

1 **3.11 MINERAL RESOURCES**

MINERAL RESOURCES – Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2 **3.11.1 Environmental Setting**

3 The Project area is located 2 miles east-northeast of Niland, Imperial County, in the
 4 central basin of the Colorado Desert. The Salton Trough is a northwestern landward
 5 continuation of the rift that extends 140 miles northwest from the head of the Gulf of
 6 California. The Trough is traversed by the San Andreas Fault and bordered on the east
 7 by the Chocolate Mountains, which stretch more than 60 miles in a northwest to
 8 southeast direction and rise to an elevation of 2,475 feet asl. The Trough was formed by
 9 a gradual sinking of the land concurrent with uplift of the surrounding mountains during
 10 the Miocene, Pliocene, and Pleistocene eras. Much of the Salton Trough lies below sea
 11 level, and at its lowest elevation lies the Salton Sea, a 376-square mile saltwater lake
 12 located about 6 miles to the east of the Project area.

13 Upon review of potential renewable energy resources in the area, CSLC staff is
 14 evaluating retaining an easement, north of Beal Road and along the west edge of
 15 Section 36, for access to and surface rights for future renewable energy exploration and
 16 development. The area is within the West Chocolate Mountain Renewable Energy
 17 Evaluation Area that the U.S. Bureau of Land Management believes has geothermal
 18 and solar energy potential.

19 **3.11.2 Regulatory Setting**

20 Federal and State laws and regulations pertaining to this issue area and relevant to the
 21 Project are identified in Table 3.11-1.

Table 3.11-1. Laws, Regulations, and Policies (Mineral Resources)

CA	Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) (Pub. Resources, §§ 2710-2796)	In accordance with SMARA, the California Geological Survey classifies the regional significance of mineral resources and assists in the designation of lands containing significant aggregate resources. Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) have been designated to indicate the significance of mineral deposits. The MRZ categories are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRZ-1: Areas where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present or where it is judged that little likelihood exists for their
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Table 3.11-1. Laws, Regulations, and Policies (Mineral Resources)

		<p>presence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRZ-2: Areas where adequate information indicates significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood exists for their presence. • MRZ-3: Areas containing mineral deposits the significance of which cannot be evaluated from available data. • MRZ-4: Areas where available information is inadequate for assignment to any other MRZ.
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1 At the local level, the Conservation and Open Space Element of the County of Imperial
 2 General Plan contains a goal and objectives to preserve mineral resources in the
 3 County. This Element also indicates the general location of known mineral resources in
 4 the County. These areas are not included within the proposed Project area.

5 **3.11.3 Impact Analysis**

6 ***a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of***
 7 ***value to the region and the residents of the State?***

8 ***b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource***
 9 ***recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use***
 10 ***plan?***

11 **No Impact.** The Project would not result in the loss of availability of any known mineral
 12 resources or mineral resource recovery site. Mineral rights associated with the School
 13 Lands parcels would be retained by the State. The proposed sale of School Lands to
 14 prospective applicants will transfer only the surface ownership of these lands. Upon
 15 review of potential renewable energy resources in the area, CSLC staff is evaluating
 16 retaining an easement, north of Beal Road and along the west edge of Section 36, for
 17 access to and surface rights for future renewable energy exploration and development.
 18 The potential easement area, which is partially within the Salvation Mountain parcel, is
 19 within the West Chocolate Mountain Renewable Energy Evaluation Area that the U.S.
 20 Bureau of Land Management believes has geothermal and solar energy potential.

21 **3.11.4 Summary**

22 Based upon the above considerations, no impacts to mineral resources are expected to
 23 occur as a result of the proposed sale of School Lands. The proposed purchasers of the
 24 School Lands parcels plan to continue the existing uses (current baseline conditions)
 25 associated with the respective parcels. The Project does not include any construction or
 26 ground-disturbing activities. Any other uses and potential impacts are too speculative for
 27 evaluation.