.
- Cement exists at the surface on the inside of the casing; however, since no records exist for the Becker onshore well, the length of the cement plug and information on what lies below the plug are unknown.
- No cement was visibly present on the outside of the exposed casing. Because an excavator could move the casing back and forth, CSLC engineering staff concluded that no cement is anchoring the pipe anywhere near the surface.
- Past oil migration to the surface likely occurred through the un-cemented annular area around the pipe.

Based on the Phase 1 assessment described above, the CSLC's contractor prepared an engineering study (Interact 2016) to define the optimum work plan and cost to abandon the Becker onshore well (Phase 2) as described below.

3.0 PHASE 2 WELL ACCESS AND ABANDONMENT (PROPOSED PROJECT)

As proposed, a jack-up barge, accessing the Project site from the ocean, would be used to abandon the Becker well (Figure 5 shows a typical jack-up barge configuration in the surf zone). Project activities would occur in three major steps: (1) construction of a double-walled cofferdam in the surf zone around the well to isolate it from ocean tides and provide access to the well (this is the most time-consuming and costly Project element); (2) well abandonment; and (3) cofferdam deconstruction.

Figure 5. Example of a Typical Jack-up Barge Configuration



Three round trips would be required to deliver cofferdam and abandonment equipment and materials from the proposed shore base at the Port of Long Beach. On each trip, the barge would be loaded with the equipment and materials necessary for that portion of the operation and require positioning the barge with small tugboats during high tides and anchoring (Figure 6). All construction activities are estimated to take 3 to 4 weeks.

3.1 Sequence of Work Activities

The following provides the sequence of work activities:

- Conduct offshore bathymetric survey prior to Project implementation to ensure safety of jack-up barge deployment.
- Position an emergency oil response trailer in Lookout Park with equipment as specified in the oil contingency plan to be onsite for the Project duration.
- Trip 1: Tow jack-up barge loaded with crane, pile hammers and cofferdam materials from Long Beach to the well location and rig-up to excavate around the well and construct the double walled cofferdam (Figure 7). De-mobilize jack-up barge for return trip to Long Beach to offload cofferdam construction equipment.

Figure 6. Proposed Jack-up Barge Anchoring Layout



Figure 7. Temporary Cofferdam Layout



- Trip 2: Following the offloading of cofferdam materials, load abandonment equipment onto the jack-up barge, including workover rig, blowout preventer equipment (BOPE), drill string, power swivel, cement pump, bulk trucks, storage tanks, etc.; tow jack-up barge back to well location for abandonment operations.
- Abandonment operations (estimated 3 days to complete) will include the following:
 - Position barge and rig-up
 - Install riser and BOPE
 - Clean inside casing as deep as possible to prepare for cement plugging
 - Log and perforate casing for two cementing operations to plug the well
 - Remove BOPE and riser
 - Weld plate on top of casing stub
 - Rig-down, de-mobilize, prepare for trip back to Long Beach to offload abandonment equipment
- Trip 3: Following the offloading of abandonment equipment, load equipment for deconstruction of cofferdam. Tow jack-up barge back to the well site to deconstruct the cofferdam and back-fill with beach sand. De-mobilize jack-up barge, return to Long Beach, and offload equipment.
- Remove all onshore staging and oil spill response equipment from Lookout Park.

3.2 Permits and Agency Coordination

In addition to action by the CSLC, the Project would require permits and approvals from other reviewing authorities and regulatory agencies that may have oversight over aspects of the proposed Project including, but not limited to, those listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Potential Responsible, Coordinating, and Consultation Agencies/Entities

Local	Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (APCD)
	Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department
	Santa Barbara County Parks Division
State	California Coastal Commission (CCC)
	California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
	California Department of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR)
	California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)
	Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)
Federal	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries or NMFS)
	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
	U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Tribal	Project activities will be coordinated with local tribes consistent with the CSLC's Tribal Consultation Policy adopted in August 2016 (see www.slc.ca.gov).
Other	Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR)

4.0 SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR)

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15060, CSLC staff conducted a preliminary review of the proposed Project and determined that an EIR was necessary based on the potential for significant impacts resulting from the Project. A preliminary list of environmental issues and alternatives to be discussed in the EIR is provided below. Additional issues and/or alternatives may be identified at the public scoping meeting, and in written comments, as part of the EIR process. The CSLC invites comments and suggestions on the scope and content of the environmental analysis, including the significant environmental issues, reasonable range of alternatives, and mitigation measures that should be included in the EIR.

The CSLC uses the following designations when examining the potential for impacts according to CEQA issue areas:

Potentially Significant Impact	Any impact that could be significant, and for which feasible mitigation must be identified and implemented. If any potentially significant impacts are identified but cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level, the impact would be <i>significant and unavoidable</i> ; if any potentially significant impacts are identified for which feasible, enforceable mitigation measures are developed and imposed to reduce said impacts to below applicable significance thresholds, the impact would be <i>less than significant with mitigation</i> .
Less Than Significant Impact	Any impact that would not be considered significant under CEQA relative to the applicable significance threshold, and therefore would not require mitigation.
No Impact	The Project would not result in any impact to the resource area considered.
Beneficial Impact	The Project would provide an improvement to an issue area in comparison to the baseline information.

The estimations of impact levels used for this Notice of Preparation are based solely on preliminary documents and do not preclude findings of significance that would be made during the preparation of the EIR, including findings that could change the significance of an impact and how it would need to be addressed within the EIR.

4.1 EIR Alternatives Analysis

In addition to analyzing the potential impacts associated with the proposed Project, in accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must:

...describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. (§ 15126.6.)

The State CEQA Guidelines also require that the EIR evaluate a “no project” alternative and, under specific circumstances, designate an environmentally superior alternative from among the remaining alternatives. Alternatives will be identified as a result of the environmental analysis and information received during scoping. The EIR will:

- Provide the basis for selecting alternatives that are feasible and that would reduce significant impacts associated with the proposed Project;
- Provide a detailed explanation of why any alternatives were rejected from further analysis; and
- Evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives, including the “no project” alternative.

Possible alternatives are included below.

Location	Examples of Potential Alternatives
Onshore*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Cofferdam, Temporary Pier Access from Shore for Abandonment • Large Cofferdam, Temporary Work Platform from Shore for Abandonment
Onshore and Offshore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Cofferdam Constructed from Shore with Barge Access for Abandonment

* Onshore work would involve constructing a temporary road and berm to access the well location and constructing a temporary pier or platform adjacent to the well. The onshore work is estimated to take at least 10 weeks to complete.

4.2 Currently Identified Potential Environmental Impacts

Based on initial internal scoping, the Project is not anticipated to affect the following environmental factors identified in State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G (Environmental Checklist Form), which could therefore be eliminated from consideration in the EIR:

- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

Other special impact topics that are not likely to be in conflict with the proposed Project include Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice.

The following sections provide information on the currently identified issues that may have potentially significant environmental effects.

4.2.1 Aesthetics

The EIR will evaluate visual impacts related to all Project activities, including any potential beneficial impacts as well as aesthetic impacts associated with construction and abandonment activities. The visual intrusion as the result of abandonment activities would be temporary.

4.2.2 Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

The EIR will analyze these issue areas in separate sections. The EIR will summarize current air quality conditions in the Project vicinity and analyze the potential Project-related air quality and GHG emissions impacts using guidelines provided by the Santa Barbara County APCD. Potential air quality and GHG impacts would result from abandonment activities, including barge and tug transportation and operations.

Additionally, the Project would generate criteria air pollutants during construction activities. If proposed emissions exceed Santa Barbara County APCD emissions thresholds, the analysis will evaluate the ability of mitigation measures to reduce these emissions to a less-than-significant level.

4.2.3 Biological Resources (Marine and Terrestrial)

The EIR will assess both direct and indirect Project impacts on onshore and offshore biological resources. Proposed Project activities on federally or State-listed species or species proposed for listing will be addressed in the EIR, in consultation with CDFW, NMFS, and USFWS.

4.2.4 Cultural Resources

The EIR will analyze the potential for Project activities, which involve some level of ground disturbance in the surf zone, to adversely affect any nearby near shore and onshore cultural resources, including shipwrecks and tribal resources if applicable.

4.2.5 Geology and Soils

The EIR will evaluate the potential geological hazards that could result in an impact to workers or Project components. The geologic impacts of the Project would be associated with seismic hazards and seismically induced hazards, including earthquakes, ground shaking, and tsunamis.

4.2.6 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The EIR will address potential conditions during abandonment activities that could result in the release of hazardous materials, fire, explosion, or other conditions that could be hazardous to the public, workers, and environment. This includes the handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials. Detailed analyses of impacts on specific resources will be addressed in their respective sections (e.g., Biological Resources, and Hydrology, Oceanography, and Water Quality). Potential safety hazards of the proposed Project and alternatives will be based on well abandonment and remediation activities.

4.2.7 Hydrology, Oceanography, and Water Quality

The EIR will address potential impacts on surface water resources, groundwater, marine hydrology, and water quality resulting from the Project. The environmental setting will focus on the most relevant characteristics of existing marine resources in the Project vicinity. Issues such as offshore currents and marine water quality are important in understanding the effects of potential turbidity during riser removal, or other hazardous materials on these resources. This section will rely on information from various agencies including Santa Barbara County, RWQCB, and NMFS.

4.2.8 Recreation

The EIR will provide details on existing recreational activities in the Project vicinity, and summarize potential recreation impacts associated with the Project, particularly beach access and partial closure of Lookout Park for construction staging.

4.2.9 Noise

The EIR will examine the Project's potential noise impacts, both from onshore and offshore noise sources, on recreationists (e.g., park users, beachgoers), workers, and residents. Impacts of underwater noise (due to remediation activities) on marine life will be analyzed in the Biological Resources section of the EIR.

4.3 Special Impact Areas

4.3.1 Cumulative Impacts

The State CEQA Guidelines require an EIR to discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is "cumulatively considerable" (§ 15130). A cumulative impact is created through a combination of the project being analyzed in an EIR and other projects in the area causing related impacts. The EIR will:

- Define the geographic scope of the Cumulative Projects Study Area (the area affected by cumulative projects), which would be considered for each issue area;
- Discuss the cumulative impacts of the Project, in conjunction with other approved and reasonably foreseeable projects in the study area; and
- Identify, if appropriate, feasible measures to mitigate or avoid the Project's contribution to cumulative effects.

4.3.2 Growth-Inducing Impacts

CEQA requires a discussion of the ways in which a proposed project could foster economic or population growth, including the construction of additional housing, in the Project's vicinity. Under State CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2, subdivision (d), a project is growth-inducing if it fosters or removes obstacles to economic or population growth, provides new employment, extends access or services, taxes existing services, or causes development elsewhere. Since the abandonment and remediation would be very limited and short term, no growth-inducing impacts associated with the Project are anticipated. The EIR will contain a discussion of this issue.