4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Section 4 examines the potential environmental impacts of the project and project alternatives. This section includes analyses of the environmental issue areas listed below:

4.1 Marine Biological Resources

4.2 Commercial Fishing

4.3 Marine Water Quality

4.4 Recreation

4.5 Air Quality

4.6 Transportation

4.7 Geology and Soils

4.8 Hazards

4.9 Noise

4.10 Cultural Resources

4.11 Environmental Justice

Each issue area section provides background information and describes the environmental setting (baseline conditions) to help the reader understand the conditions that would cause an impact to occur. In addition, each section describes how an impact is determined to be "significant" or "less than significant." Finally, the individual sections recommend mitigation measures (MMs) to reduce significant impacts. Throughout Section 4, both impacts and the corresponding MMs are identified by a bold letter-number designation, e.g., **Impact BIO-1** and **MM BIO-1a**.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Environmental Baseline

The analysis of each issue area begins with an examination of the existing physical setting (baseline conditions as determined pursuant to section 15125(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines) that may be affected by the Proposed Project. The effects of the Proposed Project are defined as changes to the environmental setting that are attributable to project components or operation.

Significance Criteria

Significance criteria are identified for each environmental issue area. The significance criteria serve as a benchmark for determining if a component action will result in a significant adverse environmental impact when evaluated against the baseline. According to the State CEQA Guidelines section 15382, a significant effect on the environment means "…a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project…"

Impact Analysis

Impacts are classified as:

- **Class I** (significant adverse impact that remains significant after mitigation);
- **Class II** (significant adverse impact that can be eliminated or reduced below an issue's significance criteria);
- **Class III** (adverse impact that does not meet or exceed an issue's significance criteria); or
- **Class IV** (beneficial impact).

A determination will be made, based on the analysis of any impact within each affected environmental issue area and compliance with any recommended mitigation measure(s), of the level of impact remaining in comparison to the pertinent significance criteria. If the impact remains significant, at or above the significance criteria, it is deemed to be Class I. If a "significant adverse impact" is reduced, based on compliance with mitigation, to a level below the pertinent significance criteria, it is determined to no longer have a significant effect on the environment, i.e., to be "less than significant" (Class II). If an action creates an adverse impact above the baseline condition, but such impact does not meet or exceed the pertinent significance criteria, it

is determined to be adverse, but less than significant (Class III). An action that provides an improvement to an environmental issue area in comparison to the baseline information is recognized as a beneficial impact (Class IV).

Formulation of Mitigation Measures and Mitigation Monitoring Program

When significant impacts are identified, feasible mitigation measures are formulated to eliminate or reduce the intensity of the impacts and focus on the protection of sensitive resources. The effectiveness of a mitigation measure is subsequently determined by evaluating the impact remaining after its application. Those impacts meeting or exceeding the impact significance criteria after mitigation are considered residual impacts that remain significant (Class I). Implementation of more than one mitigation measure may be needed to reduce an impact below a level of significance. The mitigation measures recommended in this document are identified in the impact assessment sections and presented in a Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP). The MMP is provided in Section 6.

If any mitigation measures become incorporated as part of a project's design, they are no longer considered mitigation measures under the CEQA. If they eliminate or reduce a potentially significant impact to a level below the significance criteria, they eliminate the potential for that significant impact since the "measure" is now a component of the action. Such measures incorporated into the project design have the same status as any "applicant proposed measures." The CSLC's practice is to include all measures to eliminate or reduce the environmental impacts of a Proposed Project, whether Applicant proposed or recommended mitigation, in the MMP.

Cumulative Projects

According to section 15355 of the State CEQA Guidelines, cumulative impacts refer to:

> "Two or more individual effects which, when considered together are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental effects. The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects. The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment that results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time."

Section 15130(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines states that:

> "An EIR shall discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable.... When the combined cumulative impact associated with the project's incremental effect and the effects of other projects is not significant, the EIR shall briefly indicate why the cumulative impact is not significant and is not discussed in further detail in the EIR.... An EIR may determine that a project's contribution to a significant cumulative impact will be rendered less than cumulatively considerable and thus is not significant. A project's contribution is less than cumulatively considerable if the project is required to implement or fund its fair share of a mitigation measure or measures designed to alleviate the cumulative impact.... An EIR may determine that a project's contribution to a significant cumulative impact is de minimis and thus is not significant. A de minimis contribution means that the environmental conditions would essentially be the same whether or not the Proposed Project is implemented."

According to section 15130 (b)(1)(A) of the State CEQA Guidelines, a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts may be used as the basis of the cumulative impacts analysis. A number of cumulative projects have been identified in the project vicinity; however, none of these projects would result in effects in the ocean environment in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. The cumulative projects identified for this EIR are described below.

Ongoing decommissioning of SONGS Unit 1 is a long-term, multi-year effort that is restricted to the land portions of the power plant. Likewise, the proposed new steam generators at SONGS Units 2 and 3 would be confined to the existing power plant site. Other small-scale construction and decommissioning projects are likely to occur at the power plant during project implementation; however, none of these projects would occur offshore during the proposed decommissioning activities.

The land surrounding the SONGS facility is occupied by MCB Camp Pendleton. A number of projects have been recently completed or are proposed at MCB Camp Pendleton, including the following:

- Field Placement of advanced amphibious assault vehicle (AAAV) at MCB Camp Pendleton;
- Reconstruction of Infantry Squad Battle Course (P-633);

- Reorientation of Range 409 and Addition of Armor/Anti-Armor Tracking Range (P-634);
- New Marine Corps Reserve Center, 41 Area Las Flores (P-516);
- Drainage Improvements and Navigation Aids, MCAS Camp Pendleton;
- Ammunition Handling Pad and Access Road (P-218);
- Santa Margarita River Flood Control (P-010);
- Basilone Bridge Replacement (P-030);
- Sewage Effluent Compliance Project - Las Pulgas and San Mateo Basins;
- Sewage Effluent Compliance Project (P-527B) - Lower Santa Margarita Basin;
- Northern Power Distribution System (P-046);
- Las Pulgas Landfill Permitted Disposal Area Expansion and Leachate Collection and Recovery System Installation;
- San Onofre Landfill Permitted Disposal Area Expansion and Leachate Collection and Recovery System Installation; and
- Close Combat Battle Course (P-613).

In addition to the above projects at MCB Camp Pendleton, a new tertiary wastewater treatment plant is also proposed to serve the Base. Four active treatment plants located on the Base would be consolidated into a single tertiary treatment plant. The four active plants and one inactive plant would be demolished once the new plant was constructed. The new tertiary treatment plant would be constructed approximately 10 miles south of SONGS, near one of the existing treatment plants to be demolished. That proposed action would dispose of excess tertiary-treated water via an ocean outfall.

An Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) is currently being prepared for the proposed Foothill South Tollroad extension project. This project would extend Highway 241 from its current terminus in Irvine to I-5 near San Clemente. If the controversial freeway extension were approved, construction would occur in 2006 at the earliest and would be completed in approximately 2 years. One of the alternatives would directly impact San Onofre State Beach and would connect with I-5

at Basilone Road. If this alternative were selected, it would be initiated after the completion of the much smaller disposition project which will be completed in 2006.

Other small-scale development projects may occur in the residential communities to the north of the power plant during the decommissioning project. However, these projects would occur several miles from the site and would not directly affect the SONGS facility or outfall structure.

Other cumulative projects that could affect the decommissioning project include port development activities at the Port of Long Beach. Several development projects (including dockside improvements) could potentially occur in 2006. In addition, the Port of Long Beach is currently evaluating several large-scale port expansion projects. It is uncertain if any of these projects would occur in 2006 during the proposed decommissioning project.

Each issue area in Section 4 addresses the cumulative impact scenario, the focus of which is to identify the potential impacts of the Proposed Project that might not be significant when considered alone, but could contribute to a significant impact when viewed in conjunction with the other projects.

Impacts of Alternatives

Section 3 provides a list and description that identify alternatives to the Proposed Project. Each issue area in Section 4 presents the impact analysis for each alternative scenario. A summary of the collective impacts of each alternative in comparison with the impacts of the Proposed Project is included within the Executive Summary Section of this EIR.