EXHIBIT A

FINDINGS REGARDING SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS PURSUANT TO STATE CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15091

SAN ELIJO LAGOON RESTORATION PROJECT
SCH: 2011111013
February 2016

I. OVERALL FINDINGS

Pursuant to Section 21081 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors finds as follows:

A. For the following significant effects identified under Alternative 1B – Refined in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project-by-project conditions of approval that mitigate or avoid each significant environmental effect, as explained below (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21081, subd. [a][1]):

- Water and Aquatic Sediment Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Paleontological Resources
- Hazardous Materials and Public Safety

For the following significant effects identified in the EIR/EIS, changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project-by-project conditions of approval that minimize or reduce the significant effect, but not to a less than significant level, as explained in the findings below. A Statement of Overriding Considerations is being adopted to address these significant and unmitigated impacts.

- Visual Resources (construction impacts)
- Traffic and Circulation
- Air Quality
- Global Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

B. For the following significant effects identified in the EIR/EIS, changes or mitigation measures were considered but identified as infeasible due to specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, as explained in the findings below (PRC Section 21081, subd. [a][3]). Thus, these effects would remain significant and unavoidable. A Statement of Overriding Considerations is being adopted to address these significant and unmitigated impacts:

- Biological Resources
- Noise

These findings are explained below and are supported by substantial evidence in the record of these proceedings, including materials in the County of San Diego's files for this project.

II. EXPLANATION OF FINDINGS

A. Pursuant to Section 15091(a)(1) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the County finds that, for each of the following significant effects as identified in the EIR/EIS, dated December 2015 for the San Elijo Lagoon Restoration Project (project) changes or alterations (mitigation measures) have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen each of the significant environmental effects as identified in the EIR/EIS. The significant effects (impacts) and mitigation measures are stated fully in the EIR/EIS. The following are brief descriptions of the impacts and mitigation measures set forth in the EIR/EIS and explanation of the rationale for this finding for each impact.

1. Water and Aquatic Sediment Quality Impacts

Impact: Because the lagoon is listed as a Clean Water Act Section 303(d) impaired waterbody for sedimentation/siltation, the temporary turbidity that would be generated by lagoon restoration activities, most specifically the dredging operations, would be considered a potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measure Water Quality-1: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval, requiring that all additional conditions, best management practices, and requirements that are identified by regulatory agencies prior to project initiation as part of the permitting process for the project, including Section 404 permit, Coastal Development Permit, Section 1601 permit, Section 401 Water Quality Certification, and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System MS4 permit must be implemented. Compliance with those permit conditions would be monitored through the construction

monitoring program and the contractor shall certify to the engineer of record that the conditions have been met.

Mitigation Measure Water Quality–2: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval, requiring that turbidity be actively managed by utilizing a cutterhead dredge and/or temporarily closing the lagoon inlet. The overdredge pit would be capped with sand material to encapsulate material and prevent it from introducing turbidity or pollutants into the water column or released into the environment. The contractor shall certify to the permit holder that the dredge operations have not been responsible for release of sediments into the water column at levels resulting in increased downstream sedimentation.

Rationale: Alterations in the project have been required that avoid or substantially lessen this impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure Water Quality-1 would reduce the generation of temporary turbidity by requiring that water quality measures as prescribed by appropriate water protection agencies and permits be fully implemented. Measures required by these agencies would be specifically designed to minimize the generation of turbidity based on project-specific operations. Additionally, Mitigation Measure Water Quality-2 would serve to reduce turbidity through the use of specific dredge machinery that does not create as much sediment disturbance. Temporarily closing the inlet or utilizing a dike system would allow for any disturbed sediment to settle out of the water column prior to the water being released into the ocean. Capping the overdredge pit with sand material would effectively trap sediments and prevent them from entering the water column and increasing turbidity or sedimentation. Implementation of these mitigation measures will reduce temporary turbidity generated by lagoon restoration activities to less than significant.

2. Cultural Resources Impacts

Impact: Accidental disturbance of unknown buried human remains during ground disturbance would result in a potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measure Cultural-4: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring that if human remains are encountered during the proposed project:

- Work at that location will be suspended and redirected elsewhere.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) will be immediately notified of the discovery.

- Remains will be left in place and exclusionary fencing will be placed in a 50-foot radius around the discovery.
- Under the provisions of the California PRC Section 7050.5, the County Coroner will be notified in the event of discovery of human remains.
- If the remains are either determined to be or there is reason to believe they are Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) within 24 hours.
- Disposition of Native American human remains on non-federal lands is within the jurisdiction of the NAHC. The Corps and County DPR, as lead agencies for the proposed project, will initiate consultation with the NAHC. As part of the consultation process, the NAHC will notify persons most likely to be descended (MLD) from the remains. No ground-disturbing work will occur in the location of the remains until consultation between the NAHC, MLD, Corps, and County DPR has been completed, and notification by the Corps and County DPR that construction activities may resume.
- If the remains are discovered in situ, they will be left in place and covered with weather-proof materials such as a tarp or plywood. If they are discovered in spoils, the remains will be placed in a labeled bag and, on approval by the MLD, transported to a secure locked container. An osteologist or a forensic anthropologist will, in consultation with the MLD, inspect fragmentary bones that are suspected to be human but cannot be identified as such in the field.

Rationale: Alterations in the project have been required that avoid or substantially lessen this impact. If human remains were to be encountered, work around the remains would be halted and the appropriate notifications made. This would allow the remains to be properly identified and appropriately handled, including consultation with the NAHC if necessary. Implementation of this mitigation measure will reduce potential inadvertent disturbance to unknown human remains to less than significant.

Impact: Accidental disturbance to nearby cultural resources could occur during construction use of the existing access road near sites CA-SDI-13,903 and CA-SDI-20,816 and result in a potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measure Cultural-5: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval, requiring that exclusionary fencing shall be used to avoid inadvertent disturbance of cultural resources in proximity to the area of potential effects (APE), staging areas, and access roads. The temporary exclusionary fencing shall be placed parallel to, but outside of the APE, staging areas, or the access road's existing limits of disturbance

in locations where within 15 feet. Specifically, exclusionary fencing shall be placed parallel to existing access roads used for construction access near sites CA-SDI-13,903 and CA-SDI-20,816.

Rationale: Alterations in the project have been required that avoid or substantially lessen this impact. Temporary fencing would be placed prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities near known cultural resources sites to protect these sensitive areas. By fencing the site, the potential for construction activities to inadvertently take place near the site and possibly damage the resource is minimized. Implementation of this mitigation measure will reduce potential inadvertent disturbance to known cultural resources to less than significant.

3. Paleontological Impacts

Impact: Accidental disturbance of paleontological resources could occur during construction in areas with subsurface potential and is a potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measure Paleo-1: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring a monitoring program during grading, trenching, or other excavation into undisturbed rock and sediment layers beneath the soil horizons and a fossil recovery program, if significant paleontological resources are encountered, shall be implemented. A County-approved paleontologist shall be contracted to perform paleontological resource monitoring and a fossil recovery program if significant paleontological resources are encountered during grading, trenching, or other excavation into undisturbed rock layers beneath the soil horizons in proximity to the Delmar Formation along the North Rios Avenue access road. The following shall be completed:

- A County-approved paleontologist shall perform the monitoring (and recovery, if necessary, and report preparation) duties pursuant to the most current version of the County of San Diego Guidelines for Determining Significance for Paleontological Resources. The contract provided to the County shall include an agreement that the grading/trenching/excavation monitoring will be completed. The contract shall include a cost estimate for the monitoring work and reporting.
- The cost of the monitoring shall be bonded.

Mitigation Measure Paleo-2: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring that a final Paleontological Resource Mitigation Report that documents the results, analysis, and conclusions of all phases of the Paleontological Monitoring Program shall be prepared, if excavation into the Delmar Formation occurs and monitoring is required.

Rationale: Alterations in the project have been required that avoid or substantially lessen this impact. As required in Mitigation Measures Paleo-1 and 2, during ground-disturbing activities within sensitive formations, the qualified monitor will be able to quickly identify any potential resource that is uncovered and halt work around that site to ensure the resource is not damaged or altered. The monitor can then implement procedures to analyze, record, recover, or undertake any other appropriate actions to ensure the resource is adequately processed for complete evaluation. This will ensure that the scientific, educational, and cultural importance of any unknown portion of resource is not lost and is properly recorded in the Paleontological Resource Mitigation Report. The Paleontological Monitoring Program would specify all the steps and communication protocol so all requirements are clear and detailed. Implementation of these mitigation measures will reduce potential disturbance to unknown paleontological resources to less than significant.

4. Hazardous Material and Public Safety Impacts

Impact: Unforeseen wastes and hazardous materials could be disturbed or dredged from the lagoon and create a public health hazard from management or disposal and result in a significant impact.

Mitigation Measure HAZ-3: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring that a sediment management plan be developed and implemented to test dredged materials for proper placement in the overdredge pit or for off-site transport and proper disposal and to be in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. The plan shall specify that if unknown contamination or other buried hazards are encountered during dredging, procedures must be carried out according to applicable regulations. Any material encountered that appears to contain contaminants will be handled in accordance with local, state, and federal guidelines, and permit conditions.

Rationale: Alterations in the project have been required that avoid or substantially lessen this impact. Because the lagoon is constantly receiving input from outside sources, such as creeks and off-site drainage, it is possible that construction activities within the lagoon bottom may uncover unknown sources of contamination within the sediments. As required by Mitigation Measure HAZ-3, development and implementation of a sediment management plan will clearly outline conditions that workers should be aware of while excavating or dredging that may indicate disturbance of a contaminant. Specific steps would also be detailed to ensure that all proper steps are understood and implemented as soon as discovery of unknown contaminants is suspected. By ensuring that workers know what to look for to identify unknown contaminants and steps to take if such conditions are suspected, the potential public health risk associated with

the release of contaminants will be minimized. Implementation of this mitigation measure will reduce public health risks due to unknown contaminants to less than significant.

5. Visual Impacts

Impact: Construction activities would result in a direct temporary and cumulative significant impact to the visual quality and character of the lagoon.

Mitigation Measure Visual-1: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring that temporary screening be placed around construction areas that are secured with a chain-link fence (such as booster pumps, staging areas, etc.) to provide visual screening of the equipment located within the secured area. Screening could be brown or green mesh or other similar screening material attached to the fencing that would visually hide or obscure the interior of the fenced areas. The screening would extend as high as the chain-link fence, which would range from approximately 6 to 10 feet, depending on the area being secured.

Rationale: Alterations in the project have been required that avoid or substantially lessen this impact. As required by Mitigation Measure Visual-1, the use of screening on the fences surrounding construction staging areas would reduce the intrusiveness of the construction equipment in the visual setting as the equipment would be mostly concealed and obscured. While the screening material would blend as much as possible with the surrounding landscape and eliminate or minimize the aesthetically unpleasing views of parked or stored equipment, it would not reduce the overall visual impact of construction equipment operating within and around the lagoon. Implementation of this mitigation measure will reduce temporary construction-related visual impacts but would not fully eliminate the impact and it would remain significant and unavoidable.

6. Traffic and Circulation Impacts

Impact: Bridge retrofit construction activities would result in a significant temporary direct and cumulative traffic impact due to capacity reductions causing traffic operations to degrade from LOS A to LOS F on a segment of Coast Highway 101, south of Chesterfield Drive.

Mitigation Measure Traffic-1: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring the preparation of work zone traffic control plans for lane closures and related construction along Coast Highway 101. The work zone traffic control plans shall be prepared in accordance with the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CAMUTCD), Caltrans Standard Plans (2010), and current

standards and best practices of the reviewing and approving agencies. These plans are intended to accommodate workers within the roadway, while facilitating continued circulation for road users (motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians including persons with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act) through the work zone.

Mitigation Measure Traffic-2: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring the provision of advanced notification to motorists that delays and traffic congestion will occur during bridge construction and retrofitting activities to encourage avoidance of the construction area. This notification may be accomplished through various measures such as information and detour routes included on the project website; traffic details included in all notifications sent to local residents; traffic and alternative route information published in local media; and physical traffic control measures, such as temporary signage located at various distances from the construction area.

Rationale: Alterations in the project have been required that avoid or substantially lessen this impact. Mitigation Measure Traffic-1 requires advanced planning and consideration of traffic operations in coordination with construction in order to develop the traffic control plans. The implementation of those traffic control plans would result in the best roadway modifications and traffic control measures allowing for continued circulation and safety of all motorists and pedestrians within the construction area, based on the specific needs of the various construction activities, throughout the duration of construction. Implementation of these mitigation measures will reduce the temporary construction-related traffic impact, but would not fully eliminate the impact and it would remain significant and unavoidable.

Impact: Bridge retrofit construction activities would result in a significant direct and cumulative traffic impact due to reduction in capacity and the subsequent redistribution of northbound traffic to I-5 via Lomas Santa Fe Drive, causing traffic operations to degrade from LOS E to LOS F on a segment of Lomas Santa Fe Drive from Solana Hills Drive to I-5.

Mitigation Measure: See Mitigation Measures Traffic -1 and Traffic-2.

Rationale: See rationale for previous traffic impact above. Implementation of these mitigation measures will reduce the temporary construction-related traffic impact, but would not fully eliminate the impact and it would remain significant and unavoidable.

7. Air Quality Impacts

Impact: Construction-generated reactive organic gases (ROG) and oxides of nitrogen (NO_X) emissions would exceed applicable mass emission thresholds and result in a significant direct and cumulative impact.

Mitigation Measure AQ-1: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring off-road construction diesel engines not registered under The California Air Resources Board's Statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program that have a rating of 50 horsepower or more, and meet, at a minimum, the Tier 3 California Emissions Standards, unless such an engine is not available for a particular item of equipment. Tier 2 engines will be allowed on a case-by-case basis when the contractor has documented that no Tier 3 equipment or emissions equivalent retrofit equipment is available for a particular equipment type that must be used to complete construction. Documentation shall consist of signed written statements from at least two construction equipment rental firms.

Mitigation Measure AQ-2: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring that harbor craft with a Category 1 or 2 marine engine, such as tugboats used for materials disposal, meet, at a minimum, EPA Tier 2 marine engine emission standards.

Mitigation Measure AQ-3: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring that dredging equipment be electric, if feasible, based on availability and cost.

Mitigation Measure AQ-4: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring that contractors use alternative fueled (e.g., compressed natural gas [CNG], liquefied natural gas [LNG], propane) or electric-powered construction equipment where feasible, based on availability and cost.

Mitigation Measure AQ-5: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring the construction contractor to reduce fugitive dust emissions associated with off-road equipment and heavy-duty vehicles:

- Exposed surfaces (e.g., unpaved access roads) shall be watered, as necessary, to control fugitive dust.
- Sweepers and water trucks shall be used to control dust and debris at public street access points.

- Dirt storage piles shall be stabilized by chemical binders, tarps, fencing, or other suppression measures.
- Provide sufficient perimeter erosion control to prevent washout of silty material onto public roads.
- Cover haul trucks or maintain at least 12 inches of freeboard to reduce blow-off during hauling.
- Enforce speed limit of 15 miles per hour on unpaved surfaces.

Rationale: Alterations in the project have been required that avoid or substantially lessen this impact. Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-4 would serve to limit and minimize construction equipment emissions through the use of advanced emission control technology and alternative fueled equipment, both of which produce less emission output than standard or conventional equipment. Additionally, fugitive dust emissions would be minimized through the requirements in Mitigation Measure AQ-5. Those measures would minimize dusty conditions or surfaces that could be wind-blown or disrupted by equipment and become airborne through actions such as watering, surface suppression and stabilization, and covering haul materials during transport. Implementation of these mitigation measures will reduce the temporary construction-related air quality impact, but would not fully eliminate the impact and it would remain significant and unavoidable.

8. Global Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impacts

Impact: Construction-related and operational greenhouse gases (GHGs) would exceed the recommended level of significance and result in a significant and adverse cumulative impact.

Mitigation Measure GHG-1: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring that on-site material hauling be performed with trucks equipped with on-road engines to the extent practicable.

Mitigation Measure GHG-2: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring that deliveries of materials and equipment to the site be limited to off-peak traffic congestion hours to the extent practicable.

Mitigation Measure GHG-3: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring restriction of material hauling on public roadways to off-peak traffic congestion hours to the extent possible. During construction

scheduling and execution minimize, to the extent possible, uses of public roadways that would increase traffic congestion.

Mitigation Measure GHG-4: This mitigation measure specified in the EIR/EIS has been imposed upon the project as a condition of approval requiring use of high-efficiency lighting and Energy Star-compliant heating and cooling units. Implement procedures for turning off computers, lights, air conditioners, heaters, and other equipment each day at close of business.

Rationale: Alterations in the project have been required that avoid or substantially lessen this impact. The volume of GHG emissions generated by the project would be reduced through Mitigation Measures GHG-1 through GHG-3, which are aimed at reducing those conditions that result in high vehicular emissions of GHGs, such as inefficient engines, idling in traffic, vehicle congestions. Generation of GHG emissions would also be reduced through the use of high-efficiency equipment and protocols for turning off energy-consuming equipment when not in use as dictated by Mitigation Measure GHG-4. Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-3 could also result in a reduction in GHG emissions. Implementation of these mitigation measures will reduce the GHG emissions resulting from the project, but would not fully eliminate the impact and it would remain significant and unavoidable.

B. Pursuant to Section 15091(a)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the County finds that, for each of the following significant effects as identified in the EIR/EIS, specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations make the mitigation measures or project alternatives infeasible.

1. Biological Resource Impacts

Impact: Construction would result in greater than 50 percent temporal loss of sensitive habitats, including open water and tidal mudflats, and a significant short-term direct impact and cumulative impact would result.

Rationale: Potential mitigation measures to minimize this impact, as detailed in Section 3.6.4 of the EIR/EIS, were found infeasible. Consideration was given to phasing the project over a longer period of time to avoid impacting any more than 50 percent of a given habitat type within a basin. However, several challenges were presented with this phasing concept. Challenges included the inability to conduct necessary wet construction; the substantial earthwork required to create "cells" to limit impacts to areas within a given basin; the significant increase in the overall length of the project, which could result in greater impacts to habitats and species; and the substantial increase in construction costs. For these reasons, this specific approach to phasing

was determined to be more impactful and not feasible. Because mitigation is not available to eliminate or reduce this impact, it would remain significant and unavoidable.

Impact: Construction noise could negatively affect breeding and foraging behavior and would result in a significant direct and cumulative impact.

Rationale: Potential mitigation measures to minimize this impact, as detailed in Section 3.6.4 of the EIR/EIS, were found infeasible. Potential measures considered included the use of an electric dredge in place of a diesel dredge, but it was found that the noise generated is not substantially different between the dredge types and, thus, noise reduction would not be achieved. The use of temporary noise walls was considered but eliminated because the wet environment makes construction difficult, the constant movement of the dredge or other earth-moving equipment creates a dynamic and ever-changing noise condition, the size of walls required to be effective would be substantial both in length and height, and wildlife movement obstruction that would result from the construction of noise walls is biologically undesirable. These issues all create additional impacts and complications in the effectiveness of a noise wall as noise mitigation and render this measure infeasible. An alternative work schedule was considered requiring work to be conducted outside of the bird nesting season, but that would extend the overall construction duration from 3 years to 6 years and the longer duration would result in greater impacts than temporary construction noise during the breeding season, in part because the dredge or other earth-moving equipment is mobile. Furthermore, this measure would lengthen the amount of time the overall lagoon would need for habitat recovery by at least 2 years, and thus was determined biologically undesirable and therefore infeasible. No additional measures have been identified that could reduce this impact. Because mitigation is not available to eliminate or reduce this impact, it would remain significant and unavoidable.

2. Noise Impacts

Impact: Noise impacts associated with nighttime dredging would be significant.

Rationale: No additional potential mitigation measures are feasible to minimize this impact, as detailed in Section 3.12.4 of the EIR/EIS. Design features have been incorporated into the project to minimize equipment noise during construction at nearby residences, including housing exposed engines and ensuring equipment has effective mufflers. The use of noise walls was considered as an option for noise reduction. However, the expanse of the lagoon and the continual moving dredge make the placement of noise walls less effective, also considering that many noise-sensitive receptors are located on the bluffs and hillsides surrounding the lagoon and would not receive beneficial noise reduction from a noise wall located at lower elevations. Limiting dredging and materials placement activities to daytime hours was also considered.

However, if such limits were implemented, the overall construction time to implement the project would be extended substantially. Dredging equipment operates most efficiently if run continually since dredged material is entrained in a slurry of water and sand and transported through a pipeline and into a barge; if halted once initiated, the pipes must be cleared to avoid having sand settle out and clog pipelines, adding substantial time and work. Extending the schedule would also require longer periods of inundation within the lagoon, resulting in potentially higher impacts to vegetation, noise-sensitive species, and trails and recreational amenities. For these reasons, these potential measures are not considered feasible. Because mitigation is not available to eliminate or reduce this impact, it would remain significant and unavoidable.

Impact: Noise impacts associated with nighttime material placement would be significant.

Rationale: No additional potential mitigation measures are feasible to minimize this impact, as detailed in Section 3.12.4 of the EIR/EIS. Design features require that construction would be limited to 3 consecutive nights within a distance that could disturb sleep at a given residence (100 feet). The use of noise walls was considered as an option for noise reduction. However, the active work areas on the beaches would shift approximately 100 to 200 feet per day and the use of noise walls is not efficient when left in place for a very short time before needing to be removed and relocated to another location to keep pace with the noise source. Limiting dredging and materials placement activities to daytime hours was also considered; however, the beach placement activities are linked to the dredging operations so those constraints outlined above also apply here. Additionally, the sequential nature of beach placement means that if activity is limited to daytime hours only a single placement cycle could occur within a typical 8-hour workday as opposed to four to five placement cycles within a 24-hour period with continuous dredging/placement activities. The offshore/nearshore disposal and beach disposal require the installation of pipelines in the surf zone. When these pipelines are left in place in high wave environments they can be buried, broken, or plugged; therefore, less exposure time means less chance of those problems. For these reasons, these potential measures are not considered feasible. Because mitigation is not available to eliminate or reduce this impact, it would remain significant and unavoidable.

3. Project Alternatives

The San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, County of San Diego, and Corps chose to consider project impacts and public/agency input in the ultimate selection of a Preferred Alternative. Alternative 1B – Refined, which was developed subsequent to release of the Draft EIR/EIS, is identified as the Preferred Alternative by the SELC in the Final EIR/EIS. Alternative 1B – Refined makes slight modifications to Alternative 1B as described in the Draft EIR/EIS. These refinements

minimize impacts to existing and emergent habitat while maintaining a project design that achieves the physical and water quality objectives of the project.

Alternative 2A

Alternative 2A would result in the most substantial changes to the lagoon system, both hydrologically and biologically. Alternative 2A includes the largest amount of dredging and material removal for lagoon restoration, thus also requiring the largest volume of material disposal. Additionally, Alternative 2A includes the construction of a new Coast Highway 101 bridge and a new inlet and associated cobble blocking features (CBFs). While many of the impacts associated with Alternative 2A would occur under the other alternatives as well, the duration and severity of the impacts is greatest with Alternative 2A as it requires the highest amount of disruption and time to complete the proposed restoration. Significant and unavoidable long-term visual impacts would result from the new inlet and CBFs on either side as proposed for Alternative 2A and this significant unavoidable visual impact would only occur with implementation of Alternative 2A. Alternative 2A would also cause significant and unavoidable operation-related air quality impacts associated with maintenance, resulting in a significant impact to regional air quality. Hazardous materials/public safety impacts are considered significant and would require mitigation due to construction of a new inlet under Alternative 2A to reduce impacts to below a level of significance. Construction of a new Coast Highway 101 bridge under Alternative 2A would also require mitigation to reduce potential unstable geologic conditions. Coast Highway 101 bridge construction under Alternative 2A has the potential for impacts to unknown cultural resources and requires specific CEQA mitigation in addition to mitigation described below for the other alternatives. This alternative is undesirable from a public policy standpoint because it would increase the severity of many impacts and also result in additional significant impacts to visual resources, air quality, hazardous materials and public safety, geology and soils, and cultural resources beyond those identified for other alternatives. Therefore, Alternative 2A is rejected because specific economic, legal, social, and other considerations make this alternative infeasible.

Alternative 1A

Alternative 1A would result in the least changes to the lagoon system, both hydrologically and biologically. Alternative 1A includes substantially less dredging than the other build alternatives and, thus, would have the least substantial impact due to the relative decrease in volume, footprint, and duration of dredging. This reduces the amount and degree of severity of impacts that result from Alternative 1A, relative to the other two alternatives for both lagoon restoration and materials disposal/reuse, but it also reduces the restoration actions and beneficial results. While the least impactive, Alternative 1A would still require mitigation (where feasible) to

reduce significant impacts to water and aquatic sediment quality, biological resources, cultural resources, paleontological resources, traffic and circulation, air quality, noise and hazardous materials. The beneficial environmental impacts from Alternative 1A would also be less than for the other alternatives, such as reduced improvements to lagoon hydrologic function and drainage patterns, fewer enhanced habitat and biological benefits, and no beach material replenishment. As a result of the minimized dredging and reduced benefits, Alternative 1A does not achieve the CEQA project objectives to the fullest extent, or to the same level as the other action alternatives. Most specifically, Alternative 1A does not achieve the following objectives: (1) physical restoration of lagoon estuarine hydrologic functions; and, (2) biological restoration of habitat and species within the lagoon to the same extent as the other alternatives. This alternative is undesirable from a public policy standpoint because it would result in significant impacts but does not feasibly attain primary objectives of the project. Therefore, Alternative 1A is rejected because specific economic, legal, social, and other considerations make this alternative infeasible.

No Project/No Federal Action Alternative

The No Project/No Federal Action Alternative would not modify existing conditions and no actions would take place. Thus, no significant environmental impacts would occur from this alternative. However, the lagoon would continue to deteriorate in habitat quality and hydrologic conditions if the SELRP is not completed. While no significant adverse impacts would occur, none of the beneficial or positive impacts that occur with implementation of one of the project alternatives would result under the No Project/No Federal Action Alternative. As a result, the No Project/No Federal Action Alternative does not achieve the CEQA project objectives. Most specifically, it does not achieve the following objectives: (1) physical restoration of lagoon estuarine hydrologic functions; (2) biological restoration of habitat and species within the lagoon; and (3) management and maintenance to ensure long-term viability of the restoration efforts. This alternative is undesirable from a public policy standpoint because it does not feasibly attain primary objectives of the project. Therefore, the No Project/No Federal Action Alternative is rejected because specific economic, legal, social, and other considerations make this alternative infeasible.

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