

## 1 4.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

2 This Section provides a discussion of existing agricultural resources and an analysis  
3 of potential impacts that may result from Project implementation. Included are  
4 descriptions of the environmental setting in terms of existing agricultural resources  
5 that could be affected by the proposed Project.

### 6 4.2.1 Environmental Setting

7 The proposed pipeline is approximately 40 miles long and traverses through Yolo,  
8 Sutter, Sacramento, and Placer counties. Nearly all of the proposed pipeline  
9 crosses Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance,  
10 Farmland of Local Importance, Grazing Land, and land under Williamson Act  
11 contracts. Agricultural uses in the Project area include rice fields, row crops,  
12 orchards, and grazing land.

### 13 Yolo County

14 Yolo County has placed importance on agricultural land preservation and enacted  
15 some of the earliest ordinances that limit use of agricultural lands, create minimum  
16 parcel sizes, and implement the Williamson Act. In 2006, the total agricultural  
17 commodity value was over \$330 million, surpassing the 2005 value by more than  
18 \$40 million (Yolo County 2006 Crop Report). The top ten commodities, in order, are  
19 tomatoes, hay/alfalfa, grapes/wine, almonds, seed crops, rice, walnuts, organic  
20 crops, cattle and calves, and apiary/livestock/poultry products. Table 4.2-1 below  
21 shows the 2005 and 2006 agricultural industry production values.

22 **Table 4.2-1: Yolo County Agricultural Production Summary, 2005 to 2006**

Industry	Value of Production (\$)	
	2005	2006
Fruit and Nut Crops	103,007,000	94,837,723
Field Crops	87,282,000	114,350,583
Vegetable Crops	76,518,000	86,704,112
Livestock/Poultry	15,474,000	13,789,308
Livestock/Poultry Products	3,933,000	5,271,300
Nursery Products	6,029,000	8,132,784
Apiary Products	2,575,000	3,845,391

Industry	Value of Production (\$)	
	2005	2006
Seed Crops	21,413,000	28,767,033
Organic Production	13,914,000	14,497,739
<b>Total Value in Dollars</b>	330,145,000	370,195,973
Source: Yolo County 2006.		

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2 The California Department of Conservation (DOC) monitors agricultural land use  
3 through its Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). According to the  
4 FMMP, agricultural land decreased in Yolo County by 27,030 acres since 1984 on  
5 an average of 1,352 acres per year. Between 2002 and 2004, 2,287 net acres were  
6 converted to nonagricultural uses, as shown in Table 4.2-2. Within Yolo County, the  
7 proposed Project would traverse areas of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide  
8 Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, Farmland of Local  
9 Potential, and Grazing Land.

10 **Table 4.2-2: Farmland Conversion from 2002 to 2004 in Yolo County**

Land Use Category	Total Acres Inventoried		2002 to 2004 Acreage Changes		
	2002	2004	Acres Lost	Acres Gained	Net Change
Prime Farmland	261,648	259,637	2,602	591	-2,011
Farmland of Statewide Importance	18,007	18,123	154	270	116
Unique Farmland	54,586	53,157	2,180	751	-1,429
Farmland of Local Importance	67,546	66,619	2,313	1,386	-927
Grazing Land	143,263	145,227	343	2,307	1,964
<b>Agricultural Land Subtotal</b>	545,050	542,763	7,592	5,305	-2,287
Source: California Department of Conservation 2006.					

11

## 12 Sutter County

13 In 2006, the total agricultural production value was more than \$358 million,  
14 exceeding the 2005 value by more than \$53 million (Sutter County 2006 Crop,

1 Livestock, and Annual Department Report). The ten leading crops by value in 2006  
 2 were rice, dried plums (prunes), walnuts, peaches, nursery products, tomatoes,  
 3 cattle/calves, almonds, melons, and alfalfa. Table 4.2-3 below shows the 2005 and  
 4 2006 agricultural industry production values.

5 **Table 4.2-3: Sutter County Agricultural Production Summary, 2005 to 2006**

Industry	Value of Production (\$)	
	2005	2006
Fruit and Nut Crops	123,834,400	158,918,900
Field Crops	116,674,300	130,626,000
Vegetable Crops	19,788,600	21,564,300
Livestock/Poultry	12,147,100	12,363,300
Livestock/Poultry Products	3,820,800	3,710,600
Nursery Products	11,058,300	12,736,500
Apiary Products	3,497,900	3,973,400
Seed Crops	14,368,790	14,951,900
<b>Total Value in Dollars</b>	<b>305,190,190</b>	<b>358,845,200</b>
Source: Sutter County 2006.		

6

7 Sutter County's agricultural land totals have been monitored by the FMMP since  
 8 1988. Between 1988 and 2004, agricultural land decreased by 19,029 acres,  
 9 resulting in an average loss of 1,057 net acres per year. Between 2002 and 2004,  
 10 1,926 net acres were converted to nonagricultural uses, as shown in Table 4.2-4.  
 11 Within Sutter County, the proposed Project would traverse areas of Prime Farmland,  
 12 Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Grazing Land.

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1 **Table 4.2-4: Farmland Conversion from 2002 to 2004 in Sutter County**

Land Use Category	Total Acres Inventoried		2002 to 2004 Acreage Changes		
	2002	2004	Acres Lost	Acres Gained	Net Change
Prime Farmland	167,436	166,203	1,509	276	-1,233
Farmland of Statewide Importance	108,750	107,743	1,169	162	-1,007
Unique Farmland	19,482	19,480	267	265	-2
Farmland of Local Importance	0	0	0	0	0
Grazing Land	50,321	50,637	617	933	316
<b>Agricultural Land Subtotal</b>	<b>345,989</b>	<b>344,063</b>	<b>3,562</b>	<b>1,636</b>	<b>-1,926</b>

Source: California Department of Conservation 2006.

2

3 **Sacramento County**

4 The majority of Sacramento County's non-urban lands are used for agricultural  
5 purposes. The county's total 2006 crop production value of \$306.8 million  
6 represents a 12 percent reduction from 2005 values (Sacramento County 2006 Crop  
7 and Livestock Report). The reduction of \$42 million was due to weather-related  
8 issues; a wet spring resulted in unplanted fields, late plantings, and reduction in crop  
9 production. The 2006 leading farm commodities were grapes/wine, milk (market),  
10 nursery stock, Bartlett pears, poultry, cattle/calves, tomatoes, corn (field), hay/alfalfa,  
11 and corn (silage). Table 4.2-5 below shows the 2005 and 2006 agricultural industry  
12 production values.

13 **Table 4.2-5: Sacramento County Agricultural Production Summary, 2005 to**  
14 **2006**

Industry	Value of Production (\$)	
	2005	2006
Fruit and Nut Crops	136,190,000	107,930,000
Field Crops	43,362,000	35,721,000
Vegetable Crops	32,196,000	28,128,000

Industry	Value of Production (\$)	
	2005	2006
Livestock/Poultry	44,458,000	54,106,000
Livestock/Poultry Products	52,100,000	41,145,000
Nursery Products	36,544,000	36,738,000
Apiary Products	35,000	451,000
Seed Crops	4,000,000	3,027,000
<b>Total Value in Dollars</b>	<b>348,885,000</b>	<b>306,846,000</b>

Source: Sacramento County 2006.

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2 Between 1988 and 2004, agricultural land in Sacramento County decreased by  
3 40,264 acres, resulting in an average loss of 2,517 net acres per year. Between  
4 2002 and 2004, 6,891 net acres were converted to nonagricultural uses, as shown in  
5 Table 4.2-6. Within Sacramento County, the proposed Project would traverse areas  
6 of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance

7 **Table 4.2-6: Farmland Conversion from 2002 to 2004 in Sacramento County**

Land Use Category	Total Acres Inventoried		2002 to 2004 Acreage Changes		
	2002	2004	Acres Lost	Acres Gained	Net Change
Prime Farmland	112,037	110,278	1,818	59	-1,759
Farmland of Statewide Importance	60,817	56,141	4,796	120	-4,676
Unique Farmland	15,743	15,188	637	82	-555
Farmland of Local Importance	37,924	39,873	2,795	4,744	1,949
Grazing Land	165,023	163,173	2,288	438	-1,850
<b>Agricultural Land Subtotal</b>	<b>391,544</b>	<b>384,653</b>	<b>12,334</b>	<b>5,443</b>	<b>-6,891</b>

Source: California Department of Conservation 2006.

8

## 1 Placer County

2 The 2006 gross value of agriculture production for Placer County was \$52.7 million.  
 3 This was a \$10 million decline since the previous year (Placer County 2006  
 4 Agricultural Crop Production Report). Both a wet spring and development pressures  
 5 negatively affected rice production by nearly \$3 million, which attributed to the  
 6 decline in production value. Products leading the industry are nursery products,  
 7 timber production, cattle/calves, rice, and walnuts. Table 4.2-7 below shows the  
 8 2005 and 2006 agricultural industry production values.

9 **Table 4.2-7: Placer County Agricultural Production Summary, 2005 to 2006**

Industry	Value of Production (\$)	
	2005	2006
Fruit and Nut Crops	7,758,700	7,470,691
Field Crops	17,166,800	14,654,900
Vegetable Crops	500,000	401,103
Livestock/Poultry	20,396,500	13,101,226
Livestock/Poultry Products	2,400,000	3,000,000
Nursery Products	13,998,300	13,579,420
Apiary Products	118,000	507,550
Seed Crops	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Value in Dollars</b>	<b>62,338,300</b>	<b>52,714,890</b>
Source: Placer County 2006.		

10

11 Agricultural lands in Placer County have continually decreased between 1984 and  
 12 2004. During this period, 38,631 acres of agricultural land was converted to  
 13 nonagricultural uses, resulting in an average loss of 1,932 acres per year. Between  
 14 2002 and 2004, agricultural land decreased from 545,050 to 542,763, a difference of  
 15 2,287 acres, as shown in Table 4.2-8. Within Placer County, the proposed Project  
 16 would traverse areas of Farmland of Local Importance.

1 **Table 4.2-8: Farmland Conversion from 2002 to 2004 in Placer County**

Land Use Category	Total Acres Inventoried		2002 to 2004 Acreage Changes		
	2002	2004	Acres Lost	Acres Gained	Net Change
Prime Farmland	9,538	9,236	433	131	-302
Farmland of Statewide Importance	5,493	5,509	386	402	16
Unique Farmland	22,105	23,283	507	1,685	1,178
Farmland of Local Importance	87,832	86,234	2,393	795	-1,598
Grazing Land	50,478	46,000	4,685	207	-4,478
<b>Agricultural Land Subtotal</b>	<b>175,446</b>	<b>170,262</b>	<b>8,404</b>	<b>3,220</b>	<b>-5,184</b>

Source: California Department of Conservation 2006.

2

3 **Important Farmlands**

4 The DOC monitors agricultural land use through its FMMP. The FMMP, established  
5 in 1982, is a non-regulatory program and provides a consistent and impartial  
6 analysis of agricultural land use and land use changes throughout California. The  
7 FMMP produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts on California's  
8 agricultural resources. Within the FMMP, land is generally grouped into one of the  
9 following categories:

- 10 • **Prime Farmland:** Farmland with the best combination of physical and  
11 chemical features able to sustain long-term agricultural production. This land  
12 has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce  
13 sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural  
14 production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- 15 • **Farmland of Statewide Importance(s):** Farmland similar to Prime Farmland  
16 but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil  
17 moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at  
18 some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- 19 • **Unique Farmland:** Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of  
20 the State's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may

- 1 include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in  
2 California. Land must have been cropped at some time during the 4 years  
3 prior to the mapping date.
- 4 • **Farmland of Local Importance:** Land of importance to the local agricultural  
5 economy as determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local  
6 advisory committee.
- 7 • **Grazing Land:** Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of  
8 livestock. This category was developed in cooperation with the California  
9 Cattlemen's Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, and  
10 other groups interested in the extent of grazing activities. The minimum  
11 mapping unit for Grazing Land is 40 acres.
- 12 • **Urban and Built-Up Land:** Land occupied by structures with a building density  
13 of at least one unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately six structures to a 10-acre  
14 parcel. This land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, institutional,  
15 public administrative purposes, railroad and other transportation yards,  
16 cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water  
17 control structures, and other developed purposes.
- 18 • **Other Land:** Land not included in any other mapping category. Common  
19 examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and  
20 riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or  
21 aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than  
22 40 acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban  
23 development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.
- 24 • **Water:** Perennial water bodies with an extent of at least 40 acres.

25 The proposed Project would include a temporary 100-foot right-of-way (ROW) to  
26 allow for construction of the pipeline. Upon Project completion, a permanent 50-foot  
27 easement along the entire length of the Lines 406 and 407 would remain. A  
28 permanent 35-foot easement would remain along the entire length of the Powerline  
29 Road Distribution Feeder Main (DFM). It is PG&E's standard policy to obtain  
30 permanent easements surrounding underground pipelines for purposes of pipeline  
31 maintenance and to minimize potential damage and disruption to infrastructure if  
32 ground-disturbance activity is proposed near the pipeline.

1 Figures 4.2-1A, 4.2-1B, and 4.2-1C show the approximate pipeline alignment as well  
2 as FMMP land use categories.

3 The 2004 FMMP maps for Yolo, Sutter, Sacramento, and Placer counties indicate  
4 that the temporary construction ROW (100 feet) would affect approximately 511.42  
5 acres of farmland, including the permanent easement (50 feet for Lines 406 and  
6 407, and 35 feet for the Powerline Road DFM) which would affect approximately  
7 250.84 acres of farmland. Summaries of affected farmland acreage are illustrated in  
8 Table 4.2-9 and Table 4.2-10.

9 **Table 4.2-9: Farmland Acreage Summary - Temporary Right-of-Way**

Farmland Designation <sup>a</sup>	Temporary ROW Acreage <sup>b</sup>				
	County				Total Temporary ROW Acreage
	Yolo	Sutter	Sacramento	Placer	
Important Farmland					
Prime Farmland	237.47	23.83	4.68	0	265.98
Farmland of Statewide Importance	5.22	43.44	13.56	0	62.23
Unique Farmland	15.89	0	0	0	15.89
Farmland of Local Importance	0	0	0	64.47	64.47
Farmland of Local Potential	58.49	0	0	0	58.49
Grazing Land	9.54	12.72	0	0	22.26
Other <sup>c</sup>	2.19	11.26	0	8.66	22.10
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>328.80</b>	<b>91.25</b>	<b>18.24</b>	<b>73.13</b>	<b>511.42</b>
Notes:					
a Areas affected by the Project that are designated as urban and built up land or water are not included in this table.					
b Acreage totals for individual farmland classifications within the 100-foot temporary construction ROW. Values calculated by PG&E.					
c Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than 40 acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.					
ROW = Right-of-way.					
Source: California Department of Conservation 2004, PG&E 2008, Michael Brandman Associates 2008.					

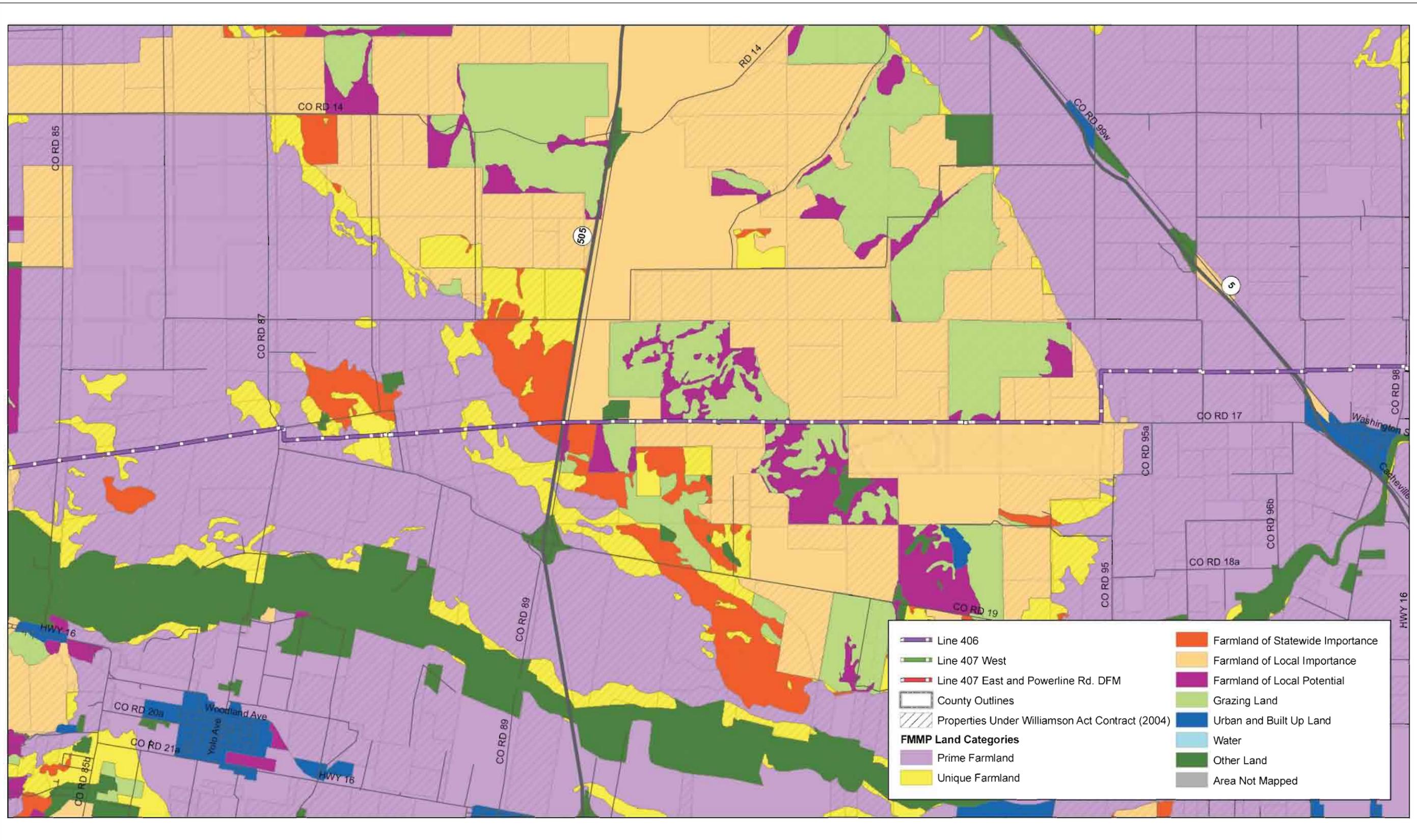
1 **Table 4.2-10: Farmland Acreage Summary - Within Permanent Easement**

Farmland Designation <sup>a</sup>	Permanent Easement Acreage <sup>b</sup>				
	County				Total Permanent Easement Acreage
	Yolo	Sutter	Sacramento	Placer	
Important Farmland					
Prime Farmland	113.3	12.58	2.06	0	127.94
Farmland of Statewide Importance	2.71	21.74	4.47	0	28.92
Unique Farmland	13.07	0	0	0.74	13.81
Farmland of Local Importance	22.19	0	0	31.49	53.68
Farmland of Local Potential	4.82	0	0	0	4.82
Grazing Land	5.54	4.58	0	0.02	10.14
Other <sup>c</sup>	0.95	5.51	0	5.07	11.53
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>162.58</b>	<b>44.41</b>	<b>6.53</b>	<b>37.32</b>	<b>250.84</b>
Notes:					
a Areas affected by the Project that are designated as urban and built up land or water are not included in this table.					
b Acreage totals for individual farmland classifications within the 50-foot (line 406 and 407) and 35-foot (Powerline DFM) permanent easements. Values calculated by MBA.					
c Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than 40 acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.					
Source: California Department of Conservation 2004 and Michael Brandman Associates 2008.					

2

3 **Williamson Act Contracts**

4 Between 2006 and 2007, acreage under Williamson Act contracts increased in Yolo,  
5 Sutter, and Sacramento counties by 457, 5,845, and 498 acres, respectively.  
6 Contract land decreased in Placer County by 2,421 acres during the same period.  
7 Table 4.2-11 indicates the amount of acreage under Williamson Act contracts for the  
8 years 2006 and 2007 in each of the four Project counties. For an explanation of the  
9 Williamson Act and its regulations, refer to Section 4.2.2, Regulatory Setting.



Source: Adapted from PG&E, 2009.



Not to Scale

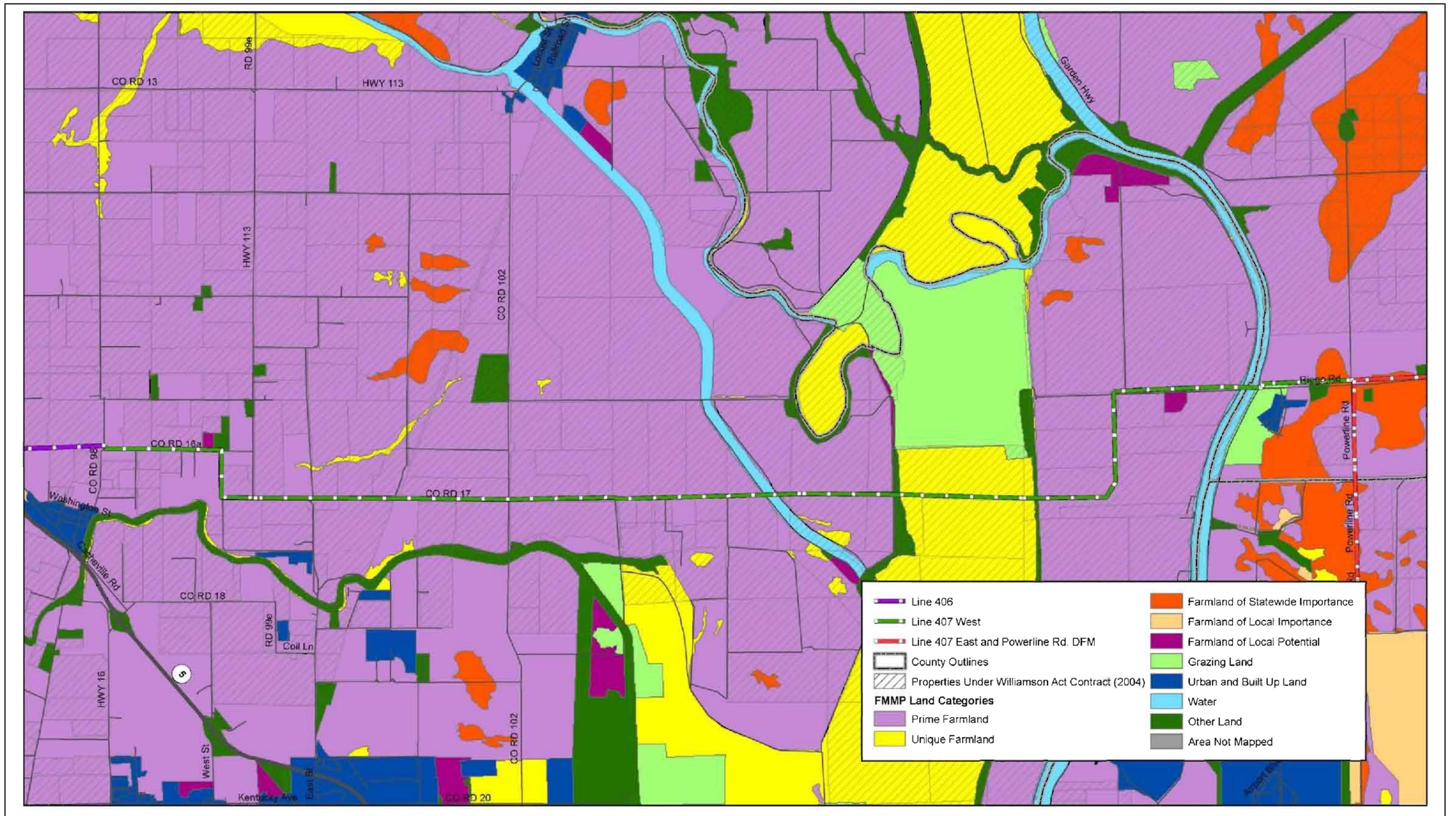
Michael Brandman Associates

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Figure 4.2-1A

Agricultural Lands: FMMP Designations and Lands Under Williamson Act Contracts





Source: Adapted from PG&E 2008.

Not to scale

Figure 4.2-1B  
 Agricultural Lands: FMMP Designations and Lands Under Williamson Act Contracts







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**Table 4.2-11: Acres under Williamson Act Contracts**

County	Total Acres Reported under Williamson Act	
	2006	2007
Yolo	415,913	416,370
Sutter	57,177	63,022
Sacramento	88,273	88,771
Placer	45,022	42,601
Source: California Department of Conservation 2008.		

2

3 Approximately 27 miles of the pipeline would cross 67 parcels listed as active under  
4 Williamson Act contracts. Yolo County contains 64 of these parcels. Three areas of  
5 land under contract are in non-renewal, and parcels under contract in the Dunnigan  
6 Hills are considered non-prime agricultural land. Refer to Figures 4.2-1A, 4.2-1B,  
7 and 4.2-1C for the location of Williamson Act parcels near the proposed pipeline.  
8 Table 4.2-12 defines the amount of Williamson Act lands that would be included in  
9 PG&E's permanent easement.

10 **Table 4.2-12: Williamson Act Contract Lands Included in Permanent Easement**

County	Acres
<b>Yolo County (50 ft)<sup>a</sup></b>	
Prime	92.75
Non-Prime	19.17
Prime - Non-Renewal	11.94
<b>Sutter County (50 ft)<sup>a</sup></b>	
Prime	3.21
<b>Sacramento County (35 ft)<sup>b</sup></b>	
Prime	4.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>131.19</b>
Notes: <sup>a</sup> The 50-foot easement covers the length of Lines 406 and 407. <sup>b</sup> The 35-foot easement covers the length of the DFM. Source: California Department of Conservation 2007, Michael Brandman Associates 2009.	

11

1 **4.2.2 Regulatory Setting**

2 **Federal**

3 There are no Federal regulations related to agricultural resources that are relevant to  
4 the Project.

5 **State**

6 *Williamson Act Farmlands*

7 The California Land Conservation Act (also known as the Williamson Act) was  
8 implemented in 1965 as a mechanism for protecting agricultural and open space  
9 land from premature and unnecessary urban development. Under the Williamson  
10 Act, private landowners and local government agencies create voluntary, rolling  
11 term, 10-year renewable contracts which restrict land use to agricultural and  
12 compatible open-space uses. In return, parcels under the Act are assessed for  
13 property tax purposes at a rate consistent with their actual use, rather than potential  
14 market value. Parcels are defined as either prime or non-prime agricultural land  
15 based on the per acre production value.

16 The California Government Code section 51293(c) specifically allows the location or  
17 construction of any public improvement on Williamson Act lands, hence current  
18 contracts would not be affected by the Project.

19 California Government Code, under section 51238, discusses the compatibility of  
20 gas pipelines with lands under Williamson Act contract as follows:

21 51238(a) (1) Notwithstanding any determination of compatible uses by the  
22 county or city pursuant to this article, unless the board or council after notice  
23 and hearing makes a finding to the contrary, the erection, construction,  
24 alteration, or maintenance of gas, electric, water, communication, or  
25 agricultural laborer housing facilities are hereby determined to be compatible  
26 uses within any agricultural preserve. (2) No land occupied by gas, electric,  
27 water, communication, or agricultural laborer housing facilities shall be  
28 excluded from an agricultural preserve by reason of that use.

29 (b) The board of supervisors may impose conditions on lands or land uses to  
30 be placed within preserves to permit and encourage compatible uses in  
31 conformity with section 51238.1, particularly public outdoor recreational uses.

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1 County Designated Compatible Williamson Act Land Uses

2 Yolo County's Code Article 4 Agricultural Preserve Zone (AP) section 8-2.404  
3 requires a minor use permit for (c) Electrical distribution and transmission  
4 substations, communication equipment buildings, and public utility service yards;  
5 and (f) publicly-owned facilities incidental to the supply of essential services by a  
6 public entity, such as wastewater treatment ponds, sewage facilities pump station,  
7 water supply facilities and pump stations, and solid waste disposal sites; and (i) oil  
8 and gas well drilling and operations.

9 While the Sacramento General Plan does not include specific language regarding  
10 the compatible uses in Williamson Act contracted parcels, compatible uses are  
11 included within the County's Resolution Establishing Agricultural Preserve's Exhibit  
12 B which includes "gas, electric, water, and communication utility facilities."

13 Both Placer and Sutter counties do not include specific language regarding  
14 compatible uses in Williamson Act contracted parcels within their respective General  
15 Plans or zoning codes.

16 **Local**

17 The following local regulations and polices have been identified and used in the  
18 assessment of Project impacts relating to agricultural resources.

19 *Yolo County General Plan*

20 Approximately 27 miles of the proposed pipeline are located in agricultural areas of  
21 Yolo County. Yolo County's General Plan, adopted on July 17, 1983, was reviewed  
22 for land use goals, objectives and policies applicable to this Project. The Agricultural  
23 Element of the General Plan contains the following goals, objectives, and polices:

24 **Goal AG-1:** Conserve and preserve agricultural lands in Yolo County,  
25 especially areas currently farmed or having prime agricultural soils and  
26 outside existing planned communities and city limits.

27 **Policy AP-12:** Agricultural lands shall be protected from urban  
28 encroachment by limiting the extension of urban service facilities and  
29 infrastructure, particularly sewers.

1 *Sutter County General Plan*

2 The current General Plan for Sutter County was adopted in 1996 and a  
3 comprehensive update is currently in progress. Since the proposed pipeline  
4 traverses 7.9 miles of mainly agricultural lands in Sutter County, the agricultural  
5 element of the County General Plan was reviewed for relevant policies. The  
6 following were found to be applicable:

7 **Goal 6.A:** To preserve high quality agricultural land for agricultural purposes.

8 **Policy 6.A-1:** The County shall preserve agriculturally-designated areas for  
9 agricultural uses and direct nonagricultural development to areas designated  
10 for urban/suburban growth, or rural communities and/or cities.

11 **Policy 6.A-2:** The County shall balance the needs of proposed urban and  
12 suburban development with the need to preserve agricultural lands.

13 *Sacramento County General Plan*

14 The DFM extends approximately 1.5 miles into Sacramento County agricultural  
15 lands. Sacramento County's General Plan 2010 was adopted on December 15,  
16 1993, and is currently undergoing a comprehensive update. The General Plan was  
17 reviewed for land use goals, objectives and policies applicable to this Project.  
18 Section I of the Sacramento County Agricultural Element contains the following  
19 policies:

20 **Goal:** Protect Important Farmland from conversion and encroachment and  
21 conserve agricultural resources.

22 **Objective:** Prime Farmlands (as defined by the DOC) and lands with  
23 intensive agricultural investments (such as orchards, vineyards, dairies, and  
24 other concentrated livestock or poultry operations) are protected from urban  
25 encroachment.

26 **Policy AG-1:** The County shall protect Prime Farmlands and lands with  
27 intensive agricultural investments from urban encroachments.

28 **Policy AG-5:** Mitigate loss of Prime Farmlands or land with intensive  
29 agricultural investments through CEQA requirements to provide in-kind  
30 protection of nearby farmland.

1 *Placer County General Plan*

2 Approximately 6 miles of the proposed pipeline are located in semi-rural and  
 3 agricultural areas of Placer County. The goals, objectives, and policies contained  
 4 within the 1994 Placer County General Plan were reviewed for Project relevancy.  
 5 The Agricultural and Forestry Section, and Land Use Section of the General Plan,  
 6 contain the following policies:

7 The Agricultural Land Use designation, as described in the Land Use Section  
 8 contains the following policy:

9 **Policy 1.H.2:** The County shall seek to ensure that new development and  
 10 public works projects do not encourage expansions of urban uses into  
 11 designated agricultural areas.

12 **Policy 1.N.3:** The County shall endeavor to protect the natural resources  
 13 upon which the County's basic economy e.g., recreation, forestry, agriculture,  
 14 mining, and tourism, is dependent.

15 **Goal 7.A:** To provide for the long-term conservation and use of agriculturally-  
 16 designated lands.

17 **Policy 7.A.1:** The County shall protect agriculturally-designated areas from  
 18 conversion to non-agricultural uses.

19 **Policy 7.A.12:** The County shall actively encourage enrollments of  
 20 agricultural lands in its Williamson Act program.

21 **4.2.3 Significance Criteria**

22 An adverse impact on agricultural resources is considered significant and would  
 23 require mitigation if Project construction or operation would:

24 1. Convert prime agricultural land, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide  
 25 Importance to non-agricultural use.

26 2. Conflict with existing land use plans, policies, or regulations for agricultural  
 27 use or a Williamson Act contract.

28 3. Involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or  
 29 nature, could result in permanent loss of farmland or conversion of farmland  
 30 to non-agricultural use.

1 **4.2.4 Applicant Proposed Measures**

2 PG&E has not identified any Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs) that are relevant  
3 to agricultural resources.

4 **4.2.5 Impact Analysis and Mitigation**

5 The proposed Project has been analyzed for its potential to convert important  
6 agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, any conflicts with existing land use zoning  
7 that would affect Williamson Act contracted lands, and any other changes to the  
8 environment that would result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.

9 **Impact Discussion**

10 *Conflict with Existing Plans, Policies, Regulations, or Williamson Act Contract*

11 The proposed Project traverses 67 parcels that are currently active under Williamson  
12 Act Contracts. California Government Code section 51238 determines the  
13 construction, alteration, or maintenance of gas transmitting facilities as compatible  
14 uses within any agricultural preserve. Additionally, California Government Code  
15 51293(c) specifically allows the location or construction of any public utility  
16 improvement on Williamson Act land if it has been approved by the California Public  
17 Utilities Commission (CPUC). As such, current contracts would not be affected by  
18 the Project.

19 All Williamson Act lands disturbed by construction activities would be returned to  
20 prior status as agreed upon with the landowner with the exception of certain areas  
21 where permanent aboveground stations would be constructed in Williamson Act  
22 tracts.

23 The permanent aboveground stations include the Capay Station and the Yolo  
24 Junction Station, which would permanently convert 0.78 acres of Williamson Act  
25 lands to non-agricultural uses. The California Government Code section 51293(c)  
26 specifically allows the location or construction of any public improvement on  
27 Williamson Act lands. In addition, the construction of the aboveground stations  
28 would not cause a termination of Williamson Act contracts for the parcels because  
29 agricultural practices in all other areas of the parcels would be allowed to resume  
30 agricultural production following construction.

31 Restrictions on land within the permanent easement of Line 406, Line 407, and the  
32 DFM would be limited to the planting of deep-rooted vegetation within 15 feet of the

1 pipeline centerline (that is, 30 feet of the permanent easement). The land would not  
2 be converted to a non-agricultural use because other types of crops could be  
3 planted within the easement.

4 Therefore, the proposed Project does not conflict with the existing land use plans,  
5 policies, and regulations for agricultural use. Impacts would be less than significant  
6 (Class III).

#### 7 *Conversion of Agricultural Land to Non-Agricultural Use*

##### 8 Temporary Impacts

9 As shown in Table 4.2-9, construction of the proposed Project would temporarily  
10 utilize approximately 511 acres of farmland within the 100-foot temporary ROW.  
11 This farmland would include 265.98 acres of prime farmland, 62.23 acres of  
12 farmland of statewide importance, 15.89 acres of unique farmland, 64.47 acres of  
13 farmland of local importance, 58.49 acres of farmland of local potential, 22.26 acres  
14 of grazing land, and 22.10 acres of other land.

15 Topsoil and subsoil removed for trenching during Project construction would be  
16 stockpiled separately and replaced after backfill of the trench. Soils would be  
17 decompacted and reseeded by PG&E in accordance with the landowners' requests.  
18 All work areas would be graded and restored to pre-construction contours within 20  
19 days of trench backfilling. Restoration activities would commence within 6 days of  
20 final grading. Following installation of the proposed pipeline and subsequent  
21 restoration of the topography and topsoil, agricultural production would be permitted  
22 within the temporary construction easement. Temporary impacts to agricultural  
23 lands would be less than significant (Class III).

##### 24 Permanent Impacts

25 Six fenced, aboveground pressure limiting, pressure regulating, metering, and main  
26 line valve stations would be constructed along the pipeline route. These stations are  
27 required for the proper regulation and maintenance of the pipeline. The six  
28 aboveground stations (and their respective acreage) would include the Capay  
29 Metering Station (1 acre) located in Farmland of Local Importance; the Yolo Junction  
30 Pressure Limiting Station (0.29 acre) located in Prime Farmland; the Powerline Road  
31 Main Line Valve (0.02 acre) located in Prime Farmland; the Powerline Road  
32 Pressure Regulating Station (0.9 acre) located in Farmland of Local Importance; the  
33 Baseline Road Pressure Limiting Station (0.28 acre) located in Farmland of Local  
34 Importance; and the Baseline/Brewer Road Main Line Valve Station (0.06 acres)

1 located in Farmland of Local Importance. Refer to Figures 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6, and 2-  
2 7 for the locations of these stations and Figure 2-8 for an example of a typical  
3 aboveground station. Installation of these stations would result in the permanent  
4 loss of 2.55 acres of farmland.

5 As shown in Table 4.2-10, approximately 250 acres of farmland would be affected by  
6 the Lines 406 and 407 50-foot permanent easement and the 35-foot permanent  
7 easement of the DFM. This farmland would include 127.94 acres of prime farmland,  
8 28.92 acres of farmland of statewide importance, 13.81 acres of unique farmland,  
9 53.68 farmland of local importance, 4.82 acres of farmland of local potential, 10.14  
10 acres of grazing land, and 11.53 acres of other land.

11 Upon completion of construction and restoration of topography, most farming  
12 practices would be allowed to resume within the permanent easement. The  
13 permanent easement is used for pipeline maintenance and is needed to minimize  
14 potential damage and disruption to infrastructure by ground-disturbing activities near  
15 the proposed pipeline. Within agricultural lands, the pipeline is proposed to be  
16 constructed with 5 feet of soil coverage in order to allow farming activities such as  
17 discing or deep-ripping to continue within the entire easement. The EPA defines  
18 deep-ripping as the mechanical manipulation of the soil to break up or pierce highly  
19 compacted, impermeable or slowly permeable subsurface soil layers occurring at  
20 depths greater than 16 inches and, in some cases, exceeding 4 feet below the  
21 surface (EPA 1996). As a part of the project, PG&E has increased the cover beyond  
22 minimum requirements from 3 feet to 5 feet because its past experience has  
23 demonstrated that this depth is sufficient to eliminate most threats from agricultural  
24 operations. Excavations in excess of 5 feet present additional construction  
25 challenges (and cost) due to the need for trench benching or shoring for worker  
26 entry. Maintaining the cover on the pipe at 5 feet would reduce the impact on  
27 farming operations if the pipeline must be excavated in the future.

28 Restrictions within the permanent easement would prohibit the planting of deep  
29 rooted plants, such as trees or vines, within 15 feet in either direction of the pipeline  
30 centerline (30 feet of the permanent easement) in order to minimize possible  
31 disturbances from the deep roots of such vegetation. This would limit the future use  
32 of approximately 152.81 acres of farmland to row crops, field crops, or any crops  
33 that do not involve deep rooted plants. However, the land would not be converted to  
34 non-agricultural uses. The majority of the land within the proposed permanent  
35 easement is grassland, row crops or rice fields. These practices could continue  
36 within the permanent easement.

1 Project implementation would result in the permanent conversion of approximately  
2 3.1 acres of existing orchards, as replanting of those trees and other deep-rooted  
3 plants, would not be allowed; however, other agricultural practices could still be  
4 implemented. Because the majority of the route is currently grassland, row crops or  
5 rice fields, no other agricultural areas would experience a change of crop type over  
6 existing baseline conditions.

7 To summarize the above discussion, the amount of farmland that would be  
8 permanently converted to non-agricultural use by the construction of the six stations  
9 is 2.55 acres. The project would also result in the permanent conversion of  
10 approximately 3.1 acres of existing orchards (because of restrictions related to  
11 replanting of trees and other deep-rooted plants) to other agricultural practices.

12 The amount of farmland permanently impacted (2.55 acres), and the amount of  
13 farmland converted from deep rooted plants to other types of crops (3.1 acres) does  
14 not represent a significant regional loss. Impacts related to the conversion of  
15 agricultural land are considered to be less than significant (Class III).

16 In addition, PG&E would be required to provide financial compensation for  
17 temporary and permanent loss of agricultural uses through the California Code of  
18 Civil Procedure, as follows:

- 19 • Section 1245.030(b) requires compensation for property damage, including  
20 crop damage, resulting from pre-construction project studies, testing,  
21 surveying, etc.
- 22 • Section 1263.210(a) requires all property improvements, including agricultural  
23 crops and associated facilities and infrastructure, in project land rights  
24 acquisition compensation.
- 25 • Section 1263.250(a) requires compensation for crop damage/losses resulting  
26 from project construction. It also requires scheduling project construction to  
27 avoid impacts to agricultural crops when possible.

#### 28 **4.2.6 Impacts of Alternatives**

29 A No Project Alternative as well as twelve options have been proposed for the  
30 alignment in order to minimize environmental impacts of the proposed Project and to  
31 respond to comments from nearby landowners. The twelve options, labeled A  
32 through L, have been analyzed in comparison to the portion of the proposed route

1 that has been avoided because of the option. Descriptions of the options can be  
2 found in Section 3.0, Alternatives and Cumulative Projects, and are depicted in  
3 Figures 3-2A through 3-2K. A comparison of impacts is found in Table 4.2-13.

#### 4 **No Project Alternative**

5 Under the No Project Alternative, no new natural gas pipeline or aboveground  
6 stations would be constructed by PG&E in Yolo, Sutter, Sacramento, and Placer  
7 counties. There would be no restrictions on agricultural land use. No agricultural  
8 land would be converted to non-agricultural use and no orchards would be converted  
9 to other types of crops. No temporary or permanent impacts to agricultural  
10 resources would result under the No Project Alternative.

#### 11 **Option A**

12 Under Option A, Line 406 would follow CR-16, CR-15B and farm roads or parcel  
13 boundaries to avoid placing the pipeline within 8 of the 16 agricultural fields that the  
14 proposed alignment would cross for Line 406. This option would also avoid  
15 removing trees from an orchard at the west end of the proposed alignment.  
16 However, vineyards would be impacted with this option, and trees within the  
17 orchards near the Sacramento River would still be disturbed. The amount of  
18 agricultural land converted to non-agricultural uses (2.55 acres) due to the six  
19 aboveground stations would be the same as the proposed alignment with this option.  
20 The amount of orchard conversion would be reduced with this option. While  
21 agricultural impacts of the proposed Project are considered to be less than  
22 significant, the amount of temporary construction impacts to agricultural fields would  
23 be increased with this option due to the increased length (an additional 2,200 feet)  
24 along agricultural fields. The amount of agricultural land restricted in the permanent  
25 easement to allow only shallow rooted crops to be grown would also be increased  
26 with this option.

#### 27 **Option B**

28 Under Option B, a portion of Line 406 would follow CR-16 and farm roads or parcel  
29 boundaries to avoid segmenting 13 of the 16 agricultural fields that the proposed  
30 alignment would cross for Line 406. This option would also avoid removing trees  
31 from an orchard at the west end of the proposed alignment. However, trees within  
32 the orchards near the Sacramento River would still be disturbed. The amount of  
33 agricultural land converted to non-agricultural uses (2.55 acres) due to the six  
34 aboveground stations would be the same as the proposed alignment with this option.

1 The amount of orchard conversion would be reduced with this option. While  
2 agricultural impacts of the proposed Project are considered to be less than  
3 significant, the amount of temporary construction impacts to agricultural fields would  
4 be increased with this option due to the increased length (an additional 2,640 feet)  
5 along agricultural fields. The amount of agricultural land restricted in the permanent  
6 easement to allow only shallow rooted crops to be grown would also be increased  
7 with this option.

### 8 **Option C**

9 Under Option C, a portion of Line 406 would utilize a section of the Hungry Hollow  
10 Canal right-of-way and a farm road (increasing the length of the pipeline by 1,160  
11 feet) to avoid segmenting 3 of the 16 agricultural fields that the proposed alignment  
12 would cross for Line 406. This option would also avoid removing trees from an  
13 orchard at the west end of the proposed alignment. However, trees within the  
14 orchards near the Sacramento River would still be disturbed. The amount of  
15 agricultural land converted to non-agricultural uses (2.55 acres) due to the six  
16 aboveground stations would be the same as the proposed alignment with this option.  
17 Agricultural impacts of the proposed Project are considered to be less than  
18 significant. The amount of temporary construction impacts to agricultural fields, the  
19 amount of orchard conversion, and the amount of agricultural land restricted in the  
20 permanent easement to allow only shallow rooted crops to be grown, would be  
21 similar to the proposed project.

### 22 **Option D**

23 Under Option D, a portion of Line 406 would follow CR-17 and parcel boundaries to  
24 avoid segmenting 10 of the 16 agricultural fields that the proposed alignment would  
25 cross for Line 406. Trees within the orchards at the west end of the alignment and  
26 near the Sacramento River would still be disturbed under this option. The amount of  
27 agricultural land converted to non-agricultural uses (2.55 acres) due to the six  
28 above-ground stations would be the same as the proposed alignment with this  
29 option. Agricultural impacts of the proposed Project are considered to be less than  
30 significant. The amount of temporary construction impacts to agricultural fields, the  
31 amount of orchard conversion, and the amount of agricultural land restricted in the  
32 permanent easement to allow only shallow rooted crops to be grown, would be  
33 similar to the proposed project.

1    **Option E**

2    Under Option E, a portion of Line 406 would follow CR-19 and parcel boundaries to  
3    avoid segmenting 10 of the 16 agricultural fields that the proposed alignment would  
4    cross for Line 406. Trees within the orchards at the west end of the alignment and  
5    near the Sacramento River would still be disturbed under this option. The amount of  
6    agricultural land converted to non-agricultural uses (2.55 acres) due to the six  
7    aboveground stations would be the same as the proposed alignment with this option.  
8    Agricultural impacts of the proposed Project are considered to be less than  
9    significant. The amount of temporary construction impacts to agricultural fields, the  
10   amount of orchard conversion, and the amount of agricultural land restricted in the  
11   permanent easement to allow only shallow rooted crops to be grown, would be  
12   similar to the proposed project.

13   **Option F**

14   Under Option F, a small portion of Line 406 would be rerouted to avoid placing the  
15   pipeline within 30 feet of a residence. Instead of segmenting grazing land, this  
16   option would segment an agricultural field with row crops. Trees within the orchards  
17   at the west end of the alignment and near the Sacramento River would still be  
18   disturbed under this option. The amount of agricultural land converted to non-  
19   agricultural uses (2.55 acres) due to the six aboveground stations would be the  
20   same as the proposed alignment with this option. Agricultural impacts of the  
21   proposed Project are considered to be less than significant. The amount of  
22   temporary construction impacts to agricultural fields, the amount of orchard  
23   conversion, and the amount of agricultural land restricted in the permanent  
24   easement to allow only shallow rooted crops to be grown, would be similar to the  
25   proposed Project.

26   **Option G**

27   Under Option G, a small portion of Line 406 would be rerouted to avoid segmenting  
28   one agricultural field that the proposed alignment would cross for Line 406. Trees  
29   within the orchards at the west end of the alignment and near the Sacramento River  
30   would still be disturbed under this option. The amount of agricultural land converted  
31   to non-agricultural uses (2.55 acres) due to the six aboveground stations would be  
32   the same as the proposed alignment with this option. Agricultural impacts of the  
33   proposed Project are considered to be less than significant. The amount of  
34   temporary construction impacts to agricultural fields, and the amount of agricultural

1 land restricted in the permanent easement to allow only shallow rooted crops to be  
2 grown, would be similar to the proposed project.

### 3 **Option H**

4 Implementation of Option H, which is a portion of Line 407 and the DFM, would  
5 increase disturbance to the Yolo Bypass by increasing the amount of that land  
6 crossed by the pipeline. The Yolo Bypass contains prime and unique farmland  
7 within the Project and Option H vicinity. Trees within the orchards at the west end of  
8 the alignment and near the Sacramento River would still be disturbed under this  
9 option. The amount of agricultural land converted to non-agricultural uses (2.55  
10 acres) due to the six aboveground stations would be the same as the proposed  
11 alignment with this option. Agricultural impacts of the proposed Project are  
12 considered to be less than significant; the amount of temporary construction impacts  
13 to agricultural fields, and the amount of agricultural land restricted in the permanent  
14 easement to allow only shallow rooted crops to be grown, would be similar to the  
15 proposed Project.

### 16 **Option I**

17 Under Option I, a portion of Line 407-E would be rerouted to the north to place the  
18 pipeline outside of a 1,500-foot safety buffer zone around a planned high school to  
19 be located on the South side of Baseline Road. Rather than following Base Line  
20 Road, the pipeline would cross three agricultural fields and traverse the boundary of  
21 a fourth agricultural field. The agricultural crops currently grown in the three fields  
22 are rice and row crops, which would be allowed to continue farming once  
23 construction of the pipeline is completed. The amount of agricultural land converted  
24 to non-agricultural uses (2.55 acres) due to the six aboveground stations would be  
25 the same as the proposed alignment with this option. Agricultural impacts of the  
26 proposed Project are considered to be less than significant; the amount of temporary  
27 construction impacts to agricultural fields, and the amount of agricultural land  
28 restricted in the permanent easement to allow only shallow rooted crops to be  
29 grown, would be similar to the proposed project.

### 30 **Option J**

31 Under Option J, a portion of Line 407-E would be rerouted to the north to place the  
32 pipeline outside of a 1,500-foot safety buffer zone around a planned high school to  
33 be located on the South side of Baseline Road. Rather than following Base Line  
34 Road, the pipeline would cross four agricultural fields near their boundary lines. The

1 agricultural crops currently grown in the three fields are rice and row crops, which  
 2 would be allowed to continue farming once construction of the pipeline is completed.  
 3 The amount of agricultural land converted to non-agricultural uses (2.55 acres) due  
 4 to the six aboveground stations would be the same as the proposed alignment with  
 5 this option. Agricultural impacts of the proposed Project are considered to be less  
 6 than significant; the amount of temporary construction impacts to agricultural fields,  
 7 and the amount of agricultural land restricted in the permanent easement to allow  
 8 only shallow rooted crops to be grown, would be similar to the proposed Project.

9 **Option K**

10 Under Option K, a portion of Line 407-E would be rerouted to the north to place the  
 11 pipeline outside of a 1,500-foot safety buffer zone around a planned elementary  
 12 school to be located south of Baseline Road. Rather than following Base Line Road,  
 13 the pipeline would cross through annual grassland. The amount of agricultural land  
 14 converted to non-agricultural uses (2.55 acres) due to the six aboveground stations  
 15 would be the same as the proposed alignment with this option. Agricultural impacts  
 16 of the proposed Project are considered to be less than significant. This option would  
 17 not increase the acreage of temporary or permanent impacts; therefore, the impacts  
 18 to agricultural resources would remain the same as the proposed Project.

19 **Option L**

20 Under Option L, a portion of the proposed Line 406-E HDD would be extended for  
 21 approximately 1,000 feet to the east along Base Line Road in order to increase the  
 22 amount of covered pipeline located within a 1,500-foot safety buffer zone around a  
 23 planned elementary school that is to be located south of Baseline Road. The  
 24 amount of agricultural land converted to non-agricultural uses (2.55 acres) due to the  
 25 six above-ground stations would be the same as the proposed alignment with this  
 26 option. Agricultural impacts of the proposed Project are considered to be less than  
 27 significant. This option would not increase the acreage of temporary or permanent  
 28 impacts; therefore, the impacts to agricultural resources would remain the same as  
 29 the proposed Project.

30 **Table 4.2-13: Comparison of Alternatives for Agricultural Resources**

Alternative	Comparison with Proposed Project
No Project	No Impacts

Alternative	Comparison with Proposed Project
Option A	Greater Impacts
Option B	Greater Impacts
Option C	Similar Impacts; less segmenting of fields
Option D	Similar Impacts; less segmenting of fields
Option E	Similar Impacts; less segmenting of fields
Option F	Similar Impacts
Option G	Similar Impacts
Option H	Similar Impacts
Option I	Similar Impacts
Option J	Similar Impacts
Option K	Similar Impacts
Option L	Similar Impacts
Source: Michael Brandman Associates 2009.	

1

## 2 **4.2.7 Cumulative Projects Impact Analysis**

3 Other projects within this Project's vicinity that would affect agricultural resources  
4 include the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan's several road improvement projects; Placer  
5 Vineyards Specific Area Plan and its road improvement projects; the Sierra Vista  
6 Specific Plan; the Placer Parkway Corridor Preservation; and the Natomas Levee  
7 Improvement Plan. The proposed Project converts only a small amount of farmland  
8 to non-agricultural uses. Since the proposed Project would not conflict with existing  
9 land use regulations or Williamson Act contracts, or create changes to the  
10 environment that would result in a significant loss of farmland, a less than significant  
11 cumulative impact would occur to agricultural resources.

## 12 **4.2.8 Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

13 The amount of farmland permanently impacted (2.55 acres) and the amount of  
14 farmland converted from deep rooted plants to other types of crops (3.1 acres) does  
15 not represent a significant regional loss. Therefore, impacts to agricultural resources  
16 are considered to be less than significant and no mitigation measures have been  
17 proposed.

