

erosion, or preserve willow cover and the visual aspects of the river can be denied by the County per this policy (unless no feasible alternative exists and a constitutional taking would occur).

Regarding Policy CV-3.10, the comment asks why such a policy is not proposed throughout the County, specific details of interpretation regarding the amount of landscaping to use native plants, what development the policy applies to. The comment does not make any argument why this policy should be applied everywhere in the County to avoid a significant impact, but General Plan Policy OS-5.14 requires that policies and procedures that encourage exclusion and control or eradication of invasive exotic plants and animals be established. The predominant portion will be determined on a site-specific basis depending on the nature of the project and landscaping requirements. This policy does not apply to 100 percent of landscaping as the policy is not intended to completely eliminate the ability to use non-invasive landscaping (such as lawn turf). Determination of “as much as possible” and “maximum extent feasible” are by their nature, site specific determinations that need to take into account particular site conditions and constraints.

Regarding Policy CV-3.11, the comment asks why this policy is not applied to the whole of the County, how this policy will be interpreted, and how this will be coordinated with the Oak Woodland Mitigation Program (revised Mitigation Measure BIO-2.2). The comment does not make any argument why this policy should be applied everywhere in the County to avoid a significant impact, but Chapter 16 of the County Municipal Code already establishes County-wide tree oak tree removal requirements. This policy requires the County to review projects for compliance as to whether they are avoiding native tree removal where feasible and to replace trees where tree removal is unavoidable. The Oak Woodland Mitigation Program will allow for off-site mitigation where on-site mitigation is not feasible.

Regarding Policy CV-3.12, the comment asks how this policy will result in action and protection of biological resources. This policy is a broad statement of intent to guide the establishment of open spaces when they are proposed as part of a proposed development plan or where they are part of a County managed area. This policy required that such plans take into account ecotone issues during open space management planning. By being specific about ecotones, this policy promotes better management of open space, whether public or private.

Regarding Policy CV-4.1, the comment asks why this policy is not countywide and why vegetation cover should not be maintained on slopes less than 25 percent cover. The comment does not make any argument why this policy should be applied everywhere in the County to avoid a significant impact but the County’s erosion control ordinance established minimum county-wide requirements for erosion. Regarding maintaining vegetation cover, the commenter is reading this policy in isolation from other CVMP policies that clearly require preservation of natural vegetation covers (see Policy CV-3.7 and 3.8, for example). This policy is about erosion, which is why it focused on steep slopes, but also produced a side benefit of preserving natural covers on those steep slopes, which is a benefit to natural vegetation and habitat.

Regarding Policy CV-5.3, the comment asks for standards and how this policy protects biological resources. The policy mandates that projects shall incorporate water conservation means; projects that do not incorporate such measures can be denied (unless no feasible alternative is available and a constitutional taking would occur). Water conservation requirements in the County are described in 4.3-81 and 4.3-82 in the DEIR, which include standards. MPWMD also establishes conservation requirements in the CVMP area. Thus, this policy, in combination with broader conservation requirements, would help to avoid/reduce impacts to biological resources, including steelhead in the Carmel River, by promoting water conservation, and reducing affects on the Carmel River Alluvial Aquifer.

Regarding Policy CV-6.2, the comment asks why agriculture will not result in erosion on slopes less than 25 percent, why the 25 percent slope is not encouraged county-wide and criticizes this policy for not creating a mandate. The policy does not state that erosion would not occur on slopes less than 25 percent; development on such areas is subject to the County's erosion control ordinance and other requirements noted in Section 4.3 of the DEIR. The comment does not make any argument why this policy should be applied everywhere in the County to avoid a significant impact but the County's erosion control ordinance established minimum county-wide requirements for erosion. The policy does not create a mandate. However, modifications to Policy OS-3.5 (see Master Response 3) limit non-agricultural development on slopes over 25 percent and specify a discretionary permit for agricultural conversions on slopes over 25 percent, which would apply to inland areas of the county, which would be a mandate.

CENTRAL SALINAS VALLEY AREA PLAN

Regarding Policy CSV-5.1, the comment asks for definition of the main channels of the Arroyo-Seco River and the Salinas River, questions whether the policy will work as proposed, and why this policy is not applied county-wide. First, as noted previously, Mitigation Measure BIO-2.1 requires a countywide stream setback ordinance. As for the definition of the "main channel", it is used in the context of "floodway," which is defined as the "channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than one (1) foot" under Section 16.16.020 of the County Municipal Code. Where appropriate, the floodway limits for some streams were set using flood velocities. Regarding maintaining of recharge capabilities, this requirement does not only apply to the main channels only.

Regarding Policy CSV-5.2, the comment asks why this policy does not apply to agriculture and made countywide. The comment does not make any argument why this policy should be applied everywhere in the County or applied to agriculture to avoid a significant impact. The County's erosion control ordinance already establishes minimum county-wide requirements for erosion and the County's floodplain regulations apply to development projects and all agriculture is subject to the Agriculture Waiver Program requirements of the Regional Board. Agriculture does not create impervious areas and thus does not impede groundwater recharge or flooding hazards, which is the focus of this policy. Safe yields were determined by MCWRA in the Salinas Valley Water Project EIS/EIR referenced in the DEIR for 2030 relative to groundwater overdraft and seawater intrusion. The floodways are defined in the County's Municipal Code Section

16.16.020 as described above. Therefore, there appears to be no reason to apply this policy countywide.

FORT ORD MASTER PLAN

Regarding Recreation Policy C-1, the comment asks for standards for tree protection and how this policy will be coordinated with Mitigation Measure BIO-2.2.

Regarding Recreation Policy C-2, the comment asks for standards.

Regarding Biological Resource Policies A-1 through A-9 and B1 through B-3, the comment asks why habitat management plans and detailed policies and programs are not established with the same level of for other parts of the County. The comment does not make any argument as to why this is necessary to avoid a significant impact to biological resources. Planning for Fort Ord has been an ongoing process for several decades and provides an example of the level of detail that will be achieved in planning for the Community Areas, Rural Centers, and Affordable Housing Overlays. While this is realistic within the focused growth areas, the commenter is unrealistic to think that the rest of the entire County can be planned in advanced down to the level of detail. This is a General Plan after all, not a project-level specific plan or EIR. Regarding the comment about oak woodland corridors, the policy doesn't protect oak woodland corridors – it protects oak woodlands and riparian corridors. Mitigation Measure BIO-2.1 is proposed to protect riparian corridors along with other policies noted in Section 4.3 in the area plans. Mitigation Measure BIO-2.2 creates an oak woodland mitigation program. Revised Policy OS-5.16 requires project-level assessment of impacts to plant communities.

Regarding Biological Resources Policy C-1, the comment criticizes the policy for not creating a specific mandate. The comment is correct that no mandate is created, but the County will nevertheless encourage projects to minimize habitat disturbance and will make a finding for projects relative to consistency with this policy.

Regarding Biological Resources Policy C-2, the comment criticizes the policy for not creating a specific mandate and asks how this will be coordinate with Mitigation Measure BIO-2.2. The comment is incorrect, as the policy requires the use of oaks and other native plants for landscaping and also require planting spacing and avoidance of paving within drip lines wherever possible. This policy does not concern off-site mitigation and thus does not have any relation to Mitigation Measure BIO-2.2.

Regarding Biological Resources Policy C-3, D-1, and E-2 the comment asks why this policy is not applied throughout the County. The comment does not make any argument as to why this is necessary to avoid a significant impact to biological resources or how this concerns the adequacy of the analysis in the DEIR. No further response is needed.

GREATER MONTEREY PENINSULA AREA PLAN

Regarding Policy GMP-3.4, the comment asks how this policy helps to protect biological resources. While a minor benefit, the use of plant materials can provide nesting opportunity for various birds on the edge of development.

Regarding Policy GMP-3.5, the comment asks how the maximum extent feasible will be determined and whether it will bar development. Feasibility determinations will take into account technical, logistic, legal, and financial feasibility. The intent is not necessary to bar development overall, but rather to shape individual development to include preservation of native forests, woodlands, and wetlands wherever feasible

Regarding Policy GMP-3.6, the comment asks how the setback would be determined and coordinates with the Stream Setback Ordinance. The setback would be determined from the edge of the delineated wetlands (applying federal and state guidance in delineating wetlands). The Stream Setback Ordinance concerns streams and would not apply to wetlands unless they are associated with streams. The more stringent setback would apply when streams and wetlands overlap.

Regarding Policy GMP-3.7, the comment asks how this policy helps to protect biological resources and what other agencies could be involved. While not creating a specific mandate, other agencies such as local cities, Caltrans, California State Parks, USFS, and other parties in Monterey County and cooperation to protect wetlands across jurisdictional boundaries can assist in long-term resource protection.

Regarding Policy GMP-3.8, the comment asks if this policy will require re-designation of land uses in the 2007 General Plan and how this policy would protect biological resource. This policy is intended to guide the County when managing open space areas (such as in County parks) or in reviewing project plans wherein open space areas are proposed. This policy does not call for or require changes in land use classifications. This policy helps to guide open space management to include consideration of ecotones and wildlife access.

Regarding Policy GMP-3.9, the comment asks how this policy will be implemented concerning critical habitat and how determinations will be made concerning the level of disruption to ecosystems. Project-level review will evaluate the level of impact to native ecosystems and critical habitat. If project-level review determines that, even with clustering and all feasible mitigation (such as off-site habitat preservation), a project will still result in a significant and unavoidable impact, the project can be denied on the basis of a significant and unavoidable impact or could be approved with a statement of overriding considerations.

Regarding Policy GMP-3.10, the comment noted that this policy does not concern the inland areas. The comment is correct but makes no assertions regarding the adequacy of the EIR.

Regarding Policy GMP-4.1, the comment asks how this policy would be coordinated with OS-3.5, whether it bans development on land over 25 percent slope, and why this is not required County-wide. As noted above, the revised OS-3.5 limits development on slopes over 25 percent slope in most cases, which is a county-wide requirement. Neither GMP-4.1 nor OS-3.5 are absolute bans on development on slopes over 25 percent, but encourage (GMP 4.1) or mandate (OS-3.5) substantial limitations on such development that will help to preserve steep natural areas.

GREATER SALINAS AREA PLAN

Regarding Policy GS-1.1, the comment asks how this policy will help to reduce impacts to biological resource impacts to a less than significant level. GS1.1a requires preservation of land for open space and sensitive habitat, among other purposes.

Regarding Policy GS-1.5 and GS-1.19, the comment asks how it will be determined if it is feasible to enhance riparian habitat and how it would be done, and how it will be determined if development will deteriorate water quality, and why this policy to other development and agricultural uses. Site-specific analysis of riparian enhancement potential will be required including consideration of soils, slopes, stability, and ability to complete enhancement without compromising the ability to reasonably develop the property consistent with allowable uses for the zoning. Enhancement could include setting back of artificial banks created by prior land uses, removal of rip-rap or other structural bank improvements, replanting of native riparian vegetation, and removal of non-native species. Project-level CEQA review will examine water quality impacts on the Salinas River. This policy is focused on commercial uses – it is not intended to address all land uses as they are addressed by other policies and existing programs (such as the Agricultural Waiver Program for agriculture).

Regarding Policy GS-3.1, the comment asks how this policy would be coordinated with OS-3.5, whether it bans development on land over 25% slope, and why this is not required County-wide. As noted above, the revised OS-3.5 limits development on slopes over 25% slope in most cases, which applies across the inland county area. Neither GS-1.1 nor OS-3.5 are absolute bans on development on slopes over 25%, but encourage (GMP 3.1) or mandate (OS-3.5) substantial limitations on such development that will help to preserve steep natural areas.

Regarding Policy GS-3.2, the comment asks how this policy will help reduce significant impacts to biological resources, whether this applies to residential landscaping, how much landscaping this applies to, and how it will be implemented. This policy will encourage landscaping with native (as opposed to non-native) vegetation which reduces the potential spread of exotic non-native species. This does not preclude the use of residential non-native turf species, but rather encourages the use of natives in landscaping. This would be implemented during project review.

Regarding Policy GS-5.1, the comment asks why this policy is not applied elsewhere in the County. Mitigation Measure BIO-2.1 requires a stream setback ordinance for the entire county intend to achieve many of the same objectives as this policy.

NORTH COUNTY AREA PLAN

Regarding Policy NC-3.3, the comment criticizes this policy for not creating a specific mandate, how native vegetation will be identified, and what agency will work with property owners on easements. The comment is correct that no mandate is created by this policy. Rather, this policy is a statement of intent by the County to support voluntary conservation easement establishment. County Departments that may be involved could include Planning Building and Inspection and County Parks.

Regarding Policy NC-3.4, the comment asks why a similar policy is not proposed for all of the County, how tree removal will be discouraged, how permits will be issued, how feasibility is determined and how this is coordinated with Mitigation Measure BIO-2.2. As noted previously, the County does have a countywide tree preservation ordinance for oaks; tree removal concerns in different part of the county are different to reflect different biological priorities. The County will discourage tree removal during project review which will examine the need for all proposed tree removal. Permits will be issued when in compliance with this policy, the County's tree preservation ordinance, and any mitigation identified during CEQA review. Conditions will require on-site replacement wherever feasible and off-site compensation when not feasible on-site. Mitigation Measure BIO-2.2 creates an off-site mitigation programs that can be utilized to mitigate off-site when on-site mitigation is not possible.

Regarding Policy NC-3.5, the comment asks how this policy will be implemented concerning critical habitat and how determinations will be made concerning the level of disruption to ecosystems. Project-level review will evaluate the level of impact to native ecosystems and critical habitat. If project-level review determines that, even with clustering and all feasible mitigation (such as off-site habitat preservation), a project will still result in a significant and unavoidable impact, the project can be denied on the basis of a significant and unavoidable impact or could be approved with a statement of overriding considerations.

SOUTH COUNTY AREA PLAN

Regarding Policy SC-1.2, the comment asks how clustering would be encouraged and questions the value of this policy if it only encourages activity. During project review, the County will examine possibilities to cluster land to serve the purposes identified in this policy. Where feasible clustering is identified and is determined necessary at a project-level to reduce significant impacts to biological resources to a less than significant level, clustering can be required as mitigation.

Regarding Policy SC-5.2, the comment asks what agencies might be involved, and what programs might be involved. Cooperation would include resource conservation districts (RCDs), the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the Regional Water Quality Control Board, neighboring counties, incorporated cities, and other parties. Programs could include extension and outreach and demonstration projects.

Regarding Policy SC-5.3, the comment asks for identification of the main channels and associated floodways and why this policy is not countywide. The main channels are defined by the bank to bank extent of the primary flow channels. The floodways are defined in County Code Section 16.16.020. Mitigation Measure BIO-2.1, proposes a Stream Setback Ordinance to provide for consistent protection of streams throughout the inland area of the county.

TORO AREA PLAN

Regarding Policy T-3.7, the comment asks how this policy will help to protect trees if it only discourages tree removal, asks whether this will pertain to agricultural activity, and how it will be coordinated with Mitigation Measure BIO-2.2. Chapter 16.60 of the

County Municipal Code requires a permit for tree removal for any oak or madrone (greater than 6 inches in diameter) in the Toro Area Plan. This is a mandatory requirement, not a voluntary one. The standards for tree removal are specified in Section 16.60.040. Requirements for Agricultural Land are specified in Section 16.60.050.

Regarding Policy T-4.1, the comment asks for standards for significant increases of siltation, erosion and flooding and how cumulative impacts would be addressed. County ordinances concerning erosion and flooding establish standards (see Chapters 16.12 and 16.16 of the County Municipal Code, respectively). In addition, project-level review will also examine siltation, erosion and flooding and potential for cumulative impacts. The County ordinances on erosion and flooding seek to manage cumulative erosions and flooding by providing uniform standards for development.

AGRICULTURAL WINE CORRIDOR PLAN

Comments are provided that reducing winery footprints will not reduce vineyard footprints and new wineries will encourage new vineyards. Comments are also provided that wineries will not necessarily be limited to the wine corridor and the winery corridor will disrupt east-west movement corridors. Please see discussion of the overall potential for new winery and ancillary uses and agricultural conversions (including those for vineyards) in Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, where it is explained that the DEIR's assumptions about the level of growth are reasonable and based on substantial evidence and far more realistic than the assertions made in this comment letter that there will be hundreds of thousands of acres of new agricultural conversions of natural habitat. Regarding the value of limiting the number of wineries in each corridor, this helps biological resources by having a limit in the first place as opposed to allowing no limit on wineries. As to the possibility of wineries outside the wine corridor, the comment is correct that the AWCP does not forbid this, but it also does not provide permit streamlining for such wineries, and this is expected to favor winery development in the corridor as opposed to outside of it. As explained in Master Response 3, the number of wineries assumed in the AWCP corresponds to the number necessary to balance grape production and wine processing in the County over the next several decades based on moderate amounts of vineyard expansion.

- O-11g.76 Regarding Mitigation Measure BIO-1.1, the comment repeats comments made in the table above (comment O-11g.75) concerning the effectiveness of Policy OS-5.1 and OS-5.2 concerning mapping of habitat. As noted above in response to comments on Policy OS-5.1 and OS-5.2, mapping of critical habitat was done for the DEIR and was considered in the impact analysis. Please see response to comment O-11g.75 concerning these two policies and concerning a revision to make clear that Policy OS-5.1 applies to plant and wildlife species.

With respect to Mitigation Measure BIO-1.1 in the DEIR, this mitigation measure has been replaced. The commenter is referred to Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*.

- O-11g.77 Regarding Mitigation Measure BIO-1.3, the comment asserts that mitigation measure BIO-1.3 is improperly deferred, that performance standards should be established, that mitigation is not identified for asserted significant impacts to special status species and

their habitat due to conversions for agriculture, as well as legal lot development and other non-discretionary development.

Regarding deferred mitigation, please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan EIR*. This is a programmatic EIR and thus does not represent approval of discretionary development. Discretionary development is subject to project-level CEQA analysis wherein Mitigation Measure BIO-1.3 in the DEIR would require project level consideration of impacts to special-status species. As explained in Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, Mitigation Measure BIO-1.3 has been deleted from the FEIR, and Policy OS-5.16 has been modified to require project-level consideration of all impacts to biological resources per CEQA Guidelines Section 15065. This policy modification is the equivalent of what was called for in Mitigation Measure BIO-1.3.

Regarding habitat conversions to agriculture, please see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, which explains the rationale for the forecasts of agricultural conversions and see Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, which discussed impacts of agricultural conversions on special-status species and their habitat. As explained therein, this comment's assertions of the potential for hundreds of thousands of acres of agricultural conversions are contradicted by the historic trends in the county, as well as considerations of soil suitability, access, and water availability. . As such, the DEIR's conclusions about agricultural conversion impacts on special-status species and their habitat (e.g. less than significant) remain grounded on evidence after consideration of this comment.

The commenter is also referred to Master Response 8 for a discussion of the potential impacts that could result from development on legal lots of record.

- O-11g.78 Regarding Mitigation Measure BIO-1.2, the comment asserts that the measure may be inadequate to address impacts to San Joaquin kit fox because there are no interim measures while the conservation strategy is being prepared and that mitigation fees from discretionary development alone may be inadequate to fund the plan. First, given that the San Joaquin kit fox is federally and state-listed species, the federal and California endangered species act restrictions apply to development that may occur between General Plan Approval and development of a conservation strategy for the San Joaquin kit fox in the southern Salinas Valley. In addition, discretionary development, as well as development on legal lots of record (see discussion in response to comment O-11g.77) is subject to project-level review and mitigation of impacts to listed species and their habitat. Thus, contrary to the commenter's assertions, there are measures in place to address non-agricultural development while the conservation strategy is in preparation. The comment asserts that the plan will create incentives to accelerate development to avoid the costs of mitigation. The commenter provides no evidence to support this assertion; regardless the San Joaquin kit fox is a protected species under state and federal law and thus individual developers are subject to requirements under FESA and CESA both which require mitigation when losses of listed species habitat is proposed.

Regarding agricultural impacts to San Joaquin kit fox habitat, the comment is correct that conversion will reduce the value of existing habitat as kit fox habitat. However, as discussed in the DEIR, such agricultural conversion is expected to be dispersed along the

Salinas Valley and scattered geographically such that there will remain substantial areas of intact San Joaquin kit fox habitat along the Valley and in adjacent areas to continue to support this species.

- O-11g.79 Regarding Mitigation Measure BIO-1.4, the comment asks why the impacts identified in the DEIR after 2030 would not occur soon, asserts this mitigation is unenforceable as the current Board of Supervisors cannot bind a future board to adopt a General Plan Update to accommodate 80 percent of future growth in focused growth areas. Mitigation Measure BIO-1.4 has been revised to track actual growth against projected growth. This will address commenters concern regarding whether impacts might occur sooner. With respect to the enforceability of the measure, the commenter is referred to Master Response 10, which discusses assumptions regarding the enforcement of regulations and implementation of the General Plan by the County.

Regarding Mitigation Measure BIO-1.5, the commenter asserts that a NCCP is needed now (not in 2030) to address biological resource impacts and that this measure permits unmitigated impacts to wildlife movement corridors for the next 20 years. The DEIR describes the impacts to biological resources from now to 2030 and beyond 2030 and makes conclusions about the levels of impacts. This measure does not permit unmitigated biological resource impacts from now to 2030 – there are County policies and other mitigation measures identified that address significant impacts as identified in the DEIR. This comment does not provide any evidence as to why a NCCP is needed now (please see responses to the specific assertions made concerning wildlife movement corridors in Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, and in the response to comment O-11g.84 below).

- O-11g.80 Regarding Mitigation Measure BIO-2.1, the comment asserts that mitigation is improperly deferred because specific standards about stream and environmental conditions are not identified in the EIR. This comment also asserts that Policy OS-3.5 will potentially open up 113,678 acres of land to agricultural cultivation on 25 to 30% slopes and some portion of 382,753 acres on slopes greater than 30% and that this will result in substantial increased in erosion and sedimentation. The comment also criticizes this mitigation measure for having no timeframe for development and no interim measures for setbacks while the ordinance is being developed. The comment also asks how this ordinance would be coordinated with Policy OS-3.9.

First, as explained in Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for General Plan and the General Plan EIR*, this is a Program EIR, intended to broadly assess the potential environmental effects of the General Plan as a whole and adopt mitigation measures where significant impacts are identified. The adoption of mitigation measures needs to be sufficiently broad to be able to address a wide range of specific conditions throughout the County to allow flexibility to adopt specific requirements in the subsequent implementation phases, which in this case would be the development of the Stream Setback Ordinance. There are a number of technical complexities in creating an effective stream setback ordinance warrant a deliberative consideration that is better addressed in a dedicated process.

Regarding the amount of potential conversions on slopes, please see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, where it is described that

the amount of potential conversions described in this comment are vastly overstated. Changes to OS-3.5 are described in Master Response 3 as well. Master Response 8 discusses how these revisions further reduce impacts to biological resources.

Regarding a timeframe to adopt the Stream Setback Ordinance, pursuant to Government Code Section 65860, it will be adopted within a reasonable time after adoption of the General Plan.

Regarding interim measures, all discretionary development is subject to project-level review which will require consideration of impacts to and protection of stream/riparian habitats. In addition, the Area Plan policies described in the DEIR on page 4.9-82 through 4.9-85 (including CACH-3.7, CV 3.7 - CV 3.9, CVS-5.1, Fort Ord Biological Resource Policy B-3, GMP 3.6, GS-1, GS-3.1, GS-5.1, and SC-5.3) all serve to protect streams and riparian areas and would apply during the interim period before a stream setback ordinance is in place.

Regarding coordination with Policy OS-3.9, the comment suggests that it too represents deferred mitigation. Please see Master Response 10 concerning the deferral of mitigation. Policy OS-3.9 is a General Plan policy, not a mitigation measure identified in the DEIR. The purpose of Policy OS-3.9 is to improve on the current practices to protect streams from impacts due to erosion and hydrologic changes, but the DEIR does not conclude that the policy must be implemented instantaneously upon General Plan approval in order to avoid a significant impact. The comment seems to imply that all the potential development will occur immediately; whereas implementation of the General Plan Policies is intended to address the full buildout in time. In order to provide some surety in time, Policy OS-3.9 has been modified to require development of the cumulative program within 5 years of General Plan adoption.

Regarding whether CEQA review will be required for the stream setback ordinance, this will be determined during development of the ordinance itself. While the ordinance itself will serve to provide protection of streams and their habitats, the specific details of the ordinance would need to be reviewed first in order to identify what, if any, CEQA review may be required.

- O-11g.81 Regarding Mitigation Measure BIO-2.2, the comment asserts that the oak woodlands mitigation program is deferred mitigation, lacks meaningful/adequate performance standards, and should follow the model identified by the California Oak Foundation. The comment also asserts that the DEIR fails to address Public Resources Code Section 21083.4. The comment acknowledges that Public Resources Code Section 21082.4 (d)(3) does not require mitigation for agricultural conversion, but asserts that mitigation should nevertheless be provided given the extent of conversions in the County if the County is to conclude that impacts to oak woodlands would be less than significant. The comment also asks how the oak woodlands mitigation program would be coordinates with various policies in the General Plan.

Regarding the assertion of deferred mitigation, please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for General Plan and the General Plan EIR*. Contrary to the comment's assertion, the mitigation measure clearly requires mitigation in the interim period until the County program is established (see language in the measure on "until such time as the County

program is implemented) and requires replacement of oak woodlands on a minimum 1:1 ratio. The minimum replacement ratio applies to the interim period and to the program itself. The measure has been revised to make it clear that the minimum requirement is “a 1:1 ratio and provide for equivalent acreage and ecological value”. Thus, as revised the measure provides for both the interim period and provides a clear minimum performance standard. The measure has also been revised to require adoption of the program within 5 years of adoption of the General Plan (see General Plan Policy 5.23).

Regarding comments that the ordinance itself should follow the model of the California Oak Foundation and that the program should take into account the need for an allowance for disease and mortality, these comments are noted and will be considered during development of the ordinance.

Regarding the comment that the DEIR fails to address Public Resources Code Section 21083.4 concerning oak woodlands mitigation, the comment does not substantiate this claim with any citation of deficiency. Public Resources Code 21083.4 requires a county to make a determination under CEQA whether a project within its jurisdiction may result in a conversion of oak woodlands that will have a significant effect on the environment. If a county determines that there may be a significant effect to oak woodlands, the county is required to adopt one or more of the following oak woodlands mitigation alternatives to mitigate the significant effect of the conversion of oak woodlands: conserve oak woodlands through easements; plant and maintain trees for up to one half of the mitigation requirement; contribute funds to the state Oak Woodland Conservation Fund; an/or other mitigation measures developed by the county. The DEIR makes the determination that the 2007 General Plan will result in a significant conversion of oak woodlands relative to discretionary development and proposed Mitigation Measure BIO-2.2 to establish a county program, while using the state fund in the interim before the county program is adopted. Thus, the DEIR complies with Public Resources Code Section 21083.4.

Regarding agriculture, the comment acknowledges that Public Resources Code Section 21083.4 specifically states that no mitigation is required for agricultural conversion of oak woodlands, but then goes on to state that a mitigation program must take into account mitigation for agricultural conversions. Regarding compliance with Public Resources Code Section 21083.4, there is no requirement to mitigate for agricultural conversion, which means that a county has discretion to make its own conclusions as to the significance of agricultural conversions of oak woodlands. The County will consider whether this oak tree mitigation program should apply to agricultural areas when drafting that program.

The estimated amount of agricultural conversions are listed in Table 4.9-8 as 575 acres of oak woodland and 43 acres of oak savannah by 2030 (compared to 426, 334 acres of oak woodland and 201,662 acres of oak savannah estimated extant in 2006 in Table 4.9-1). For 2030, the estimated conversions represent approximately 0.1 percent of extant oak woodland and less than 0.1 percent of oak savannah. The DEIR concludes that agriculture conversion of sensitive vegetation communities, including oak woodlands is less than significant for 2030 in consideration of the dispersed nature of agricultural conversion and the overall limited extent of estimated conversion. However, the DEIR concludes that impacts to sensitive vegetation communities beyond 2030 to buildout are

significant and unavoidable given the uncertainty about the level of agricultural conversions beyond 2030 (which the EIR estimated as being approximately four times that of 2030) along with other uncertainties about what type of threats might affect sensitive vegetation communities.

Regarding coordination with other General Plan policies, this mitigation measure complements General Plan policies and does not conflict with them. Policy OS-5.9 and OS-5-10 require that tree removal permit requirements be established in Area Plans, including replacement criteria. Mitigation Measure BIO-2.2 requires the replacement criteria established in these policies to be a minimum of 1:1 in acreage and ecological function. Policy OS-5.11 calls for promotion of conservation of large expanses of native vegetation; BIO-2.2 will help to make funds available to promote that conservation. As an additional example, Policy CV-3.11 and NC-3.4 require replacement for oak and other native trees on a minimum 1:1 ratio where feasible; BIO-2.2 would require a minimum 1: 1 ratio whether on-site or off-site. Finally, General Plan Policy 5.23 would directly codify the mitigation measure.

- O11g.82 Regarding Mitigation Measure BIO-2.3, the comment asserts that this represents deferred mitigation, and that Policies PS-3.3 and PS-3.4 also lack definable performance standards and thus this does not represent adequate mitigation for effects of water extraction/diversion on biological resources.

Regarding deferred mitigation, please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan EIR*.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2.3, as revised, does establish performance criteria contrary to the commenter's assertion. The criteria is "instream flows necessary to support riparian vegetation, wetlands, fish, and other aquatic life including migration potential for steelhead, for the purpose of minimizing impacts to those resources and species." This requires that water supply and well determinations by the County consider the effect of new extractions or diversions on instream flows necessary to support biological resources. Where water supply/well extractions do not reduce flows below that necessary to support the cited biological resources, then the criteria is met. Where water supply extractions would reduce instream flows below the level necessary to sustain these resources, then the County can make a determination that the water supply is not a "long-term sustainable water supply" per PS-3.3 and thus require mitigation, alternative water supplies, or could deny subdivision approval. Where well extractions would reduce instream flows below the level necessary to sustain these resources, then the County could require mitigation, an alternative well location or water supply, or could deny the well permit (provided denial did not result in a constitutional taking).

See also Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*.

Regarding the comment advocating that this mitigation should require an increase in instream flows to meet a recovery plan goal, this could require improving flows above baseline levels depending on the recovery plan specifics. While that may be desirable, under CEQA, development is only responsible to address impacts above baseline – not to address past problems. U.S. Supreme Court rulings in *Nollan v. California Coastal Commission* (1987) 107 S.Ct. 3141 and *Dolan v. City of Tigard* (1994) 114 S.Ct. 2309

establish that mitigation must have a nexus to the impact resulting from the project and be proportional to the project's specific impact. Thus BIO-2.3 is only concerned with the new effects of new water supplies and new wells.

- O-11g.83 This comment asserts that the DEIR does not adequately describe new vineyard development, agricultural conversions or the winery corridors.

Regarding vineyard development and agricultural conversions, please see Master Response 3, which discusses the basis for the DEIR's estimate of vineyard and agricultural conversions, and Master Response 8, which discusses the DEIR's basis for characterizing the biological resource impacts of vineyard and agricultural conversion.

Regarding the characterization of the winery corridors, the comment argues that the text of the AWCP leaves the winery corridor definition open to potentially all AVA areas outside the corridors shown in Figure AWCP-3. The AWCP clearly states that the winery corridors are as shown in Figure AWCP-3 and thus it is obvious that the winery corridors do not include all of the AVA areas. The language stating "the portion of the Monterey AVA located south of Highway 68 plus the other seven AVAs shall be used for defining the boundary of the Agricultural and Winery Corridor" is only intended to note that the winery corridors are intended to cross through portions of the AVAs in the southern portion of the County (e.g. not in the northern portion of the county).

The comment also states that the winery corridor areas shown in Exhibits 4.9-2, 4.9-3, and 4.9-4 are much smaller than the AVA areas illustrated in Figure AWCP-2 and the winery corridors in Figure AWCP-3 of the General Plan. As noted above, the winery corridors do not include the full extent of the AVAs. The referenced exhibits in Section 4.9, Biological Resources, were inadvertently prepared using a earlier GIS layers for the wine corridors. This has been corrected in the Final EIR and revised versions of Exhibits 3.3, 4.6-11, 4.9-2, 4.9-3, and 4.9-4 are included in Chapter 4 of this document. Table 4.9-2 was also updated for the habitats found in the wine corridors. Although the EIR exhibits and table now show a larger area for the wine corridors, the analysis of impacts has not changed as the change in the maps and table do not change the amount of development allowed within the wine corridors by the AWCP. The analysis of agricultural expansion (see Master Response 3) was not done based on the size of the AWCP, but rather consideration of historic trends and constraints (such as soil capability, water, etc.).

- O-11g.84 This comment asserts that the analysis of mitigation of impacts to wildlife movement corridors and habitat fragmentation is deferred to project-level CEQA review and will not be effective.

Regarding deferred mitigation, please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan EIR*.

Please see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, concerning assertions that agricultural conversions will be larger than estimated in the DEIR. Please see Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, which addresses impacts of agricultural conversions (and other development allowed by the 2007 General Plan) on special-status species habitats and on wildlife movement corridors.

Regarding the specific comments regarding impacts to the Arroyo Seco Uplands, as noted in the DEIR, Policy CVS-5.1 prohibits new development from encroaching on the Arroyo Seco (modified in the FEIR to include both main channel and riparian corridor) and Mitigation Measure BIO-2.1 would require identification of specific setbacks from the Arroyo Seco to protect riparian habitats, water quality, and wildlife movement along the riparian corridor. While agricultural conversions are possible in the uplands along the corridor, there are current controls on erosion through the Agricultural Waiver Program to prevent sedimentation from increasing in Arroyo Seco. Per Mitigation Measure BIO-2.3, instream flows for fish have been added as a factor for considering new wells and water supplies that might draw from the Arroyo Seco. This will require consideration and avoidance of added sediment.

Regarding specific comments regarding the Carmel River Watershed-Sierra de Salinas, this area is shown as a large area of the upper Carmel River watershed as well as well as the Carmel River. As discussed in the DEIR, Policies CV-3.7, 3.8, and 3.9 protect the Carmel River for its riparian community and as a wildlife migration route. Regarding the upper part of the Carmel River watershed, this area is not subject to large urban development pressure. The comment asserts that vineyards and ranching are a threat to this conservation area. First, the comment does not substantiate why continuation of ranching (which is already present) is somehow a threat to conservation of habitat. While there can be localized effects of ranching if areas are grazed too heavily, there is a baseline of ranching activity throughout private lands in the upper watershed that would not be substantially changed by the 2007 General Plan. Regarding vineyard expansion potential, this is possible, but not likely to occur on a widespread basis due to access, slope, and water constraints. As shown on Figures 4.9-6 and 4.9-7 of the DEIR, there has been only limited habitat conversion to farmland in the Carmel River watershed in the last several decades.

Regarding specific comments regarding the Salinas River Uplands, TNC (2006) identifies this as a 5,000 acre area south of San Lucas mostly west of the Salinas River and east of Highway 101 containing grassland habitat along the Salinas River for San Joaquin kit fox and steelhead habitat in the river. As identified in the DEIR, Policy SC-5.3 prohibits new development from encroaching on the floodways of the Salinas River. Agricultural conversion of the grassland is possible, but would not be expected to result in any blockage to steelhead passage along the Salinas River. Although conversion of this location could result in loss of habitat for the San Joaquin kit fox, it is important to remember that there are large areas of annual grassland along the adjacent edges of the Salinas Valley; further there is no reason to expect massive conversions of all grassland along the edges of the valley, but rather sporadic conversions similar to the extent and locations shown in Figure 4.9-6 in the DEIR are reasonably foreseeable.

Regarding steelhead, the comment asserts that the EIR should assess the precise detailed conditions of all creeks and rivers used for steelhead spawning, rearing, and movement including identification of downed logs, fallen riprap, discarded trash, beaver dams in each creek and then establish movement corridors for steelhead. As noted previously, this is a program EIR for a General Plan and thus the analysis is done on a broad landscape level. Detailed site specific analysis of all the creeks used or potentially used by steelhead is not necessary in order to broadly characterize the impacts of the 2007 General Plan on steelhead. The DEIR (page 4.9-41, 4.9-43 and Figure 4.9-5) identified

the major steelhead movement corridors and habitat as including the Salinas River and tributaries (including Gabilan Creek, Arroyo Seco, San Antonio River, and the Nacimiento River), the Carmel River and many of its tributaries, the Big Sur and Little Sur Rivers and other coastal streams, as well as the Pajaro River. The DEIR also discusses potential impacts to the broad movement of wildlife and fish. Where appropriate, project-level reviews (such as for new bridges over steelhead migration routes) will need to assess smaller-scale details in order to determine specific project-level impacts, this is not appropriate for a Program-level document.

Regarding the San Joaquin kit fox, the comment asserts that Mitigation Measure BIO-1.2 will take more than the identified four years and thus will defer mitigation allowing scattered development to occur in the interim. Please refer to response to comment O-11g.77 above. Note, the County amended the measure to identify a four-year time frame so that this is not an open-ended effort and can be put into effect sooner than later to better address impacts to kit fox in the Salinas Valley. The comment provides no evidence that the conservation strategy called for in BIO-1.2 cannot be done in four years.

Regarding winery and ancillary use impacts, the comment asserts that there will be no mitigation for biological resource impacts for the 40 artisan wineries and ancillary uses, the commenter is referred to Master Responses 3 and 8.

O-11g.85 This comment asserts that the DEIR does not address impacts to steelhead from increased diversions from the Salinas River beyond the 9,700 AFY proposed by Phase 1 of the SVWP and allowed by the current NMFS Biological Opinion. Please see the response to this issue in Master Response 3 concerning Phase 2 of the SVWP and steelhead, and in response to comment O-11g.24 above.

O-11g.86 This comment asserts that the DEIR does not address impacts to steelhead from continued operations of Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams. As noted in response to comment O-11g.24, the current operation of these dams is part of the physical baseline for the EIR.

This comment also asserts that the DEIR does not disclose the effects of sedimentation on steelhead and asserts that these impacts will be significant because the DEIR does not propose any substantive mitigation as Policy 3.9 will not develop a cumulative program to address erosion/sedimentation until later. The DEIR, on page 4.9-62, notes that sedimentation from new vineyards could affect special-status species in downstream areas (steelhead are noted as special-status species in Table 4.9-5) and also described erosion and sedimentation as affecting special-status species on page 4.9-65. On page 4.9-66 the DEIR discloses that impacts of the 2007 General Plan on fish species could result from an increase in sediment due to conversion of previously uncultivated slopes. The comment also ignores the water quality analysis in Section 4.3 of the DEIR wherein erosion and sedimentation are analyzed in detail. As explained therein, agriculture (both existing and new) are subject to the requirements of the Central Coast RWQCB's Agricultural Waiver Program as well as the County's standards for agricultural uses (found in 21.66.030) which apply to all new conversions in all zoning districts where agricultural uses are allowed. The County standards require the preparation of an agricultural management plan, including the identification of agricultural management

techniques and proposed development or development alternatives to reduce erosion, protect water quality, and minimize impact to plant and animal habitats. The agricultural management plan is reviewed by the Soil Conservation Service, County Agricultural Commissioner, and the Planning and Building Inspection department. As explained in Master Response 9, *Water Quality*, there are also a series of policies (including OS-3.1 - 3.5, 3.9, 4.2, and 4.3 as well as OS-9) that control erosion and sedimentation in the County. Thus, there are both current controls in place for both urban development and agriculture, as well as new programs that will be put in place to address cumulative impacts over time. Policy OS-9 has been revised to require adoption of the cumulative program within 5 years after adoptions of the 2007 General Plan.

Given the existence of current controls that will apply to agriculture and urban development in the interim and the gradual increase in new sources of potential erosion/sedimentation, no significant impacts are identified in the interim period while the program is being developed. While Section 4.3 does not address impacts to steelhead, by addressing erosion/sedimentation and providing for controls to prevent increases in sedimentation of creeks, the DEIR adequately addresses potential sedimentation impacts to steelhead as well.

- O-11g.87 This comment asserts that the DEIR's cumulative impact analysis is inadequate because no mitigation is proposed for County's contributions to cumulative biological resource impacts. The comment asserts that the County should proposed mitigation for cumulative contributions under County control including low-density development and development on lots of record, agricultural conversions, and wineries, including prompt implementation of an NCCP.

The County is proposing numerous policies in its General Plan and mitigation measures that either reduce impacts from development under the General Plan to a level that is less than significant or to the maximum extent feasible including impacts from low-density development, development on lots of record, agricultural conversions and wineries whenever a discretionary permit is required. The County does not have control over development in any of the neighboring jurisdictions, nor is it the County's responsibility to mitigate for impacts that other jurisdictions may cause. Nevertheless, the County has proposed to work cooperatively with other jurisdictions in Mitigation Measures BIO-1.2 and BIO-1.5 to development long term comprehensive mitigation for the San Joaquin kit fox and other natural biological communities. The County is also a party to the development of a Habitat Conservation Plan that will address development on Fort Ord and the cumulative impacts of development in that area.

Thus, contrary to the commenter's assertion that the County is not requiring any mitigation, the DEIR describes a system of policies and mitigation that would help to reduce cumulative contributions.

Last, as noted in the DEIR and in Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the General Plan*, the County relied upon conservative growth assumptions in its impact analysis that would further reduce the extent of impacts that are projected to occur individually and cumulative. Thus, the DEIR conservatively discloses that the buildout of the 2007 General Plan could contribute considerably to cumulative impacts to biological resources.

O-12a League of Women Voters of the Monterey Peninsula

O-12a.1 The commenter expresses their support for the reduction in the number of Community Areas and Rural Centers in the proposed General Plan update, as well as the limits on development in the North County, Toro, and Greater Salinas Planning Areas. The commenter raises no substantive CEQA issues, so no response is necessary.

O-12a.2 The commenter opposes the elimination of the prohibition against agricultural on uncultivated lands of greater than 25% slope.

See Master Response 3 on Agricultural Policies. Revised Policy OS-3.5 allows conversion of uncultivated lands on slopes greater than 25% only with limited exceptions and only upon approval of a discretionary county permit. This will discourage such conversions and mitigate the impacts of those that are allowed. As discussed in Master Response 3, the commenter's estimate of steeply sloping lands potentially available for conversion is highly overestimated.

O-12a.3 The commenter is concerned that the policies protecting rare and endangered species have been weakened by limiting them to listed species only. The commenter asserts that this is inconsistent with the CEQA Guidelines, which require a broader approach. The commenter opines that placing this requirement in the General Plan is "a far more effective and efficient approach than addressing their protection on a case-by-case basis."

See Master Response 3 regarding agricultural policies and Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*. The proposed General Plan policies are consistent with CEQA. Revised Policy OS-5.16 will require a biological study for discretionary permit projects with the potential to substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare or threatened species, thus meeting the CEQA criteria for evaluating potential significant impacts on biological resources (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15065). To implement this policy, the County will enact an ordinance establishing the standards for biological studies and surveys. Working in conjunction with the CEQA criteria embodied in Policy OS-5.16, revised Mitigation Measures BIO-1.4 and BIO-1.5 will require the County to re-evaluate, at five-year intervals, the degree to which growth may: (1) necessitate the establishment of additional focused growth areas to reduce the loss of species or habitat, and (2) increase the vulnerability of currently non-listed species from becoming rare, threatened, or endangered due to projected development. Revised Mitigation Measure BIO-1.5 would further require the County to develop a conservation strategy to preserve sensitive natural communities, riparian habitats and wetlands, and wildlife movement corridors. See Chapter 4 of this FEIR for revisions to these mitigation measures and policies.

O-12a.4 The commenter asserts that the circulation and noise elements of the proposed General Plan are inadequate. These comments are related to the proposed General Plan, not the adequacy of the EIR. No response is necessary in the FEIR. The comment will be

considered by decision-makers during the deliberative process on the General Plan. Please also see the response to comment O-11g.46.

O-12a.5 The commenter opposes establishment of ministerial uses in the winery corridor and asserts that this would exempt these later projects from CEQA review. See the response to comment O-3.4. The Agriculture and Wine Corridor Plan has been modified to require a biological study (as defined in Policy OS-5.16) for permanent facilities with the potential to affect biological resources, including Artisan Wineries. If the biological study indicates a potential for a significant impact on biological resources, then an administrative permit shall be required.

O-12a.6 The commenter notes that the proposed General Plan and DEIR rely on 2004 AMBAG projections, rather than AMBAG's adopted June 2008 forecast. The commenter asserts that this approach results in the proposed General Plan being inconsistent with the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District's (MBUAPCD's) 2008 Air Quality Management Plan.

See Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the General Plan*. Please refer also to the response to comment L.10-31 for a further discussion of this issue.

O-12a.7 The commenter asserts that the proposed General Plan's growth projection for the Monterey Peninsula is inconsistent with the 2004 AMBAG population forecasts and the data used for the 2004 AMBAG traffic model.

See Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the General Plan*.

O-12a.8 The commenter asks how the growth forecasts were adjusted to account for the exclusion of the coastal zone areas from the DEIR analysis. The commenter also asserts that potential growth in the Pebble Beach area should be discussed in the DEIR.

See Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the General Plan*.

The proposed General Plan update does not include an update to the Del Monte Forest LCP, which includes Pebble Beach. There are currently no formal proposals for changes to this LCP and attempting to estimate some future level of growth beyond the adopted LCP is remote and speculative. The County's approval of a coastal development permit (CDP) for development within Pebble Beach was appealed to the California Coastal Commission in 2006. In response to the Coastal Commission's clear lack of support for the both the project and the related revisions to the LCP, the CDP was rescinded by the Board of Supervisors in December 2006. The Coastal Commission then removed the appeal of the coastal development permit from its agenda. Coastal Commission staff opined at the time that both the proposed revisions to the LCP and County "Measure A" that purportedly revised the LCP by initiative were inconsistent with the Coastal Act in several substantive areas and unlikely to be approved by the Commission in any case. As a result, there is no evidence that the LCP will be amended to allow additional development and that the Coastal Commission would approve such an amendment.

O-12a.9 The commenter asks where the DEIR's estimate of annual building permits comes from. See Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the General Plan*.

O-12a.10 The commenter asks how growth in the coastal zone is accounted for in the proposed General Plan's 2030 estimates, and the relationship of the estimates to AMBAG 2030 growth forecasts. See Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the General Plan*.

O-12a.11 The commenter requests clarification of the growth estimates from Table 3-8 in the DEIR; asking why winery corridor units and subdivisions outside of Community Areas and Rural Centers are excluded from the 2030 implementation number. Also, the commenter asks that the 2092 buildout numbers be re-evaluated to assure consistency with GPU5 policies.

See Master Response 2 regarding the growth assumptions used in the DEIR.

The AWCP does not propose substantial changes to the existing County restrictions on residential use of farmlands. Monterey County's Farmlands zoning district allows three single-family residences and one guesthouse on each parcel without a discretionary permit. In comparison, the AWCP would allow one single-family residence, one guesthouse, and three employees' residences. This is a net change in development potential of one residential unit per site. This minor change to potential growth in the southern portion of Monterey County would not affect the overall conclusions of the DEIR regarding the General Plan's impacts on resources.

O-12a.12 The commenter asserts that the proposed General Plan would amend the County's LCP. The comment notes that the Castroville Community Area is in the Coastal Zone and its community plan was before the Coastal Commission for consideration at the time of their letter. Because the Castroville Community Area is identified as one of the five Community Areas in the proposed General Plan, the commenter argues that the General Plan is therefore amending the LCP. Please see Master Response 11 regarding coastal resources and applicability of the general plan.

The Castroville Community Plan has been proceeding on a parallel course to the proposed General Plan update. The County approved the Castroville Community Plan in 2007 (after certifying that Plan's EIR) and that status is reflected in the proposed General Plan. Since that time, the County submitted the Community Plan to the California Coastal Commission for consideration as a major amendment to the County's certified Local Coastal Program. In the face of Commission staff opposition to the proposed amendment, the County withdrew it from consideration by the Commission at the Commission's March 12, 2009 meeting. Master Response 11 describes the current disposition of the Castroville Community Plan relative to the proposed General Plan update and explains why CEQA does not require the County to consider this community plan in the EIR for the General Plan update.

O-12a.13 The commenter asks for clarification of the relationship between the proposed General Plan and the County's 1979 Growth Management Policy.

The discussion of the Growth Management Policy in the DEIR is intended to provide a context for the proposed General Plan's emphasis on discouraging new growth outside of urbanized areas and areas with the services to support growth. The proposed General

Plan's policies find their philosophical origin in the Growth Management Policy, but that policy has not been incorporated directly into the proposed General Plan.

- O-12a.14 The commenter notes that there is a typo on page 4.1-10, line 7 of the DEIR -- "incorporated" should be "unincorporated." The commenter is correct and the reader's attention is directed to that change in Chapter 4.
- O-12a.15 The commenter notes that state law requires the County to update its zoning ordinance to match its general plan and asks that the text of the DEIR be revised from stating that zoning ordinance revisions "promote" consistency to stating that they "assure" consistency. The change being requested reflects the commenter's preferred language, but does not affect the accuracy of the existing text. Government Code Section 65860 requires that the County update the zoning ordinance "within a reasonable time" of adopting the updated General Plan. This will assure that the two are consistent.
- O-12a.16 The commenter suggests that the DEIR's finding that over 2,500 acres of agricultural land may be converted to non-agricultural uses at build-out of the General Plan "cannot be justified" on the basis of the 2008 AMBAG forecast for housing growth in unincorporated areas between 2005 and 2030. Under the discussion of Impact AG-1, the DEIR states that the exact amount of conversion expected by 2030 is not being estimated, but rather the figure reflects full buildout. The buildout analysis was based on conversion of lands adjacent to cities to meet future housing needs, as well as conversion within the County. Growth estimates were based on the 2004 AMBAG forecast, which was higher than their 2008 forecast.
- The commenter misunderstands the effect of using a higher estimate on the impact conclusions drawn in the DEIR. The DEIR is not attempting to "justify" the General Plan or its policies, it is attempting to determine the significance those policies may have on the environment at such time as they are implemented. As a result, erring on the side of overestimating the level of growth that may occur results in identifying a more severe impact than may actually occur. The purpose of the DEIR is to disclose the potential for environmental impact and the preparers of the DEIR did not want to underestimate the level of that potential.
- O-12a.17 The commenter suggests that a brief description of the MPWMD's Ordinance 135 should be added to the discussion of regulatory framework in Chapter 4.3, *Water Resources*. Ordinance 135, adopted by the MPWMD Board on September 29, 2008, amended the MPWMD's rules for staged water restrictions that are imposed during water emergencies when available supplies are projected to be insufficient to meet demands. The amendments were made in response to the adjudication of groundwater in the Seaside Basin and the expected outcome of the SWRCB's cease and desist order regarding CalAm's unauthorized use of water originating from the Carmel River discussed in the DEIR on page 4.3-39. See Master Response 4 regarding water supply for a discussion of the adjudication and Cease and Desist Order. The EIR has been revised to briefly discuss Ordinance 135 (see Chapter 4).
- O-12a.18 The commenter asks whether the MCWRA's estimate of the decline in agricultural water demand in the Salinas Valley accounts for increased agricultural use that would be allowed on steep slopes. Please see Master Response 4, Section 4.2.1 on agricultural

water supply. The level of detail requested by commenter in assessing water usage on “steep slopes” is not necessary to determine the water demands for the Project as a whole and would not be an appropriate predictor of agricultural water demand in Salinas Valley. Please see Master Response 10 on the level of detail required in an EIR. The MCWRA’s data and the DEIRs impact analysis is not focused upon individual types of agricultural water usage (i.e. water usage on steep slopes), but rather focuses upon agricultural water usage trends for the agricultural industry as a whole as shown in Master Response 4, Exhibit W-1. These trends incorporate a number of factors which would not be captured if this analysis were focused upon water usage on “steep slopes,” such as water conservation by agriculturalists, the conversion of agricultural land to urban uses around the Salinas Valley cities, and the cultivation of crops, such as grapes, that tend to use less water than the row crops that have traditionally been grown in the Valley. Please also see Master Response 3 on general plan agricultural policies for a discussion of the low likelihood that extensive conversions will occur on steep slopes.

- O-12a.19 The commenter asks that the discussion on page 4.3-34 of the DEIR identify whether the reference is to Phase 1 or Phase 2 of the SVWP. The discussion relates to Phase 1.
- O-12a.20 The commenter notes that while the DEIR states that no additional demand in the Carmel River basin is expected under GPU5, this contradicts earlier reference to a number of projects that would rely on the basin as their source of water. The referenced text was in error. The DEIR clearly indicates new demand in Table 4.3-9 which was the basis for the impact analysis. The language has been revised in the text to address this comment. See Chapter 4.
- O-12a.21 The commenter states that the discussion of the PVWMA is “significantly out-of-date” and should be revised. No details are provided on what the commenter believes is “out-of-date” or “new information.” The County respectfully disagrees with this characterization of the discussion. It is not out of date, nor is substantial revision necessary. See Master Response 4 Sections 4.1 through 4.4 regarding water supply for additional information about the North County water supply.
- O-12a.22 The commenter asserts that the Draft General Plan’s policies and Mitigation Measure PS-1 will not prevent significant impacts by 2030 and 2092 on the County’s impaired water bodies. Please note that page 4.3-54 and Table 4.3-8 are part of the “Regulatory Framework” discussion and not the impact analysis which begins on page 4.3-90. Water Quality Impacts are addressed under Impacts WR-1, WR-2, and WR-3. Furthermore, the General Plan includes Policy PS-2.8 which “requires that all projects be designed to maintain or increase the site’s pre-development absorption of rainfall...” Please also see Master Response 9 regarding water quality for an updated list of impaired water bodies, as well as a detailed discussion of the Draft General Plan policies and state/regional regulations that will protect water quality in the future. This impact will be less than significant, with the implementation of the comprehensive set of policies, programs, and regulations.
- O-12a.23 The commenter asserts that the DEIR’s finding that the Draft General Plan will have no significant effect on erosion is unsupported in light of the provisions for Routine and Ongoing Agricultural Activities. The comment refers to the General Plan Policy discussion of Impact WR-2. Impact WR-2 addresses water quality associated with

development. Please see Impact WR-3 for discussion of water quality impacts associated with *agricultural* development. Commenter is also referred to the Geology discussion in Section 4.4 under Impacts GEO-4 and GEO-5 for discussion of erosion related impacts. Please also see Master Response 9 regarding water quality and Master Response 3 regarding the AWCP and agricultural resources for a discussion of agricultural runoff restrictions and routine and ongoing agricultural policies. Routine and Ongoing Agricultural activities are and will continue to be subject to the CCRWQCB's agricultural waiver program. This impact will be less than significant.

- O-12a.24 The commenter asserts that the DEIR uses inconsistent projections from AMBAG (regarding population) and MCWRA (regarding water supply) to support its contention that there will be no net increase in overall agricultural acreage through 2030. Please see Master Response 4 Section 4.2.1 for a discussion of agricultural water demand. Please also see Master Response 2 regarding growth and Master Response 3 on the topic of potential for agricultural conversion of uncultivated lands on slopes.
- O-12a.25 The commenter notes that the CalAm proposal for the Coastal Water Project will only provide water to address Order 95-10 and the Seaside Aquifer adjudication. This is incorrect. The DEIR for the Coastal Water Project makes it clear that a larger supply is also under consideration. See Master Response 4, Section 4.3.2, regarding the Coastal Water Project and the "North Marina Project" and "Regional Water Supply Project" alternatives. The County cannot predict at this time what final decision will be made by the PUC regarding the alternatives under consideration.
- O-12a.26 The commenter asks whether the water demand estimates for wineries include water for operational needs. The 7 gallon assumption refers to "gross unit water demand" for wineries, which would include operational water usage for uses such as sterilization. The estimate is based on typical water use at wineries in the Napa Valley. It does not include landscaping or water demand from ancillary uses. See Master Response 4 on water supply for a revised estimate of water demand from new wineries in the AWCP.
- O-12a.27 The commenter notes that the reference to the Coastal Water Project providing water to meet Fort Ord allotments is not correct because Fort Ord allotments are not served by Cal-Am. The Regional Water Supply Project alternative would provide sufficient additional water to the Marina Coast Water District to meet the future needs of Fort Ord (2,700 AFY). See the response to comment O-12a.25.
- O-12a.28 The commenter notes that the Monterey County's Regional Water Supply Program has been revised to exclude brackish water desalination. Two projects with similar names – the Regional Water Supply Project and the Regional Urban Water Augmentation Project – are being examined for feasibility. The Regional Water Supply Project is being examined by the California Public Utilities Commission as an alternative to the Coastal Water Project that would provide water to both the Monterey Peninsula and portions of the North County area. The Regional Urban Water Augmentation Project is being examined by the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency and Marina Coast Water District. See Master Response 4 on Water Supply for a discussion of these projects. Whether either project involves brackish water recovery is not pertinent to the 2007 General Plan or the EIR. Furthermore, one of the purposes of impact analysis WR-

5 is to address potential alternatives to supply water within the County. The discussion of brackish desalination is still therefore appropriate under this analysis.

- O-12a.29 The commenter asserts that the DEIR's mitigation measure BIO-2.1 is a deferred measure that lacks the specific performance standards necessary for adequacy. Measure BIO-2.1 requires the County to enact a Streambed Setback Ordinance in order to preserve riparian habitat and limit the release of sediment to streams and rivers.

Please see Master Response 10 regarding the specificity of mitigation measures required in a program EIR. As discussed in that Master Response, a general plan's program EIR is not expected to analyze site-specific impacts. The 2007 General Plan consists of goals and policies that will guide future development decisions. It does not, for the most part, include site-specific development proposals. Mitigation measures are components of the DEIR and are subject to the same requirements regarding their level of detail. (See CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4; see also CEQA Guidelines Sections 15143, 15146, 15151, 15204.) Mitigation Measure BIO-2.1 describes the requirements for the future Streambed Setback Ordinance sufficiently to ensure that the ordinance will contain the elements necessary to ensure that it will reduce the release of sediments. This includes: minimum standards for setbacks for new development; "appropriate uses" within the setback area that would not result in a compromise of water quality; developing a standardized methodology and mapping requirement for rivers and creeks that will result in a stream classification system; and setback standards to be developed for each class of river and creek (with specified key rivers and creeks requiring unique setbacks).

In response to comment S-9.23 from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, measure BIO-2.1 has been revised to apply to all discretionary conversions of previously uncultivated agricultural land, rather than only land on slopes. The Streambed Setback Ordinance will be developed through a public process and will involve the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

- O-12a.30 The commenter asks why there is no mention of the abandoned asbestos mine near King City. The commenter is apparently referring to the King City Asbestos Corporation mine located in the Diablo Range, approximately 30 air miles east of the City of King City. The mine ceased operations in 1988 and is within San Benito County. The discussion of mines on page 4.5-5 of the DEIR is intended to be a broad overview of mining within the County. This mine is no longer in operation and is located in another county. The comment provides no evidence that the mine is relevant to analysis in the EIR. There is no requirement to discuss it.

- O-12a.31 The commenter notes that the ½ cent sales tax intended to fund substantial portions of the regional road network that is on the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) regional fee project list was defeated by voters in the November 2008 election. The commenter further notes that this makes the affected road projects unlikely to be constructed on schedule, if at all, and asks that the EIR explain the need for significant other sources of financing for planned regional road improvements.

TAMC's Regional Development Impact Fee applies to new development projects county-wide and is earmarked for specific projects throughout the County. The regional fee went into effect in August 2008. The Joint Powers Agreement establishing the Regional

Development Impact Fee required the establishment of a process to prioritize the expenditure of fee revenues, if the sales tax for funding transportation improvements was not enacted. With the narrow November 2008 defeat of the transportation sales tax measure, the requirement that a mechanism be used to prioritize the expenditure of fee revenues became operative.

In October 2009, TAMC adopted its Strategic Expenditure Plan for the Regional Development Impact Fees. The prioritization strategy embodied in this plan consists of two parts: funding tiers establishing timeframes of 2009-2015 (Tier 1), 2016-2024 (Tier 2), and 2025-2030 (Tier 3), and project development criteria establishing a points system for ranking projects. The ranking criteria include: project readiness, funding availability, level of need/urgency, cost effectiveness, and geographic distribution. Fee program projects that are not expected to be fully funded by 2030 are identified in Tier 4, at least for that portion of the overall cost not funded by 2030.

Most of the projects identified on the Regional Development Impact Fee list will be built during the Tiers 1 through 3 timeframe. Notable exceptions are: the SR 156 widening to four lanes, the Davis Road widening portion of the Westside Bypass, SR 68 commuter improvements, the US-101/Harris Road interchange, and the Marina-Salinas Corridor-B.

- O-12a.32 The commenter notes that the widening of Espinosa Road is listed in Table 4.6-13 of the DEIR, but not in the Draft General Plan. The widening of Espinosa Road is currently on the TAMC "Constrained" List, meaning that it is a reasonably foreseeable future road improvement. See the response to comment O-11g.50.
- O-12a.33 The commenter asks for clarification of how coastal residential units are accounted for in the traffic model. The traffic model covers the entire county, however, the traffic analysis assumed no growth in the Coastal area of the county. See Master Response 2, section 2.5, regarding growth assumptions and Master Response 11 regarding Coastal Resources and General Plan Applicability. Growth within the Coastal Zone by 2030 is anticipated to be approximately 423 units. An increase of an average of about 21 units per year has no substantial effect on the outcome of the traffic model run. The model run that is reflected in the DEIR is correct for purposes of analyzing the effects of a general plan in a program EIR. See also Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail expected of a general plan EIR.
- O-12a.34 The commenter notes that while the DEIR finds that county roadways would not fall below LOS D because of Draft General Plan policies, the DEIR "fails to address Policy C-1.1 which allows County roads and intersections to degrade below D through the Community Plan process."

The commenter mischaracterizes the findings of the DEIR. Development to 2030 and buildout in 2092 will result in numerous road segments that will exceed the County's general standard of LOS D. Where this occurs, the DEIR identifies it as a significant and unavoidable impact (see, e.g., Impact TRAN-2B). Policy C-1.1 expresses the County's objective for acceptable levels of congestion. However, this will not be possible to maintain in all cases. Impacts within this portion of the County are disclosed on page 4.6-61 of the DEIR and in Table 4.6-18.

- O-12a.35 The commenter contends that the DEIR's conclusion regarding non-conflict with alternative modes of transportation "fails to account for communities such as Pajaro and the seven rural centers which are dispersed throughout the county at densities and locations that are not readily serviced by public transit (over 1,000 units). The commenter goes on to assert that the DEIR similarly underestimates conflicts due to sprawl development, and should analyze how each of the AHO districts will promote more affordable housing near public transportation, workplaces, shopping, and schools.

Although the General Plan can offer no guarantees that public transportation will be available, it can provide the opportunity to provide public transportation by concentrating populations in Pajaro and the other Community Areas and Rural Centers rather than over larger areas. The result is that fewer stops are necessary to serve a large number of potential clients. This does not create a conflict with alternative modes of transportation by creating barriers to or eliminating the potential for alternatives modes when financing is available.

The County identified the proposed AHOs based upon access to population centers and accordingly those proposed in the General Plan would meet the criteria in the General Plan for the designation of AHOs. The comment will be considered by the decision makers during deliberations on the General Plan.

- O-12a.36 The commenter asserts that the conclusion on page 4.6-57 of the DEIR that project-specific traffic impacts will be less than significant under "2030 cumulative plus project conditions" as a result of Draft General Plan policies is not supported. The commenter asserts that allowing a fair-share contribution rather than concurrent improvements would result in significant traffic impacts. Also, the commenter notes that the Draft General Plan policies do not affect city projects that could contribute to cumulative impacts.

Please refer to Master Response 6, *Traffic Mitigation* and Master Response 10 which includes a discussion of mitigation fees. Under CEQA, payment of fair-share contributions is permissible as effective mitigation if the fees are "part of a reasonable plan of actual mitigation that the relevant agency commits itself to implementing." (*Anderson First Coalition v. City of Anderson* (2005) 130 Cal.App.4th 1173, 1187; *Save Our Peninsula Comm. v. Monterey County Board of Supervisors* (2001) 81 Cal.App.4th 99, 141.) The EIR's analysis of the General Plan policies requiring development impact fees meets the requirements of CEQA. The concurrency issue raised by the commenter is addressed by revisions to General Plan Policies C-1.3 and C-1.4 which will require improvements to be installed concurrent with development. See Chapter 5 of this FEIR for the text of these policies. These specifically provide as follows:

Note that the County has already adopted the TAMC fee pursuant to Policy C-1.11. Policy C-1.8 requires the County to develop a County Traffic Impact Fee Program to address the impacts of development in cities and in the unincorporated area on major County roads. This program will be developed in consultant with the cities and adjacent jurisdictions.

- O-12a.37 The commenter asserts that the DEIR's finding that Winery Corridor projects would have a less than significant effect on roadways as a result of mitigation, "calls into question" the future impacts of ministerial projects within the corridor that would be exempt from

later CEQA analysis. Also, the commenter asserts that the DEIR “fails to address safety issues related to the conflict between agricultural vehicles which use County roads and visitors to wine tasting facilities.”

The traffic analysis of the Winery Corridor assumed the existence of the full-scale and artisan wineries. The specific road improvements, achieved through Mitigation Measure TRAN-5A and through the 2007 General Plan’s Capital Improvement Financing Plan policy, are not extensive and it is expected that a combination of the mitigation measure (requiring project-specific mitigation) and the Financing Plan (providing a mechanism for a fair-share fee) which will be imposed on all new facilities, would provide sufficient funding for these improvements. Please refer to Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, section 3.5, for further responses to this comment.

- O-12a.38 The commenter notes that the DEIR does not address the impact of new development on deteriorating roads and highways. The comment asserts that roadways will continue to degrade, increasing safety hazards and more and more potholes.

Road maintenance is paid for by the County general fund, gasoline taxes passed through to the County by the state, and projects administered by TAMC under its funding programs. The County will continue to apply the available revenues, which will increase with the increase in population under the Draft General Plan, to maintenance activities.

- O-12a.39 The commenter asserts that the DEIR relies upon an outdated 2004 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) to determine the Draft General Plan’s cumulative contribution to regional ozone levels and should have found a significant impact on regional air quality based on the 2008 AQMP. The commenter continues that the cumulative impact analysis fails to address city growth as described in the transportation section of the DEIR. They additionally assert that the analysis of the impact of fermentation emissions on ozone levels should be revised to reflect actual daily emissions, rather than relying on annual daily averages that do not reflect the distribution of emissions.

As stated by the discussion of the 2008 AQMP on page 4.7-11 of the DEIR and shown in Table 4.7-2, the air quality analysis is based on the 2008 AQMP. Additionally, the DEIR’s mitigation measures include measures identified in the 2008 AQMP. Contrary to the commenter’s assertion, Impact AQ-3 of the DEIR concludes that the Draft General plan would result in the production of a significant and unavoidable impact from increased levels of ozone precursors.

As discussed at various points in Section 4.7 of the DEIR, the air quality analysis is based on the traffic analysis prepared for the DEIR. It includes the same growth assumptions as found in the transportation analysis.

An analysis of daily emissions from wineries, as suggested by the commenter, is not a reasonable approach. The fermentation emissions are an estimate, at best, based on the assumption that all of the full-scale and artisan wineries would be built. Precise information is not available about future wineries – their size, type of wine being produced, and fermentation methods, for example. Without this information, attempting

to analyze daily emissions would be an exercise in speculation. The estimated emissions in the DEIR are sufficient to disclose the potential for impacts over the long-term of the General Plan (i.e., 2030 and 2092). Please refer also to responses to comments in letter L-10 (Monterey Bay Unified APCD).

The health impacts of air pollutants are discussed in Section 4.7.2.2 of the DEIR.

- O-12a.40 The commenter asserts that the DEIR incorrectly identifies the designation status for State and Federal air quality standards and fails to reference PM_{2.5} standards. The commenter asks that this information be updated. Text in the FEIR has been revised in response to this comment. The revised text does not differ substantially from the discussion in the DEIR. Please see Chapter for the pertinent changes.
- O-12a.41 The commenter notes that the air quality monitoring station in Carmel Valley is not listed in the DEIR. The purpose of the DEIR air quality discussion is to present a county-level analysis of air quality. Because it is not and does not need to be a site-specific study, the Salinas 3 monitoring station, which monitors the spectrum of criteria emissions, is used as representative of the County's air quality. As shown below, the Carmel Valley station monitors only a limited spectrum of emissions. It is not suitable for use in characterizing county-wide air quality.

The Monterey Bay Unified APCD maintains the following monitoring stations in Monterey County: Carmel Valley, Salinas, and King City. It also maintains a monitoring station in nearby Watsonville in southern Santa Cruz County. The stations that monitor the air quality parameters are now mentioned in revisions to the DEIR in Chapter 4.

- O-12a.42 The commenter notes that Table 4.7-2 is identified as presenting air quality monitoring data for the past three years on page 4.7-8, when it actually lists VOC emissions from wine fermentation and aging.

The reference on page 4.7-8 is incorrect. The referenced table was inadvertently left out of the DEIR. The discussion, analysis, and conclusions reached in the DEIR were based on the air quality data for the three years preceding issuance of the DEIR. No changes are necessary to the determinations made in the EIR. The reader is directed to the information in Chapter 4, reflecting the air quality monitoring data for 2006-2008.

- O-12a.43 The commenter notes that Table 4.7-3 includes a year 2000 population that exceeds the project population in 2030 and that the "2000 number makes no sense."

The 2000 with project scenario consists of the year 2000 plus the entire buildout of the 2007 General Plan using the 2000 emission rates; it is only intended to demonstrate the scale of raw change from 2000 without considering changes in emission rates over time. This has been clarified in Chapter 4 of the FEIR. Also, see the response to comment O-11g.57 for clarification of the table.

- O-12a.44 The commenter opines that the policies of the Draft General Plan do not assure that development would remain consistent with the AQMP. The commenter notes that "2030

buildout” is inconsistent with the 2008 AQMP. As a result, the commenter believes that the 2092 buildout “should be found to have significant effects on regional ozone levels.”

The commenter does not provide any evidence to support commenter’s opinion. As discussed in Chapter 4.7, *Air Quality*, ozone is the result of reactions among gases in the presence of sunlight and heat. Reductions in the gaseous precursors of ozone will reduce the production of ozone. Monterey County is currently well below state and federal standards for ozone. Continued improvements in vehicle emissions control technology, as well as projected increased use of hybrid and electric vehicles, including trucks and buses, are expected to reduce emissions of ozone precursors. A number of programs that are being pursued at the State level under the AB 32 “Scoping Plan” to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 have the co-benefit of reducing Nitrogen Dioxide emissions, one of the ozone precursors. These include the “Pavley Regulations” that will reduce GHG emissions from light vehicles by 45 percent by 2020 (California Air Resources Board 2008c), and the hybridization of medium and heavy-duty vehicles (California Air Resources Board 2008e). Please also refer to the response to L-10-31.

- O-12a.45 The commenter notes that Mitigation Measure AQ-1 appears to have words missing from it.

This is a typographical error. The mitigation measure is intended to ensure that future construction will comply with the Monterey Bay Unified APCD’s standards for controlling the production of inhalable particles. The text has been revised in response to this comment. Please see Chapter 4 of this FEIR.

- O-12a.46 The commenter notes that the DEIR concludes potential impacts from diesel exhaust emissions will be less than significant if specific mitigation is imposed. The commenter contends that there is no evidence that Mitigation Measure AQ-6 (which requires specific actions to reduce the release of diesel contaminants) would effectively reduce the potential impact below a level of significance. Further, they contend that concluding proposed Mitigation Measure AQ-7 (which recommends setbacks for new sensitive uses from freeways) will reduce exposure to a less than significant level is not supported by evidence.

The Air Resources Board is undertaking a number of programs intended to reduce diesel emissions from both on-road and off-road vehicles and machinery, and from stationary sources. Mitigation Measure AQ-6 intends to require construction machinery to conform to Air Resources Board regulations. The Air Resources Board’s regulations impose limits on idling, buying older off-road diesel vehicles, and selling vehicles beginning in 2008; require all vehicles to be reported to ARB and labeled in 2009; and then in 2010 begin gradual requirements to clean up the vehicle fleet by getting rid of older engines, using newer engines, and installing exhaust retrofits. The overall purpose of the regulation is to reduce emissions of oxides of nitrogen (NOx) and particulate matter (PM) from off-road diesel vehicles. (California Air Resources Board 2009a) In combination, these will ensure that future emissions are less than significant.

Mitigation Measure AQ-7 is based on the recommendations of the Air Resources Board’s 2005 *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook*. The handbook includes a discussion of risks of diesel emissions and recommends setbacks as a means to reduce these risks to

acceptable levels. The County relies upon this handbook as substantial evidence of the benefit of locating sensitive land uses away from high volume roads.

O-12a.47 The commenter notes that the Monterey Bay Unified APCD has identified diesel risk corridors as part of the preparation of its Carl Moyer Grant Program (the Carl Moyer program offers incentives for the replacement of stationary diesel engines with electrical motors). The commenter asserts that the DEIR “does not substantially address the increase in operational diesel exhaust emissions from mobile and stationary sources.” The commenter argues that because urban development intensifies the concentration of diesel exhaust, the DEIR must explain why it is unlikely that the cumulative impact of diesel exhaust emissions would not be significant and unavoidable. The commenter suggests adding a mitigation measure requiring project applicants to work with the Air District “to assure that the cumulative impacts of diesel exhaust emissions fall within public health standards.”

The commenter also asserts that the DEIR fails to address the cumulative impact of other sources of toxic emissions. “Since over 80 percent of the population is already exposed to levels exceeding the District’s threshold of significance, increases in traffic congestion and other sources of toxic air contaminants allowed by the GPU5 would have a significant and unavoidable cumulative impact on the public’s exposure to toxic air contaminants.”

The ARB and, at the regional level the Monterey Bay Unified APCD, have numerous programs underway that will significantly reduce diesel exhaust emissions in the future as California grows. These will ensure that growth in Monterey County will not result in an increase in overall risk. For example, the ARB’s Diesel Risk Reduction Plan sets a goal of 75 percent PM reduction by 2010 and 85 percent by 2020. This is guiding a variety of ARB programs and regulations. The ARB adopted a low sulfur diesel fuel rule in 2003. Both ARB and the U.S. EPA have adopted emissions standards for 2007 and subsequent model year heavy duty diesel engines that are expected to result in a 90% reduction in PM emissions in comparison to the pre-2007 regulations. The ARB has entered into an agreement with the Union Pacific and BNSF railroads to reduce diesel emissions from trains and railyards. The Carl Moyer Grant Program provides funding to assist owners of older heavy duty motors and engines to repower with cleaner motors. This includes the conversion of irrigation pump motors. The Lower-Emission School Bus Program will, as funding becomes available, provide funds to replace or retrofit school buses with cleaner engines. Other programs are discussed in the response to comment O-12a.46 above.

In addition, the ARB’s Scoping Plan for reducing GHG emissions is expected to yield co-benefits in the form of lower diesel emissions. Pertinent elements include the Pavley clean car standards, the low carbon fuel standard, and the heavy duty vehicle greenhouse gas emissions reduction discrete early action (improved aerodynamics to reduce fuel usage and thereby emissions).

The commenter recommends that “project applicants work with the Air District to assure that cumulative impacts of diesel exhaust emissions fall within public health standards should be added to the list of mitigation measures”. This measure would be redundant to the MBUAPCD’s regulations. The MBUAPCD has established project-level thresholds for achieving and maintaining the health based ambient air quality standards in the

region. These include diesel emission factors and Diesel Health Risk Assessment Guidance. See http://www.mbuapcd.org/mbuapcd/pdf/mbuapcd/pdf/CEQA_full.pdf.

- O-12a.48 The commenter asks that the DEIR address increased fugitive dust emissions from the conversion of steep slopes to agricultural use.

The Draft General Plan's policies will not substantially increase the potential for fugitive dust emissions resulting from future agricultural conversions. The conversion of previously uncultivated lands to agricultural use is not covered by currently adopted General Plan policies. It is covered in some of the agricultural zoning districts. Although the Farmlands and Rural Grazing zones require a conditional use permit prior to the conversion of uncultivated lands on slopes between 15-25% (in the North County Area Plan, Central Salinas Valley Plan, Cachagua Area Plan, only), no permit is required in the Permanent Grazing and Open Space zones.

In contrast, proposed Conservation and Open Space Element Policy OS-3.5, as revised, would require a discretionary permit for the conversion of previously uncultivated land to agricultural use on slopes from 10-15% (where soils are highly erodible), 15-25% slopes, and greater than 25% (prohibited, except under specified circumstances). The permit would require a management plan to reduce erosion potential, incorporate water conservation and water quality considerations, address water demand and availability, and protect important vegetation and wildlife habitats. The proposed Policy OS-3.5 will discourage future conversions in all agricultural zoning districts in comparison to existing policies. As a result, the implementation of the Draft General Plan is not expected to increase the potential for fugitive dust emissions.

- O-12a.49 The commenter asserts that conversion of uncultivated steep slopes will result in a significant and unavoidable impact on biological resources. The commenter also asserts that the 40 artisan wineries, 200 dwelling units, and other facilities that may be allowed ministerially under the AWCP would have a significant and unavoidable impact on biological resources.

The conclusion in the DEIR that conversion of previously uncultivated land to agricultural uses would not cause significant impacts on soil movement and wildlife movement is based on substantial evidence, including the projected rate and locations where conversion would occur. In developing these projections, the County considered the historic rate of conversion, economic trends, availability of water, and the location of suitable soils. See Master Responses 3 regarding agricultural policies and 8 regarding biological resources for additional discussion of these considerations.

Further, the Draft General Plan definitions and revised policies and would further restrict and regulate the conversion of previously uncultivated land to agricultural uses in two important ways. First, the Draft General Plan narrows the definition of "previously uncultivated land" to mean "areas that have not been cultivated during the past 20 years." (General Plan Glossary) Current County policy does not provide for a timeframe limitation. Second, under revised Draft General Plan Policy OS-3.5, discretionary permits would be required for conversion of previously uncultivated land containing slopes and highly erodible soils. See Master Response 3 for additional discussion of slope conversion.

The AWCP allows up to 4 units per new winery (one residential unit and 3 units of employee housing). This would total 120 units maximum, not 200 dwelling units as suggested by commenter. The worst case scenario would be 120 new units allowed by 2030, or 6 units per year. This very small number of additional units, distributed over the distributed over the AWCP's large geographic area, would not cause new or worse significant environmental impacts beyond those disclosed in the DEIR. Please refer to Master Response 4 for a discussion of water supply impacts, and Master Response 8 for the biological resource impacts, associated with new residential units in the AWCP.

The AWCP does not propose substantial changes to the existing County restrictions on residential use of farmlands, including those lands within the AWCP. Monterey County's Farmlands zoning district allows three single-family residences and one guesthouse on each parcel without a discretionary permit. In comparison, the AWCP would allow one single-family residence, one guesthouse, and three employees' residences. This is a net change in development potential of one residential unit per site. In addition, the language in the AWCP has been modified to require a biological study for permanent facilities with the potential to affect biological resources. This requirement would apply to the artisan wineries.

- O-12a.50 The commenter asserts that the Draft General Plan would result in a significant and unavoidable impact on wildlife corridors. The commenter requests that the wildlife corridors affected by the AWCP be identified and the impacts of non-discretionary activities under the AWCP discussed.

See Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, regarding slope conversion, and Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, regarding wildlife corridors. The AWCP is revised to stipulate that artisan wineries will be required to undertake biological surveys prior to approval (see Chapter 5 of this FEIR for the revised text). This will help protect wildlife corridors that may be on one of these sites.

- O-12a.51 The commenter notes that the DEIR finds that GPU5 will have a less than significant effect on the need for new or expanded fire facilities. The commenter asserts that the DEIR does not address the "more than 2,000 [residential] units that could be constructed in inland areas and the cumulative impact on fire services of units within Coastal areas." The commenter asserts that this would disperse new units throughout the rural areas of the County and that "[a]lready overstrained services would be further weakened as a result of emergency personnel having to make more trips to distant sites."

The Draft General Plan will be more restrictive of rural development than the current General Plan. Therefore, although additional development in rural areas will result in an increased burden on fire protection services, the Draft General Plan does not establish policies that would result in a greater risk than would occur at buildout of the existing (1982) General Plan. This is an existing long-term risk that would be reduced, not increased, under the Draft General Plan. For example, under the Draft General Plan development would be limited to a single family home on each lot of record within a portion of the Greater Salinas Area Plan, a portion of the Toro Area Plan, and all of the North County Area Plan. This restriction does not exist in the existing General Plan. The overall cap on additional development within the Carmel Valley Master Plan is

unchanged by the Draft General Plan. Where development is allowed in greater intensity under the Draft General Plan, it is concentrated around Community Areas, Rural Centers, and AHOs where services will be required to be provided concurrent with additional development. Please also refer to the Safety Element and Public Services Element Policies S-4.1 through S-4.33. The Draft General Plan does not amend the certified LCP and therefore does not increase the Coastal area's potential to accommodate new development.

- O-12a.52 The commenter asserts that the DEIR does not adequately address the availability of fire services in the unincorporated area, including the southern Highway 101 corridor. In addition, the commenter requests that the DEIR be revised to describe the types of fire protection services provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire). The commenter asserts that the DEIR "should provide information that will allow for an assessment of high fire hazards and identify areas that do not have structural coverage." As discussed in response O-12a-51, the Draft General Plan is not substantively increasing the existing long-range risk of fire damage. At the same time, as demonstrated by the large wildfires that have burned portions of the county in recent years, Monterey County is at substantial risk of damage from wildland fires.

In addition, in response to several comments received, the County is proposing to revise Policy S-5.1. Please see Chapter 5 for the pertinent text changes.

Wildland fire is discussed in Chapter 4.13, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, of the DEIR and under Impact HAZ-3. The following expands on the discussion found on page 4.13-3 of the DEIR.

Cal Fire provides fire protection or pays for fire protection within "State Responsibility Areas" (SRAs) established throughout the State. Public Resources Code Section 4126 defines the criteria for inclusion within an SRA:

4126. The [Board of Forestry] shall include within state responsibility areas all of the following lands:

- (a) Lands covered wholly or in part by forests or by trees producing or capable of producing forest products.
- (b) Lands covered wholly or in part by timber, brush, undergrowth, or grass, whether of commercial value or not, which protect the soil from excessive erosion, retard runoff of water or accelerate water percolation, if such lands are sources of water which is available for irrigation or for domestic or industrial use.
- (c) Lands in areas which are principally used or useful for range or forage purposes, which are contiguous to the lands described in subdivisions (a) and (b).

SRAs do not include lands owned or controlled by the federal government or any agency of the federal government, or lands within the exterior boundaries of a city.

Cal Fire prepares and periodically updates maps of the Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) for those areas of California where the state has fiscal responsibility for wildland fire protection, known as State Responsibility Areas. It similarly prepares Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) in those areas where local government agencies have Local Responsibility Areas (LRA). The purpose of this is to classify lands where a

very high fire hazard severity is present so that public officials are able to identify measures that will mitigate the rate of spread, and reduce the potential intensity of uncontrolled fires that threaten to destroy resources, life, or property, and to require that those measures be taken. The maps are updated by the Department, and reviewed by local agencies prior to adoption, as new information becomes available.

The maps for Monterey County were adopted by Cal Fire in 2007. The current maps are incorporated into Exhibit 4.13-1 of the DEIR, which illustrates that most of the County is within FHSZs and VHFHSZs (note that Exhibit 4.13-1 also includes federal lands that are not on the Cal Fire maps). The discussion under Impact HAZ-3 describes the general risks and the extensive policies within the Public Services and Safety Elements of the Draft General Plan that specifically address those risks.

In addition to these General Plan provisions, the State of California has adopted a number of laws and regulations that will reduce wildland fire hazards. Government Code Section 51175, et seq. establishes, among other things, defensible space requirements for new and re-built residential construction, requires local governments to adopt fire safety ordinances implementing state regulations, and requires real estate agents to disclose the fire hazard zone within which a property is located prior to sale. California Building Code Chapter 7A and Fire Code Chapter 47 establish building materials and design standards for construction intended to make buildings within fire hazard zones less flammable and less likely to spread fires through burning embers and other wind-carried items when they do burn.

Taken together, these policies, laws, and regulations will ensure that the Draft General Plan does not increase wildfire risk.

- O-12a.53 The commenter requests that the DEIR include information about the availability of public services to the AHOs.

The AHOs are located near existing development and services and were selected by the Planning Commission for inclusion in the Draft General Plan in part based upon their proximity to existing development. The information requested by the commenter is more detailed than needed to determine the potential for environmental impact caused by the Draft General Plan. Please see Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail required for a programmatic EIR. The site- and project-specific characteristics of future AHO proposals will dictate their specific services needs. Detailed information about the availability of public services for AHO proposals will be part of the AHO proposal process and will be analyzed on a project-specific basis when the CEQA document is prepared for the particular AHO.

- O-12a.54 The commenter claims that the finding that the aesthetic effects of future AWCP facilities are unknown at this time and further analysis will be done at the project level “fails to account for GPU5 policies that exempt most facilities in the AWCP from CEQA review.”

The AWCP exempts certain facilities from later CEQA review, but identifies extensive development standards with which these facilities must comply, many of which address aesthetics. (See AWCP, Sec. 3.5.) These policies will be applied in the review of every application. It would not be reasonable or feasible to conduct a detailed analysis of such

facilities on scenic vistas as there is no available information by which their potential aesthetic or scenic impacts may be examined. There is no information on the sites, sizes (including building heights and footprints), or types of any future facilities because no specific projects are being proposed at this time. As a result, any CEQA analysis of such facilities would be speculative. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15145, no further discussion is needed. Please see Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail required for a programmatic EIR.

- O-12a.55 The commenter notes that the 2008 fair share allocation from AMBAG shows a significantly lower affordable housing requirement than is reflected in the Housing Element. The commenter asks that this be revised.

See Master Response 2 on growth assumptions used in the EIR. Note that the 2009-2014 Housing Element is not a part of the 2007 General Plan under consideration. It will be considered by the County separately.

- O-12a.56 The commenter notes that Table 4.15-2 lists a different population forecast for Monterey County than is found on page 4.15-12, with the former being over 7,000 people lower than the latter.

Table 4.15-2 relies on the Department of Finance's 2005 forecast of population; the later discussion relies on the Department's 2007 forecast. The difference is approximately 1.6% and is not appreciable. See Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the General Plan* for a discussion of population forecasts.

- O-12a.57 The commenter notes that the revised AMBAG growth forecast differs from the forecast used in the DEIR.

See Master Response 2 regarding the growth assumptions used in the EIR.

- O-12a.58 The commenter asserts that the DEIR's 2030 buildout number for residential units is misleading because it is less than the projected 2092 full buildout.

The DEIR provides two buildout scenarios for consideration: (a) 2030, representing the end of the planning horizon; and (b) 2092, representing the time at which based on available land and development trends, the County would be fully built out. While the DEIR intended to use the term "buildout" only in conjunction with the 2092 scenario, there are times when it is applied to the 2030 planning horizon. The difference between the two scenarios is clear in the context of the DEIR and the occasional misapplication of this term should not affect the reader's ability to understand the analysis or conclusions in the DEIR.

- O-12a.59 The commenter notes that the text on page 4.15-15 leaves out three of the Rural Centers when discussing the number of residential units anticipated to be developed during the 2030 planning horizon. Also, the commenter notes that the DEIR does not identify the number of units to be developed outside those areas within the Coastal Zone and the Winery Corridor.

The context of the discussion on page 4.15-15 is to identify those Rural Centers with the greatest growth potential. The 2030 planning horizon growth potential of all of the Rural Centers is found in Table 3-8 of the DEIR.

The Draft General Plan is not proposing any revisions to the County's certified LCP and therefore would not change existing growth potential within the coastal zone. The DEIR does not identify the number of units because there is no change from the existing LCP policies. As discussed in response O-12a.49, the Winery Corridor designation does not substantially change the potential residential units that might be built under the existing General Plan.

See Master Response 2 regarding the growth assumptions used in the EIR.

- O-12a.60 The commenter notes that the 2092 buildout number for residential units differs substantially from the 2030 planning horizon number. The commenter asserts that these units would be dispersed throughout the unincorporated County and further contributes to urban sprawl.

See Master Response 2 regarding the growth assumptions used in the EIR.

Revised Policy BIO-1.4 provides, in part, that at five year intervals, the County will examine the degree to which thresholds predicted in the General Plan EIR for the timeframe 2006-2030 for increased population, residential construction and commercial growth have been attained. If the examination indicates that actual growth is within 10% of the thresholds (10,015 new housing units; 500 acres new commercial development; 3,111 acres new industrial development and 10,253 acres of land converted to agriculture), then the County shall initiate a General Plan Amendment process to consider the expansion of focused growth areas established by the 2007 General Plan and/or the designation of new focused growth areas. This establishes a method by which growth beyond the 2030 planning horizon can be directed to planned growth areas rather than contributing to sprawl. See Chapter 5 of this FEIR for the text of the policy.

- O-12a.61 The commenter asks whether the buildout number includes buildout in all designated land uses.

The answer is yes. The buildout is based on consideration of available lands and current zoning allowances.

- O-12a.62 The commenter notes that Table 4.15-1 does not indicate whether the GHG emissions are daily or annual emissions and whether they are expressed in pounds or tons.

These estimates are for annual emissions, in metric tons.

- O-12a.63 The commenter notes that Appendix B describes the methodology for the GHG emissions inventory, it does not provide the assumptions or data used to calculate emissions. Without the data, the commenter is unable to verify the emissions calculations.

The EMFAC2007 model runs for CO₂ are provided in the Technical Supporting Data found at the end of this document.

- O-12a.64 The commenter notes that the alternatives are not based on the same assumptions.

The fact that the alternatives examined in the DEIR are based on different assumptions does not render the comparison of alternative meaningless. The GPU3, GPI, and GPU4 alternatives were developed at different times during the 10-year long process of updating the 1982 General Plan and do not share all assumptions. As noted in the description of the alternatives at section 5.2 of the DEIR, only the Draft General Plan is being analyzed at full buildout in 2092. All comparisons between the alternatives and the proposed project are at the planning horizon of 2030. The EIR includes sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis and comparison with the proposed project.

- O-12a.65 The commenter asserts that the buildout numbers for GPU3 and the Draft General Plan are not based on the same assumptions and, therefore, a comparison is meaningless. Further, the commenter asks why there is a difference in the buildout number for GPU3 in this DEIR and in the DEIR for GPU4.

As discussed above, only the Draft General Plan (GPU5) is analyzed at full buildout in 2092. All comparisons between the alternatives and the proposed project are at the planning horizon of 2030. This offers a common point of comparison. Each of the alternatives allowed a different amount of potential growth in the unincorporated area, i.e., there are different numbers of community areas, rural centers, and different policies on lots of record. The present DEIR is determinative, not the DEIR for GPU4.

- O-12a.66 The commenter asserts that the buildout numbers for GPI and the Draft General Plan are not based on the same assumptions and, therefore, a comparison is meaningless.

Only the Draft General Plan (GPU5) is analyzed at full buildout in 2092. All comparisons between the alternatives and the project are at the planning horizon of 2030. This offers a common point of comparison. The EIR includes sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis and comparison with the proposed project.

- O-12a.67 The commenter asserts that the buildout numbers for GPU4 and the Draft General Plan are not based on the same assumptions and, therefore, a comparison is meaningless.

As discussed above, only the Draft General Plan (GPU5) is addressed at full buildout in 2092. All comparisons between the alternatives and the project are at the planning horizon of 2030. This offers a common point of comparison. The EIR includes sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis and comparison with the proposed project.

- O-12a.68 The commenter finds the comparison in Table 5-5 on page 5-53 to be confusing and asks for an explanation of the 21,600 building units attributed to the Draft General Plan (GPU5).

Table 5-5 is incorrect. As discussed under section 5.7 of the DEIR, this alternative is intended to result in the same number of dwelling units as the Draft General Plan by the

2030 planning horizon. The table has been revised in the FEIR. This revision does not result in significant new information.

- O-12a.69 The commenter requests that the 2092 buildout numbers reflect the Rancho Canada Village, Val Verde Drive project, the Villas de Carmelo and Rancho Canada plans for timeshare units and employee housing, and the Delfino proposal.

The 2092 buildout numbers for Carmel Valley are based upon the land use plan as constrained by the 266 cap on new lots of record, the AHO, and existing lots of record. The General Plan does not specify which future property will be subdivided. Buildout does not include any General Plan amendments.

O-12b League of Women Voters of the Monterey Peninsula

- O-12b.1 The commenter is correct that Table 4.7-1 from the DEIR indicates that statewide wine emissions are highest during September and October (28.5% and 32.1%, respectively). However, discussions with industry representatives indicate that the harvest in Monterey County generally runs 137 days from August 1 through December 15 (page 4.7-25 of the DEIR). It is more appropriate to use this data because it is specific to Monterey County and therefore more accurate.

The pounds per year VOC emissions in Table 4.7-4 of the DEIR are divided by 137 for fermentation and by 365 for storage in order to get pounds per day. This results in VOC emissions of 1074.2 pounds per day, which is below the MBUAPCD's forecast emissions for 2030 (2,227 pounds per day). Note that Table 4.7-4 of the DEIR states that total VOC emissions are 905.3 pounds per day. This has been revised in Chapter 4 of this FEIR to state that total VOC emissions are 1,074.2 pounds per day.

- O-12b.2 As stated above, discussions with wine industry representatives indicate that the harvest in Monterey County generally runs 137 days from August 1 through December 15 (page 4.7-25 of the DEIR). It is more appropriate to use this data than statewide data because it is specific to Monterey County and therefore more accurate. Consequently, annual VOC emissions from fermentation were divided by 137 to generate pounds per day, and annual VOC emissions from storage/ageing were divided by 365 to generate pounds per day.

O-13a Monterey County Cattlemen's Association (prepared by Cox, Castle and Nicholson LLP)

- O-13a.1 This comment summarizes the content of comments 2, 3, and 4. Responses to these comments are presented below. In summary, the comments assert that there is no legal *requirement* for the DEIR to use its definition of "CEQA Defined Special Status Species," and that this definition is contrary to County policy direction in the Draft General Plan. As shown by the below responses, the County has discretion to certify an EIR with a definition of special status that goes beyond that proposed by the commenter,

and there is no adopted policy direction requiring that the commenter's narrower definition should be used.

Further, it is incongruous that the commenter is asking the County to interpret CEQA in a manner that reduces environmental protection. As the Supreme Court stated in the landmark case *Friends of Mammoth v. Board of Supervisors* (1972, 8 Cal.3d 247, 259), CEQA "is to be interpreted ...to afford the fullest possible protection to the environment within the reasonable scope of the statutory language."

- O-13a.2 The comment asserts that the DEIR's definition of "CEQA-Defined Special Status Species" is not supported by substantial evidence as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15380. Please refer to response to comment O-17.1 for a detailed explanation of why the DEIR's approach to special status species is appropriate.

As explained in that summary, the DEIR's identification of status species is supported by both CEQA Guidelines Section 15380, and by the broader mandatory findings of significance for biological impacts set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15065. The obligation to evaluate impacts to non-listed species is embodied in CEQA guidelines § 15065(a)(1), which obliges lead agencies to consider whether a project "has the potential to ... substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species; cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels; [or] threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community" as well as to "substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of endangered, rare or threatened species..." An EIR biological impact analysis may not use a threshold of significance narrower than the standards in Section 15065 (*Endangered Habitats League v. County of Orange* (2005) 131 Cal.App.4th 777,793).

The comment also asserts that Section 15380 requires a case-by-case, fact-based determination of whether a species is "endangered" or "rare," citing *Sierra Club v. Gilroy* (1990) 222 Cal.App.3d 30. However, in that case, the lead agency declined to make a finding that certain candidate and special status species were "endangered" or "rare," was challenged by petitioners on the grounds that it was *required* to do so, and prevailed. However, the issue here is not whether the County is *required* to find that certain non-listed species are "endangered" or "rare," but rather whether it has the *discretion* to identify species which *may* be endangered, rare or threatened, and evaluate impacts to these species. The General Plan EIR, once certified by the Board, will represent the County's exercise of discretion to treat certain unlisted species (as defined on DEIR page 4.9-22) as "rare" and "endangered" for purposes of Section 15380. Nothing in the *Serra Club v. Gilroy* case prohibits the County from exercising its discretion in this manner.

The commenter also notes that the Draft General Plan uses a definition of special status species that is narrower than that used in the DEIR. As explained in the response to comment O-17.1, the County has recognized that the DEIR did not apply the definition of special status species in the glossary of the Draft General Plan; to resolve this inconsistency, the County is proposing to eliminate the definition of special status species from the General Plan. The comment also asserts that the Draft 2007 General Plan sets forth County policy direction on special status species with which the EIR should be consistent. That assertion is incorrect, because the Draft General Plan is a draft document prepared by County staff. It is subject to further modification by staff and the Board, and

legally becomes official County policies only after it is adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

- O-13a.3 The commenter asserts that the County is not required by CEQA or CEQA Guidelines Appendix G to apply a threshold of significance that considers potential impacts to candidate, sensitive, or special status species. As explained above, the County has determined that its threshold of significance for CEQA-defined special status species is consistent with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines.
- O-13a.4 The comment recommends that the DEIR's discussion of special status species be revised to be consistent with the Draft General Plan's narrower definition of special status species. See the responses to previous comments.

O-13b Monterey County Cattlemen's Association (prepared by Lloyd, Horan, et al, Inc.)

- O-13b.1 This comment summarizes the contents of comments 2 and 3. Responses to these comments are presented below.
- O-13b.2 The comment asserts that the DEIR's definition of "CEQA-defined special status species" is inappropriate. Please see responses to comments O-13a and O-17a for responses to assertions that the Draft General Plan glossary uses a narrower definition of special status species, and that the DEIR's definition is inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15380 and 15065.

The comment cites case law (*Save Round Valley Alliance, Defend the Bay, Sierra Club v. Gilroy*) for the proposition that the County is *required* to adopt a narrower definition of special status species than that used in the DEIR. However, in each of these cases, the lead agency elected to evaluate impacts to non-listed species and determined that impacts would be less than significant. Petitioners' challenges to methods of analysis and conclusions failed. None of these cases held that the lead agency should not have evaluated impacts to the non-listed species. However, as discussed in response to comment O-13a.2, the County has the *discretion* to evaluate impacts to species which may be endangered, rare or threatened.

- O-13b.3 The comment asserts that for various reasons, it was inappropriate for the DEIR to rely on California Native Plant Society (CNPS) and California Natural Diversity Databases (CNNDB) to help define special status species. However, these databases are commonly relied upon by professional biologists in preparing CEQA documents. The CNPS is an organization of botanists that have developed scientifically-based criteria for evaluating the relative scarcity of plant species. Their database is recognized as objective and comprehensive. The CNNDB is a database of recorded occurrences of species, organized geographically. It provides continuously updated information on where species have been found. The use of these databases is accepted professional practice for CEQA analysis. Further, there is nothing in CEQA or the CEQA Guidelines that prohibits the use of these databases in the manner used in the DEIR.

- O-13b.4 This comment summarizes the contents of comments 2 and 3. Responses to these comments are presented above.

O-14a Monterey County Farm Bureau

- O-14a.1 The commenter raises concerns about the mitigation measures proposed in the DEIR with respect to biological resources. In response to several comments received on this issue, the County has revised a number of these mitigation measures and several policies in the draft General Plan. These modifications are intended to address the concerns expressed by the commenter with respect to the requirements that would be imposed on agriculture. The commenter is referred to Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, for further discussion (Chapter 2). The modifications to mitigation measures and draft General Plan policies may also be found in FEIR Chapters 4 and 5.
- O-14a.2 As commenter states, and as noted in Section 2.5 of the DEIR (Approach to the Impact Analysis), the County was in possession of revised population and employment forecast numbers from AMBAG. However, use of these numbers was problematic with respect to consistency with the 2004 AMBAG Traffic Model and the MBUAPCD Air Quality Management Plan. That model and that plan are crucial to analysis of traffic and air quality impacts, respectively. The 2004 AMBAG forecast projects higher levels of growth than the 2008 forecast. Accordingly, the DEIR analysis is conservative. In response to comments and discussions held at Planning Commission workshop in the summer of 2009 regarding these projections, the County is proposing to modify BIO-1.4 and BIO-1.5 to track actual growth against projected growth in five year intervals. A similar modification has been made to Mitigation Measure WR-2 with respect to addressing water demand and the need for additional supply projects. Please refer to Master Response 2 regarding growth assumptions for a more detailed response to the concerns raised in this comment.
- O-14a.3 This comment summarizes the contents of comment 5. Responses to this comment are presented below. With regard to the *Save Round Valley* case, the lead agency concluded that impacts to certain non-listed species would not be significant based on project-specific evidence, was challenged by petitioners on the grounds that impact analysis was inadequate, and prevailed. Nothing in the decision confines the lead agency's discretion to restrict evaluation to listed species. However, as discussed in responses to comments O-13a.1 and O-13a.2, the County has appropriately exercised its discretion in identifying special status species for evaluation in the DEIR.
- O-14a.4 Please refer to Response O-14a.2 for a response to this comment and to Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the General Plan*.
- O-14a.5 This comment questions the DEIR's protection of "CEQA-defined special status species." See responses to comments O-13a, O-13b, and O-17.1 for responses to this comment.

The comment also criticizes the DEIR's protection of habitat in addition to critical habitat for listed species under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). However, there is

nothing in the ESA or CEQA that prohibits the County from exercising its discretion to protect habitat in addition to critical habitat designated under the ESA.

In response to comments received on the DEIR and based upon input received at several Planning Commission workshops in the summer of 2009, the County modified several of the mitigation measures in the DEIR and biological resource policies in the draft General Plan. These changes are also intended to provide clarity with respect to comments received about General Plan definitions of special status species and terms utilized in the DEIR. Please refer to Master Response 8 for a discussion of these modifications and additional responses to the comments provided. Please also refer to Response 0-14a-01. FEIR Chapter 5 will also contain revised definitions that pertain to the biological resource policies utilized in the General Plan. Changes have been made consistent with the modified mitigation measures and policies.

- O-14a.6 The commenter has raised a number of questions with respect to the preparation of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs). In response to this and other comments received on this issue, the County has modified the language in Mitigation Measures BIO-1.2 and BIO-1.5. The term “conservation plan” in BIO-1.2 has been changed to “conservation strategy”. The term Natural Communities Conservation Plan in Mitigation Measure BIO-1.5 has been changed to conservation strategy. In addition, as noted in response O-14a.2 above, the timeframe for evaluating the need for the preparation of a conservation strategy has been modified to track actual development against projected development, rather than tying the development of such a plan to 2030. The modified language is found in Chapter 4 of this FEIR.
- O-14a.7 The commenter expresses concerns about the requirement to establish a baseline inventory and to update it at 10 year intervals. Mitigation Measure BIO-1.1, which included this provision, has been deleted from the DEIR. The County believes that modifications to other policies as required under revised Mitigation Measures BIO-1.4 and BIO-1.5 will provide equivalent protection. Please refer to Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, for additional discussion of these measures.
- O-14a.8 The commenter expresses concerns about proposed Mitigation Measure BIO-1.2 which addresses potential impacts to the San Joaquin kit fox. That proposed mitigation has been modified to delete the term conservation plan. The term conservation strategy has been substituted in this policy. The County does not believe that this mitigation measure provided unnecessary additional mitigation for this species. This policy was intended as a mechanism for ensuring a more comprehensive approach to address species impacts rather than relying on site-by-site analysis and mitigation. The policy would allow for a fee program as one of the options. Under adoption of the strategy, habitat loss due to discretionary projects would be mitigated on a project-by-project basis.
- O-14a.9 The commenter raises issues with respect to Mitigation Measure BIO-1.3 which provides for mitigation to “CEQA-defined special status species. The commenter notes that he does not feel this policy is necessary. Please refer to O-14a.1 above and to Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*. Please also note that Mitigation Measure BIO-1.3 is proposed for deletion in the FEIR. Modifications to draft General Plan Policy OS-5.16 have been proposed as substitute language. This language can be found in Chapter 5 of this FEIR.

- O-14a.10 Commenter has raised concerns about the requirements in Mitigation Measure BIO-1.4, including the need to address impacts for the post 2030 timeframe. Please refer to Response O-14a.2. Mitigation Measure BIO-1.4 has been modified to provide for regular updates as growth occurs in the future. These modifications may be found in Chapter 4 of this FEIR.
- O-14a.11 Commenter has raised concerns about the requirements in Mitigation Measure BIO-1.5. These issues have been addressed in Response O-14a.2. Similar to Mitigation Measure BIO-1.4, this measure has been modified to track actual growth with projected growth, rather than selecting the year 2030 as the trigger year for requiring additional policies and mitigation. These modifications may be found in Chapter 4 of this FEIR.
- O-14a.12 The commenter expresses concerns about the requirements in Mitigation Measure BIO-2.1 regarding stream setbacks, the need for the measure, and its impacts on agriculture. The DEIR review the proposed policies in the draft General Plan and concluded that Mitigation Measure BIO-2.1 was necessary to provide additional protection to natural communities including riparian and wetlands beyond the proposed policies in the General Plan. The County respectfully disagrees with the commenter regarding the need for this measure.

Specific setbacks will be considered at the time that an ordinance is developed. The policy will apply to all discretionary development and to conversion of previously uncultivated agricultural land, which is defined as lands that have not been cultivated during the previous 20 years. It is not directed against routine agricultural maintenance practices. County grading, building and flood protection ordinances already apply to many agricultural activities. These are not proposed for modification.

The commenter has not provided any evidence regarding the amount of production that would be lost by this policy, nor any evidence that the policy will affect food safety and therefore it is difficult to provide suggested modifications to the policy that would address that issue. Accordingly, the County is proposing limited modifications to this policy and draft mitigation. Please see Chapters 4 and 5 of this FEIR for the pertinent text changes.

- O-14a.13 The commenter has provided suggestions regarding modifications to Mitigation Measure BIO-2.3 and questions that need for the language addition to Policies PS3.3 and PS-3.4 that were proposed in the DEIR. See Chapters 4 and 5 of this FEIR for modifications to the mitigation measure and these policies.

The DEIR analysis indicates that merely adding the language proposed by commenter: "effects on instream flows" would not be sufficient to address the potential species impacts that were identified in the biological resource chapter of the DEIR. This language might have been sufficient to address the water supply impacts that the proposed measure also addresses (the changes to this policy are also proposed as mitigation in the Water Resource Chapter W-4 beginning on page 4.3-134.). The County disagrees with commenter that this is a political mechanism to deny wells. The intent of the draft General Plan and this modification is to ensure that wells are evaluated against a number of criteria including impacts to adjacent wells. The policy is also intended to ensure that new wells contain water that is of sufficient quality. The cost of determining

whether a well meets these criteria is far less than the cost that would result if a property owner proceeded with the installation of a well and then subsequently learned that there were significant problems that would make continued operation of that well infeasible.

The suggestions of the commenter with respect to proposed modifications of this policy will be referred to the decision-makers.

- O-14a.14 Commenter has expressed the opinion that the Mitigation Measure BIO-3.1 (Wildlife Movement Considerations) has differentially treated discretionary projects as opposed to public projects in the protection of wildlife corridors. The commenter has also suggested that this mitigation measure (and the corresponding policy) will result in project developers seeking agricultural land for mitigation and will affect food safety. The commenter has not provided any evidence of how these consequences will result from the implementation of the policy.

The policy clearly indicates that any requirement with respect to retaining movement corridors will be based on the needs of the species that may be occupying the habitat. No specific parameters with respect to size or quality are provided, because this decision will be site and project specific.

The policy has been modified to clarify that it will apply to County public works projects (see Chapter 5 of this FEIR). The suggestions of the commenter with respect to specific proposed modifications of this policy will be referred to the decision-makers.

- O-14a.15 The commenter has provided suggestions with respect to modifications of proposed Mitigation Measure BIO-3.2. In response to comments and to public comment received at Planning Commission workshop in the summer of 2009, the proposed mitigation measure has been modified to address concerns regarding the window of opportunity for important vegetation removal activities. The proposed changes are found in Chapter 4 of this FEIR.

The letter concludes with comments regarding the importance of agriculture in Monterey County. The County refers the commenter to Master Response 3 regarding Agricultural Growth and Agricultural Policies in the General Plan. This Master Response provides responses to a number of members of the public who have addressed the potential impacts from agriculture that would occur from the provisions of the General Plan that allow for a wine corridor, routine and ongoing agriculture and conversion of previously uncultivated land. The Master Response addresses these concerns.

O-14b Monterey County Farm Bureau

- O-14b.1 The commenter states that “we are concerned about the significant environmental impacts that would result from a regional water supply plan that removes water from Zone 2C or alters water right permits that are essential to the Salinas Valley Water Project (SVWP).”

The comment appears to refer to mitigation measure WR-1. As noted on DEIR pages 4.3-130, “Mitigation Measure WR-1 puts the County on record as supporting a regional

solution (but not necessarily those currently proposed).” Furthermore mitigation measure WR-1 does not directly or indirectly propose to divert water from Zone 2C to the Monterey Peninsula. Nor are there any plans to divert surface water from Zone 2C. Therefore the DEIR is not required to analyze the impacts of such a diversion (See CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). The mitigation measure also specifically includes a provision that new water supply projects that might be identified would continue “to protect the Salinas and Pajaro River groundwater basins from saltwater intrusion.” As commenter suggests, the Monterey County Water Resource Agency Act (Water Code, Appendix Chapter 52, Section 21) prohibits the exportation of groundwater from the Salinas River Groundwater Basins “except that use of water from the basin on any part of Fort Ord shall not be deemed such an export.” Accordingly, the DEIR did not evaluate the impacts of diverting water from Zone 2C because such a transfer is not permitted. The DEIR clearly indicates as noted by commenter, that the SVWP is intended to provide a long-term reliable water supply for Zone 2C. The DEIR analysis, supported by information that enhances that analysis in Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, indicates that the SVWP will be sufficient to meet demands for the growth in the Salinas Valley that would be permitted under the 2007 General Plan.

The commenter expresses concern about the DEIR discussion of the impacts of water use in the County, and the potential for new project-specific mitigation measures. This comment appears to relate to Impact WR-5 (water facilities accommodating General Plan growth would have secondary environmental impacts). The DEIR does generally discuss mitigation approaches for these impacts, and it references project-specific mitigation measures in existing and future CEQA documents for specific water projects. It does not, however, propose new project-specific mitigation measures.

In response to comments regarding water supply problems in the Pajaro Groundwater Basin, WR-1 was modified to include a provision requiring the County to also participate in regional groups that would seek additional domestic water supplies for the Pajaro Groundwater Basin. Please see Chapter 4 for the text changes.

Please refer to Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, for additional responses to comments regarding water demand and supply in Monterey County (FEIR, Chapter 2). Please also refer to the response to comment L-8 (FEIR, Chapter 3).

O-15 Monterey Institute for Research in Astronomy (MIRA)

- O-15.1 The commenter notes the importance of a dark sky to MIRA’s astronomical work and the effects of growth on the Monterey Peninsula, Salinas Valley, and City of Salinas. Although MIRA’s observatory is located in the undeveloped Santa Lucia Mountains, increases in night-time light levels as a result of urban development in the Salinas Valley in particular are having a deleterious effect on the observatory’s ability to observe faint astronomical phenomena.

The commenter suggests that as mitigation to reduce light pollution levels, the County require the attachment of shields on all street lights that would cut off light leakage

upward whenever a street lamp's bulb is replaced. The commenter also suggests that the County adopt a comprehensive lighting policy or ordinance addressing issues such as lighting types and levels, outdoor lighting after closing times, and curfews for outdoor illuminated signs.

The DEIR examines the impacts of light pollution in Impact AES-4 in Section 4.14, *Aesthetics, Light and Glare*. The DEIR analysis concluded that this impact would be significant and unavoidable at the 2030 planning horizon as well as the 2092 buildout. The analysis notes that proposed Land Use Element Policy LU-1.13 specifically addresses light and glare impacts, but that additional mitigation is unavailable.

Policy LU-1.13 reads as follows: "All exterior lighting shall be unobtrusive and constructed or located so that only the intended area is illuminated, long range visibility is reduced of the lighting source, and off-site glare is fully controlled. Criteria to guide the review and approval of exterior lighting shall be developed." The county requires that new residential and commercial development submit a lighting plan to ensure consistency with these requirements. Additionally, the County does not permit the installation of street lights except on major thoroughfare and at the entry to tunnels. These are the responsibility of the County Public Works Department.

Policy LU-1.13 has been revised in response to commenter's suggestion, to require the County to develop enforceable design guidelines addressing lighting and glare impacts, including the use of light directing techniques such as shields where applicable. The revised policy can be found in Chapter 5 of this FEIR.

Although Policy LU-1.13 would reduce impacts from light and glare, impacts from future project-specific development cannot be adequately determined or mitigated at this time. Further environmental analysis as required by CEQA would occur on a project specific basis and appropriate mitigation for each development site would be identified at that time in order to ensure that the policies set forth in the 2007 General Plan are followed and that impacts from light and glare are avoided to the greatest extent practicable. Therefore, EIR's conclusion that the 2007 General Plan would have a significant and unavoidable impact from light and glare remains unchanged. (DEIR, Section 4.14.6.3.)

O-16 The Nature Conservancy

- O-16.1 The commenter notes that Monterey County is at the geographic core of the California Floristic Province and is "phenomenally rich." The commenter states that their 2006 analysis shows that Monterey County "supports numerous sensitive ecological systems and associated species that do not currently have adequate levels of protection on either public or private lands." They further note that both rural residential development and large-scale agricultural conversion can destroy biological systems and species, as well as regionally significant wildlife corridors. The commenter goes on to discuss their organization's long-term goals for the conservation of these areas of high biological importance and wildlife movement corridors. The comment also identifies two issues of special concern to the commenter: rangeland habitat conservation and protection of wildlife corridors. These comments are introductory –responses O-16.02 through O-16.04 below, address the commenter's specific concerns related to these issues.

The California Floristic Province is quite large -- extending from Canada to Baja California -- and includes much of California. The region is characterized by warm, dry summers and wet winters and includes a variety of ecosystems, including those identified in the DEIR within Monterey County (DEIR, Section 4.9.3, pages 4.9-2 through 4.9-47).

Impacts to sensitive natural communities, special status species, and wildlife movement corridors were analyzed in the DEIR. Impacts to sensitive natural communities were determined to be less than significant with mitigation through 2030 and significant and unavoidable with mitigation for buildout (DEIR, Impact BIO-2, pages 4.9-79 through 4.9-89). Impacts to special status species were determined to be less than significant with mitigation through 2030 and significant and unavoidable with mitigation at buildout (DEIR, Impact BIO-1, pages 4.9-64 through 4.9-78). Impacts to wildlife movement corridors were determined to be less than significant with mitigation for 2030 planning horizon and for buildout. Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, section 8.5, amplifies the discussion in the DEIR regarding the adequacy of the impact analysis on plant and wildlife species and habitat (FEIR, Chapter 2). Additional analysis of wildlife movement corridors is provided in Master Response 8, section 8.7, which discusses impacts on wildlife movement corridors. The impact analyses included consideration of impacts associated with agricultural conversion and development of rural residential areas (i.e., development on lots of record).

The commenter's goals will be considered by the County in deliberations over the proposed 2007 General Plan.

- O-16.2 The commenter notes that the "broad, relatively unfragmented matrix of grasslands, oak savanna and woodlands and riparian areas supported by rangelands" found in much of the County includes high quality native vegetation, wildlife, and associated sensitive species. The commenter states a concern that intensive agricultural uses close to sensitive habitat areas could result in significant and irreversible impacts because these activities would be exempt from CEQA review. The comment also asserts that the DEIR does not adequately address the cumulative impacts of the proposed General Plan policies on key rangeland areas. Further, the comment asserts that the DEIR's conclusions regarding the significance of impacts on biological resources are unsupported because the policies and mitigation measures defer the development of substantive content or because the policies and mitigation measures are not enforceable or feasible. The comment also asserts that the proposed policies for development or agricultural conversion on slopes do not adequately address the direct and cumulative impacts to biologically significant habitats, wildlife corridors, and species.

See Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, and Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, for discussions of the impact of the 2007 General Plan on wildlife corridors and slope conversion. The reader is also directed to Mitigation Measure BIO-3.1 in the DEIR and Chapter 4 of the FEIR, which show the text modifications to the mitigation measure.

The revisions to Mitigation Measure BIO-3.1 clarify the County's commitment to mitigating impacts on movement corridors. BIO-3.1 identifies sources of additional information in order to assist in its implementation.

The analysis of biological resource impacts is performed at the habitat level, examining the projected impacts from implementation of the 2007 General Plan (which sets out a future development pattern), and is therefore cumulative in nature (utilizing the “projections” approach authorized under CEQA Guidelines Section 15130). Section 6.4.3.7 of the DEIR, beginning on page 6-19, describes the 2007 General Plan’s contribution to cumulative impacts as “considerable.”

Additionally, please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan’s EIR*, for a discussion of the formulation of mitigation measures and future project-level environmental review.

- O-16.3 The commenter is concerned that the DEIR does not address impacts on wildlife movement linkages that it contends will be highly impaired as a result of proposed policies. The commenter offers some examples of where the proposed winery corridor would overlap with areas “critical for regional wildlife movement.” Also, the commenter asserts that policies that could affect the width or function of riparian corridors should be analyzed for potential impacts to these wildlife linkages.

The DEIR analyzes impacts of the 2007 General Plan on wildlife corridors on pages 4.9-89 through 4.9-97. Additional discussion of wildlife corridors is provided in Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, section 8.6, which examines the potential impacts to wildlife corridors from agricultural and residential development and in Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, which discusses the location and distribution of agricultural development anticipated under the proposed Agriculture and Wine Corridor Plan. Master Response 8, section 8.8 notes that impacts with the AWCP would be limited because of the limits on the number of facilities in each segment, geographic dispersal, limits on the number of ancillary facilities. There will be CEQA review of large scale wineries and a requirement to conduct a biological study for permanent facilities associates with the boutique wineries. These factors as well as EIR mitigation measures reduce the impacts to a level that is less than significant.

The commenter proposes inclusion of a specific goal in the General Plan to conserve critical wildlife movement corridors and provides an example policy for the Carmel Valley. Analysis in the DEIR determined that, with mitigation, impacts to wildlife movement corridors would be less than significant through 2030 and full buildout, therefore it is not necessary to include the goal suggested by the commenter. Nevertheless, the commenter’s suggestion will be shared with decision makers.

- O-16.4 The commenter opines that the General Plan is “the County’s best opportunity” to ensure that the long-term sustainability of the “County’s wealth of natural resources and biodiversity” and that more work is needed for the General Plan to reach this goal. The commenter’s opinion is acknowledged, however, information and analysis provided in the DEIR and in responses to comments provides decision makers with sufficient information to take intelligent account of the environmental effects of the proposed General Plan update.

O-17 Plan for the People (prepared by Mintier Harnish)

- O-17.1 The comment includes introductory remarks explaining that the commenter generally disagrees with the analysis and conclusions in the DEIR regarding impacts to species, based on the commenter's belief that the DEIR used an inappropriately broad definition of "special status species" that is different from the definition presented in the Draft General Plan Glossary.

The commenter is correct that the DEIR did not apply the definition of special status species in the glossary of the Draft General Plan.

The DEIR definition of candidate, sensitive or special status species is consistent with Section 15065 of the CEQA Guidelines "Mandatory Findings of Significance. The DEIR Biological Resources chapter analysis considered whether the proposed policies in the 2007 Draft General Plan would have the potential to ..."substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species; cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels; threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community; substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare or threatened species;...". When the analysis suggested that there was a potential impact, based upon the level and location of development projected to occur if the 2007 General Plan policies are implemented, County staff and its EIR consultant proposed mitigation to avoid or reduce impacts, consistent with the County's obligations under CEQA. (Pub. Res. Code Section 21001, 21002.1(a),(b), CEQA Guidelines Sections 15126.4, 15002(a)(2), (3)) Discussion and analysis of biological resources and impacts in Section 4.9 of the DEIR presents substantial evidence in support of the significance conclusions. Section 4.9.3 provides a detailed description of the biological species present in Monterey County which require consideration in the impact analysis. Section 4.9.5.4 provides a detailed discussion of the impacts that would occur as a result of development under the 2007 General Plan policies.

In response to comments from the public, the County presented several proposed changes to the Planning Commission at a series of workshops in the summer of 2009. These included changes to the policies in the Open Space Element regarding biological resources and modifications to mitigations proposed in the DEIR. These changes clarify the use of the definitions utilized in General Plan and the DEIR and provide mitigation that is equal to or greater than what had been proposed in the DEIR. Please refer to Chapters 4 and 5 of this FEIR for proposed text changes.

- O-17.2 The County examined the potential impacts for two timeframes (2030 planning horizon and 2092 full buildout) based upon comments it received at an earlier point in the general plan update process. Arguments have been made that the County must determine what impacts could occur at buildout. Since the County cannot specifically ascertain when buildout might occur, the DEIR makes assumptions regarding how much growth might occur in the first 20 years of Plan implementation and then how long it would take for full buildout to occur based upon those projections and historic growth.

In response to comments regarding the speculative nature of the post-2030 buildout timeframe, the County is proposing changes to Mitigation Measures Bio-1.4 and Bio-1.5 to require tracking of actual growth against actual growth and to adjust policies as

necessary. See Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the General Plan*, for further discussion of growth assumptions and timeframes.

- O-17.3 The County and its EIR consultants are not proposing to provide listed status, or to petition USFWS or CDFG to list species that are not already on the federal and state endangered or threatened species lists. Revised Policy OS-5.16 provides that an analysis should be completed for projects that might have the potential to impact species in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15380. Appropriate mitigation would then be required. See the response to comment O-17.1 above. Please refer to Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, sections 8.4 and 8.5 for further discussion of the County's approach to special status species.
- O-17.4 Discussion and analysis of biological resources and impacts in the DEIR presents substantial evidence in support of the significance conclusions. Section 4.9.3 provides a detailed description of the biological species present in Monterey County which require consideration in the impact analysis. Section 4.9.5.4 provides a detailed discussion of the impacts that would occur as a result of development under the Draft General Plan policies. Please refer to the response to comment O-17.1 above.
- The commenter criticizes the analysis and conclusions relevant to the San Joaquin kit fox ("kit fox"). The DEIR evaluated impacts to kit fox associated with development of the Rural Centers (DEIR, p. 4.9-60), development under the AWCP (DEIR, p. 4.9-62), as well as by evaluating impacts to species that meet the CEQA definition of rare or endangered under CEQA Guidelines Section 15380. As defined in the DEIR at p. 4.9-1, kit fox is a special status species. Thus, impacts to kit fox were evaluated specifically, and as part of a broader analysis of special status species (as defined in the DEIR) that included consideration of the Draft General Plan policies and Area Plan policies (DEIR pp. 4.9-67-72) and were determined to be significant. Proposed Mitigation Measure BIO-1.2 is intended to provide a comprehensive approach to mitigation for impacts to kit fox habitat and individual animals as well as an option to landowners for mitigation, rather than the current project by project approach. In response to several comments on the draft measure, the County is proposing modifications to Mitigation Measure BIO-1.2. Please refer to Chapter 4 of this FEIR for the pertinent text changes.
- O-17.5 As indicated in O-17.1 above, proposed Mitigation Measure BIO-1.1 is deleted. Changes to measures in the 2007 General Plan Open Space Element and biological resource mitigation measures in the DEIR result in policies that are equal to or more protective of biological resources than BIO-1.1. See also Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, for a discussion of the analysis of sensitive vegetation communities.
- O-17.6 As discussed in Response to comment OS-17.04 above, DEIR Mitigation Measure BIO-1.2 has been modified. The term "conservation plan" has been changed to "conservation strategy." In addition, language has been added to provide for an interim approach to mitigation until a strategy has been adopted.
- O-17.7 As discussed in the response to comment O-17.1, this Mitigation Measure BIO-1.3 has been deleted and substitute language has been provided in Policy OS-5.16 that is equal to or more protective than deleted Mitigation Measure BIO-1.3. See also the response to comment O-17.3.

- O-17.8 Implementation of the General Plan would focus development in areas of South Monterey County including proposed activities in the AWCP, Community Areas and Rural Centers that include kit fox habitat. See Response to comment O-17.4. Analysis in the DEIR provides substantial evidence that impacts to kit fox would be significant. See Responses to comment O-17.1 and Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, for discussion of the DEIR's analysis of impacts to "special status species."
- O-17.9 Discussion and analysis of biological resources and impacts in the DEIR presents substantial evidence in support of the significance conclusions. Section 4.9.3 provides a detailed description of the biological species present in Monterey County which require consideration in the impact analysis. Section 4.9.5.4 provides a detailed discussion of the impacts that would occur as a result of development under the Draft General Plan policies. See also responses to comments O-17.2, O-17.3, O-17.4, and Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*.
- See the response to comment O-17.1 with respect to revisions to Draft General Plan policies and Mitigation Measures that address impacts to species, and clarify "special status species". These revisions address concerns expressed by the commenter.
- O-17.10 The commenter requests that Mitigation Measure BIO-1.4 be removed. DEIR Mitigation Measure BIO-1.4 has been revised to require tracking of actual growth against projected growth and link future changes in the General Plan to this tracking, rather than to a specific date. Please refer to Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, for further explanation of the revisions and the revised text of BIO-1.4.
- O-17.11 The commenter requests that Mitigation Measure BIO-1.5 be removed. DEIR Mitigation Measure BIO-1.5 has been revised to require tracking of actual growth against projected growth and link future consideration of a more comprehensive conservation strategy for plant and wildlife species with the potential to become listed to this tracking, rather than to a specific date. Please refer to Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, for further discussion of the revisions and the revised text of Mitigation Measures BIO-1.4 and BIO-1.5.
- O-17.12 The DEIR provides substantial evidence regarding potential impacts to nesting migratory birds and raptor habitat on pages 4.9-97 to 4.9-99. With respect to whether CEQA requires that impacts to species covered under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) be considered, Section 15065 of the CEQA Guidelines "Mandatory Findings of Significance" requires that the preparer of the EIR determine if there might be a reduction in the range of a wildlife species. Analysis in the DEIR appropriately applied this consideration to the habitat requirements of migratory birds and elimination of nesting habitat. In addition, the "biological resource" checklist entry in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines includes consideration of whether a project would "have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive or special status species in local, or regional plans, policies or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service" (Appendix G, question IV.a), and whether a project would "[i]nterfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors,..." (Appendix G, question IV.d). Consideration of these questions is appropriately

incorporated in the DEIR review and analysis of impacts to nesting birds and raptors protected under the MBTA. However, in response to comments regarding the practicality of the measure as proposed in the DEIR, Mitigation Measure BIO-3.2 has been revised. These changes provide mitigation that is equal to or greater than the protections afforded in the original wording of the measure. Please refer to Chapter 4 of this FEIR for the text changes.

- O-17.13 Implementation of the 2007 General Plan would either allow or focus development in areas of the County that contain the habitat of migratory birds and raptors and which provide important nesting and forage habitat to these species. Therefore, there is a potential that projects, without mitigation, could impact these species. Please refer to the response to comment O-17.12. As noted, Mitigation Measure BIO-3.2 has been modified in response to comments regarding the practicality of the measure and the overlap in timeframes with other policy requirements.

O-18a Prunedale Neighbors Group

- O-18a.1 The commenter has expressed concerns regarding the accessibility of reference documents cited in Section 11 of the DEIR, *Documents, Plans and Reports Cited*. The commenter has also requested additional time for the public to review and provide comments to the document.

In response to this and similar correspondence from the public, the County provided a revised Section 11 and created a reference file in the County Administration Building Permit Center containing either hard copies of each reference or a compact disk of the information that was contained electronically or on a web site. In addition, errata to citations were provided. To ensure adequate time for review of the updated Section 11, the public review and comment period was extended to February 2, 2009. See Master Response 11, *Recirculation* for more information on the effort to provide full disclosure and the extended DEIR review period.

O-18b Prunedale Neighbors Group

- O-18b.1 The commenter explains that they are providing general comments and will rely on their elected officials to consider their concerns. The decision makers will consider these comments during their deliberations on the Draft General Plan. No additional response is necessary.
- O-18b.2 Comments pertain to policies supported in the Draft General Plan. These comments reflect the opinions of the commenter regarding policies of the Draft General Plan, and not substantive comments on the EIR. No response is necessary.
- O-18b.3 As noted on pages 4.7-15 through 4.7-17, there will be an increase in VOC emissions from the fermentation process in new wineries; however, the projected potential increase was within the forecast parameters of the MBUAPCD 2008 AQMP and therefore is considered consistent. Any new winery would be required to obtain permits from the Air

District and comply with regulations. Therefore, this impact is considered less than significant.

- O-18b.4 The General Plan includes policies that will limit future growth in areas that have been identified as having overdraft conditions. These include the North County Area Plan and portions of the Toro Area and Greater Salinas Area Plans. The DEIR proposes to add a new policy PS-3.16 which proposes County participation in several regional efforts to identify water supply solutions within the next five-year timeframe.

The Salinas Valley Water Project is nearing completion and is designed to address supply, distribution and seawater intrusion impacts in the basin. As noted on page 4.3-33 of the DEIR, operation of the CSIP has already begun to reduce the level of seawater intrusion. As the commenter has noted, there still may remain issues in the northern most portion of the basin that lacks distribution facilities. There is a citizen advisory committee appointed by the Board that is working with County officials to address this issue including the identification of funding and a project. With respect to the comment regarding water flowing uphill in the basin, the hydraulics of groundwater flows is complex. Certainly, northerly flows are not necessarily uphill. Page 4.3-5 of the DEIR provides additional information on the hydrogeology of the basin.

Refer also to Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the DEIR*, regarding ongoing tracking of development against water supply and Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, addressing water supply and growth projections in the Salinas Valley.

- O-18b.5 The Land Use Element and Circulation Element are consistent. Policy LU-1.4 provides that growth be designated only where there are adequate services and requires phasing. Policies LU-2.15 through 2.33 regarding city centered growth and development in Community Areas and Rural Centers likewise enforce this policy. LU-2.30, for example, requires that a Community Infrastructure Financing Plan be prepared to guide development of rural Centers. Policy C-1.8 provides for the preparation of a County Traffic Impact Fee to address the impacts of development in cities and the unincorporated areas on major County roads. Policy C-1.11 similar addresses impacts to the regional road system through the TAMC fee program which has already been adopted and implemented. Policy C-1.2 requires preparation of a Capital Improvement and Financing Plan that it reviewed every 5 years and adjusted annually to ensure its effectiveness. The County currently adopts a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan that is linked to the annual budget.

With respect to impacts from construction traffic, Section 4.6.3.5 of the DEIR examined “project specific impacts” and noted that new development if required to analyze and then mitigate these impacts. Impacts from construction have been and will continue to be included in any project environmental analysis.

- O-18b.6 Section 4.5 of the Agricultural Winery Corridor Plan (AWCP) addresses the preparation of a Capital Improvement Financing Plan to address infrastructure needs. This would include identifying a zone of benefit and costs of improvements over the life of the CIFP.

Financial costs associated with implementation of the 2007 General Plan are not required to be analyzed in the DEIR. (Public Resources Code, §§ 21060.5, 21100; CEQA

Guidelines, § 15131 (a)) Nonetheless, Section 4.5 of the AWCP addresses the preparation of a Capital Improvement Financing Plan to address infrastructure needs. (available at: http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/planning/gpu/draftnow2007/txt/10J-AWCP_Nov%202007_changes.pdf [as accessed Dec. 30, 2009]) This would include identifying a zone of benefit and costs of improvements over the life of the CIFP.

Page 4.3-120 estimates the water demand for wineries under the AWCP. The estimate for other facilities is not included, but would be less. However, based upon the demand projections for the basin, implementation of the Salinas Valley Water Project will ensure that there is a sufficient water supply to serve new uses in the corridor. Projects will be required to construct their own distribution pipelines as necessary.

Wastewater discharge facilities for the AWCP are addressed on pages 4.11-28 through 4.11-29 of the DEIR. Waste treatment facilities would be required and would be engineered and operated in conformance to Central Coast RWQCB standards.

The commenter cites an article on climate change and its impact on wineries at the end of the century. It is true that changes in temperature, precipitation, and pests could occur with climate change over the 21st century that could have substantial effects on grape growing in Monterey County and elsewhere. However, the precise nature of changes for viticulture in Monterey county are not known at this time because there has not been adequate downscaling of global climate models to the local scale in order to determine more precisely what localized climate changes may actually occur. The DEIR discloses (see P. 4.16-40) that climate change may adversely affect agriculture in Monterey and proposes Mitigation Measure CC-13 on p. 4.16-42 and 4.16-43 to require adaptation planning over time.

O-18b.7 The commenter is describing concerns relating to housing and services for low-paid wage earners who might be employed in AWCP facilities. There is no specific comment on resource impacts addressed or not addressed in the DEIR. However, Section 4.11 in the DEIR describes the environmental impacts that might occur as a result of the construction of facilities for schools, libraries, sheriff and medical care necessary to accommodate growth under the General Plan. With respect to questions regarding where the necessary services might be provided, the AWCP is designed in coordination with growth in the cities that align the corridor. It is anticipated that the cities would be the focus of services. In addition, the General Plan allows for some development in the proposed Community Area of Chualar and Rural Centers along the corridor.

O-18b.8 The commenter recommends that the County consider adoption of an oak woodlands management plan because of the benefits of oak woodlands to reducing climate change effects and as habitat. Mitigation Measure BIO-2.2 does address potential impacts to oak woodlands. That measure, with minor edits that are proposed by the County consistent with input from the Planning Commission at public workshops, is provided Chapter 4.

Section 4.9 provides a comprehensive analysis of the loss of wildlife habitat that could result from development. Please refer to Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, for further discussion of proposed mitigation measures to address loss of wildlife habitat.

- O-18b.9 Please refer to Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, for a discussion of proposed changes to policies in the Open Space Element regarding development on slopes.
- O-18b.10 The DEIR is based upon the proposed 2007 Draft General Plan. Guiding Principles adopted as part of an earlier version are not included in the impact analysis. Comments are noted.

O-19 Save Our Peninsula Committee (prepared by Law Offices of Richard H Rosenthal)

- O-19.1 The commenter states that the General Plan fails to correlate the land use element with the circulation element. This is not a comment on the environmental analysis in the DEIR; however, and the commenter does not provide any specific references to policies or data in the DEIR. Chapter 4.6 of the DEIR provides an extensive analysis of the impacts that would result from implementation of the General Plan. Although the DEIR concludes that in several impact areas, traffic impacts will be significant and unavoidable, this does not mean that the roads will be overwhelmed as the commenter has asserted. The analysis indicates that there will be some roadways that will still exceed LOS D. However, the DEIR provides mitigation measures including regional traffic fees and a County impact fee program that will collect fees from new development that will be utilized to address traffic impacts. These improvements will improve traffic conditions.

The commenter notes the defeat of Measure Z, a proposed countywide transportation sales tax. While the defeat of Measure Z will result in a delay in the completion of some projects on the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) project list, TAMC has continued to move forward on its high priority projects since Measure Z was only one component of the overall program. TAMC will continue to work with jurisdictions and the public in Monterey County to seek additional funding. See also, Master Response 6, *Traffic Mitigation*.

- O-19.2 The commenter refers to the December 8, 2009 correspondence from the Carmel Valley Road Committee Ad Hoc group to Supervisor Potter regarding the Ad Hoc group's views of the Carmel Valley traffic assessment in the DEIR, which was not attached. That letter is comment O-6a. Please refer to the response to that letter.

In response to the general topic cited by commenter, the level of service on Carmel Valley Road that is proposed in the DEIR is based upon the level of service in each segment that existed at the time of the adoption of the original Carmel Valley Traffic Improvement Program was adopted. Accordingly, the LOS in some segments is LOS C; in others it is LOS D. The specific Levels of Service for each segment are provided in the DEIR Page 4.6-62. Please refer to Master Response 5, *Carmel Valley Traffic*, for a discussion of the issues pertaining to that analysis.

- O-19.3 The commenter raises issues about the AHOs proposed in the General Plan and whether there is infrastructure to support development. The designation of AHOs is a policy decision of the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors received

recommendations from the Planning Commission on September 12, 2007 regarding what sites might be specifically designated as future AHOs based upon the criteria in Policy LU-2.12. These include accessibility to public transit, and the ability to connect to public water and sewer during the lifetime of the General Plan. Additional AHOs may be designated provided that they meet the provisions of LU-2.12.

O-19.4 The commenter raises the issue of salt water intrusion into the Salinas Valley and Seaside Aquifer, and the costs associated with new water supplies as well as impacts on rate payers. The commenter is referred to Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, for a detailed discussion of seawater intrusion and proposed solutions for addressing this problem. Master Response 4 also discusses the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) that represents a major effort by the County to utilize recycled water. Since CEQA does not require that a DEIR provide a cost analysis of options for addressing potential impacts, there will be no further response to this question.

O-19.5 The commenter expresses his concern that there is no cost data attached to required infrastructure improvements that are proposed in the DEIR and therefore the commenter cannot assess the feasibility of proposed mitigation measures. Please refer to Response O-10.4 with respect to the requirement to provide cost data. Please also refer to Master Response 10, section 10.5 on General Plan mitigation measures and section 10.6 on fee-based mitigation, for further responses to the comments provided.

O-20a Sierra Club, Ventana Chapter

O-20a.1 The commenter has expressed concerns regarding the accessibility of reference documents cited in Section 11 of the DEIR, *Documents, Plans and Reports Cited*. The commenter also requested additional time for the public to review and provide comments to the document.

In response to this and similar correspondence from the public, the County provided a revised Section 11 and created a reference file in the County Administration Building Permit Center containing either hard copies of each reference or a compact disk of the information that was contained electronically or on a web site. Web site addresses were provided should the public wish to access the sites independently, but these were not linked to the document on the County web site. In addition errata to citations were provided.

To ensure adequate time for review of the updated Section 11, the comment period was extended to February 2, 2009.

O-20b Sierra Club, Ventana Chapter

O-20b.1 Please see the response to comment O-20a.

O-20c Sierra Club, Ventana Chapter

- O-20c.1 The commenter asserts that the project description lacks detail regarding existing conditions. The commenter also asserts that: the analysis of and the mitigation of impacts to biological resources are not detailed enough (being qualitative rather than quantitative); the DEIR fails to justify its lack of detail; and the DEIR does not incorporate all of the available information on biological resources.

The DEIR is a program EIR for a General Plan, not for a development project. As such, it is not expected to and cannot practically analyze impacts at a site-specific level. The commenter is referred to Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for General Plan and the General Plan EIR*, and Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, section 8.2 and section 8.5.

As discussed in Master Response 8, the DEIR has not deferred the analysis of baseline conditions in Monterey County. The DEIR provides baseline information by describing the habitats that exist in the County, as well as enumerating acreages for each of these habitats both county-wide and in each of the focused growth areas that will be subject to development under the policies of the General Plan (DEIR, Table 4.9-2). The DEIR also provides tables describing the special status wildlife species with potential to occur in Monterey County, and their habitat requirements. Section 4.9.3.1 describes each of the sensitive vegetation communities and generally describes what species these communities support.

The DEIR provides a habitat-based approach to impact analysis. The DEIR calculated areas of impact by assigning scale factors to account for less than 100% conversion. The commenter is referred to Note (a) which follows Table 4.9.7 (Monterey County GP 2007 Estimated Impacts on Natural Vegetation Communities due to Development). As discussed in Master Response 8, section 8.2, this technical approach is appropriate for a programmatic level analysis of species impacts.

As noted above, the DEIR synthesizes available information on biological resources at a general level, as illustrated by Tables 4.9-4 (listing special status plants) and 4.9-5 (listing special status wildlife species) and Exhibits 4.9-1 through 4.9-9. Tables 4.9-1 and 4.9-2 describe the total acres of each vegetation community in the County and acreage per community in each of the proposed Community Areas, Rural Centers, AHOs, and the AWCP that are proposed for more intensified future growth as well as the acreage outside of these focused growth areas. Data from these tables are illustrated in Exhibit 4.9-1 that illustrates vegetation cover by type on a general scale and Exhibits 4.9-2 through 4.9-5 that show key habitat types in greater detail with an emphasis on the focused growth areas identified in the General Plan. The Impact Overview by Development Area (DEIR, pages 4.9-56 -4.9-64) provides additional discussion of the key species that occur today and are likely to be impacted by development. Table 4.9-7 includes estimates of acreage that has the potential to be impacted. These estimates are at a landscape level of detail, as is appropriate for a General Plan EIR.

The County agrees that there is a significant amount of native vegetation on slopes in Monterey County (as also evidenced in the attachment by the commenter). Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, discusses the

limited degree of impact that is likely to occur on slopes based upon historic factors, economics, distribution of species, distribution of agriculture, and the availability of water and suitable soils for agriculture.

The commenter asserts that the County has failed to undertake sufficient investigation of biological resources to adequately describe baseline conditions and cites 2007 General Plan Policies OS-5.1 and OS-5.2 as illustrating that the County will gather baseline information after adopting the General Plan. The commenter asks for an explanation of why “establishing a baseline *before* adoption of the General Plan is infeasible.” (emphasis in original)

The DEIR does not state that the 2007 General Plan is to be adopted before a baseline is provided for the environmental analysis of biological resources. To the contrary, Monterey County has properly described the baseline conditions for biological resources at a county-level scale, as discussed above. Policies OS-5.1 and OS-5.2 are not exercises in post-EIR data collection. Rather, these policies are intended to ensure that the County will retain and organize currently available data, as well as future data, on species and habitat in order that it can be used consistently in the analysis of individual projects.

In response to this comment, Policy OS-5.1 and Policy OS-5.2 have been modified and can be found in Chapter 5 of this FEIR.

The intent of Policies OS-5.1 and OS-5.2 as drafted and modified is to provide a readily accessible source of this information (hence the use of the County Geographic Information System (GIS) to hold the information) for use in the more detailed, site-specific analyses that will be done for future development projects. Each of these inventories will be ongoing during the life of the General Plan and will be updated as new information is collected and added to GIS. The commenter is also referred to Response O-11.g-75.

With respect to the comments questioning the level of effort undertaken by the preparer to seek data, the commenter is referred to Section 11, *References* of the DEIR (see also Chapter 6 of the FEIR). Documents listed in this Chapter were utilized by the preparer in the drafting of the DEIR and are cited in the text. The commenter is also referred to: (1) notes a and b for Table 4.9.3 that describe the pertinent data sources; (2) the discussion of the methodology for determining baseline acreages and in Table 4.9-6 and (3) notes a and b in Table 4.9-7 that describe the analysis undertaken.

The commenter is also referred again to Master Response 8, which provides additional information on several wildlife and plant species, wildlife corridors and slope conversion.

The commenter also asserts that there is insufficient baseline information in the DEIR to allow the conclusion that the 2007 General Plan’s impacts will be mitigated to a less than significant level. Please see Master Response 8 and responses to comments O-11.g.62 and O-11.g.75 regarding the level of information required to assess impacts in a General Plan EIR and an amplification of the DEIR analysis of specific impacts to species and habitat.

The commenter asserts that Policies OS-5.1 and OS-5.2 are deficient as mitigation measures. OS-5.1 and 5.2 are General Plan policies that are not intended to serve a stand-alone mitigation measures. The DEIR analyzes how each of the policies in the General Plan that pertain to biological resources reduces potentially significant impacts, and then provides additional mitigation measures. The DEIR concluded, based on its analysis, that collectively, the policies and mitigation measures reduce biological impacts to less than significant. That is, applying the various policies of the General Plan collectively and the mitigation measures identified in the EIR (which will be incorporated into the General Plan as policies), will reduce biological impacts to less-than-significant levels.

The commenter asks how Policies OS-5.1 and 5.2 will be funded. Please refer to Master Response 10 which discusses assumptions regarding implementation of General Plan policies and mitigation measures adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

Please refer to Chapter 5 for modifications to several of the policies proposed in the draft 2007 General Plan and DEIR mitigation measures. This includes changes to requirements for the artisan wineries in the AWCP which now will be subject to the requirement for a biological study, and modifications to Policy OS-3.5 with respect to requirements for a discretionary permit for conversion of uncultivated land on steep slopes.

Please see Master Response 10 and Master Response 8 regarding the level of detail expected of a program EIR and of its related mitigation measures. These Master Responses, as well as responses to individual comments on biological resources, demonstrate that the DEIR analysis is sufficient to allow informed action by County decision makers on the 2007 General Plan.

The commenter cites The Nature Conservancy's October 2006 *California Central Coast Ecoregional Plan Update* as support for the assertion that there is site-specific information available that was not included in the analysis. The commenter misrepresents the intent of The Nature Conservancy's report. This report serves to assist The Nature Conservancy in prioritizing its conservation activities and identifying priority areas for potential acquisition to its portfolio of lands. Although it is a comprehensive overview of the biology of the Central Coast, from Santa Cruz to Santa Barbara, it is, by its own terms, "intended to guide decisions at a regional scale and does not replace site-scale planning or focused field assessments" (The Nature Conservancy 2006, pg. 66). The "portfolio area boundaries and associated species and ecosystem locations represent approximations rather than precise descriptions of conditions on-the-ground" (The Nature Conservancy 2006, *ibid*). The EIR for the General Plan Update has taken a similar programmatic approach in its analysis of the biological resources and impacts of development under the 2007 General Plan.

Furthermore, the *California Central Coast Ecoregional Plan Update* (provided as an attachment by commenter) guides The Nature Conservancy in setting priorities for its conservation activities. It does not purport to serve as a basis for local government compliance with California Planning and Zoning Law, or to balance conservation, development, and property rights concerns, as the County of Monterey must do in preparing and adopting a general plan.

The commenter notes a close correlation between land-use concerns addressed by TNC and development under the General Plan. The General Plan's policies promoting growth in its cities and focused growth areas, rather than in a less concentrated growth pattern, will further reduce the potential for projects to adversely affect biological resources. As noted above, the DEIR provides an analysis of the habitats and species that are known to occur in each of the Community Areas, Rural Centers, designated Affordable Housing Overlay districts, and AWCP. This analysis is intended to assist decision-makers in determining the potential impacts of the proposed policies in the General Plan related to these focused growth areas. See also Master Response 7, *New Urban Development Outside Focused Growth Areas*.

With respect to impacts to biological resources that may be caused by conversion to vineyards, and cultivation permitted on slopes greater than 25%, the commenter is referred to Master Response 8 and Master Response 3 that describe proposed modifications to several General Plan policies and mitigation measures as well as provide further explanations of the analysis of biological impacts from development under the General Plan. Policy OS-3.5 has been modified and further constrains the amount of conversion on the steeper slopes that will be allowed. The text of the policy modification can be found in Chapter 5 of this FEIR. It can also be found in Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*.

With respect to impacts that might result from the spread of invasive species, the commenter is referred to Policy OS-5.14 which addresses invasive exotic plants and pests. With respect to impacts that could occur from the expansion of public services, DEIR Chapter 4.11 Public Services analyzes impacts that could result from new development that is necessary to provide additional public services (i.e., new sheriff and fire stations, schools, wastewater). Mitigation for these impacts is discussed under each public service heading. The expansion of public services is included in development analyzed for its impact on biological resources in DEIR Chapter 4.9, Biological Resources..

With respect to climate change, the commenter is referred to Chapter 4.16, *Climate Change* of the DEIR. Section 4.16.3.2 outlines the impacts to the natural environment that could result from climate change including changes in the distribution of plant and wildlife species (page 4.16-4). Section 4.16.5.3 provides an impact analysis with mitigation measures that would reduce impacts for 2030 to a less than considerable level, but are cumulatively considerable with mitigation for buildout. The adverse effects of climate change on Monterey County natural ecosystems are described on Page 4.16-42. Mitigation measures are proposed. The DEIR concludes that the General Plan with mitigation would not make a considerable contribution to a cumulative impact related to adaptation to climate change effects.

- O-20c.2 The commenter claims that the "DEIR erroneously assumes that subsequent, site-specific environmental review will assure adequate analysis and mitigation in the future." They cite a number of non-discretionary actions that they believe will result in unmitigated impacts: development of the AWCP, including ancillary uses; development on legal lots of record; new cultivation on slopes of 25% or greater; and routine and ongoing agricultural activities. The commenter recommends that the EIR include site-specific

information about the potential impacts of these actions, including identifying the locations of future development within the AWCP and all legal lots of record.

See Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail in the General Plan EIR, Master Response 3 regarding agricultural policies, including the AWCP, and Master Response 7 regarding growth outside of focused growth areas. These Master Responses discuss the likely broad distribution of future growth with respect to the AWCP, conversion of previously uncultivated lands, and residential/commercial development. They also include a description and discussion of several modifications to proposed policies and mitigation measures that will address impacts from the AWCP, legal lots of record, development on slopes and routine and ongoing agriculture.

The County acknowledges the attachment provided by commenter (The Herald, 8-1-01 and Winery Corridor Section and Maps from GPU). However, the specific location of future development within the AWCP is not known. Although the AWCP limits the number of facilities that may be built within each of its segments, it does not specify their location. It would be speculative to assume that proposed facilities would be located in the worst locations and infeasible for a programmatic analysis to describe site specific mitigation for those impacts. Therefore, it is not possible to provide the level of analysis requested by the commenter. The commenter is again referred to Master Responses 8 and 3 which discuss potential impacts to biological resources that could result from development in the AWCP and to the response to O-11g.23

Mapping existing legal lots of record is not necessary in order to describe the potential for environmental impact at a program EIR level. As noted in the response to O-20c.1 the DEIR analyzes impacts based on potential habitat conversion and has assigned scaling factors including factors for development outside of focused growth areas. The commenter is referred to Master Response 8, Section 8. 5, for a discussion of potential impacts from development on lots of record.

With regard to previously uncultivated land on slopes, proposed Policy OS-3.5 has been revised to provide for discretionary permits for agricultural conversions on slopes greater than 15% or 10% if on highly erosive soils and prohibits conversion except in limited circumstances on slopes over 25%. As discussed in Master Response 3 regarding agricultural policies, this change to OS-3.5 will further limit the impacts of uncultivated land conversion.

The commenter requests that maps be made available illustrating the location of sensitive biological resources, as well as acreage calculations of land that may be affected by future development. The commenter asks that the maps be provided in large and small scale to identify potential site-specific impacts.

Maps of sensitive resources, particularly vegetation and habitat zones and including critical habitat were included in the DEIR as Exhibits 4.9-1 through 4.9-9. Note that in response to comments, the EIR has added an exhibit illustrating the critical habitat for Yadon's piperia. This can be found in Chapter 4 of this FEIR. The DEIR provides an estimate of impacts on natural vegetation communities, by acreage, as a result of development to 2030 in Table 4.9-7 (see page 4.9-57). A qualitative discussion of impacts follows that table, organized by focused development area. See Master Response

10 regarding the level of detail that is expected of a program EIR for a discussion of why this is an adequate approach.

The commenter asserts that the impacts to biological resources from Routine and Ongoing Agricultural activities has been inadequately disclosed and analyzed. They ask that uncultivated lands subject to conversion to agriculture in the future be mapped. The commenter also asks that the EIR be recirculated for review with this information.

The commenter is combining two separate issues: the effects of Routine and Ongoing Agricultural activities and the effects of the conversion of uncultivated land to agriculture. Regarding Routine and Ongoing Agriculture, please see Master Response 3. These policies essentially recognize existing agricultural activities and do not substantially change existing regulations applicable to these activities. As a result, they would not result in a new or worsened significant, unavoidable impact. The commenter is referred to Master Response 12 which addresses the requirements for recirculation of a DEIR.

Master Responses 3 and 8 also address the expected impact of converting uncultivated land to agriculture. As discussed there, proposed revisions to Policy OS-3.5 will strengthen its environmental protections and, discourage conversions on steeper slopes by imposing regulatory requirements that do not apply on flat areas. The Master Responses address the likely geographic distribution and anticipated number of acres that will be converted. The precise locations of future conversions cannot be accurately known, because it will result from the future business decisions of private agricultural landowners. Therefore, mapping and quantifying the impacts by location is not feasible. Master Response 8 describes revisions to Mitigation Measures BIO-1.4 and BIO-1.5, which will track actual acres of land converted to agriculture against projected acres of conversion. These revised policies further strengthen biological resources mitigation by requiring an evaluation every 5 years in order to address whether it is necessary to amend the General Plan to reduce impacts to biological species and to address the timeframe for preparation of a Conservation Strategy.

The commenter asserts that “the DEIR should not assume...that subsequent environmental reviews will repair the DEIR’s inadequacies.” They ask that the EIR analyze all land use activities allowed under the 2007 General Plan, particularly those activities that will proceed without further environmental review.

Master Responses referenced earlier in this response, particularly Master Response 10’s discussion of the use of a program EIR for later site-specific projects, as well as responses to individual comments on biological resources, demonstrate that the DEIR analysis is sufficient to allow informed action by County decision makers on the 2007 General Plan. See Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail in a program EIR and Master Response 8, which discusses impacts that could result from the development of lots of record, conversion of uncultivated land and routine and ongoing agriculture and requirements in the General Plan, state and federal requirements and existing County policies that address the potential impacts from these activities.

- O-20c.3 The commenter asserts that the policies of the 2007 General Plan are “weak and unenforceable [and] will undermine environmental mitigation of future land use activities even when they do require a discretionary permit.”

The General Plan is adopted and enforced by Monterey County pursuant to its obligations under the Planning and Zoning Law (Gov. Code Section 65000, et seq.). In addition to the policies contained in the 2007 General Plan, as proposed for revision, all of the EIR’s mitigation measures will be adopted as General Plan policies to ensure their implementation. See Master Response 10 for a discussion of general plan policies and impact mitigation. See also the response to comment O-11g-75.

The commenter focuses on the potential impacts of new development on the Monterey pine, a species of special concern (Federal Endangered Species Act) that the California Native Plant Society has identified as being “seriously endangered in California” (CNPS list 1B.1). They are concerned that Monterey Pine Forest is not being provided adequate protections.

The DEIR identifies Monterey pine as a special status plant in Table 4.9-4. Please see Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, for a discussion of the analysis of impacts on the Monterey pine and the existing and proposed protections for the species.

The commenter cites specific policies in the General Plan and questions whether these will protect special status species most specifically Monterey Pine Forest (GMP-3.4 through GMP-4.1) As noted in O-20c.1, policies in the General Plan collectively mitigate impacts to biological resources. In addition to the policies in the Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan, a number of General Plan policies further address potential impacts and reduce these to a level that is less than significant. The Commenter is referred to Policy OS-5.3 (which requires that development shall be carefully planned for conservation and maintenance of critical habitat), OS-5.4 (development shall avoid, minimize and mitigate listed species and critical habitat to the extent feasible), and OS-5.16 (this requires a biological study for discretionary development that could cause significant biological impacts, and requires that “feasible measures to reduce significant impacts to a less than significant level” be adopted as conditions of approval). These policies provide criteria that must be considered in the review of projects and provide criteria for the development of an ordinance that will implement the General Plan policies.

The commenter questions the efficacy of Policy GMP-4.1 and asks why it is not applied to all pine, redwood and oak forests in the County. Again, the commenter is referred to additional policies in the General Plan and DEIR mitigation measures that collectively address these species and erosion impacts. Policy OS-3.5 addresses residential development on slopes and conversion of uncultivated land on steep slopes. Policies OS-5.3 and OS-5.4 address critical habitat and species. Mitigation measure BIO-2.1 (Stream Setback Ordinance) addresses preservation of riparian habitat and reduction of sediment and requires the preparation of an ordinance for mitigating impacts. Mitigation measure BIO-2.2 (Oak Woodlands) requires the preparation, adopting and implementation of a program that would mitigate the loss of oak woodlands from development impacts.

For the reasons stated above, the General Plan policies and proposed mitigation measures that will be adopted as General Plan policies assure that impacts on sensitive biological resources like the Monterey Pine Forest will be less than significant.

- O-20c.4 The commenter asserts that the DEIR fails to provide information about the impact on biological resources of the future expansion of incorporated towns and cities. The commenter argues that without information about the future expansion of incorporated areas “the public has no real basis for understanding the total development footprint envisioned in the 2007 General Plan.”

The project being analyzed in the EIR is the 2007 General Plan for the inland unincorporated areas. The 2007 General Plan does not address impacts from expansion of incorporated cities. Thus, the impacts of city expansion on biological resources or other impacts is not a consequence of the 2007 General Plan. Instead, the EIR evaluates the impacts of the 2007 General Plan on biological resources based on the land use designations for urban development in unincorporated areas and based on agricultural expansion trends for agricultural changes over time.

However, the EIR included the entire County in the profile of land covers (natural and man-made) in Table 4.9-1 and Exhibit 4.9-1. The nature of past conversions of habitat due to urban and agricultural expansion are shown for the entire County (including the cities (in Table 4.9-6 and Figures 4.9-6 through 4.9-10. Thus the context of past urban conversions (both city and unincorporated) areas is shown in the EIR. The analysis of habitat conversions by agriculture was conducted for the County as a whole; thus any of these conversions that might occur in city areas is subsumed in the County totals.

Thus, the impact to which the commenter is referring is not a direct impact of the 2007 General Plan, but rather a cumulative impact of city growth combined with unincorporated growth. The commenter is correct that specific quantitative analysis of potential city expansion into areas of intact habitat was not done. That does not mean it was not analyzed appropriately in the EIR. Section 6, Other CEQA, contains the cumulative biological analysis starting on page 6-19. As disclosed on page 6-22, there will be significant, cumulative impacts to biological resources from the combined effects of city urban growth, other growth not under County control (such as military expansion), and growth allowed by the 2007 General Plan and the 2007 General Plan is identified as contributing considerably to this impact, despite the inclusion of feasible mitigation.

Maps of urban expansion areas requested by the commenter are not required for a General Plan EIR biological impact analysis (see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for General Plan and the General Plan EIR*). The County has no authority over the timing or extent of future expansion of the cities through annexation (there are no “towns” under California agency formation law, although some cities have given themselves that name). Further, the policies of the County General Plan and the County’s land use regulations have no effect within the limits of incorporated cities. Therefore, although the DEIR assumed that annexation would have an effect on the natural communities within the future city boundaries, the specific nature of that effect will be dependent upon the policies and regulations of each city, as well as the application of CEQA to future individual development projects within the expansion areas. These will provide a measure of protection. In coastal cities, their LCPs will also provide protections. Given

that information is not available on specific protections future CEQA documents and LCPs would provide, the DEIR's approach has been a conservative one.

The commenter recommends that urban expansion impacts be considered cumulatively with impacts of development allowed under the General Plan in unincorporated areas. The DEIR does provide this analysis. The commenter is referred to DEIR Chapter 6.4 Cumulative Impacts for a discussion of impacts that would include development in the cities. Impact Cum-5 (Indirect Impacts of Water Supply Projects- that serve both the cities and unincorporated areas) notes that biological impacts, particularly from the release of brine into Monterey Bay National marine Sanctuary are unknown and would be potentially cumulatively significant. DEIR Section 6.4.3.7 (Biological Resources) indicates that expansion of cities which is outside the control of Monterey County, will impact habitats adjoining urban areas and the impact will be cumulatively considerable.

- O-20c.5 The commenter asserts that the DEIR's analysis of the proposed wine corridor is based on faulty assumptions about trends in land conversion and the incentive to establish new vineyards.

See Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, and Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, for a discussion of the assumptions applied to and conclusions reached regarding environmental impacts resulting from development in the wine corridor. As demonstrated by these Master Responses, the assumptions and conclusions are reasonable and supported by substantial evidence, including new information regarding existing winery capacity.

Development in the AWCP is limited by the number of future facilities that will be permitted and the distribution within the three corridors. It is unknown at this time precisely where the new facilities will be located. Moreover, the General Plan requires that future large scale wineries be subject to a discretionary permit. The policy in the AWCP regarding artisan (a.k.a. boutique wineries) and accessory facilities makes these facilities subject to revised Policy OS-5.16. Please refer to Master Response 3 *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies* for a discussion of the processing capacity of the proposed AWCP and Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, for a discussion winery demand.

As noted in Master Response 3, the commenter's assertion that nearly one million acres of land may be converted on slopes of 25% or greater is grossly overestimated and is not supported by evidence that this conversion will occur. Please see Master Response 3, section 3.2 for a discussion of reasonably available land for agricultural conversion. Policy OS-3.5 has been revised to provide additional protections for slopes with respect to the conversion of previously uncultivated land. Master Response 3 and Master Response 8 describe modifications to the slope policy and address the assumptions in the DEIR analysis and conclusions regarding the impacts that would result from conversion on steep slopes, routine and ongoing agriculture, and development in the AWCP and conversion of uncultivated land.

For the above reasons, the revisions proposed by the commenter are inappropriate and not required. The comment does not present substantial evidence of new or worsened significant unavoidable impacts; therefore, DEIR recirculation is not required. See also

Master Response 12, *Recirculation*. The commenter is also referred to the responses to O-11g-75, O-11g-83 and O-11g-84.

- O-20c.6 The comment challenges the DEIR for allegedly stating (on page 3-31) that “development of Rancho San Carlos shall be based on County ‘Resolution 93-115,” and the comment questions whether the DEIR accounted for Measure M, a referendum measure passed by the voters in November 1996.

The comment misunderstands the statement in the DEIR. The statement is part of the project description. The DEIR describes the Rancho San Carlos Special Treatment area as following “the densities and policies in Board of Supervisors’ Resolution 93-115, ‘Comprehensive Planned Use’ Overlay and the Comprehensive Development Plan for the Santa Lucia Preserve.” (DEIR, pp. 3.-31 and 3-32.) This statement paraphrases proposed policy GMP-1.6, and thus the DEIR project description is accurate. Proposed policy CV-1.25 contains similar wording.

In regard to whether the DEIR analysis took account of Measure M; it did. The policies mentioned above refer to Resolution No. 93-115 with respect to the “Comprehensive Planned Use” overlay and refer to the Comprehensive Development Plan for the Santa Lucia Preserve. While Resolution No. 93-115 required the Comprehensive Development Plan, the Comprehensive Development Plan itself was part of the later-approved Santa Lucia Preserve Combined Development Permit (Board of Supervisors’ Resolution No. 96-060). That Combined Development Permit has subsequently been amended as a result of several actions, including Measure M, litigation relating to approval of the Santa Lucia Preserve Combined Development Permit (*Sierra Club, et al v. County of Monterey et al.* Superior Court Case No. 106800), and subsequent County approvals.

Measure M, a referendum measure adopted by voters on November 5, 1996, nullified Ordinance No. 03857 and thereby rescinded the rezoning that would have allowed visitor-serving units in specific areas of the Santa Lucia Preserve. As a result of Measure M, the zoning of the site affected by Measure M reverted to the original RC-D zoning. Following the passage of Measure M and the above-referenced litigation, the Board of Supervisors denied General Development Plans for hotels and related commercial uses in compliance with Measure M’s nullification of Ordinance No. 03857 and made other modifications to the Combined Development Permit and Vesting Tentative Map. (Board of Supervisors’ Resolution No. 97-360.)

In or about 2003, consistent with the RC-D zoning, the County approved a residential subdivision, known as the Chamisal Area Subdivision, in the area where the hotel site had been located prior to the passage of Measure M. Over the years, a total of 294 residential parcels have been approved within the Santa Lucia Preserve. An additional 14 lots have been approved for employee housing and 12 lots are zoned commercial or public/quasi-public. This DEIR’s analysis is based on the existing conditions on the ground, and growth projections are based on the entitlements as they are today.

O-21a The Open Monterey Project (prepared by Law Offices of Michael Stamp)

- O-21a.1 The comment noted that a new appendix was added to the County web site after release of the DEIR for public comment on September 8, 2008. The County subsequently restarted the public comment period in December 2008 and all appendices were included at that time on the web site. Please see Master Response 12, *Recirculation*.
- O-21a.2 The comment contends that the initial distribution of the DEIR did not go to all libraries in the County library system. The County subsequently restarted the public comment period in December 2008, and the DEIR was provided to all libraries in the County system. Please see Master Response 12, *Recirculation*.
- O-21a.3 The comment criticizes the indicated closure time for public comment in the initial public review period. The County subsequently restarted the public comment period in December 2008. Please see Master Response 12, *Recirculation*.

O-21b The Open Monterey Project (prepared by Law Offices of Michael Stamp)

- O-21b.1 The comment complains about the timing of receipt for a CD of the DEIR upon commencement of the initial public review period. The County subsequently restarted the public comment period in December 2008, and the commenter had more than sufficient time for review pursuant to CEQA. Please see Master Response 12, *Recirculation*.
- O-21b.2 The comment contends that certain references listed in Section 11 of the DEIR were not available at the time the initial public review period was commenced. The County subsequently restarted the public comment period in December 2008, and the references were made available. Please see Master Response 12, *Recirculation*.

O-21c The Open Monterey Project (prepared by Law Offices of Michael Stamp)

- O-21c.1 The comment complains that certain of the references in Section 11 of the DEIR were not available to the public upon the commencement of the initial public review period. The County subsequently restarted the public comment period in December 2008, and the references were made available. Please see Master Response 12, *Recirculation*.

O-21d The Open Monterey Project (prepared by Law Offices of Michael Stamp)

- O-21d.1 The comment complains that certain of the references in Section 11 of the DEIR were not available to the public upon the commencement of the initial public review period. The County subsequently restarted the public comment period in December 2008, and the references were made available. Please see Master Response 12, *Recirculation*.

O-21e The Open Monterey Project (prepared by Law Offices of Michael Stamp)

- O-21e.1 The comment complains that certain of the references in Section 11 of the DEIR were not available to the public upon the commencement of the initial public review period. The County subsequently restarted the public comment period in December 2008, and the references were made available. Please see Master Response 12, *Recirculation*.

O-21f The Open Monterey Project (prepared by Law Offices of Michael Stamp)

- O-21f.1 These comments complain that the State Clearinghouse did not receive a complete version of the DEIR because of a missing appendix, and that the State Water Resources Control Board did not receive the DEIR. The County subsequently restarted the public comment period in December 2008, and the State Clearinghouse was provided a complete version of the DEIR at that time. In addition, although distribution to the State Water Resources Control Board was the duty of the Clearinghouse, the County ensured that the State Water Resources Control Board was provided a copy. Please see Master Response 12, *Recirculation*.

- O-21f.2 See the response to comment O-21f.1.

O-21g The Open Monterey Project (prepared by Law Offices of Michael Stamp)

- O-21g.1 The comment complains that the State Water Resources Control Board did not receive the DEIR. The County subsequently restarted the public comment period in December 2008, and, although distribution to the State Water Resources Control Board was the duty of the Clearinghouse, the County ensured that the State Water Resources Control Board was provided a copy. Please see Master Response 12, *Recirculation*.

O-21h The Open Monterey Project (prepared by Law Offices of Michael Stamp)

- O-21h.1 The comment requests a copy of the consultation contacts for the County. The requested list of contacts was provided to the commenter.

O-21i The Open Monterey Project (prepared by Law Offices of Michael Stamp)

- O-21i.1 The commenter alleges that the County did not properly notify the public of the changes that it made to the General Plan and DEIR materials between the original release of the DEIR in September 2008 and the subsequent re-release of the document in December 2008. The commenter recommends that the DEIR public review period should not begin to run until the environmental documents are accurate and available to the public at large.

The County restarted the public comment period in December 2008 for the express purpose of providing reviewers with full information and sufficient time to comment on the DEIR, and the commenter had more than enough time for review pursuant to CEQA, as evidenced by their voluminous comments in letter O-21k. See Master Response 12, *Recirculation*, for a discussion of the County's actions to provide the public with accurate information on the DEIR and the 2007 General Plan.

O-21j The Open Monterey Project (prepared by Law Offices of Michael Stamp)

- O-21j.1 The commenter references correspondence with the County in January of 2009 and complains that the County has ignored their allegations of procedural errors in the CEQA process.

The County has chosen to reply to all comment letters received during the public review period between September 2008 and February 2, 2009 in this FEIR. Please see Master Response 12, *Recirculation*.

O-21k The Open Monterey Project (prepared by Law Offices of Michael Stamp)

- O-21k.1 The County recognizes these comments are submitted on behalf of the Open Monterey Project, and that the Open Monterey Project joins in the comments of other groups, including those of Landwatch Monterey, County, the Sierra Club, and the Carmel Valley Association.

- O-21k.2 The comment asserts that the DEIR does not compare the proposed project with either the existing 1982 General Plan or “current on-the-ground conditions.” This assertion is false, as explained below.

The DEIR compares the proposed 2007 General Plan Update to the 1982 General Plan in its analysis of the No Project Alternative in DEIR Section 5.3. The analysis of the No Project Alternative assumes that the existing 1982 General Plan would be retained as the County’s blueprint for growth; no land use designations would change; and existing undeveloped lots of record ultimately would be built out to their highest use, as envisioned by the 1982 General Plan land use map. The No Project Alternative analyzed in the DEIR is consistent with CEQA’s requirement that when the proposed project is the revision of an existing land use plan, the “no project” alternative will be the continuation of the existing plan into the future. (See CEQA Guidelines § 15126.6(e)(3)(A).)

The DEIR also compares the proposed 2007 General Plan Update to existing physical environmental conditions, i.e., the baseline physical conditions by which the County determines whether an impact is significant. Each Section within Chapter 4 of the DEIR (Sections 4.1 through 4.16) includes a subsection entitled Environmental Setting, which complies with CEQA Guidelines § 15125. Therefore, the DEIR complies with CEQA’s requirements to compare the proposed project against both the “no project” scenario, i.e., continuation of the 1982 General Plan, and existing conditions.

- O-21k.3 The comment asks whether any the impacts of the proposed project would be mitigated by fee-based mitigation. Under CEQA, paying a “fair-share fee” is permissible as effective mitigation if the fees are “part of a reasonable plan of actual mitigation that the relevant agency commits itself to implementing.” (*Anderson First Coalition v. City of Anderson* (2005) 130 Cal.App.4th 1173, 1187; *Save Our Peninsula Comm. v. Monterey County Board of Supervisors* (2001) 81 Cal.App.4th 99, 141.)

Mitigation Measure TRAN-2B, related to traffic impacts, and Mitigation Measures BIO-1.2, BIO-1.5 and BIO-2.2, related to impacts to biological resources, include payment of fees as one component of the comprehensive mitigation strategy to reduce impacts TRAN-2B, BIO-1 and BIO-2, respectively.

Specifically, Mitigation Measure TRAN-2B would revise certain policies of the Carmel Valley Master Plan (CVMP). One of these is Policy CV-2.19, which requires, among other things, that all projects within the CVMP area and within the “Expanded Area”, that contribute to traffic within the CVMP area shall contribute fair-share traffic impact fees to fund necessary improvements identified in the Carmel Valley Traffic Improvement Program (CVTIP), as updated at the time of building permit issuance. The environmental impacts of the CVTIP are currently being evaluated in the “CVTIP Partial Revision of the Draft Subsequent EIR,” which was circulated for public review in April 2009. The revisions to Policy CV-2.19 are one component of Mitigation Measure TRAN-2B, which also includes revisions to CVMP Policies CV-2.10 and CV-2.18. As discussed in Section 4.6 of the DEIR, implementation of Mitigation Measure TRAN-2B will result in impacts to Carmel Valley Road being less than significant except for the segment of Carmel Valley Road in the Carmel Valley Village where the conditions will drop from LOS C (the current standard) to LOS D (the proposed standard) due to the lack of feasible

mitigation consistent with the rural character of Carmel Valley to maintain the higher standard.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1.2, as revised in the FEIR, requires the County to develop a conservation strategy funding program that will consider a mitigation fee program as one of the options to reduce impacts to the San Joaquin kit fox. Fees would typically be used to acquire conservation easements on suitable habitat and for habitat management. As such, the fee component of this measure is part of a reasonable mitigation strategy to address the impacts of the project, as described in Section 4.9.5.4 of the EIR.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1.5, as revised in the FEIR, requires preparation of a conservation strategy for areas containing substantial suitable habitat for plant and wildlife species with the potential to become listed species due to development. This conservation strategy could include fee programs as one of several options for mitigating impacts. As above, fees would typically be used for acquisition of conservation easements. Comprehensively, Mitigation Measure BIO-1.5, in conjunction with Mitigation Measures BIO-1.2 and BIO-1.4, as well as proposed General Plan Policy OS-5.16 as revised, would reduce impacts of buildout on CEQA-defined special-status species and their habitat to a less than significant level. (See FEIR, Section 4.9.5.4.) Therefore, the potential fee component of Mitigation Measure BIO-1.5 is part of a larger mitigation strategy that is reasonably expected to address project impacts.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2.2, as revised in the FEIR, requires the County to prepare an oak woodlands mitigation program that could include payment of fees as one of several options to mitigate the loss of oak woodlands, consistent with Public Resources Code Section 21083.4. Mitigation Measure BIO-2.2 would be applied along with Mitigation Measures BIO-1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, and 2.3 and the General Plan policies discussed in EIR Section 4.9.5.4 to mitigate project-level impacts to sensitive natural communities, riparian habitat, and wetlands/waters to a less than significant level.

In addition, the following proposed General Plan Policies include fee-based mechanisms: Open Space Policies OS-5.17; Circulation Policies C-1.2, C-1.8 and C-1.11; Public Services Policies PS-1.1, PS-1.4, PS-7.8 and PS-11.9; Safety Policies S-5.11 and S-6.3; and Agriculture Policy AG-1.12. The environmental impacts of the TAMC Regional Development Impact Fee (Policy C-1.11) were evaluated in the 2007 Addendum to the EIR prepared for the 2005 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan (State Clearinghouse No. 2004061013).

The fee component of each of these policies is part of a reasonable strategy to address the impacts of the proposed General Plan Update. In no case does the EIR rely solely on any of these fee-based mechanisms to presumptively establish full mitigation of an impact. For example, the EIR recognizes that even with adoption and implementation of the County Traffic Impact Fee (Policy C-1.8) and the TAMC Regional Development Impact Fee (Policy C-1.11) the proposed GPU will have a significant and unavoidable impact on County roads and Regional roads both within and external to Monterey County. (DEIR, p. 4.6-45.)

Each of the fee-based mitigation mechanisms described above are legal and environmentally sufficient mitigation as part of a comprehensive mitigation strategy and

are reasonably expected to mitigate project impacts. Please also see Master Response 10 for additional discussion of mitigation requirements in a programmatic EIR.

- O-21k.4 The comment asks whether “any of the impacts of or mitigations for the GPU5 affected in any way, or dependent upon, a program, policy, code section, or regulation of the County that the County has not enforced fully or been able to enforce fully at any time in the last ten years.” This comment does not address significant environmental issues or analysis in the EIR. Lead Agencies are only required to respond to significant environmental issues and do not need to provide all information requested by reviewers, so long as a good faith effort as full disclosure is made in the EIR. (CEQA Guidelines § 15204.) Unless the Board of Supervisors makes a finding that a proposed mitigation measure is not feasible per CEQA Guideline section 15091, inclusion of the mitigation measures identified in the EIR, as revised by this FEIR, in the draft General Plan upon adoption will mean that the County has determined the measures are feasible and enforceable. (See CEQA Guideline section 15126.4(a)(2) regarding enforceability of mitigation measure; see also discussion in Master Response 10 regarding implementation of the General Plan).
- O-21k.5 The commenter identifies specific parameters and rules with which it would like the County to comply in responding to its comments. All responses to comments on the DEIR have been made in good faith and describe the disposition of significant environmental issues raised, in compliance with CEQA. Citations to the EIR and relevant reference documents have been included as necessary. As required by CEQA, any responses will detail how the response is supported by the documents and the analysis in the DEIR, or how the General Plan and FEIR will be modified to respond to the comment. The responses comply with CEQA’s requirements for response to comments. (See CEQA Guidelines §§ 15088 and 15204.)
- O-21k.6 The comment notes that certain changes were made to the General Plan and DEIR in December of 2008, prior to the final public review period, and contends that these changes were confusing and create inconsistencies. The commenter asks that the County be specific in any responses regarding the documents relied upon in the response and why it supports the response.
- The comment is a general comment on the process and is noted. The version of the DEIR referenced in the Notice of Availability (“NOA”) published in December of 2008, and the version of the General Plan available at that time, are the versions relied upon for purposes of these responses. Any changes in the documents prior to the NOA in December of 2008 are not confusing and do not create inconsistencies for the reasons explained in the substantive responses to this comment letter (O-21k, The Open Monterey Project). As required by CEQA, any responses will detail how the response is supported by the documents and the analysis in the DEIR, or how the General Plan and FEIR will be modified to respond to the comment.
- O-21k.7 The comment requests that the EIR identify by number each General Plan policy that is being analyzed. There is no requirement in CEQA that an EIR identify each policy of a proposed plan. The description of the project contained in Section 3.0 of the EIR complies with CEQA’s requirements for a Project Description as set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15124. Similarly, there is no requirement to identify policies by

number in the analysis of alternatives. All that is required is “sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis and comparison with the proposed project.” (CEQA Guidelines § 15126.6(d).) Such information is included in Section 5.0 of the EIR. The comment provides no evidence that the EIR does not comply with these requirements.

The comment also raises concerns about the distribution, organization and formatting of the EIR. The comment does not provide any evidence that the alleged concerns render the EIR inadequate. Moreover, these comments do not address significant environmental issues or analysis in the EIR.

The comment also inquires about General Plan errata released by the County. The comment contends that the September 3, 2008 document entitled “2008 General Plan Update Errata/Addendum” released with the DEIR contains changes to two land use designations that were not summarized in the introductory paragraph of the errata and that staff made without authority from the Board of Supervisors. There was no usurpation of authority by staff or lack of transparency in regard to the corrections and proposals in this errata document. In the document, every proposed change is accompanied by an annotation explaining the reason for the proposed change. Staff presented the errata document to the Monterey County Planning Commission on September 10, 2008, and as noted in the comment, the document was released with the DEIR. The errata informed the public of revisions to the 2007 draft General Plan that were included within the project evaluated by the DEIR. The “two” changes to land use designations referenced by the comment are explained by the errata document itself. As is apparent from the text of the errata, the two changes are one change that is described twice, once in relation to the Greater Salinas Area Plan Land Use Map and once in relation to the Greater Monterey Peninsula Land Use Map, because the change affects property that is partially in each of these planning areas. The errata also provide the reason for the proposed land use designation change, which was a request by the Water Resources Agency for the reasons described in the errata. Further, staff did not act outside the bounds of its authority. None of the revisions listed in the errata will be part of the General Plan unless and until the Board of Supervisors acts upon them. The Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors will make a determination on these proposed changes when they consider adoption of the General Plan Update. This comment does not address significant environmental issues or analysis in the EIR.

The comment also criticizes the revisions which the County released in December 2008 as “filled with errors.” In December 2008, the County issued a revised DEIR reference section (Section 11), minor updates and corrections to citations in the text of the EIR, and corrections to three General Plan maps and two corresponding aerial photos. In connection with this release, the County issued a new Notice of Availability and began a new DEIR comment period of December 16, 2008 through February 2, 2009. At that time, the County also issued a letter to the EIR distribution list identifying the exhibits in the DEIR that correspond to the corrected General Plan maps and figures. A note to this effect was placed on the County website. Individuals who requested CDs of the General Plan and DEIR were mailed a CD that included both sets of changes- General Plan figures and DEIR exhibits. A notice of correction was also sent to the State Clearinghouse. As these efforts demonstrate, the County made a good faith effort at full disclosure. The six- page document questioned by the comment is a list of corrections to

citations in the text of the DEIR. It was entitled “Monterey County 2007 Draft General Plan, DEIR, Updates to citations in text and errata related to citations (December 2007).” The “December 2007” date was listed in parentheses in reference to the December 2007 draft General Plan. In regard to the comment about the section numbers cited in that document, it is reasonable to expect that the reader of this update/errata would understand a section entitled “4.03” to be equivalent to a section entitled “4.3.” Neither of these so-called errors affects the sufficiency or adequacy of the environmental analysis. This comment does not address significant environmental issues or analysis in the EIR.

As explained in the CEQA Guidelines, “reviewers [of a DEIR] should be aware that the adequacy of an EIR is determined in terms of what is reasonably feasible, in light of factors such as the magnitude of the project at issue, the severity of its environmental impacts, and the geographic scope of the project. CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commentors. When responding to comments, lead agencies need only respond to significant environmental issues and do not need to provide all information requested by reviewer, as long as a good faith effort at full disclosure is made in the EIR.” (CEQA Guidelines § 15204) The issues raised in the comment do not address significant environmental issues or analysis in the EIR and do not detract from the County’s good faith effort at full disclosure. Therefore, no further response is required.

- O-21k.8 The comment contends that certain Section 11 reference documents were not available on the web as indicated. In particular, the comment contends that Document 141 “Hydrogeologic Investigation of the Salinas Valley Basin in the Vicinity of Fort Ord and Marina, Salinas Valley, California. Final Report” was not available at the indicated web site; Document 119 “2003b. Housing Element. Adopted November 4, 2003. The 2007 General Plan” was not available at the indicated web site; and documents 209, 210, 211 required reader input for unknown criteria.

The reference list for Document 141 (Salinas Valley hydrogeologic investigation) listed two methods to obtain the document: 1) access the MCWRA website and follow instructions for the drop down menu to access the document; and 2) enter a specific, listed web address. The former method links to the document; however, the latter led to a message that the document was not found on the indicated URL. Because the former method linked to the document, the County has complied with its obligation to make that reference document available.

Similarly, the reference list for document 119 (Housing Element) listed two ways to access the document: 1) it was included in the 2007 General Plan; and 2) directions to enter a specific, listed web address. Following the instructions to access the document in the 2007 General Plan leads to the Housing element as indicated. While the specific web address did not, the County has complied in making the document available.

The instructions for documents 209, 210, and 211 are self-explanatory and were the same way that information was accessed in preparation of the DEIR. Specific species were referenced throughout the DEIR, and interested persons could input into the web site the necessary information to access the data base and retrieve the pertinent information.

In addition, the instruction regarding the revised Section 11 indicated that County staff was available to assist members of the public in accessing any documents. In light of these efforts, the County has complied with its good faith obligation at full disclosure.

- O-21k.9 The comment requests clarification of the DEIR's use of the term "discretionary project" and contends that permits and approvals are discretionary, not "projects." The comment also seeks clarification as to who would exercise the discretion and on what basis and requests specificity as to whether the term refers to permits under the General Plan, County Code or CEQA.

The DEIR uses the term "discretionary project" consistent with its definition under CEQA. A "discretionary project" is "a project which requires the exercise of judgment or deliberation when the public agency or body decides to approve a particular activity, as distinguished from situations where the public agency or body merely has to determine whether there has been conformity with applicable statutes, ordinances, or regulations." (CEQA Guideline §15357) The term encompasses land use actions and entitlements that require a discretionary permit under County's regulations. County regulations, whether the General Plan itself or implementing ordinances such as the County zoning and subdivision ordinance, prescribe the entitlements required for particular uses and prescribe the appropriate process and decision-maker for particular entitlements.

- O-21k.10 The County recognizes that the comments on "2030 Planning Horizon" analyses apply equally to "Buildout" analyses, and vice versa, unless otherwise noted. The County would like to clarify that in the DEIR, "Planning Horizon" is intended to refer to the year 2030, while "Full Buildout" is intended to refer to the year 2092.

- O-21k.11 The comment contends that Figure S-2, 100-Year Floodplain, shows black lines where rivers should be, that the only legend for black lines is "Major Road," and that the map does not distinguish between rivers and major roads. The map, now numbered Figure 8b in the draft General Plan, has been clarified. (See Chapter 5 of the FEIR, Figure 8b in the draft General Plan.) It is not attempting to show the location of river channels and the floodplain, but only the location of the 100-Year Floodplain. Areas outside the 100-Year Floodplain show the location of waterways (these are aqua lines on the color map, but may show up as grey or black on a black and white reproduction). The thick black lines show the location of major roads and should not be confused with river channels. The legend indicates that black lines are roads and aqua lines are "river and water body."

- O-21k.12 See Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan EIR* regarding program analysis and the level of detail that is reasonable to provide in an EIR for a countywide general plan. Contrary to the commenter's assertion, the DEIR does quantify the potential impacts on habitats, based on this GIS-based analysis. See Table 4.9-7 (conversion of vegetation communities) and Table 4.9-8 (conversion of habitat to agricultural use) for this information. Table 4.9-6 (habitat conversions, 1982-2006) provides information on past trends of conversion as well.

Regarding the comment about making specific mapping of sloped areas and predicting exactly where agriculture might expand, this is considered a speculative exercise as it would depend on the County being able to predict the precise actions of landowners across a vast landscape for years in the future. Instead the County has relied on the past

as the most reliable benchmark for identifying potential future impacts and made a good faith effort to estimate future agricultural conversions if the past trends continue.

See Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies* and Master Response 8, *Biological Resources* for discussions of the effect of slope conversion on biological resources.

O-21k.13 The comment expresses commenter's opinion that the DEIR fails to provide sufficient information and analysis and lists alleged "failures." Regarding the list of alleged inadequacies, the comment makes blanket assertions of inadequacy without supportive evidence or logic to the list. No response is needed to this expression of opinion. To the extent the comment is meant as an introduction to issues elaborated subsequently in the comment letter, see responses below to comments raising the same issues in more detail. Please also see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies* for further steep slope information, investigation and analysis. Regarding the criticism that the mechanisms of approval of development are not identified, explained or investigated, the reader is directed to the policies of the General Plan itself which describe the processes by which the policies will be implemented, such as through establishment of a program, adoption of implementing ordinance, or requirement of a permit. See also Master Response 10 *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan EIR* regarding discussion of implementation of General Plan policies and mitigation measures.

O-21.k14 The comment alleges that the DEIR fails because it does not analyze the cumulative impact of Local Coastal Program (LCP) amendments that would result from this General Plan update. The comment is predicated on the incorrect assumptions that amendments to the LCP would be required for consistency with the GPU and that LCP amendments that result from GPU5 "are envisioned and planned now." For all of the reasons explained in Master Response 11, *Effect of GPU5 on the Local Coastal Program and Impacts to Coastal Resources* the commenter's assumptions are in error. The 2007 General Plan does not amend the Local Coastal Program, require amendments to the Local Coastal Program to achieve consistency, or result in known or foreseeable LCP amendments. CEQA does not require the DEIR to analyze environmental impacts of LCP amendments that are not proposed or reasonably foreseeable. Please see Master Response 11 for additional response on this issue.

O-21.k.15 Impacts to Williamson Act lands and Important Farmland were assessed and analyzed separately in the DEIR (see the discussions beginning on page 4.2-7, as well as Impacts AG-1 and AG-2). The two designations do not necessarily address the same lands, as the Williamson Act is a voluntary, tax-based program, while Important Farmland designations are based primarily on soil quality. Grazing lands make up a substantial portion of the lands under Williamson Act contract, yet they are not identified as Important Farmland. Therefore, how many acres of Williamson Act and Important Farmland overlap is not germane to the discussion of farmland impacts in the DEIR.

The text on page 1-39 has been changed in the EIR to correct the referenced acreages of Important Farmlands and Williamson Act land.

To calculate these numbers, Important Farmland (as designated by the California Department of Conservation) and Williamson Act farmland in the County were mapped using GIS data and technology. This mapping was overlaid with the areas that are contemplated to be converted to urban uses under the General Plan. Using GIS data and technology, the EIR calculated the total acreage that was both Important Farmland and contemplated for conversion to urban uses by the General Plan. In addition, the total acreage that was both Williamson Act farmland and contemplated for conversion to urban uses by the 2007 General Plan was calculated.

The location of land designated as Important Farmland is provided by the California Department of Conservation, as is the location of land under Williamson Act contract.

In response to the comment's request for the meaning of the term "Williamson Act farmland," the DEIR defines the meaning of the term in Section 4.2, Agriculture Resources, under the subheading "Williamson Act" on page 4.2-8 of the DEIR, stating "Lands under [Williamson Act] contract may also support uses that are 'compatible with the agricultural, recreational, or open-space use of the land' subject to the contract (Government Code Section 51201[e])." The DEIR then lists the compatible uses identified by Monterey County. Lands under Williamson Act contract may include grazing land. Grazing land may appear and act as open space, but serves an agricultural function and is considered active agricultural land. Williamson Act farmland, as defined in this document, includes all land under Williamson Act contract, including land meeting the definitions described here.

The DEIR did not analyze impacts to land under the "Agricultural Preservation" designation referenced by the comment, as this designation does not confer any legally binding status to such lands. The Agricultural Preservation designation simply identifies those lands that may opt into a voluntary Williamson Act contract. Until such time as a landowner with an Agricultural Preservation designation enters into a contract, the land has no different set of rules and regulations than land without an Agricultural Preservation designation.

The text of the EIR at page 4.2-9 has been changed to clarify how much land is under Williamson Act contract, and how much acreage is under Farmland Security Zone. The Farmland Security Zone contract is an option within the Williamson Act program. As explained on page 4.2-9 of the DEIR, land under a Farmland Security Zone contract is not technically under a Williamson Act contract. However, the level and type of protection experienced by lands under either a Farmland Security Zone or under a Williamson Act contract are similar. While land under a Farmland Security Zone are protected for a longer period of time than Williamson Act land, the difference in the length of time and the type of protection are not significant enough to change the DEIR analysis. In addition, because the amount of land under a Farmland Security Zone is included in the amount of Williamson Act land analyzed in the DEIR, the DEIR analysis does not change. As stated in the DEIR, the source of this information is the California Department of Conservation.

As stated in the references, the following documents and maps were utilized to obtain information on Williamson Act lands:

- California Department of Conservation. 2008c. Williamson Act Reports and Statistics. Available under “Total Enrollment: 1991–2007, by County”:
http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/lca/stats_reports/Pages/Index.aspx.
- California Department of Conservation. 2004. Williamson Act GIS data, 2004. Available:
<ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/wa/Map%20and%20PDF/CALIFORNIA%20WILLIAMSON%20ACT/>.

In addition, the following reference was utilized to obtain information on Williamson Act lands. The reference is added to the reference list in Chapter 6 in the FEIR.

California Department of Conservation. 2004. Williamson Act GIS data, 2004. Available:
<ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/wa/Map%20and%20PDF/CALIFORNIA%20WILLIAMSON%20ACT/>.

- O-21k.16 The Seaside basin is discussed in detail beginning on page 4.3-10 of the DEIR. The Seaside basin is also featured in the discussion of the Carmel River aquifer in relation to the oversubscription of Carmel River water by CalAm that begins on page 4.3-13. For additional clarification on the watershed and basin boundaries, please see DEIR Exhibits 4.3-1 through 4.3-6, Exhibit 4.3-8, and Exhibits 4.3-11 through 4.3-14. Please also see revised exhibits Exhibit 4.3-10 and Exhibit 4.3-9 and new Exhibits 4.3-7a and Exhibit 4.3-9a in Chapter 4 of this FEIR. Regarding the adequacy of the DEIR analysis of impacts to the Salinas Valley groundwater basin (including the effect of the SVWP), the Seaside basin, the North County subareas (including those within the Pajaro River groundwater basin) and those within the Salinas Valley watershed) please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

Regarding the commenter’s assertion that the SVWP does not provide water supply, please see Master Response 4. The SVWP seeks to balance supply and demand within the Salinas Valley groundwater basin to halt groundwater overdraft and seawater intrusion. By providing additional water for infiltration into the aquifer, the SVWP explicitly increases the amount of water available for both urban and agricultural use.

- O-21k.17 The comment contends that the description of “General Plan 4 Alternative” in section 1.5.4 is inconsistent and biased, and should state that General Plan 4 was “drafted by the County,” “placed on the ballot by referendum” and defeated by the voters in June of 2007. Additionally, the comments suggests that the Notes on Table 1-3, Summary of Alternatives, should be numbered and asks for clarification on the reference notes for the GPU4 alternative.

The comments are not ones on the environmental analysis per se. The description of the General Plan 4 alternative is accurate. A more thorough discussion of the history of the County’s efforts at updating the General plan, and of GPU 4 (which in itself is fairly complex) is set forth in Section 3.1.2 of the DEIR, at pages 3-3 to 3-4. The notes to Table 1-3 are similarly not confusing, and are more thoroughly explained in Section 3.1.2 of the DEIR.

- O-21k.18 This comment is on the DEIR's Executive Summary. By its nature, the summary is an overview of the contents of the DEIR.

The information requested, in the level of detail appropriate for a Program EIR, can be found in Section 4.3, *Water Resources*, of the DEIR and is amplified and clarified in Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. Master Response 4 contains a response to the issues raised in this comment regarding the Salinas Valley aquifer and Salinas Valley Water Project.

- O-21k.19 See the response to comment O-21k.18, above. The text of the EIR has been modified in Chapter 4 of this FEIR to mention that there are water supply challenges for the North county subareas that are not in the Pajaro basin. The text has been modified to mention the Seaside aquifer by name. Regarding the Pajaro Valley and planning for water supply, please see the relevant discussion in Section 4.3, *Water Resources* and in Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

- O-21k.20 Please see the response to comment O-21k.15. In addition, the text on page 1-45 has been revised to correspond to the revision being made to page 1-39.

- O-21k.21 The comment asks how the number of existing lots cited in section 1.6.1.4 was calculated, what the zoning is, and whether residences can be built on every lot. The comment opines that the number "looks wrong," but provides no evidence showing the number is in error. The number of parcels was calculated based on County's GIS database and Assessor's parcel records. Zoning varies, but the number represents the County's best approximation of the number of existing vacant parcels in the inland unincorporated area that have residential zoning classifications. The sentence on page 1-45 has been changed to substitute the word "parcels" for "lots of record." For a breakdown of these parcels by area, see Table 3-8 of the DEIR. Whether a residence can be built on each of these parcels depends upon the individual circumstances of that parcel, including a case-by-case determination as to lot legality and site limitations.

These factors cannot be known without examining the history of the parcel creation and assessing each individual lot based on factors such as soils, percolation tests, water quality, and slope. A lot-by-lot examination is not a reasonable or required level of examination for a Program EIR on the general plan. (See Master Response 10 regarding the expected level of detail for analysis of a general plan)

- O-21.k.22 The comment identified a minor typographical error. The DEIR has been changed to correct that error, as detailed in Chapter 4 of this FEIR.

- O-21k.23 The comment questions the use of the word "could" in regard to a DEIR sentence summarizing whether the 2007 General Plan could result in the significant loss or degradation of biological resource impacts. The qualifier "could" is used for two primary reasons. First, while development will occur in areas that contain sensitive plant and animal species, riparian areas, and wetlands, it would be speculative to predict exactly what type of development will occur in these areas and the precise footprint of said development. Second, "could" is appropriate because even if there are potential impacts, such impacts may not be significant depending on the specifics of the particular development proposal and potential mitigations. Future development could cause

significant impacts, but would not definitely cause significant impacts, necessitating the use of “could.” Moreover, the sentence is a summary, as part of the Executive Summary. The more detailed conclusions regarding the plan’s impact on biological resource impacts are found in chapter 4.9. See also Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*.

O-21k.24 The research, assumptions, methodology, calculations and analysis that support the EIR conclusion regarding the loss or degradation of biological resources are located in Section 4.9, *Biological Resources*. Also see Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*.

O-21k.25 The comment is a fairly argumentative statement generally that the County is biased, and that approval of the General Plan and certification of the DEIR are foregone conclusions.

The comment is not one on the environmental analysis per se, and is noted. The DEIR does not present a biased view, nor presume that certification of the EIR and approval of the General Plan are foregone conclusions. In Section 1.7 (to which the comment appears to be directed) the DEIR presented a hypothetical process in generic terms based upon the format of the DEIR at the time it was written. The County points out that the Planning Commission must still hold hearings and make a written recommendation to the Board, and agrees that the Board of Supervisors retains ultimate discretion. The public will have significant opportunity to comment to the Commission and Board during this process. The County also agrees that the Board may reject the General Plan and Final FEIR, or reject the General Plan without taking action on the FEIR.

In order to avoid any doubt concerning these issues, however, the last paragraph of Section 1.7 (page 1-47 of the DEIR) has been revised to clarify the Board’s role in adoption of the General Plan and associated environmental documents.

O-21k.26 The comment contends that the Carmel Valley Traffic Plan EIR should be added to the list of future County actions for which the GP EIR would be the basis for later CEQA reviews. The listing on page 47 is prefaced with the words “may include” and is not exhaustive. The point of the discussion on pages 47 and 48 is not to list all the projects that may in the future rely on the General Plan but to explain that the General Plan EIR is a first tier document that may be a basis for environmental review of later projects that implement the General Plan or that are consistent with the general plan but are for a more specific project or of a more limited geographical scale. (CEQA Guideline §15183; see also CEQA Guideline §§15152, 15168.) In regard to the comment’s question about the status of the Carmel Valley Traffic Improvement Program EIR, see Master Response 5, *Carmel Valley Traffic Issues*.

O-21k.27 The comment asks for the sources and a list of EIRs to support the statement in the DEIR on page 2.3 that “most general plan EIRs identify significant and unavoidable impacts.” The introductory clause of this sentence, which is not quoted by the comment, explains the rationale for the questioned statement. The introductory clause is: “[b]ecause a general plan involves land uses for an entire county....” Due to the scale of a comprehensive update of a general plan, it is not unusual for a general plan EIR to identify significant and unavoidable impacts. A recent example is the City of Sacramento’s General Plan EIR. A complete list of all general plan EIRs that identify significant and unavoidable impacts is not germane to this project.

- O-21k.28 The comment, echoing comment O-21k.25, argues that the DEIR makes a biased presumption that the County will adopt a statement of overriding considerations. The comment is not one on the environmental analysis per se, and is noted. The DEIR does not present a biased view, nor presume that certification of the EIR and approval of the General Plan together with adoption of a statement of overriding considerations are foregone conclusions. See the response to comment O-21k.25 above. To avoid any doubt concerning this issue, however, the last sentence of the last paragraph of Section 2.1.1 (page 2-3 of the DEIR) has been revised to clarify the approval process of the General Plan and associated environmental documents.
- O-21k.29 The comment questions the statement in Section 2.1.2 (page 2-3 of the DEIR) that the County has “an extensive array of ...lands devoted to mineral extraction” because the comment opines that the County only has a small number of land devoted to mineral extraction. The sentence, when read in full and when read in the context of the paragraph on page 2-3, is not specifically about extensive lands devoted to mineral extraction but rather is describing the “extensive array” of different kinds of lands. The sentence in full is: “The County has an extensive array of agricultural lands, lands devoted to mineral extraction, and recreational areas,” and this sentence is part of a paragraph explaining the degree of specificity of a Program EIR for a general plan for a County of large size with many types of land uses. To amplify the information regarding mineral extraction, however, the DEIR has been revised to clarify the amount of land in the County devoted to mineral extraction. Existing mineral extraction activities will not be altered by the General Plan. In addition, Section 4.5, *Mineral Resources*, describes in detail the lands devoted to mineral extraction in the County. Table 4.5-1 *Existing Aggregate Resources in Monterey County*, illustrates the aggregate sites and minerals being extracted in the County. The history and current status of limestone, dolomite, and metallic mineral production in the County is provided. Productive oil fields in Monterey County are listed, and the fact that there is no known coal production underway in Monterey County is explained. This information sufficiently provides the necessary level of detail regarding mineral production in the County. See also Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail expected of a program EIR for a general plan.
- O-21k.30 The DEIR utilizes information from the FEIR for GPU4 where pertinent. Where new information has been available, that information has been used in preparation of this DEIR. As noted in Section 2.1.3:

“This DEIR for the 2007 General Plan is a new, stand alone analysis of the potential significant effects of the proposed 2007 General Plan. To the extent applicable, information from the FEIR, certified for GPU 4, has been utilized.”

The DEIR is a stand alone analysis. It is impractical to attempt to list those portions of the DEIR that reflect information from the GPU4 FEIR; however, where, for example, maps are based on the EIR for GPU4, the DEIR cites the source. (See, e.g., Exhibits 4.4.2 , 4.4.3, 4.4.4, and 4.4.5.) The reader may judge the adequacy of the DEIR on its own.

The DEIR was released and the public comment period begun in September 8, 2008. The references in the DEIR (Section 11 and other citations) were updated in errata that were released in December 2008. Following the release of the revised Section 11 and other

errata, the County began a new public comment period for the DEIR, beginning December 16, 2008 and running through February 2, 2009. The DEIR, as revised by the errata, was available for an extended public review period, in keeping with the requirements of CEQA.

- O-21k.31 The commenter requests information on the contacts made during the consultation period for the DEIR and requests the list of contacts referenced in section 2.2.1 of the DEIR. On December 21, 2007, the County sent an Offer for Consultation to seven California American Native Tribes pursuant to Government Code §65352.3. On December 21, 2007, the County sent a letter to the 12 cities in Monterey County, American Native Tribes, Monterey County Office of Education, Monterey County Fire Protection Association and LAFCO inviting them to submit a request for consultation on the General Plan. These requests for consultation are on file in the RMA- Planning Department. A member of the Ohlone tribe attended the Scoping Meeting on the DEIR for the General Plan on December 12, 2007 and provided verbal input on the cultural, archaeological and biological policies in the General Plan.

Additionally, the County invited representatives of the 12 cities to attend a meeting to discuss the General Plan. Subsequently, the cities of Monterey and Seaside asked for separate meetings with County staff to provide input on the General Plan. County staff also, at the invitation of the City of Salinas, attended a meeting of the Salinas City Council to provide a presentation on the provisions of the General Plan. The input received from the cities of Salinas and Seaside is reiterated in the comment letters received from those jurisdictions on the DEIR. The commenter is referred to Comment Letters L-5 and L-6.

The County also consulted with state and local agencies on several occasions. The County met in person and telephonically on several occasions with AMBAG, TAMC and Cal Trans to discuss the traffic modeling assumptions that would be utilized for completing the DEIR and some of the policies in the Circulation Element. The County consulted with local and state fire agencies that provide fire protection in Monterey County as well as the Monterey County Sheriff in preparation of the policies of the Safety Element.

- O-21k.32 The comment asks whether unincorporated land in the coastal zone would be subject to the General Plan update, and the comment opines that amendments to the County's coastal guidelines are a "known and foreseeable future action" that should be addressed in the DEIR. The General Plan update does not amend the county's Local Coastal Program (LCP), require amendments to the Local Coastal Program to achieve general plan consistency, or result in known or foreseeable LCP amendments. CEQA does not require the DEIR to analyze environmental impacts of LCP amendments that are not proposed or reasonably foreseeable. Please see Master Response 11, *Effect of GPU5 on the Local Coastal Program and Impacts to Coastal Resources* for additional response on this issue.

The comment inquires why GPU5 mentions only submission of "major" LCP amendments to the Coastal Commission. This is a comment about the General Plan and does not require response as part of the EIR; however, for information, the word "major" is used to reflect the different procedural requirements under the Coastal Act for major

amendments versus minor or de minimis amendments. (Public Resources Code section 30514 and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, §§13554, 13555) The comment also points to a typographical error in the General Plan update (“2006 General Plan”) which has been corrected. (See Chapter 5 of the FEIR)

The comment also inquires whether the County has identified any countywide GPU5 standards that should not apply in the coastal zone. This is a policy question beyond the scope of the EIR on the General Plan update. The policy question would be the subject of separate environmental review and consideration by the Board of Supervisors if the Board were to choose to amend the LCP. The comment also inquires whether the EIR analyzed the impacts of GPU on the coastal zone. The EIR analyzed the reasonably foreseeable indirect impacts of inland development upon the coastal zone and coastal resources, as further discussed in Master Response 11.

The comment also points to text of the GPU Policy LU-2.22.b relating to the Castroville Community Area as dictating an LCP amendment. As described in detail in Master Response 11, clarifications have been made to proposed General Plan Policy LU-2.22.b and other text of the GPU and DEIR to eliminate any ambiguity regarding the fact the GPU applies to the inland unincorporated area only. (See Chapter 5 of the FEIR)

- O-21k.33 The comment asserts that the statement in Section 3.2.1 (on page 3-4) regarding the complexity of the general plan and requirement that it “meet all of its objectives in order to be effective” is confusing, and the comment asks for an explanation of its meaning. The statement is intended to convey the point that a general plan is a complex document that is intended to meet a number of objectives. Because a general plan is required by Planning and Zoning Law to balance multiple concerns from land use and housing to conservation and open space, its objectives are interrelated. The sentence in the DEIR reflects the state law requirement that the general plan and its elements and parts must “comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies” for the County. (Gov’t Code §65300.5)
- O-21k.34 The comment questions whether the Agricultural Winery Corridor Plan (AWCP) is necessary “to make the general plan effective.” As explained in response to O-21k.33, the DEIR statement introducing the objectives of the general plan was intended to convey the point that a general plan is a complex document that is intended to meet a number of objectives. The objectives listed on pages 3-4 and 3-5 are based the proposed policies of the General Plan. The question of whether the AWCP is an essential objective of the draft General Plan is a comment on the draft General Plan policies, not a comment on the adequacy or content of the EIR. The comment also inquires about the status of the AWCP within the General Plan. It is a part of the draft General Plan. The general plan may address any subjects “which in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county.” (Gov’t Code §65303)

The DEIR project description is correct. (DEIR, section 3.1.2 at p. 3-7) The project description includes the AWCP. The Agriculture Element of the General Plan designates a winery corridor and requires the development of an Agricultural and Winery Corridor Plan (see draft General Plan Goal AG –4 and its policies). In regard to whether the EIR is required to consider an alternative that does not include a winery corridor, see response to O-21k.383 below. In response to the comment that the EIR is inadequate because it

fails to provide a project level review of the AWCP, see Master Response 3 addressing the EIR discussion of impacts of the AWCP. As noted in Master Response 3, section 3.3 of the AWCP is also proposed to be modified to provide for an initial project screening which may, where indicated on the basis of the screening, trigger discretionary review of proposed projects in the Agricultural Winery Corridor with respect to biological resource impacts.

- O-21k.35 The comment inquires whether the Housing Element is being updated, whether an update to the Housing Element has been drafted, and whether any amendments to the existing Housing Element are necessary to achieve consistency. The comment addresses the statement in the DEIR Project Description which indicates that the County has a certified Housing Element for the 2003-2007 planning cycle, and it will not be updated until the next planning cycle. (DEIR, at p. 3-5)

The Housing Element is a mandated element of the County's General Plan. The Housing Element is subject, however, to a unique planning cycle and procedural requirements that put it on a different approval cycle than the other elements of the General Plan (See Government Code § 65580 et seq.) Pursuant to state law, the Housing Element must be updated every five years unless otherwise extended by state law, whereas the other elements of the General Plan are not subject to a specific update schedule. (Government Code §65588) State Housing Element Law also prescribes the content of the Housing Element and process for approval, including significant public participation, and requires review and certification by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). (Government Code §§ 65583, 65585) Because the Housing Element has a different update cycle than the General Plan and unique procedural requirements for review and certification by the state, the County is processing the Housing Element update separately from this General Plan Update.

The County's current certified Housing Element was adopted in 2003 and covered the planning period 2003 through 2008 (the planning period was originally to run through 2007 but was extended by the state to 2008). The DEIR correctly described the fact that the certified Housing Element would not be updated until the next housing planning cycle. The DEIR was written and released during the period covered by the County's certified Housing Element. Since release of the DEIR, the state extended the planning period for the Housing Element through August 2009. (Government Code §§65584(c) and 65588(e)(4).) Since release of the DEIR, the County has also begun preparing the 2009-2014 Housing Element.

The County's Housing Element update process has had considerable public input. Three public presentations (December 10, 2008, May 13, 2009, and August 12, 2009) were made before the County's Housing Advisory Committee (HAC) to solicit comments. In August 2008, the HAC appointed a subcommittee which worked directly with staff on the preparation of the Preliminary Draft Housing Element. In August 2009, the HAC received a presentation and copy of the Preliminary Draft Housing Element. On September 9, 2009 and on September 30, 2009, Planning Commission workshops were conducted to introduce the Housing Element process and present the preliminary draft Housing Element (dated September 9, 2009). On September 30, 2009 the Planning Commission recommended that the Preliminary Draft Housing Element be sent to HCD for the required initial review. In October 2009, the Preliminary Draft was sent to HCD,

and on December 10, 2009 comments were received back from HCD. A final draft Housing Element is currently being prepared based on those comments, along with an initial study for environmental review specifically of the Housing Element. Once the final draft Housing Element and environmental review document are prepared and circulated for public review, public hearings before the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors will be conducted on the draft Housing Element. If and when the Board of Supervisors adopts the Housing Element for 2009-2014, it will be submitted to HCD for certification. Certification by the state is crucial to the County because it is generally required for many State affordable housing grant programs for which the County regularly applies (i.e., CDBG and HOME).

As an element of the General Plan, the 2009-2014 Housing Element must be consistent with the General Plan. A primary component of the draft Housing Element is to demonstrate to the state that the County has sufficient available sites, zoned appropriately, to accommodate the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) in the 2009-2014 planning period. HCD does not require that the County actually build the needed units, only to accommodate them. In June 2008, the County of Monterey was assigned a RHNA of 1,554 units. Based on affordable housing units actually built or permitted along with the Community and Specific Plans that have been adopted within the past few years, the County's remaining RHNA that must be accommodated in this Housing Element Update is only 174 additional units. The draft Housing Element Update relies on infill sites in Castroville that are currently designated for high density residential development or mixed use development that allows high density housing. This approach to meeting the remaining RHNA is consistent with both the existing 1982 General Plan, which has been previously amended to incorporate Castroville Community Area Plan as applied in the inland area of the County, and the draft General Plan Update. Based on the current draft General Plan update, no amendments to the draft General Plan are required for the Housing Element-update to be consistent with the draft General Plan.

- O-21k.36 The comment inquires, in relation to the project description in Chapter 3 of the DEIR, what the functional difference is between Area Plans and Master Plans in the draft General Plan and requests an explanation of the planning and environmental impacts of the Carmel Valley Master Plan and Fort Ord Master Plan. The difference in nomenclature between "Area Plan" and "Master Plan" relates to the geographic area covered. Both the Area Plans and these Master Plans are integral components of the draft General Plan. As explained in the introduction to the General Plan Update, the Carmel Valley Master Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 16, 1986. The 2007 General Plan proposes an update to the Carmel Valley Master Plan, and it is intended to serve as the Area Plan for the geographic area defined within that plan. The Fort Ord Master Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in November 2001. Revisions to the Fort Ord Master Plan are proposed in order to reflect jurisdictional changes, as explained in Master Response 1, *Changes to the General Plan*. The Fort Ord Master Plan will serve as the Community Plan for the Fort Ord Community Area, as further explained in Policy LU-2.25 of the Land Use Element. Areas Plans cover specific geographical planning areas, and the proposed inland Area Plans in the draft General Plan will cover the same geographic area as the currently adopted Area Plans for those areas, except that the proposed Area Plans will exclude the areas which are covered by the Master Plans. Master Plans and Community Plans are stand alone plans because of unique conditions for those areas. This is the context for which Master Plans are part

of the project analyzed by the EIR, and the environmental impacts of the proposed Area Plans and Master Plans are addressed as appropriate throughout the EIR.

O-21k.37 This is a general comment expressing the commenter's opinion regarding the adequacy of the CEQA analysis. Specific comments are responded to below. Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply* concerning quantification of water supply and demand.

O21k.38 The comment contends that the DEIR failed to evaluate water resource impacts on the coastal zone. The comment argues that "it is known" that the County "intends to apply to amend LCP to match the General Plan" and the DEIR should include analysis of these cumulative impacts. The comment provides no evidence to substantiate the assertions. The General Plan update does not amend the county's Local Coastal Program (LCP), require amendments to the Local Coastal Program to achieve general plan consistency, or result in known or foreseeable LCP amendments. CEQA does not require the DEIR to analyze environmental impacts of LCP amendments that are not proposed or reasonably foreseeable. Please see Master Response 11 for additional response on this issue. The DEIR does analyze water resource impacts of GPU5 on the coastal zone, as more fully described in Master Response 11, *Effect of GPU5 on the Local Coastal Program and Impacts to Coastal Resources*, and Master Response 4 regarding water supply analyzes water demand, taking into account the cumulative water demand of the inland and coastal unincorporated areas and cities within the County.

O-21k.39 The water demand analysis is based on the projected development, existing data on demand from local water management agencies (MCWRA, PVWMA, and MPWMD), and reference on per capita use from the Department of Water Resources. Long-range planning by the three main water management agencies also considers potential droughts in their evaluation of supply scenarios. The analysis of supply and demand in the DEIR is based on average demands and average supplies, which will of course vary in wetter than normal years and drier than normal years. The effect of drought in the County is described in the EIR in relation to groundwater levels (p.4.3-14), nitrates in the Carmel River basin (p. 4.3-24), planning for long-term water supply (p. 4.3-28), design of the SVWP (p. 4.3-35), groundwater management and monitoring programs (p. 4.3-45), UWMPs (p. 4.3-68), water supply emergencies (p. 4.3-69), water supply impact WR-4 (p. 4.3-113, 4.3-114), impact of infrastructure WR-5 (p. 4.3-136), PVWMA water management (p. 4.3-139), and groundwater overdraft impact WR-6 (p. 4.3-147). Thus the context of drought occurrence is properly disclosed in the DEIR.

Further, Policy 3.3 includes consideration of drought in that it defines a long-term water supply as "an available supply of water that can be extracted from a basin or hydrogeologic sub-area to service the existing and projected development in that basin or hydrogeologic sub-area for a twenty year period without degrading water quality, damaging the economical extraction of water, or causing significant unavoidable adverse environmental impacts." Although droughts are common in California, their intensity and length varies. Water agency managers and the County are empowered to require conservation measures during periods of drought in order to extend available supplies during those lean times. Also see the response below to comment O-21k.40.

O-21k.40 The SVWP has been designed to accommodate dry periods. The impacts of multi-year drought have been discussed and disclosed in the EIR for the SVWP. Section 3.2.6, *Drought Contingency Planning*, of the SVWP DEIR/EIS states, in part: The SVWP has been designed to accommodate expected drought episodes (based on the drought of record that occurred in 1987-1991) while continuing to meet its overall objectives. The preferred action assumes the basic conjunctive use of ground and surface water during drought. Conjunctive use takes advantage of surface water supplies during periods of availability and preserves groundwater supplies for use during periods of drought or other periods when surface water supplies are not available.

Surface water supply that would be derived through reservoir reoperation and river diversion is variable and would be constrained during drought periods. The Salinas Valley Integrated Ground and Surface Water Model (SVIGSM) was utilized to assess groundwater conditions that would result from the preferred action's continued in-stream groundwater recharge and the delivery of diverted Salinas River water. The underlying assumption is that groundwater pumping would occur in all project service areas where surface water deliveries are made.

Drought contingency was evaluated against the historic droughts of record within the Salinas Valley during the 1949–1994 hydrologic period. The delivery of diverted Salinas River water during normal to wet years results in reduced groundwater pumping. This in turn results in increased groundwater levels. The SVIGSM evaluations assumed that groundwater is pumped whenever river diversions are not available or are not adequate to meet the needs of the designated delivery area. The results indicate that groundwater supplies are adequate to meet project objectives without re-establishing intrusion in the Salinas Valley through droughts of historic record.

The discussion of the hydrologic study period found in Section 5.3.1 of the SVWP DEIR/EIS explains:

The hydrologic study period analyzed for the Salinas Valley Water Project is for the water years (October through September) from 1949 to 1994. This period is selected due to following primary reasons:

- It is the longest period that adequate, consistent, and reliable information is available on hydrologic data (precipitation and streamflow), as well as groundwater level data.
- The period contains extreme hydrologic conditions, such as the critically dry periods of 1976-77 and 1989-91, and wet periods. This allows the analysis of the performance and operation of the proposed project through extreme hydrologic periods.

Because the SVWP is designed with drought periods in mind, no further analysis or examination is necessary as part of the EIR for the Draft General Plan.

The commenter's estimate of a \$120 million price tag for an expansion to the SVWP system is purely speculative. As discussed in the EIR for the SVWP, whether an expansion is necessary will depend upon the results of the monitoring of the SVWP's effectiveness. The SVWP is financed through a benefit assessment district. That may be used as the source to fund future expansion of the system, but such expansion is not sufficiently defined at this time to establish a definitive cost estimate.

The North County basins (except for the Pajaro basin) are sub-areas of the larger Salinas River basin. Although they are not on the Salinas Valley floor, they nonetheless may benefit from the SVWP. The SVWP is being financed through a benefit assessment district that assesses lands that can be served by the SVWP, whether they lie within the Salinas Valley or not. The pertinent zone of benefit (Zone 2C) includes both the Granite Ridge area and Prunedale. Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for amplified discussion of the Granite Ridge/Highlands South area and efforts to provide a more reliable supply of water to that area.

Proposition 218 requires that an engineer's report be prepared for any proposed benefit assessment district in order to identify those properties that will receive a special benefit from the project being funded. RMC (Raines, Melton & Carella, Inc.) prepared the final SVWP Engineer's Report (Engineer's Report) in January 2003 in advance of the establishment of the boundaries of Zone 2C, consistent with the requirements of Proposition 218 and the underlying special assessment district act. The subsequent election, carried out pursuant to Proposition 218, ratified the formation of the assessment district that is funding the SVWP.

The January 2003 Engineer's Report defines the benefits that properties may receive from the SVWP (this includes: flood protection, control of sea water intrusion, groundwater quality, and increased recharge). The Proposition 218 election procedures and assessment have been validated through a validation proceeding and settlement among the parties.

There is no requirement for the DEIR to analyze the consistency of the Draft General Plan with "the policies adopted in the SVWP EIR." An EIR does not establish policies. That said, both existing Monterey County ordinances (i.e., Chapter 15.12 [Water Conservation – see Section 15.12.050 prohibiting the waste of water], Chapter 16.16 [Regulations for Floodplains], Chapter 18.50 [Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Water Conservation Measures – this includes requirements for low-flow fixtures]) and the Draft General Plan (i.e., PS-2.9 [protect and manage groundwater], PS-3.3 [proof of long-term sustainable water supply], PS-3.6 [restrictions on drilling wells in areas of known sea water intrusion], PS-3.8 [coordinate and collaborate with all agencies responsible managing existing and new water resources], PS-3.9 [development of overdraft elimination program], PS-3.12 [adopt regulations to maximize conservation of agricultural water], and many others) contain numerous regulations and policies that are compatible with the guiding policies of the SVWP.

The commenter recommends that the EIR consider a mitigation that requires deed restrictions on all new development requiring the use of ultra-low flow water fixtures. As noted above, County ordinance Chapter 18.50 already requires installation of low-flow fixtures in the Greater Salinas, Toro, Greater Monterey Peninsula, and a portion of North County and Coast Planning areas. County ordinance Chapter 18.44 requires the installation of ultra-low flow fixtures in unincorporated county areas served by CalAm water.

At the state level, the green building standards adopted as part of Title 24 (State Building Code) in late January 2010 and taking effect on January 1, 2011 will require new construction in California to reduce its water use by 20% below the previously allowable

level. (California Building Standards Commission 2010) Further, SB 407 (Padilla -- (Chapter 587, Statutes of 2009) establishes statewide requirements for the replacement of plumbing fixtures in existing residential and commercial property (built and occupied on or before January 1, 1994) with ultra-low-flow models. Therefore, the mitigation suggested by the commenter is not necessary.

The growth-inducing impact of the Draft General Plan is analyzed in Section 6.3, *Growth-Inducement*, of the DEIR. That analysis includes consideration of growth within the Salinas Valley. The DEIR does not, as alleged by the commenter, rely on the SVWP for mitigation of the increased water demands from future development. Please see the preceding discussions in this response and Master Response 4 and Section 4.3 in the EIR for an extensive list of existing regulations, future requirements, and Draft General Plan policies that act to reduce water demand.

The commenter reiterates the claim that the SVWP is intended to relieve additional seawater intrusion alone. As earlier explained, that is not its sole effect. The SVWP lowers the demand on existing groundwater resources by supplying more recharge through releases and by capture of water at the diversion dam and supply to agriculture to avoid further extractions in the portion of the basin subject to seawater intrusion. See also Master Response 4, *Water Supply* regarding the improved groundwater balance that will result from the SVWP.

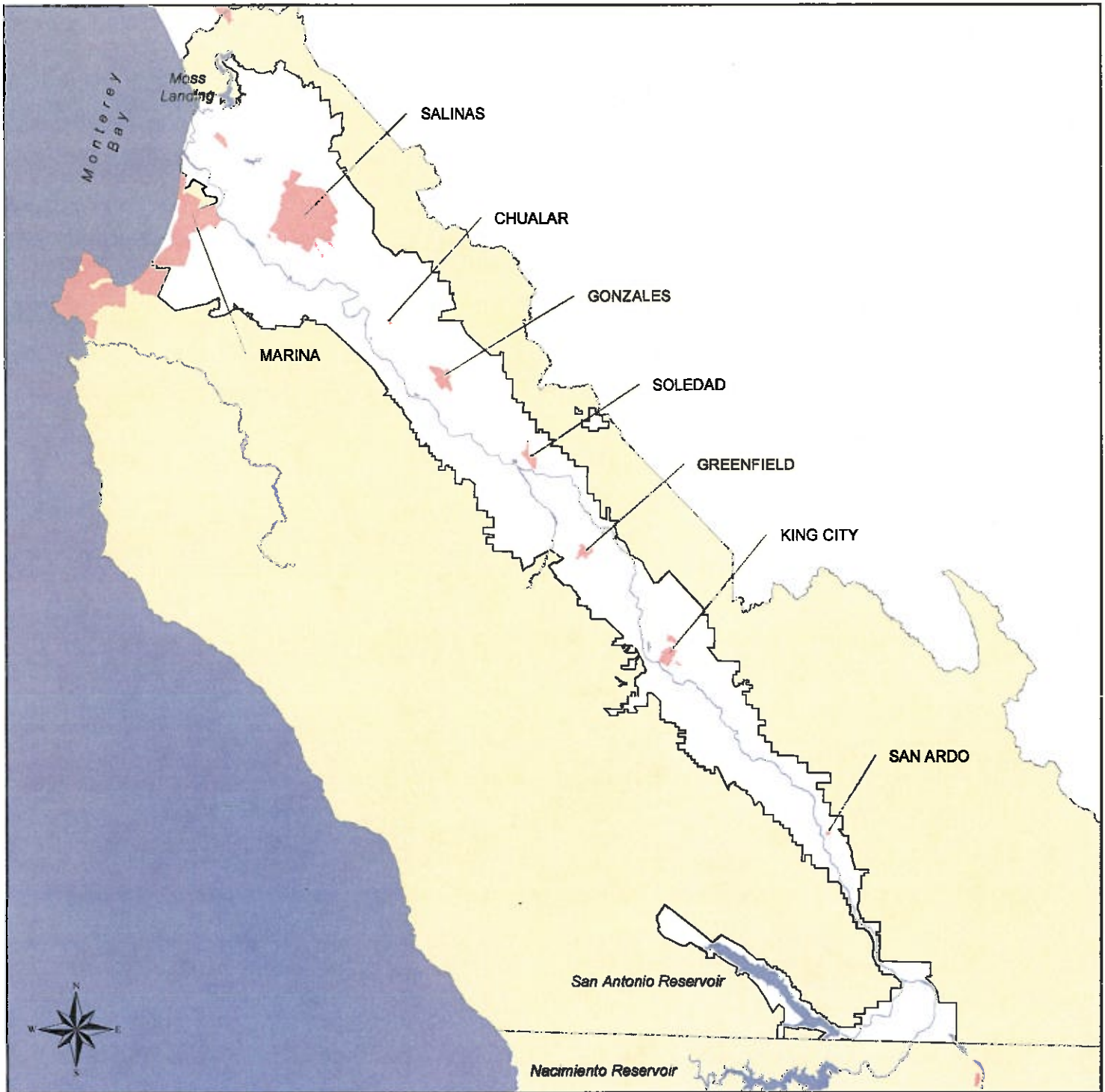
- O-21k.41 The FEIR for the Coastal Water Project (CWP) has been certified by the California Public Utilities Commission since release of the 2007 General Plan DEIR. See Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, for a discussion of the CWP and its alternatives.

The commenter is correct that the proposed CalAm desalination plant is intended to provide water to meet the requirements of State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Order No. 95-10. See Master Response 4 for a discussion of the SWRCB's subsequent Cease and Desist Order (CDO) against CalAm. The CDO is currently stayed as the result of litigation. If the CDO takes effect, it will enforce Order No. 95-10 through the phased reduction in CalAm's pumping.

The impacts associated with the CWP are identified in the CWP DEIR and FEIR. The DEIR does not assume that the CWP will provide water for future growth; the DEIR described the need for additional supplies to provide water for future growth (see discussion of Impact WR-4).

Please see Master Response 4 regarding estimates of demand and supply and for clarification and amplification of the analysis of the impact of the General Plan on water supply for the Monterey Peninsula.

- O-21k.42 The SVWP is designed to halt seawater intrusion. Its design is based on a sophisticated groundwater model designed for and calibrated to the Salinas groundwater basin. The commenter provides no evidence that the SVWP will not perform as expected. The benefits of the SVWP will occur as it is being installed, with full benefit at its completion.



Zone 2C



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As discussed above and in Master Response 4, *Water Supply* the SVWP has more than one function and is, in part, a water supply project. Please see Master Response 4, Sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.4, for discussion of the status of SVWP construction and discussion of seawater intrusion.

O-21k.43 The Seaside groundwater subbasin does not drain to the Salinas River; this has been corrected in Chapter 4 in the FEIR. The DEIR's analysis of the groundwater supply and demand is not based on this assumption, so the analysis is correct.

O-21k.44 The DEIR does discuss the fact that the North County watersheds are overdrafted. Section 4.3.2.4, *Potable Water Supply and Infrastructure*, page. 4.3-41 states the following:

"The North County aquifers are limited by a much smaller available surface area for recharge and relatively low precipitation compared to some of the highland areas. Due to demand exceeding supply, the area has been in a state of chronic overdraft since the 1950s. Groundwater extractions are estimated to be twice the average annual recharge. Resultant water supply and water quality problems include falling water levels, seawater intrusion, and extensive areas with nitrate contamination. North County problems not only affect residents and agriculture in the area, they also affect water supply and water quality conditions in the adjacent and hydraulically connected Salinas and Pajaro Valleys."

O-21k.45 Granite Ridge is indeed outside the jurisdiction of the PVWMA. MCWRA, PVWMA, Aroma Water District, Castroville Community Services have been working with the Supervisor's Ad Hoc water committees to develop a plan for Granite Ridge (Monterey County Health Department 2009a). This cooperation is what was being referred to generally in the DEIR. Since release of the DEIR, additional progress has been made toward resolving water supply and water quality problems experienced in the Granite Ridge Area, including a portion of Highlands South, as further discussed in Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. See Master Response 4, section 4.2.6.

O-21k.46 Seawater intrusion is a recognized problem in the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys and is discussed extensively in the DEIR, including discussion on DEIR pages 4.3-25. In addition, the Draft General Plan has numerous policies linked to reducing this problem. See also Master Response 4, section 4.2.4.

O-21k.47 Master Response 4, *Water Supply* includes additional information that clarifies the supply and demand for the incorporated and unincorporated portions of the county and amplifies the evaluation of sustainability. The DEIR contains no section 4.3.3.2.2, therefore no response can be provided to the comment about inconsistency.

O-21k.48 The DEIR is intended to analyze the potential effects of the 2007 General Plan. It is not necessary to discuss in detail the existing entitlements, overlying users' water rights, and riparian users' water rights in order to provide decision-makers with sufficient information about the existing and projected state of water supply and demand to allow for informed decision making.

Regarding Fort Ord supply the comment is non-specific about the problems it alludes to. Groundwater contamination at Fort Ord is discussed on pg. 4.3-20, 4.3-27, 4.3-28, 4.3-85

of the DEIR. Seawater intrusion is noted as an issue in Table 4.3-10 on page 4.3-117 and on page 4.3-118. Since Fort Ord could receive water from the SVWP under existing agreements and overlies portions of the Seaside aquifer, issues related to the Seaside Aquifer and the Salinas Valley groundwater basin are well disclosed in the DEIR. The 2007 General Plan would not change the Fort Ord Area Plan water demands, as set forth in the existing agreements.

With regard to the comment on agricultural management practices, see Master Responses 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies* and 9, *Water Quality*, which address water quality issues.

In regard to the suggestion of a mitigation measure that would require all irrigation ditches to be lined, the commenter has provided no substantial evidence indicating that there is a significant effect on either erosion or sedimentation from the operation of unlined ditches. Mitigation measures are not required for less than significant impacts. Further, lining of irrigation ditches reduces or eliminates seepage and may result in changes in groundwater recharge and therefore make such a measure infeasible.

- O-21k.49 The DEIR addresses the increasing number of vineyards in Monterey County in DEIR Section 4.3, *Water Resources*. See also Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

It is unclear what impacts the commenter believes the DEIR should address, but due to this comment's presence in a section labeled "WATER RESOURCES," it is assumed the commenter is referring to water quality impacts due to the movement of dirt associated with development of new vineyards and other new development. Water quality impacts associated with new development, including the development of agricultural land use practices such as vineyards, are addressed in Section 4.3, *Water Resources*, in the DEIR. In particular, Impact WR-10 analyzes the impacts associated with alterations to existing drainage patterns due to land uses and development consistent with the 2007 General Plan. See also Master Response 9, *Impacts on Water Quality*, for a discussion of protections against water quality degradation. Comments regarding existing soil piles are not relevant to future development under the General Plan.

- O-21k.50 As stated in DEIR Section 4.3.2, *Water Quality*, initial steps have been taken toward developing best management practices (BMPs) that would reduce the rate of nitrate contamination in the Salinas Valley basin (and other areas of the county). Nitrate contamination can be partially reduced by improved soil management and water conservation practices adopted by farmers.

Nitrate contamination is an existing problem and part of the baseline for purposes of CEQA analysis. The EIR for the 2007 General Plan addresses the change in the environmental baseline that would occur if the general plan were implemented. See Master Response 10 for a discussion on the appropriate level of detail in a program EIR prepared for a general plan.

Public water systems in Monterey County are required to collect water samples at least once a year and analyze them to determine whether Nitrates are above 50% of the maximum contaminant level (MCL). If nitrate levels are found to exceed the MCL, the water system must notify the water users and must take steps to reduce the amount of

nitrates so that they are consistently below that level. Additional actions, such as providing alternative drinking water supplies, may be required. In addition, the Monterey County Environmental Health Bureau provides sampling containers and testing of individual well water to determine the level of nitrates.

Mitigation prohibiting the use of agrochemicals or synthetic fertilizers which contain nitrogen that in turn breaks down to nitrate, or mitigation that would require a steady reduction of use of such fertilizers until they are effectively prohibited, could reduce existing water quality problems. This mitigation could apply to existing conditions. However, it is not necessary in order to address the potential impacts of the 2007 General Plan. The DEIR discusses the regulatory scheme now in place that will reduce the effects of future nitrate application resulting from new agricultural activity under the 2007 General Plan (see DEIR Section 4.3.3). See Master Response 9, *Impacts on Water Quality*, for a further discussion of the regulatory scheme. Therefore, such mitigation was not considered.

- O-21k.51 The DEIR refers to four Carmel River subbasins that are subject to limitations on subdivision as a result of a 1983 resolution of the County Board of Supervisors. This discussion was taken from the EIR prepared for GPU4, as noted in the text of DEIR at page 4.3-24. Although this statement does not affect the analysis in the DEIR, it has been revised in the Chapter 4 in the FEIR.
- O-21k.52 The water features of the area defined as “North County” are described on pages 4.3-14 through 4.3-16 of the DEIR, under the heading “North County Watersheds.” The five planning areas within North County, as defined in the document, are described on page 4.3-15 and 4.3-16. See Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, and Master Response 9, regarding water quality for additional discussions of current conditions in the North County. A specific accounting of the number of known wells outside of water systems is part of the existing environment that has been described in sufficient detail within the DEIR to allow informed decision making. The draft General Plan is not making site-specific decisions, so the water quality in individual wells is not pertinent to an examination of overall water quality in the area (which the EIR has disclosed is substandard in many cases). See Master Response 10 regarding the expected level of detail in the program EIR for a General Plan.
- O-21k.53 In response to this comment, Chapter 4 in the FEIR includes current maps of seawater intrusion. Please also see Master Response 4, *Water Supply* section 4.2.4, on seawater intrusion. An exhibit has been added that illustrates the 400-foot aquifer’s seawater intrusion. The continued advance of the seawater front occurred prior to operation of the SVWP, which will begin full deliveries in 2010.
- O-21k.54 As detailed in Master Response 4, section 4.2.4, the SVWP DEIR/EIS concludes that “seawater intrusion would be effectively reversed during normal and greater than normal rainfall years, and would occur at a rate less than current and Future Baseline (2030) conditions under drought conditions. The net effect, considering all rainfall years, would be no additional seawater intrusion.” (Section 5.3, SVMP DEIR/EIS) This conclusion is essentially unchanged in the FEIR/EIS. (Monterey County Water Resources Agency 2002)

- O-21k.55 Exhibit 4.3.8 (referenced on page 4.3-24 of the DEIR) is incorrectly labeled. The exhibit depicts 2001 nitrate contamination. The labeling has been corrected in Chapter 4 of the FEIR.
- O-21k.56 The comment inquires about the meaning of Exhibit 4.2.10. The comment appears to contain a typographical error. If the question pertains to Exhibit 4.3.10, the title of this exhibit has been revised in Chapter 4 of the FEIR.
- O-21k.57 The “Deep Zone” refers to the deepest of the aquifers below the Salinas Valley; lying beneath the 400-foot aquifer.

The commenter suggests a new mitigation measure that would prohibit the installation of any new wells in the Deep Zone. This is not feasible. Pursuant to California Water Law, the overlying land owner has the rights to groundwater at any depth. The County does not have the authority to unilaterally prevent the drilling of new wells to access groundwater. If the County were to attempt to prohibit the landowner access to such water, this action could raise “takings” claims against the County, leading to the County paying landowners compensation for the loss of access to the water.

The commenter’s assertion that the DEIR does not describe the Deep Zone is incorrect:

- On page 4.3-7, the Deep Zone is mentioned in DEIR Section 4.3, *Water Resources*, in the discussion of the “180-Foot/400-Foot Area Subarea” under the more general discussion of Salinas Valley groundwater.
- On page 4.3-26, under the Salinas Valley Watershed describes the situation with regard to the three aquifers (i.e., 180-foot, 400-foot, and Deep Zone) as follows: “The intrusion of seawater has forced all water supply wells in the affected area of the 180-foot aquifer to be re-drilled into the 400-foot aquifer. Additionally, in those areas where the 400-foot aquifer also suffers from seawater intrusion, the Deep Zone aquifer has become a major source of water (Marina Coast Water District 2005). The water of this aquifer is up to 30,000 years old. However, because of the prehistoric origin of this water, withdrawal from the Deep Zone is a non-sustainable activity and is the effective equivalent of “mining” water.”
- On page 4.3-32, under the discussion of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin, the DEIR discusses all three zones and notes that the Deep Zone “extends approximately 2,000 feet below land surface”.
- On pages 4.3-118 and 4.3-119, the DEIR states: “MCWD is currently drawing water from the non-sustainable Deep Zone, which, combined with the risk of further seawater intrusion from continued pumping in the 180- or 400- foot aquifers, rules out possibilities for meeting the Community Area’s water demands from local groundwater sources.”
- On page 4.3-147, potential declines in the Deep Zone are also noted under Impact WR-6.

The DEIR has clearly disclosed the character of the Deep Zone and has described a potential concern with extractions from the Deep Zone as being unsustainable.

To clarify, the Department of Water Resources' Groundwater Bulletin 118 states that up to 2,000 feet of saturated alluvium underlie the Salinas Valley. This includes the 180-foot, 400-foot, and Deep Zone aquifers. The 180-foot and 400-foot aquifers are so named for the average depth at which they occur. The Deep Zone lies below the 400-foot aquifer and is separated from it by a blue marine clay layer. According to Bulletin 118: "[t]his deeper aquifer consists of alternating layers of sand-gravel mixtures and clays (up to 900 feet thick), rather than a distinct aquifer and aquitard (citation)." Bulletin 118 further notes that the Deep Zone "has experienced little development except near the coast where it is used to replace groundwater from the 180- and 400-Foot Aquifers rendered unusable by seawater intrusion. Water quality and yield data are scarce." (DWR 2004)

According to its 2005 Urban Water Management Plan, the Marina Coast Water District's (MCWD) three wells in the Salinas Valley groundwater basin are the only current significant user of the Deep Aquifer system (MCWD 2005). This information has been added to the EIR.

Recent preliminary findings regarding the deep aquifers in the Fort Ord Community Area indicate that pumping from the deep aquifer may affect the rate of seawater intrusion in the overlying middle and upper aquifers (e.g. the 180-foot and 400-foot aquifers). This is because the deep aquifers' sources of recharge include the overlying aquifers. Thus, pumping of the deep aquifer can draw more water from the overlying aquifers and in turn, water can be drawn into these middle and upper aquifers from a landward direction (from the sea). (MCWD 2005). This information has been added to the EIR.

The MCWRA manages the Salinas Valley groundwater basin that includes the Deep Zone aquifer. Keep in mind that the SVWP will improve overdraft conditions within the Salinas Valley groundwater basin, thereby benefitting the Deep Zone aquifer.

The MCWD is cooperating with the County, MCWRA, and other agencies on reaching a regional solution to water supply. See Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, section 4.3.3.

The DEIR's reference to reported declines in the Deep Zone aquifer on page 4.3-147 could not be verified and thus this text has been deleted in the DEIR. Given the expense of drilling wells into the Deep Zone, groundwater users are only motivated to tap the Deep Zone if the shallower aquifers are compromised due to seawater intrusion or other factors.

The fundamental conclusion in the DEIR about the SVWP (see Master Response 4) remains that it will balance demand and supply in the Salinas Valley groundwater basin up to approximately 2030 and an expansion of the SVWP could address demands beyond that point. This conclusion not only applies to the 180-foot and 400-foot aquifer, but also to the Deep Zone because by halting overdraft and seawater intrusion (up to nominally 2030), the SVWP promotes continued use of the shallower aquifers and reduces the potential for mining of water from the Deep Zone.

Commenters have noted that the data in Table 4.3.3 (Estimated Acreage Overlying Seawater Intrusion) of the DEIR stops at 1999. More recent data is available, and is illustrated in Exhibit W-2.

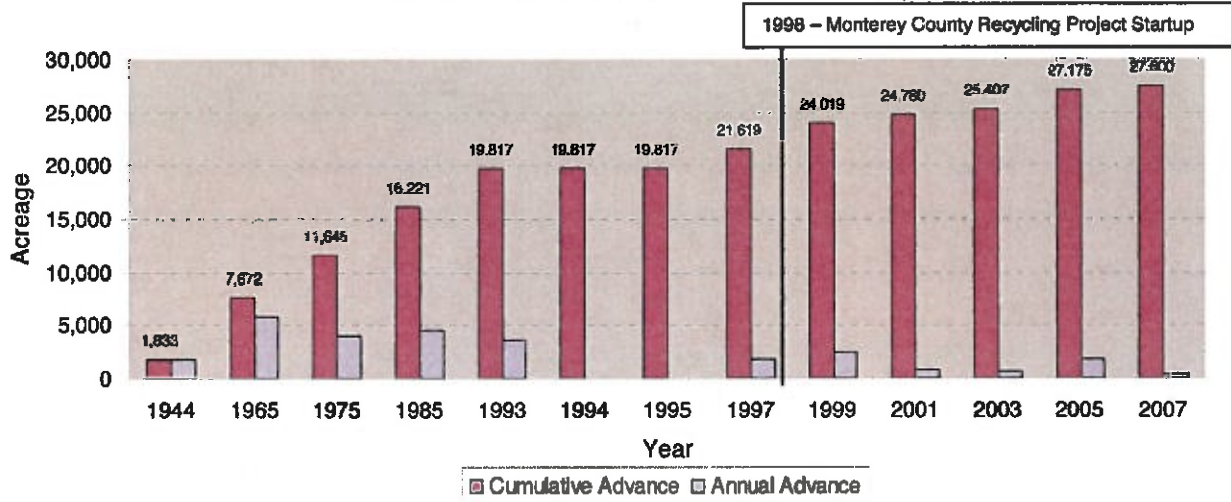
- O-21k.58 It is not inappropriate to rely on information that is pertinent to the issue at hand. The fact that Jones & Stokes (aka ICF International) prepared the EIR referenced is not pertinent to the currency of its information. This reference has been supplemented by the MPWMD's 2008 Mitigation Program Report (MPWMD 2009), which concludes that there has been no identifiable trend indicative of seawater intrusion in the Carmel Valley alluvial aquifer.
- O-21k.59 The comment cites language in Section 4.3.2 of the DEIR. This information is included to provide the environmental setting for the DEIR under Section 15125, and does not constitute and impact of the proposed project. As stated in the Monterey Peninsula, Carmel Bay, and South Monterey Bay Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (2007), hydrology consultants for Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD) completed a detailed analysis of water level trends and groundwater budgets titled "Seaside Groundwater Basin: Update on Water Resource Conditions" (Yates, 2005). The report estimated the sustainable yield of the Seaside Groundwater Basin at 2,880 acre-feet/year (AFY) and the usable groundwater storage capacity at 6,200 AF. While the report found no current significant seawater intrusion problems (i.e. seawater intrusion problems that would reduce the water quality in the basin such that it would become unusable for drinking water), it did state that the main limitation on yield in the Seaside Groundwater Basin is the risk of seawater intrusion, which may reach production wells before the groundwater budget can be brought into balance.

In part to address the risk of seawater intrusion, adjudication of the Seaside Groundwater Basin occurred in 2006 with a Final Statement of Decision filed on March 27, 2006. The court appointed a "watermaster" and mandated a "physical solution" to the overdraft problem. The operating yield for three (3) years beginning in March 2007 for the Seaside Basin as a whole was defined as 5,600 acre feet. The judgment required that the operating yield for coastal subareas (4,611 AFY) be decreased by 10% every three years starting in year four, e.g. 10% decrease at the start of the fourth year for years four, five, and six, and an additional 10% decrease at the start of the seventh year for years seven, eight and nine, etc. These decreases will continue until production reaches the "natural safe yield", which was initially set at 3,000 AFY, unless the watermaster (1) has secured an equivalent amount of "non-native" replacement water and added it to the basin, or (2) the watermaster has secured an equivalent amount of recycled water and contracted with one or more of the producers in the basin to use this quantity of recycled water in lieu of their production allocation with the producers agreeing to forego their right to claim a storage credit for their forbearance, or (3) any combination of replacement or recycled water results in the required decrease in production of "native water" in the basin, or (4) water levels in the aquifers are sufficient to ensure a positive offshore gradient to prevent seawater intrusion.

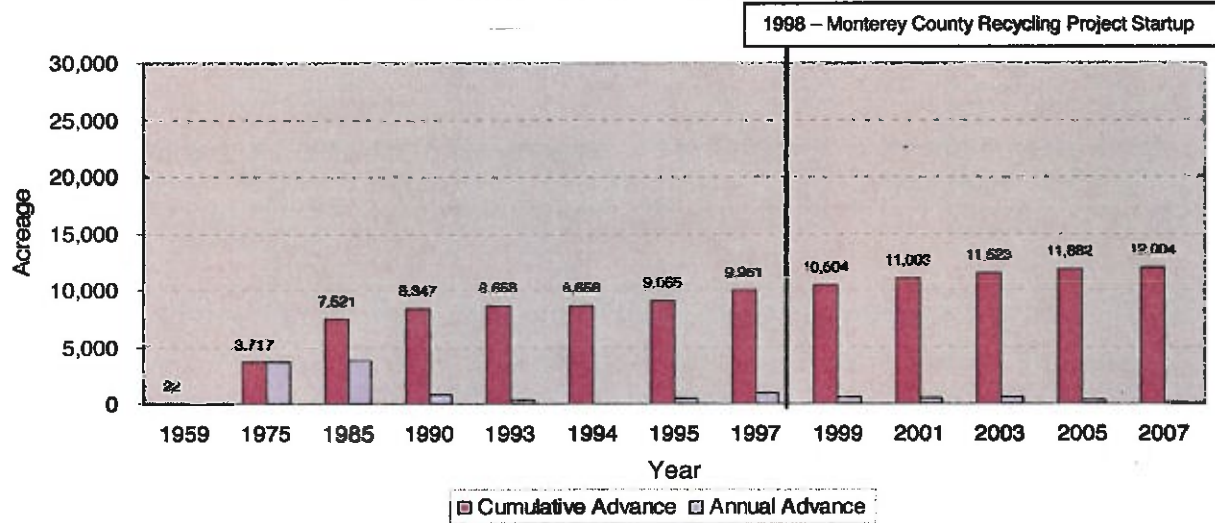
In the event the watermaster cannot procure replacement water to offset operating yield over-production in an administrative year, production in the following administrative year must be curtailed to the targeted operating yield or a replenishment assessment may be levied on the producers. (Monterey Superior Court 2007)

Based on the legally enforceable framework provided in the Final Statement of Decision, it can be reasonably assumed that the Seaside Groundwater Basin will successfully avoid significant seawater intrusion in the near future.

Estimated Acreage Overlying Seawater Intrusion Pressure 180-Foot Aquifer



Estimated Acreage Overlying Seawater Intrusion Pressure 400-Foot Aquifer



Source: Monterey County Water Resources Agency. Graph Date: September 4, 2009

00982.07 (01-10)

- O-21k.60 The EIR has been edited to correct the reference to Exhibit 4.3.7.
- O-21k.61 The County did not find evidence of seawater intrusion at Highlands South. Please see the updated Exhibits 4.3.9 and 4.3.9a.

The groundwater subareas are clearly detailed in Exhibit 4.3.7, providing ample depiction of these areas for informational purposes. An updated Exhibit 4.3.9 and an additional Exhibit (Exhibit 4.3.9a) have been provided in the Chapter 4 in the FEIR to show the most recent data regarding seawater intrusion in the North County, south of Elkhorn Slough. Mapping of the seawater intrusion into groundwater basins north of Elkhorn Slough has not occurred since 1993. Therefore, Exhibit 4.3.11 is not outdated. Seawater intrusion data north of Elkhorn Slough is not available. The seawater graphics of the updated Exhibit 4.3.11 are not inconsistent with the information on Exhibit 4.3.9 and Exhibit 4.3.9a, as the two graphics depict saltwater intrusion in two different geographic areas.

For an illustration of the rate of seawater intrusion, please see Exhibit W-2.

Mapping of seawater intrusion and details about the rate of seawater intrusion sufficiently detail the severity of the issue in the area.

- O-21k.62 Reference to the “SR 168 corridor” was a typographic error which has been corrected to the “SR 68 corridor”. The SR 68 corridor is the swath of land adjacent to and extended out from both sides of State Route (SR) 68. The SR 68 corridor extends from Salinas southwest to Monterey. The text of the DEIR has been edited to reflect the corridor being discussed.
- O-21k.63 The arsenic standard for drinking water is still currently 10 parts per billion. The information in the DEIR remains applicable in 2009.

According to a January 8th, 2010 personal communication with Charles Hewitt, Monterey County Environmental Health Specialist, many systems are already in compliance with the 10 parts per billion standards, and have been issued compliance orders stating this fact. However, it has been more difficult to ensure compliance for some smaller systems due to the cost of compliance.

- O-21k.64 Fort Ord groundwater contamination is known to the agencies that serve the former Fort Ord and contaminated groundwater is not a prospective source of water for future planned uses. As discussed under the title of “Fort Ord” on page 4.3-28 of the DEIR, the Army is undertaking a program of groundwater cleanup. As discussed on page 4.3-85, the Monterey County Health Department has established a Fort Ord Special Ground Water Protection Zone and Consultation Zone where contaminant plumes occur. Development within the zone is regulated in consultation with Fort Ord Base Realignment and Base Closure Team, including representatives of the U.S. Army, EPA, California Department of Toxic Substances Control, and Central Coast RWQCB.
- O-21k.65 The term “available water supply” refers to potable water available for human uses. The term does not refer to all wet water, contaminated water that cannot be made available for human uses, or water not in overdraft.

- O-21k.66 The comment raises issues over who determined that balancing water demand and supply is an objective. This is a general water management objective. It is a broad statement that reflects common practice among water management agencies. For example, if there were no objective to balance demand and supply then agencies would not be concerned over groundwater overdraft.

The terms “demand” and “supply” are intended to convey their standard usage. Demand is a level of use resulting from a variety of activities that use water. Supply is the amount of water that is available. Supply does not necessarily mean “recharge” in all contexts. Recharge generally pertains to water entering an aquifer. A surface water supply does not include recharge.

“Prolonged period” is also intended to be a general term. It does not convey any particular time period.

The commenter suggests a different objective for groundwater management. The commenter apparently misunderstands what is meant by “objective” here and how it relates to the document. The objective described on page 4.3-28 is a general explanation of how water management is approached. It is not a binding objective that is being adopted by any agency in order to direct their future actions. It is a description included in the DEIR to give a context to the discussion of water supply that follows. This is a reasonable description of the general approach to water management, not an objective for planning purposes or to direct an action or series of actions. To the extent the comment is proposing an “objective” as a policy option, the comment raises an issue of policy referred to the decision-makers.

- O-21k.67 The DEIR states that “[t]he Marina Coast Water District (MCWD) supplies water to the City of Marina and the former Fort Ord.” (page 4.3-29.) This adequately describes its water supply responsibilities. The comment does not raise issue regarding the significant environmental issues or the adequacy of the DEIR, therefore no further response is required (CEQA Guidelines Section 15204).

- O-21k.68 The reference to an imported water supply was to Lake San Antonio, which is located in San Luis Obispo. However, there is no piping of supply from Lake San Antonio for use in Monterey (water is released into the San Antonio River which flows into Monterey County and into the Salinas River) and thus reference to importation of water has been deleted on page 4.3-29.

- O-21k.69 The commenter notes that the DEIR refers to Exhibit 4.3.7 in stating that there are “several smaller groundwater basins” in the County. This is a general statement and is not intended to indicate that Exhibit 4.3.7 illustrates all of the smaller groundwater basins. It does illustrate five smaller sub-basins located in the North County area that is discussed at length in Section 4.3, *Water Resources*.

The discussion of groundwater basins and the analysis of water resources is not dependent upon an illustration of the location of such basins. Nonetheless, for clarity purposes, the EIR has been revised to include Exhibit 4.3.7a that shows the locations of the County’s major groundwater basins.

- O-21k.70 The commenter offers their opinion regarding the adequacy and implementation of the 1982 General Plan and further opines that “there is nothing that inspires any confidence that the 2007 Plan (and this weak DEIR) will be any better.” The commenter asks “why the public should once again place its confidence when it is not deserved.”

The comment is an opinion and noted. Please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan EIR* for a discussion of implementation of the General Plan. Please also see FEIR Chapters 4 and 5 for revisions to mitigation measures and General Plan policies. The DEIR discusses numerous policies and relies upon a combination of policies and mitigation measures to help reduce impacts. Furthermore, these policies, if adopted by the County, would become part of the General Plan and the County would implement these policies consistent with Government Code requirements (see Government Code Section 65400). The comment does not discuss any specific mitigation measures or policies or the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and the ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated. Therefore, no further response is required (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15204).

- O-21k.71 Progress is being made in halting the rate of seawater intrusion in the Pajaro and Salinas groundwater basins, as described in Section 4.3, *Water Resources*, as well as in Master Response 4, *Water Supply* (see Exhibits W-1 and W-2). Several projects are now, or soon will be, in operation that will provide substantial quantities of water to replenish groundwater supplies and replace groundwater extractions from agricultural operations, including the CSIP, the SVWP, and the recycled water project operated by the PVWMA and the City of Watsonville.
- O-21k.72 In response to the comment’s request for clarification, sustainable growth is a broad term relating to the consideration of future generations when making decisions in the present time. The concept of sustainable growth, put simply, is to minimize or avoid decisions that would adversely affect future generations by consuming resources at rate that is not sustainable over time. A sustainable groundwater supply would be one component of reaching a goal of sustainable growth.
- O-21k.73 The Community Areas are highlighted because they are identified as areas that are designated in the General Plan as “the preferred location and the priority for additional development” within the inland unincorporated County over the planning period. (Policy LU-2.21.)
- O-21k.74 Fort Ord is currently supplied by the Marina Coast Water District which derives its water from the Deep Zone in the Salinas River groundwater basin. Fort Ord itself overlies the Seaside and Corral de Tierra subareas but it is unlikely to derive any water from the adjudicated Seaside aquifer and thus the adjudication is not relevant. A note has been added to Table 4.3-4 on Page 4.3-31 and to Table 4.3-10 on Page 4.3-117 to clarify that Fort Ord does not derive water from the Seaside aquifer, nor is expected to in the future. Potential water sources for future growth at Fort Ord include a well field near Spreckels (in the Salinas Valley groundwater basin) and /or the regional urban water augmentation project (see Master Response 4). Page 4.3-119 has been modified to indicate that future growth would not be served by the Coastal Water Project, but that discussions are

ongoing among water agencies over the potential for a regional project. See Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for a discussion of this effort.

- O-21k.75 The Fort Ord Reuse Authority is identified in Table 4.3-4 as a management authority because it exercises land use planning authority over the former Fort Ord. "WPWMD" is a typographical error and is intended to be MPWMD.
- O-21k.76 The DEIR has been edited to clarify the current status of the MCWD desalination plant and is included in FEIR Chapter 4.
- O-21k.77 The Reservation Road/Highway 68 AHO is in the Salinas Valley groundwater basin. The Monterey Airport AHO is in the Seaside groundwater basin. The Seaside groundwater basin is commonly defined as within the (surface) Salinas Valley Watershed, but is treated separately for the purposes of groundwater.
- O-21k.78 The comment states "the DEIR's affirmative claims about the Toro water shed are inconsistent..." It is unclear what the commenter is referring to when referencing "affirmative claims." The commenter does not cite any evidence or study to support the statement that there is a "large amount of scientific uncertainty" about the relationships between the Toro watershed and the Salinas Valley groundwater basin. The Toro Planning area contains areas within the Salinas Valley groundwater basin and the El Toro Creek Groundwater Sub-basin (see Exhibits 4.3-3 and 3.10 in the DEIR). The DEIR describes the El Toro Creek Groundwater Basin (on p. 4.3-35) based on the 2007 Geosyntec Consultants report. That report clearly states that the El Toro watershed drains to Toro Creek which flows northeastward into the Salinas River, thus establishing a hydrologic connection. See Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for an expanded discussion of the El Toro watershed.
- O-21k.79 See the response to O-21k.57 above.
- O-21k.80 The DEIR was based on the most recently available data at the time of its writing. See Master Response 4 on Water Supply for a discussion of recent trends in groundwater extraction in the Salinas Valley, including an update of the extraction data through 2008. The average total annual extraction in the Salinas Valley Groundwater basin between 1995 and 2005 was 507,004 acre-feet. When including 2006 through 2008, the average from 1995 to 2008 is 507,218 acre feet, which is virtually no change in overall average for this size of a basin. The overall trend in agricultural pumping since the early 1990s is downward; the level of urban pumping is nearly level. Keep in mind that year-to-year numbers are influenced by rainfall amounts. The increased levels of pumping in 2007 and 2008, relative to the level in 2006, are undoubtedly the result of the State's three-year drought.
- O-21k.81 Extraction levels correlate inversely with precipitation levels, particularly for agricultural water users. Agriculture is dependent upon providing plants with sufficient water for an economically productive crop. When there is abundant rainfall, soil moisture is higher, and there is less need for irrigation. The opposite is true when there is little rainfall.
- O-21k.82 There is a typographical error in the text. The reference to "100/400-Foot" should be "180/400-Foot" in order to reflect the 180-foot aquifer. The reference to the area north of

Salinas should be to the "...180/400-foot subarea (also known as the Pressure Zone subarea), west of Salinas... In areas east and south of Salinas in the Pressure Zone subarea, it is estimated that..." The typographical errors on page 4.3-33 and 4.3-38 have been revised in Chapter 4 in the FEIR.

- O-21k.83 The DEIR has been edited to clarify that the 180-Foot/400-Foot Subarea is also known as the Pressure Subarea.
- O-21k.84 The Monterey County Water Recycling Project began operation in late 1997 and as of Fall 2007 had produced approximately 3.4 billion gallons of water (Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency 2007a). Please see the response to comment O-21k.61 for information regarding saltwater intrusion data. The groundwater modeling done for the SVWP is based on the assumption that the SVWP is delivering water to the CSIP for distribution. The past performance of the Water Recycling Project is not at issue.
- O-21k.85 The cited rate of seawater intrusion is being used as the baseline for purposes of determining the significance of the Draft General Plan relative to seawater intrusion. The term "baseline" is defined under CEQA Guidelines section 15125(a) and is used in identifying the impacts of the project. However, because of the variability of seawater intrusion data from year to year, the DEIR baseline took into account the normal fluctuation of seawater intrusion with time. This data is considered representative of baseline conditions. Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for updated information on seawater intrusion.

This discussion is not "plagiarized," as the commenter claims. The intent of CEQA is to share information such that decision-makers are informed of the potential effects of a project before they may act to approve it. Information may be taken from a variety of sources. In this case, the information is from the EIR for the SVWP and is so cited. The use of the word "SEIR" in the comment's quotation has been changed to "EIR" (see Chapter 4 of the FEIR). Comments on "plagiarism" do not address the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and the ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated. Therefore, no further response is required (see CEQA Guideline section 15204).

- O-21k.86 As stated in Master Response 4 on Water Supply, the SVWP includes physical changes to the spillway at Lake Nacimiento, allowing the reservoir to retain approximately 30,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) of additional storage, in round numbers. This work is complete. Changes in the operation of both Lake Nacimiento and Lake San Antonio will both improve flood control and allow larger releases during the irrigation season. Larger flows in the Salinas River translate to about an additional 10,000 AFY of water available to recharge the aquifers through infiltration into the riverbed.

The DEIR states that the annual rate of seawater intrusion in 2001 was 8,900 AFY. The DEIR also states that without augmentation of water supply, the annual rate of seawater intrusion in 2030 would be 10,300 AFY.

The DEIR references the certified SVWP FEIR/EIS as the source of this information.

The calculation made by the commenter is incorrect. The DEIR does not state that the rate of seawater intrusion from 2000 to 2030 would be 10,300 AFY. Instead, it states that without water supply augmentation, the rate of seawater intrusion would increase from year to year between 2000 and 2030, reaching 10,300 AFY in 2030.

“Storage depletion” refers to the depletion of groundwater storage that would occur if the SVWP were not implemented. This is clear from the context of the discussion cited by the commenter.

O-21k.87 The projections made by MCWRA comparing the 1995 baseline used in the SVWP EIR to 2030 project conditions do not include year-by-year data. As stated in the DEIR, the projection is based on general population projections, meaning that the projections assume a certain rate of growth and develop the projections for demand based on such a rate of growth. Furthermore, the DEIR provided additional Groundwater Extraction Data in Table 4.3-5. However, because of the variability of groundwater extraction data from year to year, the DEIR baseline took into account the normal fluctuation with time. This data is considered representative of baseline conditions. Please also see Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for additional groundwater extraction data and for discussion of consistency of the water supply analysis in the General Plan DEIR and the SVWP EIR/EIS.

O-21k.88 The commenter misunderstands the content of Table 4.3-6. It does not match the information in Table 4.3-5 because, as described in the DEIR text: Table 4.3-6 provides a comparison of the MCWRA’s baseline (1995) and projected future (2030) conditions assuming the SVWP is not in place. With full implementation of the SVWP (see discussion below), MCWRA estimates groundwater storage depletion will be substantially improved from their baseline conditions and will avoid additional overdraft.

Table 4.3-6 is intended to illustrate the condition if the SVWP were not in place – that is, the demand conditions and resultant overdraft absent operations of the SVWP. It does not represent actual water demand numbers. The 1995 baseline refers to the baseline data used in developing the SVIGSM and is the basis for that model. “Baseline” in this context does not relate to the baseline for determining CEQA significance.

Table 4.3-5 is a straightforward tabulation of actual extractions.

O-21k.89 These assumptions are part of the MCWRA’s SVWP analysis. They are based on historic rates of agricultural land conversion, changes in crop type to those that require less water, and expected improvements in agricultural water conservation practices. As shown in Table 4.3-5 and in Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, over time agricultural water use has been declining even though agricultural acreage has been slowly increasing.

O-21k.90 A project description in the DEIR of the CSIP that references “injection” is found on page 4.3-8 in Section 4.3, *Water Resources*. The DEIR states:

“The MCWRA and its co-operators, including the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency (MRWPCA), have several major capital projects to better manage groundwater quality and reverse the long-term trend of seawater intrusion and

groundwater declines in the Salinas Valley groundwater basin. Some of these projects have been completed, and others are underway.

- The MCWRA completed the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) in 1998. This project injects recycled water into the aquifer to establish a hydraulic barrier to further seawater intrusion.”

Injection is a poor choice of term. The CSIP delivers surface water to farmers who use it in place of groundwater. This reduces groundwater pumping and results in a hydraulic barrier against seawater intrusion. The text on page 4.3-8 has been amended.

- O-21k.91 As stated in the SVWP DEIR, the conveyance and diversion of water associated with the SVWP would include diversion of an average of 9,700 AFY of water via pumping into the existing Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) distribution pipeline for delivery to agricultural users for irrigation. If needed in the future to stop seawater intrusion or meet project objectives, based on monitoring, an expanded distribution system may be constructed to deliver Salinas River water outside the CSIP area. However, no such system has been designed, approved, or otherwise committed to action.

To clarify, the DEIR considers such a potential distribution system, as follows: diversion from the Salinas River would be increased from an average of 9,700 AFY to 18,300 AFY. Of this total diversion, 14,300 AFY would be delivered outside the CSIP delivery area. CSIP deliveries would shift in their composition. An average of 4,000 AFY would be provided by Salinas River diversions. Recycled water deliveries would increase to 16,000 AFY. Supplemental pumping of groundwater wells up to 2,800 AFY would provide the balance of water needed to meet water use demands (approximately 23,000 AFY) in the CSIP area (MCWRA 2001).

In order to deliver the additional water to areas outside of CSIP, a pipeline parallel to the existing CSIP pipeline would need to be constructed from the diversion dam to a new distribution area adjacent to the CSIP distribution area. For purposes of analysis, the DEIR assumed that deliveries would occur to the southeast of the CSIP service area, as this is the area nearest the diversion dam that is not within the CSIP area. A 42-inch diameter new pipeline would be required, along with a distribution system to deliver diverted water to agricultural users in the expanded service area. Specific alignment of the expanded distribution system would be developed at a later date to deliver agricultural water to turnouts for each affected property.

This is provided to disclose what may be necessary post-2030 if the SVWP does not operate as expected. It is not intended to suggest that a decision has been made to proceed with such an expansion of the SVWP.

- O-21k.92 The proposed Hwy. 68/Reservation Road AHO is located within the Salinas Valley groundwater basin proper and not within the El Toro Creek groundwater basin. The El Toro Creek groundwater basin is separate and distinct from both the Salinas and Seaside basins. However, surface flows in Toro Creek feed into the Salinas River.

The DEIR utilizes the name of El Toro Creek groundwater basin, based on the El Toro Groundwater Study (Geosyntec Consultants 2007). The El Toro Creek groundwater basin encompasses an area somewhat larger than the Corral De Tierra itself.

- O-21k.93 The DEIR mentions in passing that increased water demands in an overdrafted area would result in a significant effect. This is a self-evident conclusion drawn from the basic assumption that overdraft is a significant effect in itself where it exists and that increases in overdraft are significant because they worsen the condition.
- O-21k.94 For the Department of Water Resources (DWR 2004), the Seaside groundwater basin is defined as a sub-basin to the Salinas Valley basin overall. However, this basin does not flow into the Salinas Valley groundwater basin and thus is more commonly referred to as its own groundwater basin. The meaning of the DEIR is evident, however, whether calling Seaside a basin or sub-basin, and the particular label does not change the DEIR impact analysis. All references in the DEIR to Seaside as a sub-basin refer to the Seaside "basin."
- O-21k.95 The commenter is correct; a portion of the City of Monterey lying north of the Monterey Peninsula Airport is within the Seaside Basin. The text in Chapter 4 in the FEIR adds the City of Monterey to the list of cities. This is a minor addition that has no effect on either the analysis or conclusions.
- O-21k.96 This statement quoted in the comment is not correct and has been deleted from the DEIR in Chapter 4.
- O-21k.97 The comment asks for a description of the Seaside basin-wide average annual storage depletion figure (approximately 1,540 AFY) on page 4.3-36 and how it may relate to recharge and sustainable yield.
- With adjudication of the Seaside basin, future demand will be balanced with supply to ensure that safe yield is not exceeded. The discussion in the EIR has been revised to clarify this point in Chapter 4 of the FEIR.
- O-21k.98 As detailed in Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, the SVWP DEIR/EIS concludes that "seawater intrusion would be effectively reversed during normal and greater than normal rainfall years, and would occur at a rate less than current and Future Baseline (2030) conditions under drought conditions. The net effect, considering all rainfall years, would be no additional seawater intrusion." This conclusion is essentially unchanged in the FEIR/EIS. The DEIR for the General Plan Update uses the term *may*, because the SVIGSM, like all models, has a margin of error.
- O-21k.99 Please see the responses to comments O-21k.80 and O-21k.84 regarding operation of the CSIP. The results expected to result from operation of the SVWP will not be evident in the results of the CSIP alone.
- O-21k.100 The statement refers to the gradient created by removing groundwater in areas away from the ocean. The removal of groundwater reduces the pressure that keeps seawater in place. This allows seawater to move into the landward aquifers that previously held fresh water.
- O-21k.101 The commenter disagrees with the County's proposed approach to halting seawater intrusion. Contrary to the commenter's remarks, the overall approach to halting seawater intrusion does include management practices and conservation (examples: the Resource

Conservation District provides educational programs instructing farmers in management and water conservation, and Monterey County ordinance Chapter 18.50 mandates residential water conservation), as well as a major reliance upon reuse (examples: the CSIP and Pajaro Valley's Recycled Water Facility both provide thousands of acre-feet of treated wastewater to farmers to replace supplies that would otherwise have been extracted from groundwater). The commenter apparently does not disagree with the basic statement in the DEIR that a way to control overdraft is to reduce pumping from the aquifers. Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for discussion of conservation measures. No further response is required because the comment does not raise significant environmental issues or address the adequacy of the EIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15204).

- O-21k.102 The comment questions the phrase "delivery area of the SVWP" on Page 4.3-37 of the DEIR. The passage has been revised to clarify that the SVWP will provide water to the CSIP, which delivers water to 12,000 acres of farmland. The project area of the SVWP is coterminous with Zone 2C and is much larger than 12,000 acres.
- O-21k.103 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, particularly Section 4.2, *Salinas Valley*. Contrary to the commenter's assertion, the SVWP and CSIP will result in substantial improvements in conditions in the Salinas Valley groundwater basin relative to both groundwater overdraft and seawater intrusion.
- O-21k.104 This information is available on page 1 of the document referenced in the citation.
- O-21k.105 The commenter mischaracterizes the statement made in the DEIR. The DEIR does not state that the SVWP will not meet water demand through the year 2030. The DEIR states the project may not halt seawater intrusion sufficiently to meet water demand through the year 2030. For a complete discussion of the SVWP's ability to halt seawater intrusion, please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, particularly Section 4.2, *Salinas Valley*.
- O-21k.106 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, particularly Section 4.2, *Salinas Valley*.
- O-21k.107 The benefits referred to are the benefits of the SVWP on groundwater levels. As discussed at page 4.3-38 of the DEIR, the SVWP will raise groundwater levels by providing substantial additional water for recharge. This will occur in all of the subbasins as a result of additional water being released for infiltration into the bed of the Salinas River, as well as water delivered to the CSIP. The phrase "more uniformly" relates to the geographic scope of the benefits. The increased releases to the Salinas River will benefit groundwater levels across the basin.
- O-21k.108 The commenter insinuates that there is some question regarding the legitimacy of the Zone 2C benefit assessment. Although the benefit assessment was subject to legal challenge, the litigation is concluded, the final assessment procedure meets all requirements of Proposition 218, and the assessments are fully legal. There are no outstanding challenges.

The commenter alleges, without providing evidence, that "there will be organized resistance to further projects due to the cost." This is speculation on their part, in that the

specific designs, costs, and financing mechanisms of any further projects are not known at this time.

The commenter requests a map and description of the expanded distribution system that would make up Phase 2 of the SVWP. This is not available. The system has not been designed, because its necessity has not yet been determined. Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply* Section 4.2.3 for greater detail on this issue.

- O-21k.109 The commenter questions “whether the reservoirs have sufficient storage and water available for the [Salinas River] flows required by the resource agencies over time.” This is a comment regarding the SVWP rather than the Draft General Plan.

The SVWP includes improvements to the spillway at Lake Nacimiento that will increase the lake’s storage capacity. This, along with changes in the operations of both Lake Nacimiento and Lake San Antonio that, among other things, allow more water to be retained in storage while still providing flood protection, enabling the reservoirs to meet the water needs of the Salinas Valley described in the SVWP.

- O-21k.110 The commenter disagrees that the CSIP and SVWP, along with other efforts, will help bring the Salinas River basin into hydrologic balance. The DEIR does not mean that these efforts alone would be sufficient to establish hydrologic balance – hence the phrase “help bring.” However, based on the results of SVIGSM modeling runs, the SVWP and CSIP are expected to raise groundwater levels, reversing overdraft conditions. The commenter provides no substantial evidence that the SVIGSM is not a reliable model.

See Master Response 4 on Water Supply for a discussion of trends in groundwater pumping.

- O-21k.111 These special treatment areas are described on page 3-33 of the Project Description. The subject of the discussion is an overview of the state of the watershed, not specific development areas within the watershed. See Master Response 4 on Water Supply for an accounting of water demand and supply in the Carmel Valley as shown on revised Table 4.3-9. Please also see Master Response 10 on the level of detail required in the DEIR.

The commenter’s hearsay report of the applicant’s opinion concerning the Rancho Canada Village EIR is noted. Only CEQA lead agencies can decide whether to accept or reject an EIR (separate from legal proceedings). The Rancho Canada Village EIR has not been formally “rejected” by Monterey County, which is the CEQA lead agency.

- O-21k.112 The commenter is correct. However, this has no effect on the validity of the analysis and conclusions in the EIR. To clarify, the MPWMD is a public agency established to manage water supplies on the Monterey Peninsula. It does so through its statutory power to directly enact regulations on water use, but is not a water supplier. CalAm is an investor-owned public utility that provides water service to much of the Monterey Peninsula. CalAm does not provide water to the MPWMD. However, it does provide water to the area that is regulated by the MPWMD.

- O-21k.113 According to *California’s Groundwater - Bulletin 118*, “DWR (1974) estimated the groundwater in storage in spring 1972 was 45,500 af [acre-feet], 39,300 af in fall 1972,

and 52,500 af in spring 1973” within the Carmel River basin (California Department of Water Resources 2004). This is the most recent information available. DWR has not estimated a groundwater budget for the Carmel River basin due to a lack of verified information. (California Department of Water Resources 2004). This data has been used to update page 4.3-38.

O-21k.114 The requested information is available in the FEIR for the Coastal Water Project, from which the following is taken. (California Public Utilities Commission 2009a) The Coastal Water Project proposes to produce 12,500 af/year (AFY) of water. This is a revision to the 11,730 AFY originally proposed for replacement in the “Preliminary Environmental Assessment” submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission for the Coastal Water Project. (California Public Utilities Commission 2009a)

Under the proposed Coastal Water Project, this replacement water would come from the following:

Table 3-4. Coastal Water Project Production

Source	Amount, in acre-feet per year
Moss Landing desalination plant (new)	10,900
Aquifer Storage and Recovery project (in operation, would be expanded under the CWP)	1,300 (920 AFY is currently being injected)
Sand City desalination plant (approved, but not yet operational)	300
Total	12,500

Source: California Public Utilities Commission 2009a

The ongoing Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) project injects water diverted from the Carmel River during periods of high flow into the Seaside groundwater basin. In 2007, the State Water Resources Control Board issued Permit 20808A to the MPWMD and CalAm authorizing the diversion of up to 2,426 acre-feet from the River to underground storage. (California State Water Resources Control Board 2009) As illustrated above, one aspect of the Coastal Water Project would be to expand the current level of diversion (920 AFY).

As described in the FEIR for the Coastal Water Project, the Project would replace water that is being diverted by CalAm from the Carmel River in excess of its water rights, conform CalAm production from the Seaside groundwater basin to comply with the adjudication of that basin, and replace the capacity of the Los Padres Reservoir that has been lost as a result of siltation since 1995 (the year the State Water Resources Control Board issued Order 95-10, limiting CalAm’s right to Carmel River water). In essence, this would retain the current level of water supply for those areas served by CalAm.

O-21k.115 Regarding the Coastal Water Project, see the response to O-21k.114 above.

See the response to comment O-21K.40 regarding the Highlands South and Granite Ridge sub-basins, as well as Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

The benefits of the SVWP to North County aquifers, specifically those in Zone 2C, are described in the Engineer's Report prepared in support of the Zone 2C benefit assessment. (Monterey County Water Resources Agency 2003a) This report stated that "[a]ny contiguous parcel that overlies a portion of the alluvial material that is in hydrologic continuity with the Salinas River has been included in Zone 2C since the overlying portion of the parcel provides access to all hydrologic benefits." Groundwater that is in hydrologic continuity moves from areas of higher pressure or higher elevation, to areas of lower elevation or lower pressure. By increasing groundwater levels in the Salinas Valley, the pressure gradient between the aquifers in the Valley and those connected aquifers in the surrounding upland is reduced and flow from the uplands to the Valley is reduced. (Weeks 2009) Please also see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, Section 4.2.6.

- O-21k.116 The EIR for the Draft General Plan contains a reasonable, good-faith analysis of water supplies in the North County, based upon available information. This includes pertinent information from a prior EIR. The commenter does not and cannot provide any legal basis for the claim that the "DEIR should not lift its information from a 2004 DEIR that was never adopted." The use of information from prior documents is common practice. The EIR for the Draft General Plan does not rely on the DEIR for the 21st Century General Plan update for purposes of CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 or 15163 (subsequent or supplement to an EIR). It simply notes that the DEIR for the 21st Century General Plan update reported that there are four large water systems in the area.

The Municipal Services Review for the North County adopted by the Monterey County Local Agency Formation Commission in February 2006 found that the Aromas County Water District had 805 customers and the Pajaro/Sunny Mesa Community Services District 683 customers. The latter took over NORMCO (erroneously identified as "Normeo" in the DEIR) in 2006 and the total includes previous NORMCO customers as well. (Local Agency Formation Commission of Monterey County 2006c) Both the Oak Hills and Las Lomas water systems mentioned in the DEIR are run by the California Water Company, an investor-owned public utility.

- O-21k.117 The comment asks for a breakdown of the DEIR's statement that 40% of parcels in North County are served by private wells or are undeveloped. The County does not have a breakdown of this 40% estimate as between the exact number of parcels served by private wells in the North County versus the number that are undeveloped. Further, the number of properties affected by water shortages is not precisely known. (Monterey County Health Bureau 2009c) Please also see Master Response 10 on the level of detail required in an EIR for a General Plan.
- O-21k.118 The referenced statement simply means that the North County receives less precipitation than the higher, Coastal Range watershed of the Salinas River.
- O-21k.119 The commenter misrepresents the DEIR's discussion of the PVWMA's exploration of outside water supplies. The DEIR discussions on page 4.3-42 makes very clear that, despite PVWMA's hopes to obtain water from the CVP, the state of financing and the lack of available water make any outside source infeasible for the foreseeable future. However, the possibility of importation from the CVP is still in the PVWMA's most recent basin management plan, which is why it is mentioned in the DEIR.

See also Master Response 4 on Water Supply.

O-21k.120 See Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

O-21k.121 The DEIR discusses the Pajaro/Sunny Mesa CSD with Pajaro because a major portion of the CSD's service area lies within the Pajaro River watershed. It could just as easily be discussed under North County, of which the Monterey County portion of the Pajaro watershed is a part. This makes no substantive difference to the analysis and conclusions.

O-21k.122 The subheading "Other North County" simply identifies this subsection as providing additional information that is available about the North County. The information from the Rancho Roberto EIR is included because it was issued in 2005 and offered a source of recent information at the time the DEIR was prepared.

As shown in Table 4.3-7, the North County information is provided by area and does not present a "huge range," but rather a set of ranges based on geographic areas. The Rancho Roberto EIR is cited as the source of information for Table 4.3-7 of the DEIR, and was listed in DEIR Section 11 under reference #77.

O-21k.123 The commenter is correct. The 1982 General Plan does not limit development to a single, one family residence on each lot of record. Therefore, except in the Pajaro Community Area, which the Draft General Plan identifies as a development area (dependent upon public services' availability), relative to North County the 1982 General Plan would allow more development.

O-21k.124 To our knowledge, this is the most recent information that is available.

O-21k.125 In 2007, the Central Coast RWQCB -- citing its concern over water quality impacts from septic tank systems -- directed Monterey County to conduct an area-wide study of the urbanized part of the Carmel Highlands that has individual sewage disposal systems and to develop an Onsite Wastewater Management Plan (OWMP) to protect water quality. The County responded by adopting an interim ordinance restricting new development with the potential to generate wastewater and to limit the installation of new water wells (Ordinance 5086). The ordinance was subsequently extended twice, expiring in October 2009, while the County prepared the requisite Carmel Highlands Onsite Wastewater Management Study and the Carmel Highlands OWMP.

The County Board of Supervisors considered and adopted the OWMP at its December 15, 2009 meeting. The OWMP has been submitted to the Central Coast RWQCB for approval by its Executive Officer. The Board of Supervisors has directed County staff to bring forward amendments to the County Code to incorporate the recommendations of the OWMP regarding sewage disposal standards, new domestic water well water quality testing, and water well pumping requirements. See also Master Response 9, *Impacts on Water Quality*.

Carmel Highlands is in the Carmel Area Land use Planning Area which is in the Coastal Zone and is not the subject of the 2007 General Plan. This is why it is not mentioned in the DEIR, but it has been added to the FEIR as general background (see Chapter 4).

- O-21k.126 See Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, section 4.1.1 for definitions of “safe yield” and “sustainable yield.”
- O-21k.127 “Water budget” refers to the availability of water supply to meet demand.
- O-21k.128 The commenter suggests that the DEIR mischaracterizes the purpose of the adjudication action filed by CalAm over the Seaside basin. This is a distinction without a difference. CalAm filed an adjudication action, whatever its underlying motivation, and it led to the result described in the DEIR.
- O-21k.129 The commenter asks for confirmation that Alco Water Service continues to have regulatory authority over water resources. Alco Water Service is still in operation and provides water to customers in parts of the County.
- O-21k.130 The commenter’s assertion is incorrect. The DEIR does not “copy wholesale” 40 pages of another document. Selected information has been included when pertinent, but the DEIR reflects a new analysis of the potential impacts of the Draft General Plan. CEQA has no prohibition against using information from other documents. The DEIR references these other sources when information is being used.

Monterey County’s General Plan does not stand alone from a regulatory or statutory perspective. Development within the County, contemplated under the General Plan, must comply with other federal, state, and local regulatory and statutory requirements. As noted on DEIR page 4.3-48 “[t]here is extensive overlap in regulatory programs governing environmental aspects of water resources, especially in water quality and the public health and safety aspects of water supply. Much of the development and implementation of local water quality programs or ordinances has been mandated by the State of California, with some of the state programs in turn required by the federal government.” Moreover, pages 4.3-48 to 4.3-88, present the federal, state, and local regulatory context for consideration of water resources. This is actually a critical part of understanding how water quality and water supply are regulated. To ignore regulatory considerations would be to ignore the full range of federal, state, and local controls that apply to both water quality and water supply. This information is discussed because it will shape the way development occurs within the County, in addition to the General Plan. Inclusion of this information is also consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15125. Please also see Master Response 10 *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan EIR*.

- O-21k.131 The comment opines that the DEIR should have discussed the existing regulatory framework for water resources (DEIR Section 4.3.3) in ten pages, rather than forty pages. The County notes the commenter’s preference. CEQA requires the EIR prepared for a general plan update to analyze the changes that would occur when comparing the baseline – defined as existing conditions at the time the Notice of Preparation is released for review (CEQA Guidelines Section 15125) – to conditions that would occur upon implementation of the updated plan. A plan-to-plan analysis, as requested by the comment, has been held to be inconsistent with this requirement.

“An EIR is required to assess the impact of amendments to the general plan against existing conditions on the ground, not against the impact of the amendments on the

previous version of the general plan.” (*Saint Vincent’s School for Boys, et al. v. City of San Rafael* (2008) 161 Cal.App.4th 989) (See also *Environmental Planning and Information Council v. County of El Dorado* (1982) 131 Cal.App.3rd 350 [projected buildout of existing general plan was not baseline for analysis of proposed general plan update]; *Woodward Park Homeowners Assoc. v. City of Fresno* (2007) 150 Cal.App.4th 683 [improper reliance on existing general plan designation as baseline]) The DEIR does contain a discussion of the proposed Project and the 1982 General Plan. As explained in that response, the DEIR compares the proposed 2007 General Plan Update to the 1982 General Plan in its analysis of the No Project Alternative in DEIR Section 5.3. See response O-21k-2 for a discussion of the comparison in the EIR between the proposed Project and the 1982 General Plan. With respect to the comment that “current County ordinances ... can be changed if they are inconsistent with the new Plan,” many of the regulations relied upon in the EIR impact analyses are not required to be modified by proposed General Plan policies. Impacts of those regulations that would be modified (and typically strengthened) by General Plan policies are analyzed in the DEIR.

O-21k.132 The comment requests the EIR to describe and analyze whether each of the ordinances cited on pages 4.3-48 through 4.3-88 of the DEIR are consistent with the policies of the draft General Plan. This level of detail is not required for a Program level EIR, as discussed in Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan EIR*. As a matter of state law, zoning and other ordinances affecting matters governed by the General Plan must be consistent with the General Plan. The General Plan will guide later implementing actions to be undertaken during General Plan implementation, and these other actions must, by law, be consistent with the general plan. (See, e.g., Government Code Sections 65860 [zoning actions], 65402 [property acquisition and disposal], 65454 [specific plans], and 66474 [subdivisions]). Policy LU-9.1 requires the Director of Planning to bring a work program to implement the General Plan to the Board of Supervisors within three months after adoption of the General Plan. The fact that ordinances must be amended to be consistent with the General Plan does not, however, mean that every County regulation would be weakened or that every County regulation would need to be changed. It is speculative and not possible to identify the “likely post-GPUS language” in the County Code as requested by the comment. Please also see Master Response 10 regarding implementation of the General Plan.

O-21k.133 The comment asks for proposed mitigations that would apply to “that topic.” It is not clear from the comment to what topic it refers. The proposed mitigations are identified in each issue area of the DEIR, when mitigation is being proposed. If the comment refers to potential changes to the County Code, as explained above, it would be speculative to identify the exact revisions to the Monterey County Code and whether such potential changes could have significant environmental effects. Further, any such specific changes must comply with CEQA before such time they are brought forward for consideration by the Board of Supervisors. Therefore, it is not possible or necessary to identify proposed mitigations that might be required.

O-21k.134 The criteria used for determining significance are taken from Appendix G (Environmental Checklist Form) of the State CEQA Guidelines. The use of these criteria is common practice. The question of why the County has not adopted a standard set of criteria that it will apply to all projects is a policy question and is not pertinent to this

EIR. CEQA does not require the County to adopt a set of standard thresholds of significance, and CEQA recognizes that the definition of significant effect may vary depending on the project being analyzed. (CEQA Guidelines §§15064, 15064.7) The thresholds of significance used for this EIR are appropriate for a program EIR (see Master Response 10 regarding programmatic analysis in a general plan EIR).

- O-21k.135 The discussion does not ignore the impacts of special treatment areas. The potential impacts in the Special Treatment Areas (STAs) are included in the broad consideration of impacts within planning areas outside the focused growth areas. The EIR is not intended, nor required, to analyze project-level impacts. (See Master Response 10 regarding programmatic analysis.) Proposals for development within STAs, such as the subdivision project referenced in the comment (Rancho Canada Village), will be subject to their own project-level CEQA analysis.
- O-21k.136 DEIR Section 4.3 is the water resources section, focusing on water quality and water supply. Nevertheless, biological resource impacts of water quality and water supply development are discussed on pages 4.3-2, 4.3-38, 4.3-42, 4.3-132, 4.3-135 to 4.3-139, 4.3-142, 4.3-144, and 4.3-146. DEIR Section 4.9 is the biological resources section focusing on impacts to biological resources. In Section 4.9, impacts to biological resources from water quality are addressed on pages 4.9-43, 4.9-62, 4.9-64 to 4.9-65, 4.9-67, 4.9-75 to 4.9-76, 4.9-86 (Mitigation Measure BIO-2.1), and 4.9-87. Thus, the full picture of water quality and water supply impacts is derived through consideration of both Sections 4.3 and 4.9. Please also see Master Response 8, *Biological Resources* for further information regarding the impacts of water quality on biological resources.
- O-21k.137 See Master Response 9, *Water Quality*. The Master Response identifies where the discussions of agricultural runoff and water quality can be found in the DEIR, and provides additional clarification of the expected impacts. Note that existing agricultural runoff is part of the existing conditions and is not a result of the proposed Draft General Plan. Further, contrary to the commenter's assertion, although agriculture is expected to grow in the future, the policies of the Draft General Plan will not result in a major increase in agricultural acreage. See Master Response 3 on General Plan agricultural policies for a discussion of the potential for conversion. With respect to the comment concerning the organization and format of the DEIR, see response to comment O-21k.7 above.
- O-21k.138 The reference to coastal streams on page 4.3-92 does not include the coastal rivers – the Pajaro, Salinas, and Carmel. The Draft General Plan is proposing revisions to inland policies, but no changes to coastal policies or the certified Local Coastal Program. Accordingly, the changes to the coastal streams will occur primarily as a result of existing or already currently planned development, not as a result of the General Plan. The exceptions, such as the Airport/Hwy 68 AHO, are small in scale and will be subject to current regulations such as Low Intensity Development standards, meaning that their contributions will be minimal in the context of overall water quality. See Master Response 9, *Water Quality* for an expanded discussion of water quality regulations.
- O-21k.139 See Master Response 9, *Water Quality*. The primary surface water features are the Salinas River and its tributaries. "Continued loading" is intended to include the loading

that will occur as a result of new development. As to the extent of additional loading, the observation is qualitative. There is no quantified information on projected levels.

- O-21k.140 The commenter contends that the majority of the General Plan policies lack metrics, performance standards, and “enforcement teeth,” and asserts that the DEIR cannot assume that the policies will be effective. The policies are effective and appropriately detailed for General Plan policies, as explained in Master Response 9, *Water Quality* and Master Response 10, subsection 10.5 discussing the adequacy of the proposed policies and their implementation.

By way of example, the comment questions the DEIR assumption that Policy GS-1.8 of the Greater Salinas Area Plan will be effective. The DEIR analysis of this policy (on page 4.3-95) is adequate when read in context. Policy GS-1.8 is aimed at agriculturally-related commercial uses, not residential use. Moreover, this policy and the other area plan policies cited on page 4.3-95 are described in the context of “Area Plan supplemental policies” that “also support water quality protection.” They are part of a larger series of policies. For example, Policy GS-1.8 will be implemented through site plan reviews and, while the provision for riparian vegetation says “as feasible,” the application of the conservation strategy required under 2007 General Plan Policy OS-5.21 will protect riparian areas. Further, the Stream Setback Ordinance that will be developed under modified Policy OS-5.22 will specifically address setbacks along the Salinas River and also protect riparian areas.

The commenter also questions the efficacy of General Plan policies that use the term “should.” It is appropriate for General Plan policies to be written in terms that allow a degree of flexibility. The word “should” in a policy does not mean that the policies will not be implemented. As more fully discussed in Master Response 10 (subsection 10.5), the General Plan’s goals and policies will be realized through County regulatory ordinances, future County decisions on specific development projects, and the laws and regulations of other agencies. Moreover, the particular General Plan policies cited by commenter (from the DEIR discussion on pages 4.3-95 and 4.3-96) are not the sole basis for the DEIR’s impact determination. The DEIR’s conclusion that water quality impacts resulting from nonpoint source pollution runoff will be less than significant relies on General Plan policies as well as on state and federal regulations which have strict requirements to protect water quality (DEIR at 4.3-97). See also Master Response 9, *Water Quality* for further discussion of applicable state and federal regulations protective of water quality.

- O-21k.141 The General Plan proposes no specific development projects. Therefore, attempting to quantify the precise amount of potential impacts to water quality due to implementation of certain General Plan policies would be speculative, and would not represent the level of detail and analysis appropriate for a program-level General Plan EIR. By their nature, General Plan policies seek to provide guidance for future actions by the County. The DEIR seeks, to the best of the County’s ability, to determine the general significance of impacts due to implementation of General Plan policies and applicable state and federal regulations based on available, verifiable evidence and reasonable assumptions. Based on the General Plan policies and the state and federal regulations governing water quality to which new development under the General Plan will be subject, the DEIR reasonably

concludes that the Impact WR-1 (water quality degradation from nonpoint source pollution from urban runoff) will be less than significant. See also Master Response 9.

- O-21k.142 As stated in the DEIR (page 4.3-97), impacts on water quality associated with nonpoint source runoff from increased development are less-than-significant without additional mitigation. The proposed Stream Setback Ordinance (BIO -2.1) is not necessary to address significant water quality impacts, but is suggested to help further reduce water quality impacts.

The comment asserts that the ordinance would be beneficial only if the new setbacks will be mandatory, not subject to variance, and guaranteed to be larger than current setbacks, and the comment requests modification of the measure to include these requirements. The requested modification is not necessary because the measure already contains a performance standard requiring the ordinance to establish minimum setbacks for the stated purpose of preserving riparian habitat and reducing water quality impacts. While the specific details are more appropriately resolved at the ordinance drafting stage, the measure contains clear direction that the standards to be established must serve to preserve riparian habitat and reduce water quality impacts of new development. The new ordinance would include stream setbacks greater than those that currently exist. The County currently has a variety of setback requirements, depending on the zone where development is expected to occur, as detailed in the Monterey County Zoning Ordinance. These setback regulations detail requirements for setting structure back from lot lines, other structures, and roadways in areas with certain zoning designations. No specific setback requirements currently exist specifically for streams except as required for protection of floodways per the County's floodplain regulations. Mitigation Measure BIO-2.1 (Policy OS-5.22) has been modified to state the purpose up front and provide greater specificity. (See Chapter 4 of the FEIR; see also Master Response 8.)

In regard to the commenter's question about the meaning of OS-5.2's term "discretionary development" and "conversion of previously uncultivated agricultural land," the wording means that the proposed Stream Setback Ordinance is to apply to development requiring a discretionary land use entitlement and to conversion of previously uncultivated land on slopes. In the discretionary entitlement process, the County has the ability to evaluate project specific environmental impacts of the project seeking the entitlement and require such conditions as the ordinance would direct to preserve riparian habitat and reduce water quality impacts of a project. Because OS-5.2 is proposed to help further reduce water quality impacts, but is not necessary to reduce the water quality impact to a less than significant level, the commenter's request to expand the ordinance to ministerial permits raises a policy issue, not an environmental issue to be addressed in the EIR.

- O-21k.143 The commenter argues that the DEIR fails to analyze the issue that "the vast majority" of the DEIR policies do not have deadlines or timelines or guarantee of implementation. The comment is based on the incorrect assumption that the General Plan is a compilation of specific regulatory actions which must meet the standards of specificity and enforceability required of ordinance-level regulations or project-specific mitigation measures. As explained in Master Response 10, a general plan is a long term comprehensive plan for the physical development of the County. (Gov't Code section 65300.) The General Plan consists of a statement of development policies and includes diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, and standards, and plan proposals.

(Gov't Code section 65302.) The General Plan will guide later implementing actions to be undertaken during General Plan implementation, and these other actions must, by law, be consistent with the general plan. (See, e.g., Government Code Sections 65860 [zoning actions], 65402 [property acquisition and disposal], 65454 [specific plans], and 66474 [subdivisions]).

State law and the General Plan itself establish timeframes for this implementation. Government Code Section 65860 requires conforming revisions to the zoning ordinance to be made "within a reasonable time" of adoption of the General Plan update. Also, policy LU-9.3 of the General Plan provides that subdivision applications that were deemed complete after October 16, 2007 will be subject to the General Plan and the ordinances, policies and standards that are enacted and in effect as a result of the General Plan. Therefore, recent and new subdivision applications will be required to conform to the provisions of the General Plan as soon as it takes effect. In addition, Policy LU-9.1 requires the Director of Planning to bring a work program to implement the General Plan to the Board of Supervisors within three months after adoption of the General Plan. In addition, many General Plan policies and proposed mitigation measures contain specific timelines and triggers, such as C-1.2., OS-5.20, and OS-5.21.

- O-21k.144 The comment states that the DEIR should consider mitigation measures that would require full funding of all GPU policies, require deadlines or timelines, and require "completion, execution, and implementation of all environmental protection policies prior to any development being approved under the proposed Plan." As explained in the response to O21.k.143 above, the proposed mitigation requiring implementation is not necessary because state law and the General Plan itself contain policies that ensure implementation of the General Plan.

A mitigation measure that would require all environmental protection policies be fully implemented before any development is approved under the General Plan is not feasible or required under CEQA. Many measures are designed so that they will be implemented as part of conditions of approval of development, such as fee-based mitigation programs. Fee-based mitigation programs, in which development projects pay a fee representing their fair share as part of a comprehensive mitigation strategy, are legal and environmentally sufficient under CEQA (See Master Response 10, section 10.6 re: fee-based mitigation.). If an environmental policy entails a comprehensive mitigation strategy, then requiring the policy to be fully implemented prior to approval of development could result in requiring a development that is first in time to bear the entire cost of the larger mitigation strategy; this result is legally infeasible because the County cannot constitutionally require a development to perform mitigation not roughly proportional to that development's impact. CEQA requires mitigation measures to be "consistent with all applicable constitutional requirements," including the requirement of rough proportionality. (CEQA Guidelines §15126.4(a)(4)) The measure is also legally infeasible to the extent the EIR has identified significant and unavoidable impacts which cannot be mitigated by an "environmental protection policy"; halting "any development" indefinitely runs the risk of a takings, and thus is legally infeasible.

- O-21k .145 Page 4.3-106 of the DEIR has been edited to clarify the assumption regarding implementation of the General Plan policies by 2092. See Chapter 4 of the FEIR.

- O-21k.146 The commenter points out a minor difference in language in the DEIR. “Downstream waterways” and “downstream surface waters” are synonymous terms. This makes no difference relative to the environmental analysis in the DEIR.
- O-21k.147 Page 4.3-91 of the DEIR has been edited to clarify the scope of the impacts analyzed related to agricultural-related uses. See Chapter 4 of the FEIR.
- O-21k.148 The comment requests clarification of the DEIR’s reference to “existing County development regulations” requiring erosion control plans (page 4.3-99 of the DEIR). The DEIR is referring to County Code Chapter 16.12 which governs erosion control, as discussed on page 4.3-100 of the DEIR. It is correct that County rules and ordinances will be adjusted to ensure compliance with the General Plan; however, because the General Plan policies themselves require erosion control measures (see, e.g., OS-3.1 through O-3.9 which establish guidelines for erosion prevention), it can be reasonably assumed that the updating of the specifics of the regulations will not weaken the nature or efficacy of the regulations. The DEIR assumes that County Code Chapter 16.12 may be relied upon to reduce impacts resulting from development consistent with the draft General Plan, even after any update required by its adoption..
- O-21k.149 In response to the comment’s criticism of the DEIR methodology, please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan’s EIR*, and Master Response 9, *Water Quality*.

The commenter asserts incorrectly that proposed Policy OS-3.5 would result in “a huge amount of development where it is not currently allowed.” See Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, for an expanded analysis of the extent of land that may be affected by this policy. Policy OS-3.5, as revised and clarified, would prohibit conversion of previously uncultivated land for agricultural purposes where the slope exceeds 25% except for a narrow exception requiring a discretionary permit and for which five criteria must be met to qualify for the exception. The policy also establishes a discretionary permit process for conversion of previously uncultivated lands containing slopes exceeding 15%, but not exceeding 25% and for conversion of lands containing slopes exceeding 10% where the lands to be converted contain highly erodible soils. To the extent Routine and Ongoing Agricultural Activities would create significant soil erosion impacts or violate water quality standards, such activities would be subject to Policy OS-3.5.

- O-21k.150 Readers of the DEIR may refer back to the significance criteria located within Section 4.3, *Water Resources*, in Section 4.3.4.1, *Thresholds of Significance*.

A discussion of cumulative impacts is located in Section 6, *Other CEQA Required Sections*, in Section 6.4, *Cumulative Impacts*.

- O-21k.151 As stated in the DEIR, agricultural and resource development under Impact WR-3 is defined as activities including commercial timber harvesting, mineral resources extraction, hay farming and grazing, fruit and vegetable production, vineyard planting, some timber and hardwood harvesting (especially associated with land conversion), quarrying, and sand and gravel extraction. (DEIR, p. 4.3-107) Also as stated in the DEIR, land uses and development under Impact WR-2 includes “construction of a wide

range of uses, including residential, commercial, and industrial buildings; public facilities; and agricultural-related uses (e.g., processing, support, and visitor-serving uses)." (DEIR, p. 4.3-99) As indicated in the headings for WR-2 and WR-3, impacts associated with agriculture under Impact WR-2 are primarily associated with construction of agricultural-related uses, while impacts under Impact WR-3 are primarily associated with the physical activity of resource development and agricultural production.

Please see the response to comment O-21k.50 for a discussion of prohibiting the use of agrochemicals.

O-21k.152 A key purpose of the AWCP is to provide "value added" activities for wine grape growers within the County's existing wine growing area appellations. The AWCP does not include any vineyard plantings. Future plantings will reflect the economic decisions of the farmer and are not dependent upon the existence of the AWCP. Please see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies* regarding the draft General Plan agricultural policies and the role of the AWCP in county viticulture.

O-21k.153 References for the claim regarding the number of agricultural land uses that require certain types of permits from the County can be found in the Monterey County Zoning Ordinance, Chapters 21.24, 21.30, 21.32, 21.34, 21.48 and 21.66 (section 21.66. 030). As discussed in those codes, many agricultural uses are subject to discretionary permits.

The statement on page 4.3-108 quoted by the comment refers to regulations in County Code Chapter 16.12, specifically Sections 16.12.040, General Provisions, and 16.12.080, Land Clearing. For a further discussion of reliance on certain County Code regulations in the DEIR, please see the response to Comment O-21k.148 above.

O-21k.154 The comment criticizes the DEIR's method of analysis of water quality impacts and disagrees with its significance conclusions regarding Impact WR-3 (re: impact of General Plan's agricultural and resource development land uses on water quality.) For responses to these issues, please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan's EIR*; Master Response 9, *Water Quality*; and Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*.

O-21k.155 "Long-term" refers to build-out in 2092. See Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, section 4.1.1 for definitions of "safe yield" and "sustainable yield." Coastal zone and city demands have been added to the analysis of water supply, as explained in Master Response 4.

A comprehensive water budget includes goals and policies that seek to ensure a sustainable water supply for the County and analysis of how successful such goals and policies would be at achieving a sustainable water supply. The 2007 General Plan and associated EIR represent such a budget.

The commenter states that "for good managers, development should never outpace supply." However, supply is vulnerable to unforeseeable and uncontrollable occurrences. The draft General Plan seeks to balance reasonable, progressive development with the knowledge that future supply cannot ultimately be predicted; hence, the need for the planning and management contingencies mentioned in the DEIR.

O-21k.156 The overall 27% increase in population includes the coastal zone.

O-21k.157 Table 4.3-9 is based upon at 181 gallon per capita water usage value from the California Water Plan Update 2005 [the most recent California Water Plan per capita data available at this time], as discussed on DEIR page 4.3-114. (California Department of Water Resources 2005) Curtis Weeks, General Manager of the MCWRA, has informed the EIR consultant that 181 gpd is a conservative estimate of per capita water use in Monterey County. (Weeks 2009) As discussed in Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, Section 4.2.2, 2030 water usage predicted in the SVWP EIR is consistent with the water use predicted in this EIR. Furthermore, the DEIR accounted for commercial and industrial uses, as discussed in the notes of Table 4.3-9; “including residential, commercial, industrial, and landscape uses.” Industrial uses were included in the 181 per capita data from the 2005 California Water Update. The 2005 California Water Update states “total urban applied water use for the Central Coast region was 295,700 af, which was 13 percent higher than the total applied water for 1998. Average per capita water use was about 181 gallons per day, which is about 10% higher than the 1998 usage.” (see 2005 Update Volume 3 pages 4-13 and 4-14.) Urban use in the 2005 Update is defined in Table 4-2 as including: “Large Landscape, *Commercial, Industrial*, Energy Production, Residential – Interior, Residential-Exterior, Evapotranspiration of Applied Water, E&ET and Deep Perc to Salt Sink, Outflow, Conveyance Applied Water, Conveyance Outflow, GW Recharge Applied Water, GW Recharge Evap + Evapotranspiration.” While the per capita usage discussion cited above does not explicitly state that it is based upon “urban use,” the 181 gallon average is obtained from the cited population of 1,459,200 (California Water Plan Update 2005 page 4-3) and the total Urban Water use of 295.7 Thousand Acre-feet (TAF). (1 AF = 325,851 gallons). Therefore, the 181 gallon per day estimate includes *commercial and industrial* uses.

For a broad analysis in this program EIR, the use of this per capita factor is considered appropriate. As explained in Master Response 4, the estimate of future overall water demand in 2030 the Salinas Valley is consistent with the estimates for the SVWP. The estimated future new demand on the Monterey Peninsula for the unincorporated County (1,099 AF in Master Response 4) is also very close to that estimated by MPWMD (1,135 AF in MPWMD 2006b). Thus, the DEIR’s approach while not identical to the methodology used by other studies, results in a reasonably representative of overall demand for the purposes of disclosure under CEQA. As discussed in Master Response 10, which discusses the expected level of detail, this EIR is not intended to provide parcel specific information, like the information provided for individual projects such as the “pending EIR in North County.”

The 181 gallons per capita use was not intended to address agricultural demand which was accounted for separately for the Salinas Valley using the SVWP assessment as disclosed in the DEIR. Please see Master Response 4 Section 4.2.1 for discussion of agricultural water use.

O-21k.158 According to the California Department of Conservation data regarding conversion of farmland, the total acreage of farmland in Monterey County has declined from 1,306, 926 total acres in 1984 to 1,301,719 acres in 2006, a decline of 5,207 acres. The total amount of farmland in Monterey County has declined steadily over this time period, with occasional small year-to-year increases in farmland. However, this represents a decrease

of 15,933 acres in grazing land with an increase of 10,726 acres of important (aka intensive) farmland over this period.

As discussed in Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, the DEIR forecasts modest growth in new farmland based on the land use patterns of the last several decades (1982 to 2006), estimating approximately 466 acres of farmland converted from natural land covers (see Table 4.9-6 in the DEIR). Much of this conversion will likely occur on grazing land.

Page 4.3-114 of the DEIR has been edited to reflect this additional information regarding trends of farmland conversion. Regardless, the substantive point in the DEIR is that agricultural water use has been declining over time, despite the modest increase in farmland acreage over the last two decades. The DEIR relies on the agricultural demand estimate from the SVWP which took into account the increase in efficiency over time with agricultural use. This is also demonstrated in Table 4.3-5 (now updated to 2008), which shows a declining amount of use in the Salinas Valley (see also Exhibit W-1 in Master Response 4).

Some 2007 General Plan policies do seek to encourage continued agricultural production. However, the DEIR has adequately included considerations of changes in agricultural water demand overall. See Master Response 4 for further discussion.

O-21k.159 Table 4.3-9 has been revised for clarity and now provides information by different basins and numbered clarified notes. Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply* regarding the assumptions used in developing the water demand projections. The persons/housing unit for new growth to 2030 average is derived from Table 3-5. The person/housing unit for new growth to buildout is also derived from Table 3-5, but for the buildout year 2092. The coastal zone and city demands are now included in a new Table 4.3-9a and new tables 4.3-9b through 4.3-9h (see Master Response 4). The Highway 68/Airport AHO is placed correctly in the Seaside aquifer. AWCP ancillary uses are now included in the demand estimates in Table 4.3-9. Regarding the North County sub-areas that are within the Salinas River watershed, the intent of Table 4.3-9 overall is intended to look broadly at the demands. The per-capita factor and its appropriateness are discussed in response to comment O-21k.157 above. The areas outside the focused growth areas are based on the growth in such areas indicated in Table 3-8 and 3-9.

Regarding the AWCP and additional water supply associated with development of steep slopes, please see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*. Please see Master Response 4, where the demands of coastal areas and cities are now included in the analysis. This quantitative cumulative impacts analysis amplifies the cumulative impacts that were qualitatively considered in the DEIR. It also clarifies the level of impact within areas of the County smaller than the water basins.

O-21k.160 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. Please also see response to comment O-21k.86. As discussed in that response, the physical changes to the Lake Nacimiento reservoir related to the SVWP are complete. The diversion dam is expected to be completed in the spring of 2010. Furthermore, existing conditions are not impacts of the proposed project as suggested in the comment (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15125).

O-21k.161 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

O-21k.162 Table 4.3-10 is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all water basin subareas.

A. As the DEIR states, Table 4.3-10 summarizes water supply issues affecting Community Areas (Table 4.3-9 includes all areas, as do the new tables 4.3-9b through 4.3-9h). In Section 3, *Project Description*, the DEIR states that five Community Areas are identified by the 2007 General Plan as areas where, with a more detailed plan for that area (Community Plan), additional growth would occur. All five such areas are identified in Table 4.3-10.

B. Table 4.3-10, on page 4.3-117 in the DEIR, has been revised to reflect nitrate and arsenic issues affecting ground water supply.

C, D. As stated on page 4.3-118 of the DEIR, Chualar is situated in a portion of the Salinas Valley groundwater basin that receives sufficient groundwater recharge and is not subject to seawater intrusion. Potable water supply is available from the aquifer system. Consequently, the area is not subject to CalAm's overall shortage conditions affecting the Monterey Peninsula. The level of growth anticipated for the proposed Community Area would not incur significant water supply impacts. The text on page 4.3-118 has been revised to clarify the location of Chualar, as suggested by the comment.

Table 4.3-10 has been edited to clarify the reference to Chualar wells as independent.

O-21k.163 A substantial increase in water use means the amount of water use associated with the development of the vacant lots located in Pajaro, unless such development has no net increase in water demand and/or new supply sources are developed.

The DEIR's statement regarding whether or not future growth can proceed without significant groundwater impacts unless new supplies are secured is not a policy of the 2007 General Plan. The statement is a conclusion of the DEIR, for which the analysis is located throughout Section 4.3, *Water Supply*, including on pages 4.3-16, 4.3-40 through 4.3-43, 4.3-128, and 4.3-129.

As stated in the DEIR, a substantial reduction in basin-wide groundwater pumping (by 45,000 AFY) would be necessary to eliminate seawater intrusion and restore groundwater levels throughout the coastal area. Therefore, the sustainable yield of the groundwater basin at present is approximately 24,000 AFY. The level of new supplies required before future growth can proceed without significant groundwater impacts is a level that is sufficient to ensure groundwater pumping occurs at a rate lower than the sustainable yield of the groundwater basin. Please see Master Response 4 which presents updated tables concerning supply and demand in the Pajaro River groundwater basin.

O-21k.164 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

O-21k.165 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

- O-21k.166 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, for a discussion of groundwater and the effect of the SVWP in raising groundwater levels and offsetting overdraft in the Salinas Valley. The reference to Highway 68 has been deleted on page 4.3-118.
- O-21k.167 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. The community areas, rural centers, AHOs and the AWCP ancillary use were included. The buildout in the Special Treatment Areas is included in the estimates for the different Area Plans as the STAs are all located outside the focused growth areas. Master Response 4 compares the SVWP EIR estimated water demand in 2030 to that estimated for the 2007 General Plan and finds them roughly equivalent.
- O-21k.168 The comment recommends prohibiting all development on existing lots of record in basins subject to overdraft until a water balance is achieved. The County had considered and rejects the commenter's suggestion. Such a broad prohibition of development could amount to a "regulatory takings" without compensation, in contravention of the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. CEQA requires mitigation measures to be "consistent with all applicable constitutional requirements." (CEQA Guidelines §15126.4(a)(4).) Furthermore, this suggestion would not meet the third and fourth objectives of the proposed project discussed in DEIR Section 1.2.1. Therefore, this suggestion is considered infeasible. Please also see response to comment O-21k.21 and Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, Section 4.3.4 on the feasibility of such suggestions.
- O-21k.169 The comment misrepresents what is stated in the DEIR. It is not solely withdrawals from the Deep Zone that rule out the possibility of meeting new demand from local groundwater sources. Instead, as stated in the DEIR, withdrawal from the Deep Zone combined with the risk of further seawater intrusion from continued pumping in the 180- or 400- foot aquifers rules out this possibility. Regarding the difference between pumping from the Deep Zone (which may not have recharge) versus the Salinas Valley aquifer (which is being improved by the SVWP), please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, particularly the discussion of water supply and the SVWP. Please also see the response to O-21k.57.
- O-21k.170 Please see the response to comment O-21k.76.
- O-21k.171 The discussion of Fort Ord is discussing the future projected water demand for the Fort Ord community.

Page 4.3-119 of the DEIR has been revised to clarify the meaning of the term "these uses." Page 4.3-119 of the DEIR has also been revised to clarify that the source of additional water supply to Fort Ord is unclear, but that there is an initiative underway to provide a more secure source.

Regarding the 6,600 AFY, an agreement between the federal government and the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) dated September 1993 (MCWD 2005) provides for groundwater extraction rights of 6,600 acre-feet per year (AF/Y), an amount consistent with the former average groundwater use at Fort Ord while under military operation (MCWD 2005). The Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FOR A) Board allocated this supply among the various local governments and entities. (Monterey County 2004a)

The additional 2,400 AFY identified in the Fort Ord Reuse plan as needed for future development would have to come from an additional supply project such as the regional water augmentation program (see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*).

- O-21k.172 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. Future supply is available, although without obtaining additional supply, substantial depletion of groundwater supplies and further seawater intrusion may occur. While MCWD did indeed make this assertion in their 2005 UWMP, they also noted that this will require a future water augmentation alternative to meet the 2,400 AFY need for redevelopment of the Ord Community. MCWMD is collecting fees on redevelopment projects to generate funding for an augmentation project including recycled water and desalination. MCWD considers this water to be “available” for planning purposes and on line sometime between 2008 and 2015 (MCWD, 2005).

Sufficient water supply means enough water to supply the needs of Fort Ord water users, and may include pumping from aquifers needing recharge. The DEIR is relying upon the MCWD’s conclusion that sufficient water would ultimately be available to meet expected demands. However, the DEIR is also disclosing what the potential impacts of various options for water supply might entail.

The language on p. 4.3-119 has been clarified to make it clear that MCWD’s assertion presumes an augmented water supply.

Since circulation of the DEIR, new projects that would potentially serve Fort Ord reuse have progressed. The Regional Project alternative under the Coastal Water Project and the Regional Urban Water Augmentation Project (non-potable water) are under consideration and in design, respectively. Again, for discussion of the ability to supply additional water for the Fort Ord reuse, please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

Future growth at the Highway 68/Airport AHO and Mid-Valley AHO would depend on the provision of new water supply projects such as the regional project alternative, expanded aquifer storage and recovery or other projects. The language on 4.3-119 has been updated to make this clear.

- O-21k.173 As stated in Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, the SVWP includes physical changes to the spillway at Lake Nacimiento, allowing the reservoir to retain approximately 30,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) of additional storage, in round numbers. A substantial portion of this additional water is dedicated to the SVWP. The work on dam improvements is complete. Changes in the operation of both Lake Nacimiento and Lake San Antonio will both improve flood control and allow larger releases during the irrigation season. Larger releases raise groundwater levels allowing more extractive use without exacerbating groundwater overdraft.

The impact analysis of the SVWP in this DEIR does not under-analyze agricultural water demand, as discussed in Master Response 4.

- O-21k.174 The DEIR assumes that all legal lot development would be from wells in order to provide a conservative estimate of the future groundwater demand in the County. By using conservative numbers for future groundwater demand, the DEIR ensures that greater

impacts to groundwater supply than those analyzed in the DEIR will not occur. It is not feasible to provide a more detailed analysis given the geographic scope of the County. Please see Master Response 10 on the level of detail required for this EIR. Big Sur is in the coastal area (not the subject of the 2007 General Plan), and very few areas are likely to obtain water via surface water diversions.

- O-21k.175 The statement means that any legal lot development occurring outside the service areas of water districts and outside focused growth areas would increase the significance of impacts related to overdrafting of groundwater basins on which this development occurs. See Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, for an updated analysis of water supply impacts from the development on legal lots.

As stated in the DEIR, the Rural Centers are all in the Salinas Valley, and adequate supply will be provided with completion of the SVWP.

Page 4.3-120 of the DEIR has been revised to clarify issues related to the Carmel basin. Please also see Master Response 4.

- O-21k.176 Policies PS-3.1 and PS-3.3 require demonstration of a long-term water supply to approve new subdivisions. Where that long-term water supply cannot be demonstrated, subdivision will not be allowed. Subdivisions are discretionary projects and thus evaluation under CEQA will consider the effect of new development on overdraft, seawater intrusion, and on instream flow for biological resources (per Biological Mitigation Measure 2.3). This approach will result in proper project-level determinations regarding significant effects on water supplies and on biological resources for new subdivisions and the imposition of feasible mitigation measures, where warranted.

Regarding the suggested mitigation measure of prohibiting development on lots of record, please see the response to O-21k.168.

- O-21k.177 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, Section 4.2.1.

- O-21k.178 See the discussion of AWCP/winery demands in Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. The estimated water demands of new wineries in the AWCP is a good faith estimate of the potential demand. The commenter has not provided any substantial evidence indicating that the water demand estimate is flawed and that actual water demands will be substantially higher than projected. The DEIR analyzed reasonably foreseeable impacts. CEQA does not require a worst case analysis, what is required is discussion of reasonably foreseeable impacts. (See CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(a); *Save Round Valley Alliance v. County of Inyo* (2007) 157 Cal.App.4th 1437; see also similar NEPA requirements in *Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens Council* (1989) 490 U.S. 332.) In any case, Policy PS-3.1 requires new development, with minimal exceptions, to demonstrate the availability of a long-term, sustainable water supply and will apply to all new full scale wineries. As shown in revised Table 4.9-11, the overall expected demand from artisan wineries is relatively small (71 AF) in contrast to the overall demand from full-scale wineries (239 AF). The AWCP has a cap on the number of wineries; wineries outside the ACWP are discretionary projects subject to PS 3.1 and CEQA review. Thus, the commenter's assertion that winery demand is unbounded is incorrect.

- O-21k.179 Please see Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail required in the EIR for the General Plan. Project specific details such as those discussed in the comment are not known. The EIR makes reasonable assumptions about vineyards in the County. Impacts associated with current and future demands of vineyards are addressed extensively in Impact WR-3 in the DEIR. Data regarding water demand associated with vineyards is provided in Section 4.3.2.2, *Monterey County Watersheds* in the DEIR. Estimated water demand from new wineries is provided in revised Table 4.3-11 in Chapter 4 in the FEIR and is discussed in Master Response 4 *Water Supply*, particularly Section 4.2.1, *Salinas Valley Water Demands*. This updated analysis does not change the conclusions made in the DEIR. For a discussion of potential land use conversion to vineyards, please see Master Response 3, *General Plan Agricultural Policies*, as well as Master Response 4, particularly Section 4.2.1.
- O-21k.180 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. An estimate of water demand for ancillary uses in the AWCP is included in Table 4.3-11 in Chapter 4 of the FEIR.
- O-21k.181 Please see DEIR, Section 3.4.6, *Agricultural Winery Corridor Plan*, for a detailed description of the limits on the amount of development within the AWCP. Estimated new water demand associated with the ACWP is provided in revised Table 4.3-11 in Chapter 4 in the FEIR.
- Providing quantitative data regarding the precise impact of development within the AWCP would be speculative, given that no plans have been submitted for any wineries or ancillary uses, and would include a level of detail not appropriate for a program-level EIR. However, the overall scale of AWCP allowable use is relatively limited as described in the AWCP itself. Please also see response to comment O-21k.178.
- O-21k.182 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. The County acknowledges that additional use as a result of winery and ancillary uses in the AWCP may not be offset by existing agricultural demand, and the revised water demand analyzes the impacts associated with additional demand caused by development associated with the AWCP.
- O-21k.183 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. See also the response to comment O-21k.40 regarding the purpose of the SVWP.
- O-21k.184 Impacts due to new distribution pipelines associated with the SVWP are analyzed generally in Impact WR-5. The future location of these pipelines is not known at this time nor has the MCWRA committed to construction of these pipelines, so determining the precise impacts of such pipelines would be speculative and include analysis at a level of detail inappropriate for a program-level EIR.
- O-21k.185 The commenter is expressing an opinion. The DEIR investigates the actual or likely effectiveness of proposed policies at a level of analysis sufficient for a program-level EIR. See Master Response 10.
- O-21k.186 Public Services Element Policy PS-3.2 allows credits to be issued for significant reduction in the historical water use on site that would allow for additional development. The County's previous practice regarding providing credits for reductions in historical water use has been to ensure that landowners are not allowed to unfairly maximize the

amount of credit they could obtain in the future by increasing current usage. The County would continue this practice with implementation of the 2007 General Plan.

- O-21k.187 As stated in the Section 4.3 of the DEIR, Central Salinas Valley Area Plan Policy CSV-5.2 stipulates that recreation and visitor-serving commercial uses be allowed only if it can be proven that they would not interfere with prime groundwater recharge areas, would not commit groundwater supplies beyond their safe, long-term yields where such yields can be determined, would meet state water quality and quantity standards, and would not adversely impact groundwater quality. This policy ensures that these concerns are taken into consideration before permitting any such uses. This does not require that development be halted until the basin is in balance. As discussed elsewhere, including Master Response 4, the SVWP is expected to improve overdraft conditions in the Salinas Valley once it is fully operational.
- O-21k.188 Page 4.3-125 of the DEIR has been revised to clarify the wording of various 2007 General Plan policies. These are not prejudicial errors, but instead reflect the County's commitment to undertake these policies. See the response to comment O-21k.140 for a discussion of the use of the word "should."
- O-21k.189 Page 4.3-127 of the DEIR has been revised to clarify the wording of General Plan Policy PS-3.1. Note that Policy PS-3.1 is not growth-inducing in that it acts to limit development absent an available "long-term, sustainable water supply," with the exception of the first single family residence and non-habitable accessory uses on existing lots of record.
- O-21k.190 For revisions to the DEIR to clarify the wording of various 2007 General Plan policies, please see response to comments O-21k.188 and O-21k.189. The DEIR paraphrases certain 2007 General Plan policies. These paraphrases sufficiently and accurately encompass the intent and meaning of each referenced policy. The DEIR is sufficiently clear to readers as to when the DEIR is discussing a 2007 General Plan policy or not without the use of quotation marks. As stated in the DEIR, the County does assume certain policies will reduce the need for additional water supplies.

Precise quantification of the reduction in need for additional water supplies of certain 2007 General Plan policies would be speculative, and would include a level of analysis not appropriate for a program-level EIR. Instead the EIR properly discloses the broad level of impact for each of the basins within the County due to the draft General Plan. The EIR does not rely on a specific percentage reduction of water demand for each contributing policy to make significance conclusions.

- O-21k.191 As the DEIR states, Impact WR-4 "discusses the availability of water supply to serve existing and future demands," and determined whether "land uses and development consistent with the 2007 General Plan would exceed the capacity of existing water supplies and necessitate the acquisition of new supplies to meet expected demands." Section 4.3.4.1, *Thresholds of Significance*, states that a threshold of significance for the DEIR is whether or not the proposed project would "exceed the capacity of existing water supplies and necessitate the acquisition of new supplies to meet expected demands." Impact WR-4 clearly references and applies the significance thresholds presented at the beginning of the chapter.

O-21k.192 As stated in the section immediately following the sentence quoted by the commenter, under the title “Salinas Valley,” the SVWP will provide sufficient additional supplies from the system’s reservoirs to meet 2030 projected demands and halt further seawater intrusion. For detailed information about the SVWP and its associated impacts, please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. The impacts of water supply development are disclosed in Impact WR-5 in the DEIR.

O-21k.193 The DEIR’s significance determination regarding the water supply impacts on the Monterey Peninsula (Impact WR-4) addresses both short term and long term impacts. As the DEIR states, “at present, none of the proposed projects to substantially address the existing water supply problems has reached the DEIR phase of CEQA compliance (other than the MPWMD ASR project). Thus, while potentially feasible, there is no assurance that comprehensive solutions will be implemented in time to provide water for new development.” The DEIR is addressing impacts beginning at present as well as impacts extending into the long-term future. The DEIR also states “...development on existing legal lots in the Carmel Valley Master Plan and Greater Monterey Peninsula Plan areas would result in a significant impact, unless such development has no net increase in water demand and/or new supply sources are developed.” This statement refers to growth and impacts occurring both in the short term and long term. It has been clarified in Chapter 4 of the FEIR.

See Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for a discussion of the progress made on additional water supplies to meet short-term and long-term water needs on the Monterey Peninsula.

O-21k.194 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, particularly Section 2, *Salinas Valley*. The statement quoted by the comment is consistent with the SVWP EIR/EIS analysis.

O-21k.195 The commenter mischaracterizes statements made in the DEIR. The DEIR does not state that the Coastal Water Project (CWP) will provide water for growth. Instead, it states that it will solve the existing supply problem and enable Fort Ord allotments to be met. Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for current information regarding the CWP. The DEIR describes the current deficiencies in meeting existing demands on the Monterey Peninsula and thus it is obvious to the reader that without the CWP or its equivalent, the current water supply impacts will continue. Furthermore, the quoted statement acknowledges the uncertainty of the CWP.

O-21k.196 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for an update on cooperative water supply planning efforts underway on the Monterey Peninsula.

O-21k.197 It is unclear what part of the EIR the commenter deems incorrect or conclusory about the CWP and Regional Project proposed by the Water for Monterey County coalition. The DEIR clearly defines the regional project as a project “under discussion by the Water for Monterey County Coalition, which would provide additional water for growth to the Monterey Peninsula and North County. This program has been proposed to the CPUC as an alternative to the Cal-Am desalination proposal.”

Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for an update on the progress of the CWP and changes to that project since release of its DEIR as well as discussion of the regional

project alternatives and discussion of significant environmental impacts of both the CWP and the regional alternatives as reflected in the CWP FEIR.

As the DEIR states, Mitigation Measure WR-1 will not decrease impacts related to water supply to a less than significant level. For a discussion of Mitigation Measure WR-2, please see the answer to comment O-21k.215.

O-21k.198 This number was derived from information from the County's GIS database. Vacant commercial and industrial areas are shown by acres, which is a better indicator of commercial and industrial potential than lots (lots are better indicators for residential areas; especially since subdivision potential varies across the county and there are substantial areas where subdivision is limited or prohibited). The County believes the level of detail requested by the commenter is not necessary for the public to understand the impacts of the proposed project, nor is such a level of detail appropriate for a program-level EIR. See Master Response 2 regarding growth assumptions and Master Response 7 concerning projections for growth outside of the focused growth areas. Tables 3-8 and 3-9 do not include detailed coastal zone estimates of future growth, as the 2007 General Plan does not concern the coastal zone (the CVMP and the GMP are not in the coastal zone). However, as explained in Master Response, the estimates of demand by different groundwater basins in the County have been updated to include the estimated demands of areas outside the unincorporated County, including cities and the coastal zone.

O-21k.199 The commenter is correct in pointing out that not all single family residences are exempt from discretionary review, as certain types of single family residential development do require such review. For the meaning of "discretionary development" as used on page 4.3-128, see response to comment O-21k.9 above.

Even if development of a single family dwellings does require a discretionary permit in some instances, the DEIR assumed all single family residences were not subject to discretionary review (and therefore not subject to constraints on discretionary development created by the GPU5) in order to avoid underestimating the potential impacts of non-discretionary development on water supply. Rather than attempting to speculatively quantify the amount of single family development that would be subject to discretionary review, the DEIR assumed no single family residences would be. This method was utilized to ensure that no greater impacts than those analyzed in the DEIR would occur after implementation of the GPU5. Also, analysis of this "worst case scenario" (i.e., no discretionary process to evaluate applications for permits for single family dwellings) is reasonable as a method of analysis of water supply impacts because first single family dwelling on an existing lot of record is explicitly exempted from the requirements of Policy PS-3.1. Thus, the DEIR analysis on page 4.3-128 referenced by the comment regarding the impact of single family residential development on water supply is correct

O-21k.200 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

O-21k.201 Please see response to comment O-21k.198. Tables 3-8 and 3-9 do not include detailed numbers in the coastal zone since the coastal zone is not addressed in the 2007 General

Plan. The DEIR states there are 577 vacant residential lots in the North County (not 1,134 lots as the commenter states) based on County GIS and Assessor's data.

- O-21k.202 The references to the Pajaro Valley Basin and North County are correct. The Pajaro Valley Basin is a portion of the North County area. It and the rest of the North County were found to have significant, unavoidable water supply impacts. The DEIR states "There are an estimated 577 vacant residential lots in the North County Plan area." While the Pajaro Valley Basin does not cover the entirety of the North County, this statement is made to provide regional context for the statement of significance, which reads as follows: "Thus, development on existing legal lots in the portion of the North County area within the Pajaro Valley would result in a significant impact, unless such development has no net increase in water demand and/or new supply sources are developed."

For further discussion of water supply impacts on Highlands South and Granite Ridge, and why they are less than significant, please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, particularly Section 4.2.6, *North County*.

- O-21k.203 The comment states that Mitigation Measure WR-1 is "ineffective, speculative, uncertain, and cannot be objectively measured..." Impact WR-4 does not rely upon Mitigation Measure WR-1 to reduce impacts to a less than significant level, as suggested in the comment letter. Overall, Impact WR-4 is considered significant and unavoidable. Please also see Master Response 4 for discussion of the adequacy of mitigation measure WR-1, FEIR Chapter 4 for revisions to Mitigation Measure WR-1 (including Policy PS-3.16), and Master Response 10, which discusses the level of detail for Monterey County 2007 General Plan Mitigation Measures and Policies. The "significance conclusion" on page 4.3-130, is revised in Chapter 4 of the FEIR. The "2007 General Plan policies" referenced in this conclusion refer to the policy discussion on DEIR pages 4.3-122 through 4.3-126, along with the policy discussions under the individual impact analyses.

The Comment also asks about the authority of the EIR preparer to suggest policies such as PS-3.16 and asks whether "the County would be the lead agency on the projects." Mitigation measure WR-1 proposes a revision to Policy PS-3.16 (as originally presented in the 2007 General Plan) and is therefore included in the "Mitigation Measures" section for Impact WR-4. Discussion of this mitigation measure is consistent with CEQA. (See CEQA Guidelines Sections 15126.4(a)(1) and 15084.) Additionally, as discussed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(2), "[i]n the case of the adoption of a plan, policy, regulation, or other public project, mitigation measures can be incorporated into the plan, policy, regulation, or project design." The approval of the proposed project, alternatives, policy revisions, or mitigation measures is an issue to be decided by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15092). Discussion of proposed Mitigation Measure WR-1, including Policy PS-3.16, was appropriate in the DEIR. Furthermore, Monterey County is the appropriate lead agency for the County's General Plan, and the EIR represents the independent judgment and analysis of the County. (See also CEQA Guidelines Section 15090(a)(3).) The lead agency for project level EIRs and future CEQA documents will be determined when project specific details are known and the CEQA documents are being prepared, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15051.

The comment suggests that Policy PS-3.16 “take[s] away the County’s discretionary authority...” The comment cites to no authority to support this claim. Mitigation Measure WR-1 is consistent with General Plan Government Code requirements and is considered feasible. Please see Master Response 4 for greater detail on the feasibility of mitigation measure WR-1, and Master Response 10, which discusses general plan implementation requirements.

- O-21k.204 For a quantitative explanation of how implementation of the 2007 General Plan would increase demand for water in portions of the county beyond available supply, please see the detailed impact discussion in the DEIR of Impact WR-4, beginning on page 4.3-113. In particular, please see Table 4.3-9, which details the estimated new water demand after implementation of the 2007 General Plan. Also, please see Section 4.3.2.4, *Potable Water Supply and Infrastructure*, in the DEIR, which includes quantitative information regarding the water supply in Monterey County. Also, please see Master Response 4, Water Supply, for further discussion of water demand compared to available supply. Note that the discussion in Master Response 4 provides a finer level of detail regarding the significance level of impacts on the Monterey Peninsula (both Seaside aquifer and Carmel Valley alluvial aquifer). For further discussion of water supply impacts on Highlands South and Granite Ridge, please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, particularly Section 4.2.6, *North County*.

See Master Response 4, Section 4.1.1, for a discussion of water supply-related definitions.

Regarding the SVWP’s ability to address seawater intrusion, please see the response to comment O-21k.54, and Master Response 4.

It is unclear what short term impacts the commenter believes will occur before all components of the SVWP are fully operational, but after the 2007 General Plan policies are adopted. However, the DEIR states and demonstrates that there will not be any such significant short term impacts. This is in part due to the fact that the SVWP is currently under construction and is expected to be completed by Spring 2010, such that the benefits of the project in terms of halting groundwater overdraft and seawater intrusion to prevent further supply degradation will begin to be realized in 2010. Furthermore, existing seawater intrusion and groundwater overdraft are not impacts of the proposed project part are part of existing conditions (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15125).

- O-21k.205 No new or expanded water entitlements are contemplated to meet demand to 2030” means that no new or expanded water entitlements that would bring potable water to Monterey County from outside the County are currently being contemplated. This assumption is based on discussions with the water agencies and research and investigation of the current efforts to develop additional water supply in Monterey County.
- O-21k.206 For additional analysis regarding future water supply in the Highlands South and Granite Ridge subareas, please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.
- O-21k.207 The DEIR assumes that once a project is at the DEIR stage, sufficient information regarding that project (e.g. the projected amount of water such a project will deliver, the

potential roadblocks to completion of said project, the methods by which said project will deliver water) will be available to determine whether or not that project will provide adequate water to address current problems and future needs. As stated in the DEIR, in a measurable standard/criteria, “sufficiently developed” means at the DEIR stage. Funding and other support is necessary to implement any large-scale water supply projects.

O-21k.208 Please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan EIR*. The word “constrain” is used in this DEIR to refer to limiting development in any way due to available water supply issues and concerns. PS-3.1 and PS-3.3 are two examples of policies that constrain development without a long-term sustainable water supply. Other policies include T-1.7, NC-1.5, and GS 1.13 that limit development to the first single family dwelling on a legal lot of record in certain portions of the Toro, North County, and Greater Salinas Area Plan areas due to current water supply and other infrastructure constraints.

O-21k.209 See response to O-21k.9 for the meaning of “discretionary development” as the term is used in this EIR. “Non-discretionary development” is development requiring only a ministerial action, with “ministerial” defined in accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15369. CEQA Guidelines Section 15369 defines “ministerial” to include “a governmental decision involving little or no personal judgment by the public official as to the wisdom or manner of carrying out the project” and that “involves only the use of fixed standards or objective measurements ...” (See CEQA Guideline section 15369.) “Legal lot of record” is a lot that is recognized under the Subdivision Map Act as having been legally created and that may be sold or leased individually. (Government Code §66410, et seq)

The 2007 General Plan (see policies under Goal PS-3) requires new development for which a discretionary permit is required, except for the first single family dwelling and non-habitable accessory uses on an existing lot of record, to demonstrate that there is a long-term, sustainable water supply to serve the development. (See, for example, Policy PS-3.1 and Policy 3.3.). Because non-discretionary development would not be subject to these General Plan restrictions, development that does not require a discretionary permit could exacerbate existing water supply problems. (See response to O-21k.199 above for the reasons why the DEIR grouped all single family dwellings with non-discretionary development for purposes of CEQA analysis of impacts.) Quantification of such impacts would be speculative, as the location of such development, the timing of such development, the type of water delivery each development relied upon, and the intensity of such development is unknowable at this time. Master Response 4, *Water Supply* clarifies that the impacts of legal lot single-family residential development water demands in the Seaside aquifer will not result in significant impacts (considering the restrictions that are a part of the adjudication of the basin), and that legal lot water residential demands in the Carmel Valley alluvial aquifer will not result in significant biological resource impacts. Please also see response to comment O-21k.199.

O-21k.210 Please see Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions in the DEIR*. The 37,081 units is based on the allowable growth in the 2007 General Plan and does not include the coastal areas.

O-21k.211 The SVWP's elements and goals are explained in detail on pages 4.3-37 and 4.3-38 of the DEIR. The SVWP has the capacity to provide additional water to the Salinas Valley through the capture of additional upstream flows (through modification of the Nacimiento Dam spillway and reoperation of Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs), and reversal of declining groundwater levels. Continued trends of per capita conservation (urban water conservation measures mandated by the 2007 General Plan, local ordinances, the State Building Code green building standards, and the Urban Water Management Planning Act) will reduce per capita water use in the future, thereby lessening the burden the SVWP would otherwise have to carry were such measures not in place.

In the context of the cited use in the DEIR, "capacity" means "ability."

As stated in the DEIR, the SVWP has completed its planning and CEQA review process. It is now under construction and is expected to be operational in the spring of 2010. See Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for a discussion of the status of other water supply projects.

O-21k.212 The DEIR does not assume that significant reductions in agricultural water use are the same as significant reductions in agriculture. The DEIR does assume, however, that agriculture requires water use, and significant agriculture production will continue to occur in Monterey County for the foreseeable future. Agricultural water use has been slowly declining over time as more efficient means are adopted to apply water. See the discussion in Master Response 4, *Water Supply* Section 4.2.1 regarding agricultural water demand.

O-21k.213 For an analysis of the impacts of climate change on seawater intrusion, please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. Contrary to the commenter's assertion, it is not a simple matter to determine climate change impacts on the County's water resources. There is not at present a downscaled climate model to determine the potential localized climate change effects on precipitation, temperature, and evapotranspiration. While such analyses will likely be feasible in the relatively near future, given that such analysis is not presently available, it would be speculative to make conclusions as to the specific character of climate change effects on the County's water resources without more definitive research, which has yet to be developed.

O-21k.214 A list of the policies of the 2007 General Plan referenced can be found on pages 4.3-122 through 4.3-126 of the DEIR, under the discussion of Impact WR-4.

O-21k.215 The comment states that mitigation measure WR-2 is "another ineffective and speculative mitigation measure." Please note that Mitigation Measure WR-2 is applied to *buildout* impacts (i.e. years 2030 to 2092). As discussed in the *In re Bay-Delta* case, over a 30 year period, it is "impracticable to foresee with certainty specific source of water and their impacts...The PEIS/R complied with CEQA by identifying potential sources of water and analyzing the associated environmental effects in *general terms*." (*In re Bay-Delta Programmatic Environmental Impact Report Coordinated Proceedings* (2008) 43 Cal.4th 1143, 1173; emphasis added.) The DEIR provided a program level analysis consistent with the requirements of CEQA. The commenter is also directed to FEIR Chapter 4 for revisions to Mitigation Measure WR-2, Master Response 10 for discussion

of the level of detail required for General Plan policies and mitigation measures, and Master Response 4 for discussion of the adequacy of mitigation measure WR-2.

The comment also requests an explanation why Mitigation Measure WR-2 would reduce impact of “climate change in the Salinas Valley to less than significant.” Impact WR-4 does not quantitatively and directly address climate change; Impact WR-4 addresses whether “Land uses and development consistent with the 2007 General Plan would exceed the capacity of existing water supplies and necessitate the acquisition of new supplies to meet expected demands.” However, discussion on DEIR page 4.3-132 notes that:

“Global climate change will have some effect on future precipitation patterns in this part of California in the future. That might in turn affect available water supplies in the reservoirs at the upper end of the Salinas River. What that effect will be is unknown. The California Department of Water Resources reports that California’s precipitation is on an upward trend since the 1960s, but that the yearly amount of precipitation is increasingly variable (i.e., wet years can be followed by dry years; California Department of Water Resources 2006). Present climate models do not have the precision to determine with any certainty what will be the case in Monterey County.”

To clarify the conclusion, the DEIR language has been revised to note that whether this will mean more or less precipitation over time is not reasonably foreseeable (see Chapter 4 of this FEIR). For more detailed discussion on climate change please see DEIR Section 4.16.

O-21k.216 The cited policies are part of Mitigation Measure WR-2 discussed on DEIR page 4.3-133 under “Mitigation Measures” and refined in FEIR Chapter 4. Please see response to comment O-21k.203 for authority to propose mitigation measures. As discussed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(2), “[i]n the case of the adoption of a plan, policy, regulation, or other public project, mitigation measures can be incorporated into the plan, policy, regulation, or project design.” If the Board of Supervisors adopts the mitigation measures proposed by the EIR, they are intended to take the form of policies of the General Plan. The Board of Supervisors makes the determination, ultimately, as to which policies to include in the General Plan. Chapter 5 of this FEIR presents the draft General Plan with the inclusion of the proposed mitigation measures as revised in this FEIR. Please also see Master Response 10 for discussion of the level of detail required for General Plan policies and mitigation measures, and Master Response 4 for discussion of the adequacy of mitigation measure WR-2.

O-21k.217 Page 4.3-134 of the DEIR has been edited to clarify the source of information regarding the feasibility of Phase 2 of the SVWP.

In this context, “feasible” means Phase 2 can be reasonable assumed to occur in the future. It does not mean Phase 2 has been committed to, planning has been completed, or that Phase 2 has been funded. It refers to the availability of additional water from the SVWP that has not been committed to current uses.

O-21k.218 Impacts to the North County subbasins that are not in the Pajaro Basin are included in the significance determination for the North County. The DEIR concludes that all of the North County will have significant and unavoidable water supply impacts. The FEIR has been revised to clarify that this is the case for the Pajaro Valley (2030 and 2092), but not the Granite Ridge/Highlands South area. See also Master Response 4 for an updated discussion of water supply in the North County.

O-21k.219 The AWCP exempts certain uses (artisan wineries, certain ancillary uses) from discretionary project review, except, per revisions to the AWCP, projects that have the potential to affect biological resources will require an administrative permit. However, these exemptions only apply to the described use itself. Water infrastructure projects would require discretionary review. All on-site wells would be subject to Policy PS-3.4, which, as revised, would require a discretionary level review in certain circumstances.

O-21k.220 For clarification and amplification of the analysis of the Regional Supply Projects listed under that heading on the referenced page 4.3-135, please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

O-21k.221 Section 3.4.9, *Rural Centers*, in the DEIR clearly states the locations of all Rural Centers and provides exhibits depicting the precise location of each Rural Center on a map (Exhibits 3.3 and 3.19 through 3.24.). The analysis under Impact WR-5 applies to all water resource infrastructure, including that for Rural Centers.

Page 4.3-143 of the DEIR has been revised to clarify the location of impacts to Rural Centers in Chapter 4 of the FEIR.

O-21k.222 The analysis considered ancillary facilities at a broad scale. Page 4.3-142 of the DEIR has been revised in Chapter 4 of the FEIR to clarify the analysis of impacts of water facilities for the AWCP and agriculture. See also the revised water demand discussion in Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, which addresses the demands of ancillary uses in the AWCP.

O-21k.223 “Existing supply” means water currently available to users in the Winery Corridor. Existing supply does include the Salinas Valley Basin, because this is currently a source of water for users in the Winery Corridor. Per Master Response 4, all of the demands of ancillary uses and wineries are now analyzed in the EIR as “new” demand.

O-21k.224 The mitigation measure suggested by the comment would be legally infeasible, particularly determining what “non-essential” uses of water are compared to “essential” uses of water, as well as attempting to prohibit the use of water for claimed ‘non-essential’ use. As discussed elsewhere, water supply impacts in the Salinas Valley are less than significant with implementation of the SVWP and further mitigation is not necessary. Furthermore, such a measure would not accomplish the third and fourth project objectives discussed in DEIR Section 1.2.1. For these reasons, the County did not investigate this proposed mitigation measure further.

O-21k.225 For a more detailed analysis of the anticipated needed water supply for future agricultural uses in Monterey County, please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. For a more detailed analysis of the amount of land on steep slopes that could potentially be converted

to agricultural uses, please see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*.

The DEIR makes a general statement that future agricultural expansion will require supporting infrastructure. However, it would be speculative at this juncture to attempt to examine the location of new infrastructure required to provide water supply to new agricultural uses that may operate under the draft General Plan because the location, type, size, and timing of such infrastructure are unknown and cannot be known. Please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and General Plan's EIR*.

O-21k.226 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, for detailed information about water supply for the Salinas Valley coming from the SVWP.

O-21k.227 As stated in the DEIR, a comprehensive list of applicable draft General Plan policies and applicable mitigation can be found in the draft General Plan and in the other DEIR sections. There is no requirement in CEQA to identify policies by number in the analysis of impacts of the General Plan. A copy of the 2007 General Plan was included with the DEIR and clearly delineates policies by subject matter. There is no need to hunt through the entire General Plan to locate applicable policies, as the EIR is organized into sections with clear referents to subject matter. The phrase "In many cases" refers to instances or situations in which development will occur. Please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan's EIR*.

O-21k.228 The DEIR uses the word "ultimately" because, as the DEIR states, sustainability of groundwater is not be measured on a day-by-day basis. Instead, balance between the volume of water drawn from an aquifer must not exceed the volume of groundwater recharge over an extended period of time. Were the sustainability of groundwater measured at all times, as suggested by the commenter, recharge would dramatically exceed withdrawal during the winter and vice versa in the summer, creating an incomplete or misleading picture of the sustainability of the aquifer.

The reference to "over a number of years" recognizes that recovery of groundwater balance is not a quick process and is dependent upon the characteristics of the groundwater basin. We have no answer as to precisely how long it may take.

The County acknowledges throughout the DEIR the level at which the County's groundwater resources have been adversely affected, and addresses these affects with an appropriate level of urgency.

O-21k.229 The commenter incorrectly states that page 4.3-147 is the first time that groundwater declines discussed as occurring in the Deep Zone. Please see the response to comment O-21k.57 where issues surrounding the Deep Zone are discussed in detail. As noted therein, the statement about decline in the Deep Zone could not be confirmed and so it has been removed from the EIR; however the EIR still concludes that withdrawals from the Deep Zone do not appear to be sustainable due to the ancient character of the water. Note that the Deep Zone is located within the Salinas Valley basin, so it will benefit from the SVWP's reversal of seawater intrusion.

O-21k.230 The comment recommends prohibiting extractions from the Deep Zone. Such a prohibition would be legally infeasible due to the nature of currently existing water rights. The County did not consider such mitigation further. See response to comments O-21k.57 and O-21k.224.

O-21k.231 Page 4.3-147 does not mislead the public, as it specifically references another section of the DEIR that provides the information mentioned by the commenter. As stated in the DEIR, the Existing Conditions, Section 4.3.2, details which of the County's aquifers are in overdraft, depicts the County's aquifers on maps, and provides the available information regarding pumping and recharge associated with the County's aquifers.

O-21k.232 The DEIR has been revised to clarify that the SVWP will balance supply with demand for groundwater resources in the Salinas Valley, not just summer demand. For more detail regarding the SVWP's ability to balance supply with demand for existing groundwater resources in the Salinas Valley, please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. The SVWP balances supply and demand by supplying more recharge through increased releases to the Salinas River, by capture of water at the diversion dam, and supply to agriculture through the CSIP to avoid further extractions in the portion of the basin subject to seawater intrusion.

O-21k.233 For detailed information about how the SVWP, in conjunction with the Monterey County Water Recycling Projects, is expected to meet Salinas Valley water needs, please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

The EIR has been revised to include an updated table detailing water demand in the County (Table 4.3-9a). The commenter incorrectly assumes what the citation is referencing. The citation references the amount of water the SVWP is expected to provide the County, while the DEIR provides the County's water needs. A table has been created clarifying the projected water needs in the 2007 General Plan EIR and the SVWP EIR (Table 4.3-9c).

For information regarding water demand for Monterey County, including increased vineyard demand and AWCP-associated demand, please see both Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, and Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

O-21k.234 See the response to comment O-21k.90 and Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

O-21k.235 Please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan's EIR* for a discussion of policies, mitigation, and level of detail. The DEIR's conclusions are based on a consideration of the totality of policies and mitigations, not on any singular policy.

The DEIR has been revised to describe Policies SC-5.1 and SC-5.3 more precisely. These policies can be found in Chapter 4 of the FEIR.

O-21k.236 For a detailed analysis of the amount of land on steep slopes that could be reasonably converted to agricultural cultivation, please see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*. For a more detailed analysis of how changes in

agricultural policy and conservation improvements could affect agricultural water demand, please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. Further, as described in Master Response 3, the revised Policy OS-3.5 is consistent with current policy and thus will not result in a change in the general pattern of future agricultural growth compared to current practices.

O-21k.237 For a more detailed analysis of the water needs associated with the AWCP, please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. As stated in Master Response 4, although the amount of water demand was found to be a slightly higher amount than identified in the DEIR, the addition of this amount does not substantially alter the water supply-demand situation overall in the Salinas Valley and is consistent with the demand estimated in the SVWP EIR/EIS. Therefore, AWCP implementation would not substantially change the assumptions supporting the conclusion of the SVWP EIR/EIS.

O-21k.238 The type and level of review necessary for development in the AWCP has been revised. Please see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*.

The commenter's disagreement with the significance determination and conclusion as to the Salinas Valley is noted. The responses to comments above as well as Master Response 4 respond to this comment.

The comment states that commenter is repeating earlier comments regarding proposed Mitigation Measure WR-1. The comment is acknowledged. Responses to comments about proposed Mitigation Measure WR-1 are provided above.

O-21k.239 Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. As further explained in the Master Response, changes in the operation of Lake Nacimiento will increase storage capacity, improve flood control, and allow larger releases during the irrigation season. Larger flows in the Salinas River translate to about an additional 10,000 AFY of recharge through infiltration into the Salinas riverbed. (Monterey County Water Resources Agency 2002; Weeks 2009)

O-21k.240 For a detailed analysis of additional water demand at buildout and how the SVWP will address increased overdraft, please see the buildout analysis under Impact WR-4 and Master Response 4, *Water Supply* Sections 4.1.6 and 4.2.3.

O-21k.241 See response to comments O-21k.217 and O-21k-239.

O-21k.242 Please see response to comment O-21k.40 and Master Response 4, *Water Supply* Section 4.2.6. Master Response 4 provides an updated analysis of groundwater overdraft in the Granite Ridge/Highlands South area.

O-21k.243 The comment expresses opinion and summarizes allegations made in prior comments. The comment is noted. Responses to each of the listed issues are provided in response to the prior comments that raised the same issues.

O-21k.244 The comment recommends adoption of a prohibition on wells within one-mile of known areas of seawater intrusion. Such a measure may be legally infeasible if it would result in

prohibiting all development of existing legal lots of record. Furthermore, the suggestions would not be consistent with the third and fourth project objectives discussed in DEIR Section 1.2.1. Please also see response to comments O-21k.168 and O-21k.230. The suggested mitigation measure is therefore not considered feasible.

Please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, for additional supporting analysis regarding the significance conclusion for Impact WR-7. The commenter is expressing an opinion with regards to what they believe the significance determination should be. The EIR's significance analysis is supported by substantial evidence. For further amplification and clarification regarding the significance conclusion for Impact WR-7, see Master Response 4. Revisions to the text of the EIR clarifying this conclusion are in Chapter 4 of the FEIR.

In regard to the comment's statement that the DEIR relies inappropriately on proposed desalination projects, please see Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, regarding the Regional Water Project, the proposed desalination plants and other facilities that are elements of that alternative to the Coastal Water Project, and the potential for the Regional Project to meet future water supply needs.

O-21k.245 Please see Master Response 9, *Water Quality*, and Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan's EIR*. In regard to the example provided by the comment regarding onsite wastewater management in North County, draft policies under Goal PS-4, including but not limited to Policies PS-4.8, PS-4.10, and PS-4.12, address wastewater management. (See Chapter 5 of this FEIR.) Revisions proposed to these policies are consistent with the approach used by the County in adopting the Onsite Wastewater Management Plan for the Carmel Highlands. As noted above, Carmel Highlands is in the coastal area and is not subject to the policies in the 2007 General Plan.

O-21k.246 Please see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, for additional analysis of the impacts of steep slope development and the wide variety of environmental regulations that would apply to Routine and Ongoing Agricultural activities. The extent of future conversions of slopes is substantially less than asserted by commenters, and conversions will be subject to the revised provisions of Policy OS-3.5 that will require discretionary permits for agricultural conversions on steep slopes and the approval of a management plan. The commenter is mistaken that Routine and Ongoing Agricultural activities are exempt from erosion control and water quality regulations. By its own terms, Policy AG-3.3 does not exempt "activities that create significant soil erosion impacts or violate adopted water quality standards." Further, as revised, this policy has been clarified by removing Policy OS-3.6 (erosive soils) from the list of exemptions.

Policy OS-3.5, as revised, does not represent a substantial departure from current slope policy in the 1982 General Plan. See Master Response 3, Section 3.2 for further discussion.

The commenter is correct in stating that once the GPU5 is adopted, the County's ordinance requirements and practices must be updated to conform to the GPU5. Further, pursuant to Government Code Section 65860, the zoning ordinances must be revised to conform to the General Plan within "a reasonable time." See also Master Response 9,

Water Quality for response relating to the comments about runoff, erosion, and water quality impacts.

Regarding the commenter's statement on Policy S-3.7, please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan's EIR*.

- O-21k.247 The cited statement is intended to be a general example, not a list of all areas potentially subject to flooding. As stated in the discussion of Flood Control and Floodplain Management beginning on page 4,3-79 of the DEIR, the County has enacted restrictive ordinances that minimize flood hazard from new development (hazards to existing development is part of the environmental setting). These include County floodplain management regulations (which were recently updated by the Board of Supervisors) codified in Title 16 of the County Code and section 21.64.130 of the County Code regulating land use in the Carmel Valley floodplain

Policy OS-3.5 has been revised to correctly reference PS-2.6, which includes reference to floodplains.

Prohibition of all new residential development within the 100-year flood hazard area exceeds Federal floodplain regulations (discussed on page 4.3-53). The National Flood Insurance Program allows limited development, provided that such development does not inhibit flow and can be elevated above the estimated flood line. A prohibition of all development is not necessary in order to minimize the risk of flooding resulting from new development and would raise the issue of "regulatory takings" under the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. CEQA requires mitigation measures to be "consistent with all applicable constitutional requirements." (CEQA Guidelines section 15126.4(a)(4).) Therefore, the suggested mitigation was not considered feasible and is not required for less than significant impacts.

Alternatives are not required for less than significant impacts (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(b).) Furthermore, the DEIR does consider an alternative that does not have any Community Areas, Special Treatment Areas, or AHOs in flood plains. It is titled the "No Project Alternative," and is analyzed in Section 5 of the DEIR. All community areas, STAs, and AHOs will require project-level evaluation of flooding impacts, which may result in site-specific modifications to avoid significant flooding impacts.

Regarding the DEIR's analysis of project-specific impacts, such as those associated with the Rancho Canada Village, please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan's EIR*.

Regarding erosion and sedimentation, just because a project included earth-moving does not mean that project-level impacts on erosion and sedimentation cannot be controlled such that impacts can be less than significant. As discussed in the DEIR, Chapter 16.08 of the Monterey County Code requires erosion control for grading and protection of adjacent streams. See also Master Response 9 for a discussion of state regulations restricting erosion and sedimentation.

The commenter is correct that the Aromas Water District is sending water pumped from North County to San Benito County because the Aromas Water District's service area includes portions of Monterey and San Benito Counties and the District draws groundwater from wells located in both counties. These are existing conditions and not impacts of the proposed project (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15125.) The Aromas Water District wells are in the Pajaro Valley groundwater basin. The DEIR does analyze the current condition of the basin. It discloses the current condition of this basin as overdrafted, discusses potential future supply projects, and concludes that there is a significant and unavoidable overdraft and seawater intrusion impact to the basin as at present because there are no reasonably foreseeable sufficient feasible water supply projects to balance supply and demand in that basin in the future. The suggested mitigation of prohibiting regulated water districts whose service area includes more than one county from supplying water from their water systems across county boundaries is outside of the County's regulatory control and is therefore infeasible.

Regarding the comment on a potential conflict of interest for Jones & Stokes relative to the Rancho Canada Village, ICF International (formerly Jones & Stokes) is under contract to Monterey County for both the Rancho Canada Village EIR and the 2007 General Plan EIR and is not working for the developer of the Rancho Canada Village project. The commenter provides no evidence as to why this is a conflict. ICF International is working on both projects under the direction of the County and has no financial stake in the outcome of the CEQA process for the Rancho Canada Village project. See also response to O-21k.391 below.

- O-21k.248 Comment discusses mitigation measures for "water supply solutions." Water supply is discussed under Impact WR-4. The DEIR quantified water demand in DEIR Table 4.3-9 (see revisions to Table 4.3-9 in FEIR Chapter 4), described baseline conditions in DEIR Section 4.3.2, and applied the significance thresholds in DEIR Section 4.3.4.1. The DEIR also provides an analysis of water supply alternatives and their potential supplies, as provided in DEIR Section 4.3.4, Impact WR-5 (see also Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for updated information on the water supply alternatives). Please also see Master Response 10 on the level of detail required for a General Plan and the associated EIR. As discussed by the California Supreme Court, "at the first-tier program stage, the environmental effects of obtaining water from potential sources may be analyzed in general terms, without the level of detail appropriate for second-tier, site specific review." (*In re Bay-Delta* (supra) 43 Cal.4th at 1169.) The Court further held that in a program EIR covering a 30 year period, "it is not reasonably feasible to require quantification of the 'big picture' impacts of its water needs." (Id. at 1176.) The level of detail provided in this program EIR is appropriate and consistent with CEQA requirements.

Please also see Master Response 4 which addresses water supply and the adequacy of water supply mitigation measures.

- O-21k.249 The DEIR includes Policy PS-3.10 which provides for grey water systems in residential development. However, water conservation can be accomplished in a number of ways. Mandating gray water systems in all new residential development, as suggested by the comment is not necessary in light of recent state laws and regulations regarding the conservation of water. The California green building codes, adopted Jan. 17, 2010 and

effective as mandatory code on January 1, 2011, will require new residential and non-residential construction to reduce water use by 20% in comparison to prior California Building Code (Title 24, California Code of Regulations) requirements. SB 407 (Chapter 587, Statutes of 2009) – mandates that pre-1994 residential, including multi-family, and commercial buildings with ultra-low flow faucets, toilets, showers, and urinals be retrofitted with low-flow replacement fixtures by 2019. The Sustainable Water Use and Demand Reduction Act (SBX7 7 (Steinberg) -- Water Code Section 10608, et seq.) will require a 20% reduction in statewide water use by 2020, including water use at the local level. Furthermore, the California Plumbing Code (in Title 24, California Code of Regulations), has been revised to simplify the requirements for grey water systems and their installation. This makes unnecessary the mitigation being proposed.

- O-21k.250 The comment refers to existing water uses that are part of baseline conditions and are not impacts of the proposed project (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15125). The commenter suggests graduated water use fees to increase rates for high users of waters, neighborhood marketing efforts for conservation practices, and incentives for lawn-removal programs. These comments are noted.

See also the response to comment O-21k.249.

Monterey County already has extensive water conservation requirements, which were summarized in the DEIR on page. 4.3-81 through 4.3-83. Regarding landscaping, as described on page.4.3-082, all new construction requiring a land use permit must apply xeriscape principles throughout the exterior landscape, including such techniques, and materials as native or low water use plants and low precipitation sprinkler heads, bubblers, drip irrigation systems, and timing devices. MPWMD, MCWRA, and PVWMA are all engaged in water conservation outreach education. Regarding water use rate structures, this is under the jurisdiction of the California Public Utilities Commission; Monterey County does not have the authority to establish water use rates. Cal-Am has had tiered rates for many years for its service area on the Monterey Peninsula (Cal-Am 2008).

The Water Conservation in Landscaping Act of 2006 (Government Code Section 65591, et seq.) requires cities, counties to adopt water conservation ordinances for landscaping by January 1, 2010. The Department of Water Resources has prepared a “Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance,” which became effective on September 10, 2009. Under the Act, all local agencies must adopt a water efficient landscape ordinance by January 1, 2010. Local agencies may either adopt the state’s Model Ordinance, or adopt their own ordinance that may be more suited to local conditions. Accordingly, the suggested limitation on water intensive plantings will be enacted as a County ordinance in the near future.

- O-21k.251 The General Plan update does not amend the county’s Local Coastal Program (LCP), require amendments to the Local Coastal Program to achieve general plan consistency, or result in known or foreseeable LCP amendments. In analyzing the impacts of the draft General Plan, the coastal zone was part of the background data to the extent it is part of surrounding land use, but changes to the LCP were not analyzed because none are planned or foreseen as a result of this General Plan update. Please see response to O-21k.32 above and Master Response 11, *Effect of GPU5 on the Local Coastal Program*

and Impacts to Coastal Resources for additional responses on these issues. The statement in LU-2.35 that “this policy does not apply in the coastal zone” is consistent with the fact that the General Plan does not amend the coastal zone.

- O-21k.252 The comment suggests a mitigation to eliminate the “newly zoned” parcels in the Coastal Zone in the Castroville Community Plan area. As further explained in Master Response 11, the General Plan is not intended to amend the land use designations or zoning in the coastal area of Castroville. The language of the policy (Policy LU 2.22.b that may have caused confusion has been revised to eliminate reference to the coastal zone. (See Master Response 11, *Effect of GPU5 on the Local Coastal Program and Impacts to Coastal Resources* and Chapter 5 of the FEIR.) Therefore, the proposed “mitigation” is not necessary, but the observation that elimination of reference to the coastal zone area of Castroville would reduce the environmental impacts of the General Plan is noted.
- O-21k.253 The DEIR has been revised to clarify the location of the discussion of potable water supply.
- O-21k.254 For a discussion of the inclusion of the coastal area data in the DEIR analysis, please see Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the General Plan*. Coastal area data is relevant to analyzing the impacts of the General Plan. The General Plan update does not include amendments to the Local Coastal Program or result in foreseeable amendments to the Local Coastal Program. See Master Response 11, *Effect of GPU5 on the Local Coastal Program and Impacts to Coastal Resources* for further discussion of this issue.
- O-21k.255 As described in the DEIR (and in Master Response 2), the AMBAG 2004 projections were used to identify the potential overall amount of housing units (10,015) within the unincorporated inland County between 2006 and 2030. Dividing this number by 24 years, this would represent an average of 417 units/year. There is no need for correction of this number. For the period after 2030 to buildout, the 2007 General Plan land use designations were used to identify the total number of residential units after 2006 (35,918); dividing this number by 417 units/year results in an estimate buildout year of 2092. A recalculation of this number in Master Response 2 showed a variation of about 4% from the DEIR number, within an acceptable margin of error for an 82-year projection.

The comment asserts that a tendency toward mixed use may result in buildout earlier than 2092 because of the commenter’s theory that mixed use happens on non-residentially zoned areas. The commenter does not explain how this would actually change population growth dynamics. Further, the DEIR notes clearly that the specific date of buildout will depend on many factors (demographics, economic conditions, etc.) that cannot be known with a high degree of certainty for such a distant point in the future. The DEIR is based on reasonable assumptions in light of this uncertainty and thus does not need to be updated.

The comment criticizes the adjustment of 2006 numbers to account for future annexations per note (b) in Table 3-5 of the DEIR. The 2030 numbers from AMBAG already account for future annexations; thus in order to properly estimate the amount of change in the unincorporated areas, one must adjust the 2006 base year to properly describe the change

in the unincorporated areas. This was done using the TAZ areas for the future annexations as projected in city General Plans through the AMBAG travel demand model. Since this methodology is clearly indicated to the reader, nothing is being hidden in the DEIR contrary to the commenter's assertion.

Regarding the comment on note (c) in Table 3-5, as described above, the rate of 417 units/year is derived from the growth projected between 2006 and 2030.

Regarding the comments on Table 3-5, note (d), the commenter asserts that Peninsula cities will be limited in growth due to water constraints and asserts that the County will have more growth because the County does not protect their water sources. This comment is highly speculative. First, while the Monterey Peninsula cities (Carmel, Pacific Grove, Monterey, and Seaside) are not projected to grow, all the other cities are projected to grow substantially and the AMBAG projections (both 2004 and 2008 projections) support this contention. Second, extensive planning for water supplies for both the coastal areas and inland areas is being conducted by the County, including accounting for future growth (see DEIR Section 4.3 and Master Response 4). Third, the assertion that the County does not protect its water sources is an unsupported opinion without any citation of evidence in this comment; by contrast the DEIR describes the County's many water conservation requirements and its involvement in numerous water supply projects to balance supply and demand including the SVWP.

Regarding the period after 2030, the DEIR acknowledges the uncertainty in projecting growth so far in the future. AMBAG's 2004 projections were only to 2030; AMBAG's 2008 projections are only to 2035. Most of the cities' General Plans (such as Salinas) have a planning horizon only to around 2030. Thus, in order to make a good faith effort to disclose potential growth impacts beyond 2030, the DEIR used the approximately split between City and County growth as a reasonable estimate to project potential overall County growth. The actual split may vary in the future, but there isn't accurate evidence to definitively state what it may be 86 years in the future. The split used by the County is reasonable, as explained in Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the General Plan*.

O-21k.256 As stated in the DEIR, Table 3-6 is based on parcel data. It is derived from the Monterey County Assessor's database. This data is updated yearly for tax purposes. The table represents existing stated land uses by land owners for tax purposes. The Assessor's parcel database was used for Table 3-6 because it provides a comprehensive database of all parcels in the County. It provides a reasonable approximation of existing land uses, but the land use categories used for property tax assessment purposes do not correspond precisely to the land use classifications in the General Plan. Table 3.11 describes the General Plan land use designations.

In regard to the comment's specific questions about Table 3-6, the category "other" in Table 3-6 is based on an the Assessor's categorization and includes uses such as private roads, tank lots, railroad rights of way, utility parcels, developed oil and gas extraction facilities, mining, quarries, labor camps, water system improvements, and mobile home lots.

The comment notes that the Fort Ord Planning Area is shown as “0” acres in Table 3-6. The entry should have corresponded to the entry for Fort Ord in Table 3-7, and Table 3-6 has been corrected accordingly. (See Chapter 4 of the FEIR, Changes to the Text of the DEIR) This correction to the table does not change the DEIR analysis because the analysis assumed the acreage listed in Table 3-7.

As stated in Table 3-10 of the DEIR, for purposes of that table, the term “Coastal/Non-Coastal Areas” refers to lands within the Los Padres National Forest. It does not refer to the entire coastal region of the County. Regarding the precise location of different acreages, please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan’s EIR*.

O-21k.257 Table 3-7 shows the existing land uses in the proposed future community areas and rural centers. See response to O-21k.256 regarding Table 3-6.

O-21k.258 Table 3-8 (New Growth by Planning Area) has been revised for clarity. The original table was not, as the comment asserts, “very hard to understand.” In fact, it is a straightforward listing of projected growth within the Planning Areas. The data in Table 3-8 represents Monterey County estimates based on growth projections found in Table 3-5 and the land use regulations proposed in the 2007 General Plan.

The estimates of future growth includes “second units,” as defined by Government Code Section 65852.2, to the extent that the number is included in the 417 unit/year assumption used in the growth projections. Typically, of the residential units approved in unincorporated Monterey County each year, about 10 are second units. As the County cannot foresee how many homeowners would opt to install a second unit, using the historical rate of growth is a reasonable basis for growth projection. The County has no reason to believe that the number of second units would increase substantially in the future, and the comment offers no substantial evidence to support any such claim.

Regarding the location of potential commercial use in the Cachagua planning area, the Carmel Valley Master Plan Area, Fort Ord, and North County, see Exhibits 3.11, 3.8, 3.9, and 3.4, respectively, in the DEIR. For Fort Ord, commercial uses include those within the business park, mixed use, and regional retail designations. Development in these areas is included in the analysis throughout the DEIR, for example in traffic generation for the traffic analysis or in the loss of habitat in the analysis of impacts to biological resources.

STAs reflect Special Treatment Areas for developments that already exist or have already been approved (e.g., Rancho San Carlos, Butterfly Village) or provide specific direction for future development in an area based on site-specific considerations or constraints. Study Areas are designated for areas where the County desires to look further at the constraints of an area to determine if a Special Treatment Area should be established and to what extent.

All the projections in the DEIR (and Table 3-8) are based on the land use designations in the underlying land use plans. Thus, where a STA or Study Area has not been redesignated to match the potential use indicated in the STA or Study Areas description, no projection was based on the potential use unless reflected in the land use plans.

Regarding how STAs were evaluated in the EIR, please see Table 3-5 below which compares the STA descriptions with the underlying land use designations, indicates what type of development may be possible, and how the impacts of that development were considered in the EIR for key subjects (such as traffic, water, and biological resources). Several revisions were made to the EIR to better account for certain STAs, including revisions to Tables 3-8 and 3-9 (regarding Butterfly Village and Jefferson STA and a redistribution of 2030 growth to account for the more near/medium term buildout of Butterfly Village), to the biological analysis (to account for the addition of potential habitat impacts due to the Jefferson STA), and to the water demand analysis (to account for shifts in water demand with the revised 2030 distribution of growth accounting for the more near/medium-term buildout of Butterfly Village).

Table 3-5. Review of How Special Treatment Areas are Included in the EIR Analysis

STA	Planning Area	GPU LU Map	STA Buildout	Notes
Butterfly Village	Greater Salinas	Residential, commercial, open space	1,147 units, other uses	Consistent with land use maps Included in DEIR GP Traffic model Added to Table 3-8 and 3-9 in FEIR Included in revised water analysis in FEIR Analyzed in DEIR biological resource impacts based on land use.
Spence/Potter/Encinal	Greater Salinas/Central Salinas Valley	Farmland - 40	greenhouses/etc	Consistent with land use maps Included in overall traffic projection Treated as agricultural use for water and biological resource impacts in DEIR
Highway 68/Foster Road Area	Greater Salinas	Farmland - 40	Visitor farm; produce stand	Included in overall traffic projection Treated as agricultural use for water and biological resource impacts in DEIR
Natividad/Rogge Road	Greater Salinas	Farmland - 40	greenhouses/etc	Included in overall traffic projection Treated as agricultural use for water and biological resource impacts in DEIR
Jefferson	Greater Salinas/Greater Monterey Peninsula	Permanent Grazing - 40	16 units on 40 acres	Traffic covered by overall traffic projection. Added units to Table 3-8 and 3-9 in FEIR Added to revised water analysis in FEIR Added habitat acres to biological impact analysis in FEIR
Paraiso Hot Springs	Central Salinas Valley	Visitor-Serving	visitor-serving	Consistent with land use maps Analyzed in biological resource impacts based on land use. Covered in overall water analysis.
Old Mission Union School	Central Salinas Valley	Farmland - 40?	winery-related facilities	Traffic covered by overall traffic projection. Covered in overall water analysis.
Lohr	Central Salinas Valley	Farmland - 40	No increase over existing potential	Included in overall traffic projection Treated as agricultural use for water and biological resource impacts in DEIR
Miller's Lodge	Central Salinas Valley	Resource Conservation	Same as existing	No increase over existing

STA	Planning Area	GPU LU Map	STA Buildout	Notes
Rancho San Carlos	Greater Monterey Peninsula/CVMP	Resource Conservation/ Rural Grazing	No increase over approved	Included in CVTIP traffic analysis in DEIR Previous CEQA review completed No increase over approved
White Rock Club	Greater Monterey Peninsula	Resource Conservation	No increase over existing	No increase over existing
San Clemente Ranch	Greater Monterey Peninsula	Resource Conservation	No increase over existing	No increase over existing
Carmel Valley Ranch	Carmel Valley Master Plan	Residential, commercial, public/quasi public (for Garin Regional Park)	No increase over approved	Included in CVTIP traffic analysis in DEIR Previous CEQA review completed No increase over approved
Rancho Canada Village	Carmel Valley Master Plan	Public/quasi public	Residential	Development subject to subdivision cap Included in CVTIP traffic analysis in DEIR Biological impacts to be addressed at project level.
Greco	Toro	Farmland - 40	No increase over existing	No increase over existing
Syndicate Camp	Cachagua	Resource Conservation	No increase over existing	No increase over existing

The revisions noted above (and presented in Chapter 4, Changes to the Text of the Draft EIR) relative to Butterfly Village and Jefferson STA did not change any significance conclusions in the DEIR.

The Study Area designation indicates a potential direction of land use consideration for an area, but does not by itself change the allowable use of a specific area. Thus, Study Areas are different from STAs in that they do not actually result in a change to the General Plan; as such the underlying land use designations were used for the EIR analysis.

Regarding the North County, although there were only 577 vacant residential lots at the time of the DEIR preparation per land use designations, there are a total of 3,260 lots of record, per Assessor's parcel data. Whether these are legal lots of record and whether it is feasible to actually build a residence would have to be assessed on an individual basis. To be conservative, the DEIR assumed all 3,260 parcels could actually contain a residence. As the DEIR states, "Impact analyses for 2092 will be qualitative, not quantitative, for the most part because of the uncertainty over what life might be like over 84 years into the future. Residential growth rate was chosen as the indicator of full buildout because it is relatively constant and is easier to extrapolate than other factors." The estimates for development potential in those areas where new development will be limited to the first single-family residence on existing lots of record (such as the North County), are based on assessor's parcel data and whether the parcel allows residential development under existing zoning.

Regarding inland vs. coastal areas, as stated in the DEIR, Exhibit 3.1, Monterey County is divided into eight inland and four coastal planning areas designed to reflect geographical areas where there are common physical conditions. The 2007 General Plan

does not amend the County's coastal plans (DEIR, page 3-23). "Inland" refers to those areas outside the Coastal Zone (delineated by the County's certified Local Coastal Program) and is a necessary distinction so that the reader does not have the mistaken impression that the 2007 General Plan includes the coastal region of the County. For a discussion of growth projection and the coastal zone, please see Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the DEIR*. As explained in Master Response 11, *Effect of GPU5 on the Local Coastal Program and Impacts to Coastal Resources* this General Plan does not plan new development in the coastal portion of the Castroville Community Area. See also response to comment O-21k.252.

Estimates of growth in Monterey County under Buildout (to 2092) were made to analyze long-term potential impacts of the 2007 General Plan. As stated above, there is uncertainty over what life might be like over 84 years in the future. The growth projections for Buildout represent a good-faith effort to estimate the amount of projected development in Monterey County in 2092.

- O-21k.259 As stated in the DEIR, provisions of the land use element include encouragement of clustering and the use of transfer of development rights to conserve land. Generally, "transfer of development rights" involve the transfer of the right to develop a piece of land to another, more suitable, site. In the case of the Spence/Potter/Encinal Road STA referenced by the commenter, land may be subdivided into parcels of not less than 10 acres in size. At the same time, no parcel of less than 40 acres would be allowed to contain a residence. In other words, subdivisions of land of within this STA will not be for residential purposes. Where a parcel of 40 acres or more is created, no residential would be allowed there, but a development right (or credit) of one unit per each parcel of 40 acres or more would be generated. Those credits would be dedicated to the County or a qualified non-profit conservation so that the property could not be developed with a residence in the future.
- O-21k.260 A "visitor farm," as mentioned for the Highway 68/Foster Road Area STA, is a farm which engages in agrotourism, a style of tourism that normally takes place on a farm or ranch. Agrotourists visit these farms or ranches, and engage in farm activities ranging from picking fruit, feeding animals, or planting crops. The term is relevant to the DEIR because it is used to describe an intended use in this STA.
- O-21k.261 The comment opines that the paragraph under Section 3.4 is "a blatant sales job for the project." The comment is an opinion and is noted. The County disagrees. The paragraph describes the County's aspirations for the General Plan. A statement of the objectives sought by the project is appropriate in the project description. (CEQA Guideline section 15124.)
- O-21k.262 The General Plan update does not amend the county's Local Coastal Program (LCP), require amendments to the Local Coastal Program to achieve general plan consistency, or result in known or foreseeable LCP amendments. The comment asks for clarification of GPU5 to the coastal areas. This clarification is provided in Master Response 11, *Effect of GPU5 on the Local Coastal Program and Impacts to Coastal Resources*. See also response to comments O-21k.251 and O-21k.252.

O-21k.263 These land use designation categories are capitalized in the General Plan. For example, see Goal LU-6, a discussion of the Public/Quasi-Public land use category. The commenter should note the distinction between current land uses in Monterey County and the land use designations in the General Plan. See also the response to comment O-21k.256.

Table 3-11 has been revised to clarify the “Resource Conservation” land use designation.

O-21k.264 The County considers the Area Plans to be sufficiently described in Section 3.4.5. Note the sections titled “Land Use” under some area plan subheadings, which detail land use regulations of the General Plan for each Area Plan. Also note the sections titled “Special Treatment Areas” under applicable area plan subheadings, which provide detailed information about land use regulations in these specific areas.

As stated in the DEIR, the 2007 General Plan contains eight Area Plans for the inland portion of the County. Each Area Plan in the 2007 General Plan contains supplemental policies that guide, or, conversely, limit growth within its boundaries. The 2007 General Plan would modify the area plans directly. There would be no separate process. See also response to comment O-21.k.36 regarding the status of the Area Plans in this General Plan update.

Regarding the coastal areas and the 2007 General Plan, the 2007 General Plan does not amend the County’s coastal plans (DEIR, page 3-23). The County’s decision to amend the General Plan as applied only in the inland area is not impermissible “piecemealing” under CEQA, because no Local Coastal Program amendments are planned or foreseeable or required as a result of the update of the General Plan as applied in the inland area. Analysis of Local Coastal Program amendments that are not yet conceived or known is not required under CEQA. CEQA does not require analysis of impacts that are too speculative for evaluation. (CEQA Guideline section 15145.) Analysis of the 2007 General Plan’s impact on coastal areas is located throughout the DEIR. See also Master Response 11, *Effect of GPU5 on the Local Coastal Program and Impacts to Coastal Resources* regarding these issues.

For a detailed explanation regarding the coastal area’s inclusion in the 2007 General Plan, please see Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the General Plan*.

O-21k.265 Please see response to comment O-21k.256. The note means that the acreages of current land uses in Monterey County as defined by parcel data represent a different data set than the acreages of land uses as defined by General Plan land use designations. The differences in these data sets are due to how the parcel data categorizes use and determine acreages. The “parcel data described above” is located in all the tables above Table 3-12 that state “Based on Parcel Data.” This includes Tables 3-6 and 3-7.

As clearly stated in the DEIR, Table 3-11 includes the land use designations of the 2007 General Plan. Table 3-12 summarizes the existing land cover in unincorporated Monterey County as of 2006, as well as the land use groups of the 2007 General Plan. The existing land cover in unincorporated Monterey County as of 2006 includes some land designated as “Other.”

O-21k.266 The “entire General Plan planning area” includes the unincorporated area of Monterey County, except for the coastal areas. No amendments to the certified Local Coastal Program are either contemplated or necessary, as part of the 2007 General Plan. Please see Master Response 11, *Effect of GPU5 on the Local Coastal Program and Impacts to Coastal Resources* and response to multiple comments above on this issue. For more information regarding the inclusion of the coastal areas in growth projections, please see Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions Utilized in the General Plan*.

Please see response to comment O-21k.60 and Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for further discussion of the Seaside Basin.

In this particular context, sufficient water supply means enough water to serve the needs of users within the General Plan boundaries. The amount of water necessary to achieve sufficient water supply is discussed in detail in Section 4.3, Water Resources. Please see in particular the revised Table 4.3-9a for the projected water demand in 2092, as well as Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

O-21k.267 As stated in the DEIR, the future general development plan for Paraiso Hot Springs will address fire safety, access, sewage treatment, water quality, water quantity, drainage, and soil stability issues associated with mineral water bottling, should such an activity be permitted in accordance with this general development plan and other discretionary approvals such as subdivision maps, use permits and design approvals. The 2007 General Plan is not making a site-specific commitment to approve any development proposal for Paraiso Hot Springs, but is rather setting out broad parameters for the consideration of future proposed uses. Such future uses would be subject to all of the policies of the 2007 General Plan, and any development proposal for Paraiso Hot Springs would be subject to its own environmental review.

The mitigation proposed by the commenter is not timely, given that review of and development of mitigation is appropriate when and if specific mineral water bottling operation proposal is before the County. At that time, such a proposal would be subject to environmental review and, on that basis, the need for mitigation and the nature of the mitigation would be determined. Please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan's EIR*.

O-21k.268 Such facilities on the Old Mission STA could potentially be subject to CEQA, and the DEIR does not expressly state CEQA would not apply. The application of CEQA will depend upon whether a discretionary permit will be required for future development. That will depend upon the size and nature of the future project.

As clearly stated in the DEIR (see page 3-30), the Lohr STA is proposed to be used for agricultural purposes and is established for the purpose of combining two existing parcels into a single parcel. The underlying land is already designated as farmland, thus the range of potential activities is defined by allowable uses for that designation.

O-21k.269 The comment asks numerous questions concerning the DEIR's choices of language in how it describes the Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan at section 3.4.5.4 of the DEIR. The DEIR lists distinct geographic features and areas to provide context for the public regarding the areas to which the particular Area Plan under discussion will apply.

Regardless of the commenter's opinion that these features and areas are described differently in certain sections compared to others, the descriptions in Chapter 3 of the DEIR serve their intended purpose –to provide a general description of the project.

The DEIR's description of the features within each plan represents a good-faith effort by the County to provide a general description of the features of each Area Plan. The project description "should not supply extensive detail beyond that needed for evaluation and review of the environmental impact." (CEQA Guideline section 15124.) The description satisfies that standard. Choosing different types of areas to list does not alter the analysis in the DEIR. Regarding the Carmel Valley, it is discussed at length in Section 3.4.5.5 of the DEIR, beginning on page 3-32.

In regard to the comment that the DEIR references to the Special Treatment areas are "unintelligible" because the DEIR does not list them by number while the maps do, the County's judgment is that the DEIR's depiction of the location of STAs is logical and reasonable. The DEIR provides a narrative description of the Special Treatment Areas (STAs) in each Area Plan. Each Area Plan has a corresponding Land Use map. These maps are exhibits in the DEIR, with corresponding identical maps the draft General Plan. These maps include references to each STA by denoting the perimeter of the area with a specific symbol so that readers may easily locate each STA geographically. The maps also give a reference to the specific policy contained in the area plan discussing the STA so that the discussion of the pertinent policy is easy to find.

- O-21k.270 The comment expresses concern that "the Land Use Map for the Greater Monterey Peninsula refers to polices GMP 1.16, GMP 1.17, and GMP 1.18 which do not exist in the General Plan text." These references are typographical errors. The references should be to GMP-1.6, GMP-1.7, and GMP-1.8. These corrections have been made. (See Chapter 5 of the FEIR.)...
- O-21k.271 The comment expresses concern that each map should have a legend and contends the DEIR is "incomprehensible because the maps cannot be understood by the public." This is a very broad comment, without a specific reference. We are unaware of any map that does not have a legend.
- O-21k.272 The comment states that the DEIR description of the Rancho Canada Village STA is inconsistent with the GPU5 maps. The comment identifies that the STA encompasses a far greater land area than that described in the DEIR. The comment is correct that Exhibits 3.7 and 3.8 of the DEIR initially showed the boundaries to be larger than described in the description on page 3-33 of the DEIR or in policy CV-1.27 of the General Plan, but this error was corrected prior to the extension of the DEIR public comment period. This comment was previously made in 2008, and the map was changed to show the correct boundaries and placed on the RMA Planning Department website in December 2008. This correction was also shown on draft General Plan Figure LU3 and Figure LU5, which were distributed in December 2008 prior to the extended comment period that began in December 2008. The maps have corrected to correspond to the text.

The commenter questions whether the "industrial" (pink) land use at the mouth of Carmel Valley is actually in commercial land use. Exhibit 3.8 (General Plan Figure LU3 Carmel Valley Master Plan) does not show any industrial land use within the Carmel Valley

Master Plan. Exhibit 3.7 (General Plan Figure LU5 Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan) lists industrial land use in the legend, but does not show any industrial land use within the plan area. The property in question is shown as commercial and office.

The commenter asks, where a verbal description differs from a depiction on the map, which version controls? There are no verbal descriptions in either the DEIR or in the General Plan. We presume the comment refers to written descriptions. The intent is that both written descriptions and depictions on a map are consistent. Part of the public review process is to provide the opportunity for readers to point out to the County where the document may have a typographical error or ambiguity and provide an opportunity for the County to correct any such inadvertent errors. This has been done.

- O-21k.273 The Study Areas are included in the project description of the 2007 General Plan. Adoption of the General Plan would prompt the study of the potential for development of these areas as more particularly described by the text for each individual study area, but does not commit to any particular development proposal. The Study Areas would not cause any changes in the existing land uses or land use designations without additional discretionary action and environmental review of that discretionary action. There is neither sufficient information about the future uses of these areas to allow meaningful environmental analysis of impacts, nor a sufficient commitment on the part of the County to a particular future use to warrant more detailed, site-specific analysis at this time. (See *Save Tara v. City of West Hollywood* (2008) 45 Cal. 4th 116 [commitment to a project warrants environmental analysis])
- O-21k.274 The EIR text has been revised to ensure that all STAs described in the discussion of each plan are cross-referenced to the map (see revised GP figures). Not all areas designated by the “ST” are described in each area plan, because some of the areas designated by the “ST” are study areas, not STAs. For an explanation of why the study areas are not included in the project descriptions of area plans, please see response to comment O-21k.273.
- O-21k.275 There are four STAs included in the proposed Carmel Valley Master Plan Area: Carmel Valley Ranch (CV-1.22), Condon/Chugach Property (CV-1.23), Rancho San Carlos (CV-1.25), and Rancho Canada Village (CV-1.27). All four are included in the project description on page 3-33.
- O-21k.276 The information in the DEIR provides an overview of existing uses. See the response to comment O-21k.273 regarding the ripeness for more specific analysis.
- O-21k.277 For clarification of what rules and ordinances would apply to development in the AWCP, the potential for “sprawl” in the AWCP, and the traffic impacts associated with the AWCP, please see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*. Regarding the variety of questions about the specifics of the development guidelines for the AWCP, please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan’s EIR*. The General Plan seeks to provide a framework for future development in the AWCP.

Regarding specific development requirements in the AWCP: there is no limit on the physical size of residences in the AWCP (other than height limits that may be set by the

zoning ordinance), just as there are no such limits in the existing General Plan and zoning ordinance for such units in agricultural areas. The list of allowable residences at the wineries parallels the allowable uses described in the AWCP. Employee units would not be available for individual sale and would be for the use of employees of the operation. These units would be located on the same parcel as the winery. As discussed in Master Response 3, sections 3.4 and 3.5, respectively, the AWCP would not substantially alter the allowable uses under the existing General Plan and zoning and were considered in the traffic analysis used in the DEIR.

The details of the AWCP are found in the 2007 General Plan, a copy of which was provided with each copy of the DEIR. As described in Section 3.1, General Provisions, of the AWCP, up to two visitors' centers would be allowed in the wine corridor – one in the vicinity of Highway 101/Arroyo Seco and another near Highway 68. No specific locations have been identified at this time. The sizes of allowable inns within the AWCP are described in subsections (B) and (C) of Section 3.4, *Permitted Uses, Administrative Permit Required in Each Case*, as no more than 10 guest rooms.

Regarding the process and implementation of all 2007 General Plan policies, please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan's EIR*.

“Some type of discretionary permit” as used on page 3-40 means a land use entitlement requiring discretionary review, with the particular type of permit to be determined based on the particular use proposed. The description on page 3-40 is distinguishing between uses and activities that would be allowed without further discretionary review versus those that would require discretionary review. In regard to the comment regarding the adequacy of the analysis of the impacts of the AWCP, see response in Master Response 3.

Full-scale wineries are not exempt from CEQA, contrary to the commenter's assertion.

Also, proposed revisions to the AWCP will require biological resources analyses of artisan wineries and ancillary uses that may trigger discretionary review (see AWCP Section 3.3 and 2007 General Plan Policy OS-5.16). Regarding the request to identify all places in the EIR where the impacts of the exemptions are considered, the impacts are analyzed where the AWCP is analyzed and discussed in the DEIR, as well as Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, and Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.

- O-21k.278 Specific wineries that meet a variety of criteria developed in the AWCP would be allowed to have certain types of private events with several restrictions on those events. The AWCP contains limits on the uses of facilities that would be allowed as of right. (Section 3.2 of the AWCP) Table 3-16 on page 3-41 of the DEIR shows the uses that are allowed by right, those allowed with ministerial permit, and those allowed with an administrative permit. The administrative permit is conceived in the AWCP as a discretionary entitlement requiring discretionary review. Impacts associated with wineries and their ancillary uses are detailed in the DEIR, Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, and Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. In regard to the comments about anticipated development under the AWCP, please see Master Response 3.

Table 3-16 has been revised to ensure its accuracy in Chapter 4 of the FEIR.

- O-21k.279 There is no STA titled “Carmel Valley Airport.” The STA with the designation of CV-1.27 is Rancho Canada Village. Exhibit 3.8 has been corrected in the draft General Plan to accurately reflect this, as well as the location and policy number for each STA. See the response to comment O-21k.-269.
- O-21k.280 The comment cites a minor typographical error. The EIR has been revised to clarify the location of the Airport/Highway 68 site. See Chapter 4.
- O-21k.281 There is no difference in definition between the gray diagonal lines and the black lines. They both designate Urban Reserve areas. Figure LU5 (Land Use Plan, Greater Monterey Peninsula) in the General Plan, which corresponds to Exhibit 3.7 in the DEIR, has been revised to correct the misspelling of Olmsted Road, and the different shades of diagonal lines have been changed to be identical in hue.

The comment inquires “would the housing be required to be permanently affordable.” The comment is not clear as to which housing is referenced, but if the comment relates to the Affordable Housing Overlay area indicated on Exhibit 3.7, please see policy LU-2.13 in the General Plan for information about the term of affordability. Policy LU 2.13 requires the restrictions to comply with State Redevelopment law, which requires a long affordability period. The DEIR analysis took account of the AHOs in its analysis. (See, e.g., Table 3-8 in Chapter 3 of the DEIR; Section 4.15, Population and Housing, page 4.15-15 through 4.15-17, of the DEIR.)

- O-21k.282 Adoption of an ordinance establishing the list of Routine and Ongoing Agricultural Activities is a discretionary action and would be subject to CEQA. The specific uses included in the list of Routine and Ongoing Agricultural Activities will be defined at a later date. Note that these will reflect routine, not new uses that would otherwise require a use permit, such as a confined animal facility. Please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan's EIR*. For more detail on Routine and Agricultural Activities, please see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*.

The commenter claims that the paraphrasing of the bulleted policies is inaccurate and misleading, but does not describe how they are inaccurate and misleading, or provide any examples. The DEIR has been clarified to state that the bulleted policies are paraphrased. Beyond this, the current bulleted list provides enough detail for evaluation and review of the environmental impact.

For further discussion of the AWCP’s relationship to Routine and Ongoing Agricultural Activities, as well as clarification and further analysis of regulation of agricultural conversion on steep slopes (Policy OS-3.5), please see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*.

In response to this comment, the bulleted description in the DEIR of Policy OS-3.5 has been revised in Chapter 5 of the FEIR to clarify that the policy applies to the conversion for agricultural purposes of previously uncultivated lands containing slopes exceeding certain thresholds.

O-21k.283 The comment states that Exhibit 3.15 of the DEIR incorrectly cites to “LU-2.23(f)” as the General Plan policy that governs establishment of the boundary of the Chualar Community Area. The exhibit cited in the comment, Exhibit 3.15, does not relate to the Chualar Community Area, but we assume that the commenter is referring to Exhibit 3.16 which is the exhibit depicting the Chualar Community Area. The incorrect reference to LU-2.23(f) in the relevant General Plan maps and figures (General Plan Figure #CA3 (an aerial photo) and Figure LU4 (a map)) has been changed to correctly refer to Policy LU-2.22(c). (See Chapter 5 of the FEIR.) This correction was made in December 2008, and thereafter the County issued a new Notice of Availability and began a new public comment period on the DEIR, beginning December 16, 2008 and ending February 2, 2009. At that time, the County also issued a letter to the EIR distribution list explaining that Figures CA3 and LU4 of the General Plan Update are identical to Exhibit 3.6 and Exhibit 3.16 of the DEIR and the corrections apply to both. A note to this effect was placed on the County website. Individuals who requested CDs of the General Plan and DEIR were mailed a CD that included both sets of changes- General Plan figures and DEIR exhibits. A notice of correction was also sent to the State Clearinghouse.

Regarding the comment relating to the inadequacy of the DEIR because the boundary of the Chualar Community Area has not yet been established, as can be seen from Policy LU 2.22 and LU 2.24, the policies establish parameters for the size of the community. Policy LU-2.22.c states the boundaries for the Chualar Community Area are to be developed by a citizen group with recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, but shall not exceed 350 acres over the life of this Plan (20 years). The policy also states that planning for the Chualar Community Area and any Community Plan ultimately adopted for Chualar shall be consistent with that certain Settlement Agreement between Chualar Area Concerned Citizens, et al. and the County of Monterey in *Chualar Area Concerned Citizens, et al. v. County of Monterey* (Monterey County Superior Court Case no. 107519), executed on or about October 16, 2001. Therefore, the public will not be left out of the process, and the process will be subject to CEQA at such time as the specific locations of land uses and other attributes of the Community Area are determined. This is not piecemeal; it is rather going from the larger more programmatic level of planning to the more specific, which CEQA encourages. Please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan EIR*, for further discussion of the level of specificity of project-level impacts required in the DEIR.

The General Plan does not propose a prioritization of the County’s water resources. The Chualar Community Area is located within the Salinas Valley. As discussed in Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, operation of the SVWP will raise groundwater levels and alleviate overdraft by providing additional water to the bed of the Salinas River where it will infiltrate the aquifer. Because no significant and unavoidable impact is identified for this portion of the County for either the 2030 planning horizon or 2092 buildout, the suggested mitigation measures are not added to the FEIR. For the reasons outlined in response to O-221k.144 above, the mitigation measure is also legally infeasible to the extent the proposed measure would halt new development, including development on vacant legal lots of records, until overdraft is eliminated.

O-21k.284 The commenter is expressing a general opinion, which the County recognizes as such. Responses are made to the more specific assertions that follow.

O-21k.285 The waste diversion rates were the most recent and reliable waste diversion rates currently available at the time of preparation of the DEIR. This is current information, hence the use of the word “currently” in the DEIR. The commenter mischaracterizes statements made in the DEIR – “recent years” refers to the recent years for which data was available, i.e. 2005 and 2006. The DEIR has been edited to clarify when Monterey County was in compliance with the required waste diversion rate.

Future generation of solid waste would not result in non-compliance with State requirements. Both waste diversion *and* recycling efforts affect the waste diversion rates. For analysis of the 2007 General Plan’s impacts on solid waste, please see Impact PSU-8. In regard to the commenter’s request for specific information about the County’s outreach efforts, please see Monterey County’s Recycling Services website for detailed information about the County’s outreach efforts associated with recycling and waste diversion programs:

<http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/health/EnvironmentalHealth/recycling.htm>. According to the information available to the County, there have been no outreach efforts that have had a negative impact on waste diversion rates.

The comment’s request to list the County’s recycling and waste diversion programs is not appropriate or necessary for this DEIR. The purpose of the DEIR is to analyze the impacts of the 2007 General Plan, not every current County policy or program, and the level of detail requested is not required for a program level EIR on the General Plan. Please see Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan’s EIR*.

O-21k.286–

O-21k.287 These comments were inadvertently listed as 2 distinct comments, but they are related and will be responded to in a consolidated manner.

The comment contends that “the sources listed in the hard copy of the DEIR released by the County are inconsistent with the County’s updated list of Section 11 reference documents.” The comment provides only one example, however, a reference to the source cited in Table 4.11-4 Municipal Wastewater Disposal in Monterey County. That source was listed as “Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments 1999.”

Table 4.11-4 was based on information from AMBAG regarding available sewer capacity. In response to the comment, the table has been revised in the FEIR (see Chapter 4) to reflect newer information available from the Monterey County Local Agency Formation Commission Municipal Service Reviews for the Carmel Valley and South/Central Salinas Valley, as well as the Central Coast RWQCB discharge permit for the City of Gonzales’ sewer treatment plant expansion. The text of the EIR on page 4.11-5 is likewise revised to include this newer information, and to correct a misplaced decimal point. The information does not indicate that any of the wastewater treatment plants are receiving waste in excess of their capacities. The conclusions in the DEIR are therefore unchanged.

The comment further generally complains that the DEIR did not comply with Guidelines section 15148 because it did not cite to page and section numbers of reference documents. Again, the comment only cites one example, the DEIR’s citation to the

Monterey County Environmental Health Department “Subsurface Disposal System Design Criteria – 1/18/08.” A hard copy of that reference was made available during the DEIR comment period and the document was available online and is still available online (as of 02/15/10) at the address indicated in Chapter 11 of the DEIR (<http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/health/EnvironmentalHealth/EHReview/pdfs/winerywaste.pdf>). This reference is only one page long, and thus the commenter’s point about not finding the information referenced is not supported by the evidence.

The comment further contends that the DEIR cannot be verified for accuracy, but again only cites one example. Citing to page (in actuality, the section) 4.11.2.6, located on page 4.11-5, regarding the CAWD treatment facility, the commenter contends that the conclusion is not supported by the analysis. The source of the information in the text is the same source as for Table 4.11-4. The commenter asserts that the DEIR states that the CAWD treatment capacity exceeds current demand. This is true. Then the commenter asserts that somehow the impact conclusion that wastewater treatment capacity impacts are less than significant is contradicted by the data showing that there is plenty of capacity to meet new demand. We fail to follow the logic of the comment. Excess treatment capacity does not result in a significant impact. Therefore, no further response is necessary.

Regarding the comment on page 4.11-5 regarding the CAWD treatment facility, the source of the information in text is the same source as Table 4.11-4.

- O-21k.288 The comment relates to the wastewater generated by future development within the AWCP and its disposal. Please see Master Response 9, *Water Quality*, Section 9.5.3 regarding wastewater treatment plants in the AWCP.

Daily disposal rates will logically depend upon the volume of wine production. The crush, when water is used to clean and process grapes, wastewater production will be greater than periods of fermentation when no water-intensive processes are occurring.

- O-21k.289 The comment asks for additional analysis of solid waste generated by wineries and ancillary development within the AWCP. The waste products of wineries will vary, depending whether the winery includes bottling facilities. Typical solid wastes from wine making operations include pomace, grape stems and other organic materials, and diatomaceous earth (from filters). These materials are amenable to composting and reuse in the vineyards and are generally used for that purpose when economical. When bottling is included in the facility, additional solid wastes include wooden pallets, shrink wrap and plastic, glass, cardboard, paper, metals, cork, and packaging. (The California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance 2009) The volume of solid waste produced by wineries can vary greatly, depending upon whether or not it includes bottling facilities and the level of commitment of the operator to reduce and recycle their wastes. No estimate was undertaken because there is no standard benchmark by which to estimate the solid waste that may be produced by the wineries within the AWCP.

For examples of solid waste reduction efforts by a variety of producers:

- From 1990 to 2008, Fetzer Vineyards (Mendocino County) reduced its volume of solid waste sent to landfills from 1,724 tons to 58.8 tons, while simultaneously growing in capacity from 1.2 million cases per year to over 3.7 million cases. Fetzer

currently produces 2,500 tons of composted materials which it uses as compost and mulch in its vineyards and landscaped areas. (CalRecycle 2009; Wine Institute 2002)

- As of 2002, Frog's Leap Winery (Napa County) recycled, reduced or composted 80 percent of its solid wastes from production of approximately 50,000 cases of wine annually. (Wine Institute 2002)
- Diageo Chateau and Estate Wines Paicines Operations (San Benito County) processed more than 35 million gallons of wine in 2008 and diverted approximately 2,250 tons of solid waste from the landfill, including 2,051 tons of composted materials. (CalRecycle 2009)
- Quady Winery (Madera County) composts, reuses, or recycles approximately 99.4 percent of its wastes. (CalRecycle 2009)

Ancillary development would be expected to produce the wastes typical of the given use (i.e., guest or workers residence, inn, delicatessen, etc.), such as paper, plastic, glass, and food wastes in volumes typical of such uses. Because of the limited amount of such development when viewed in the context of existing development, the ancillary development within the AWCP would not be expected to have a significant effect on the overall County waste stream.

As shown in Table 4.11-5 of the DEIR, the County's Marina Landfill has a remaining capacity of 48.6 million cubic yards (of a total permitted capacity of 49.7 million cubic yards) and projected closure date of 2107. The wineries eventually permitted in the AWCP are not expected to have a substantial effect on that capacity. The comment asserts that Table 4.11-5 "is not accurate." The information in the table is taken from the records of the former California Integrated Waste Management Board (now the California Department Recycling, Resources, and Recovery), which oversees landfill permitting. That information is accurate.

An additional comment relates to the wastewater generated by future development within the AWCP and its disposal. Please see Master Response 9, *Water Quality*, regarding wastewater treatment plants in the AWCP and water quality permitting requirements.

O-21k.290 The comment requests specific information to support the DEIR statement that several Area Plan policies address wastewater. Information about the Area Plan policies addressing wastewater is found beginning on page 4.11-29 under "Area Plan Policies." Specific policies are listed on page 4.11-30 to support the DEIR statement. These policies are in addition to the policies in the other elements of the 2007 General Plan. The analysis of specific impacts requested by commenter will occur at such time as CEQA analyses are undertaken based on the specific proposals. See Master Response 10 regarding the expected level of detail in the program EIR prepared for a General Plan. In regard to the conclusion that Impact PSU-6 is less than significant, the conclusion is based on both General Plan policies and other regulations, particularly those of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. (DEIR, at pp. 4.11-31 and 4.11-32)

O-21k.291 See Master Response 10 regarding the expected level of detail in the program EIR prepared for a General Plan; see also Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*.

- O-21k.292 The term “low habitat value” means what it says -- an area that has low value as habitat. The determination that wastewater treatment facilities are likely to be located on lands of low habitat value is based on the protective policies of the 2007 General Plan, including OS-5.4 (development shall avoid, minimize, and mitigate listed species and critical habitat to the extent feasible) and OS-5.16 (biological study required for any development project requiring a discretionary permit and having the potential to substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare or threatened species), and Mitigation Measure BIO-2.1 (to preserve riparian habitat, conserve the value of streams and rivers as wildlife corridors, and reduce sediment and other water quality impacts of new development, the county will develop and adopt a Stream Setback Ordinance). These measures, as well as the CEQA analysis and mitigation that would be required for wastewater treatment facilities, will strongly discourage the placement of such facilities in areas of high habitat value.
- O-21k.293 The comment argues that the DEIR must analyze specific wastewater impacts, in specific the wastewater impacts of the AWCP, because this is the only time the AWCP will undergo CEQA review. The General Plan is not proposing or otherwise considering any specific wastewater treatment plants, and therefore cannot reasonably analyze the potential effects of as yet unknown facilities. See Master Response 10 regarding the expected level of detail in the program EIR prepared for a General Plan. Please see Master Response 9, *Water Quality*, regarding wastewater treatment plants in the AWCP and water quality permitting requirements (disposal requires discretionary permits from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board), and please see the response to comment O-21.k.289 above regarding solid waste impacts of the AWCP. The assumption on which the comment is predicated is also incorrect. Full scale wineries, restaurants, delicatessens, and inns are permitted uses subject to an administrative permit as set forth in the AWCP, and the administrative permit is a discretionary permit that is subject to a public hearing process and environmental review.
- O-21k.294 The comment asserts that the wastewater production estimates in Table 4.11-7 of the DEIR are inaccurate, but provides no substantial evidence to support that opinion. See Master Response 9, *Water Quality* Section 9.5.3 regarding water quality for a discussion of wastewater disposal in the winery corridor.
- O-21k.295 This comment states that the analysis of climate change environmental impacts is incomplete and inadequate because it asserts that it is based on unsupported assumptions. This comment is responded to in the context of the specific comments made in comments O-21k.296 and O-21k.297 below as this comment alone is a statement and does not provide any specific comment on the EIR that requires response.
- O21k-296 This comment states that the DEIR analysis does not adequately address agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for a number of specific reasons responded to below.
- The comment asserts that the DEIR underestimates the amount of agricultural growth, including vineyard growth due to the 2007 General Plan and thus underestimates the amount of agricultural GHG emissions. Regarding the amount of overall estimated agricultural growth in the county, please see the Master Response 3 on general plan

agricultural policies, which provides a detailed response to this issue. As noted therein, the DEIR's conclusion that agricultural growth will be modest is supported by evidence from the trend of overall agricultural growth, the projections of agricultural employment, the evaluation of other studies (such as the Salinas Valley Water Project EIS/EIR). The statement about no increase in overall acreage of agricultural land in Appendix B and Tables 4.16-3 and Table 4.16-4 of the DEIR was an overstatement and is not consistent with the analysis of agriculture and biological resources in the DEIR (wherein an increase in agricultural acreage is estimated, albeit a limited increase consistent with historic trends). This has been corrected in the FEIR (see Chapter 4 of the FEIR for revised tables). As explained below, the analysis of agricultural emissions has been updated to account specifically for agricultural equipment emissions in 2030 and beyond and to account for conversion of natural land covers to farmland. This update does not result in any new impacts.

The underlying assertion of this comment regards agricultural emissions and whether they are adequately disclosed in the DEIR. Agricultural emissions result from several sources including agricultural equipment, processing of agricultural goods, transportation of agricultural goods, and changes in land use cover due to conversion of natural land covers for use for agriculture.

Regarding agricultural equipment emissions, these were included in the DEIR for the baseline (see Table 4.16-1), but were not estimated to increase based on no assumed overall change in agricultural acreage. This assumption of no increase in agricultural equipment emissions was reexamined for the FEIR by running the ARB OFFROAD model for both 2006 and 2030, which identified that agricultural equipment emissions in Monterey County are actually shown to decline slightly from 2006 (87,448 tons CO₂e) to 2030 (86,725 tons CO₂e). This evidence from ARBs currently accepted offroad model (California Air Resources Board. 2007d) supports the DEIR's estimate of no increase in agricultural equipment emissions and has been added to the EIR (see Chapter 4 of the FEIR and the Technical Supporting Data) in addition to corrections about references to changes in agricultural acreages. This decrease is due, in part, to newer equipment that produces fewer emissions.

Regarding processing of agricultural goods, GHG emissions would include those related to energy (electricity, natural gas) consumption in buildings where agricultural goods are processed and stored. As noted in the DEIR in Appendix B, increases in energy consumption were included based on projections of commercial growth and industrial emissions were included based on projections of industrial employment. The exact amount of commercial or industrial growth related to agricultural processing within unincorporated Monterey County was not estimated, but nevertheless is subsumed in the broader analysis and the TOMP comment provides no evidence as to why this is an inappropriate approach to estimating GHG emissions overall.

Regarding the transportation of agricultural goods using on-road vehicles, the transportation analysis in the DEIR includes traffic from all projected land uses allowed by the 2007 General Plan and thus already includes agricultural on-road traffic. The exact amount due to agricultural growth was not estimated, but nevertheless is subsumed in the broader analysis and the MP comment provides no evidence as to why this is an inappropriate approach to estimating GHG emissions overall.

Regarding conversion of natural land covers to agriculture, please see the response to Comment O21k-297.

The comment asserts that agricultural employment projections may not be a reliable indicator of agricultural development. Appendix B to the DEIR, which presented the GHG estimation methodology, stated that agricultural employment was used as an indicator of agricultural development for the purposes of estimating agricultural emissions. This statement has been modified in the FEIR by adding the analysis of agricultural equipment emissions using the ARB OFFROAD model, by explaining how emissions from building energy use and transportation are included in the overall analysis of building energy use and transportation, and by referencing the additional analysis of GHG emissions associated with changes in land use cover. The addition of this analysis does not change the conclusions of the DEIR – that is – the implementation of General Plan policies and the identified mitigation measures would still result in the reduction of emissions to meet the County's identified reduction target which is consistent with statewide planning efforts to reduce GHG emissions under AB 32 (California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006). It should also be noted that the TOMP comment provides no evidence as to why use of agricultural employment may be inappropriate and thus does not contradict the DEIR's methodology by reference to an alternate methodology or approach nor present any evidence as to why the DEIR's methodology is inadequate. Regardless as described above, the analysis of agricultural emissions has been expanded and the methodology described adequately in the Chapter 4 of the FEIR.

The comment asserts that agricultural emissions can expand without an increase in acreage and that the DEIR's assumption of no change for agricultural emissions is therefore inaccurate. As noted above, the statement found in DEIR Appendix B and in Tables 4.16-3 and 4.16-4 that there is no change in agricultural acreage is incorrect and has been changed in Chapter 4 in the FEIR to be consistent with the analysis of agriculture and biological resources. Regarding expansion of agricultural emissions without an increase in acreage, in theory this is possible if agricultural GHG emissions intensity were to increase across the sector. However, as noted above, the analysis in the Chapter 4 in the FEIR includes the estimated changes in GHG emissions from equipment, processing, transport, and land use changes based on reasonable sources and assumptions. The TOMP comment does not provide any specific evidence that the GHG emissions intensity of agriculture in Monterey County will increase. If anything, the evidence is that over time, agriculture tends to become ever more efficient; a specific example is the increasing efficiency of water use described in Master Response 4 concerning water supply (reducing water consumption reduces pumping which reduces GHG emissions from either diesel or electric pumps).

The comment states that regardless of conclusions about agricultural growth, the DEIR should show how it would quantify agricultural emissions from agricultural development. As described above, Chapter 4 in the FEIR (see Section 4.16) now describes how agricultural emissions are included in the overall estimate of GHG emissions at 2030 and for development.

The comment requests that the methods to analyze agricultural emissions from a particular development project should be explained. The EIR for the 2007 General Plan is a programmatic EIR analyzing buildout within the unincorporated County, but is not a

project-level EIR analyzing any particular development project. A general methodology for estimating overall GHG emissions, including agricultural-related emissions, is described in Chapter 4 in the FEIR which is adequate for a Program EIR.

The comment states that the analysis should include the emissions from new wineries allowed by the AWCP and that new wineries will increase the amount of vineyards in the County and thus increase agricultural emissions. Regarding the amount of growth in wineries and whether the estimated vineyard acreage increase will be greater than estimated in the DEIR due to the new wineries, please see Master Response 3 concerning agricultural policies wherein it is concluded that the DEIR estimates of both winery and vineyard growth remain reasonable and supported by evidence. Regarding emissions from new wineries, the two primary sources of GHG emissions would be energy consumption (electricity/natural gas) and transportation. AWCP traffic was included in the traffic analysis that produced the VMT used to estimate transportation emissions. For energy consumption, the FEIR now includes estimated building energy-related (electricity/natural gas) GHG emissions for AWCP-allowed wineries and ancillary uses; the overall increase in unmitigated GHG emissions at 2030 is 5,327 tons CO₂e (See Chapter 4 of the FEIR).

The comment states that the DEIR does not sufficiently explain how the estimation of traffic, electricity demand, and direct energy use emissions take into account new winery and agricultural GHG emissions and should identify the specific agricultural emissions included in the overall estimation. As noted above, energy use (electricity and direct energy use) and traffic estimates of GHG emissions include that projected from growth in commercial and industrial growth overall in the County, AWCP traffic was included in the transportation emissions estimate and the GHG emissions related to building energy use for specific AWCP allowed wineries and ancillary uses has now been added in Chapter 4 in the FEIR. Regarding separation out of specific agricultural-related emissions from all other emissions, this is not necessary for the analysis of GHG emissions in the EIR, but the reader can now identify the following specific GHG emissions in the Chapter 4 in the FEIR: 1) agricultural equipment emissions; 2) AWCP building energy emissions; and 3) GHG emissions related to changes in land use cover due to agricultural conversions.

- O21k-297 This comment requests and states the following: 1) explanation of which natural lands and agricultural lands will be converted by the 2007 General Plan and identify the locations of such conversion on a parcel basis; 2) if specific locations of land conversion are not identified then provide an analysis of the effects on the environment from a lack of specific provision and the likely locations; 3) that the estimated GHG fluxes from natural land and agricultural land conversion should be disclosed along with the uncertainty in estimating such GHG fluxes.

Regarding the amount of land conversion from natural land covers to farmland and urban use and the conversion of farmland to urban use, the DEIR provided estimates as follows: Table 4.9-7 (conversion of natural land covers to urban uses of 17,991 acres at buildout); Table 4.9-8 (conversion of natural land covers to farmland of 9,843 acres by 2030 and 37,582 acres by buildout); and Table 4.2-9 (conversion of 2,571 acres of important farmland to urban uses by buildout).

The DEIR describes the specific natural land cover conversions to urban uses by community area, rural center, and AHO on pages 4.9-57 through 4.9-61 and figures for these areas are included in the 2007 General Plan. The locations of conversion of natural land covers to urban uses in other planning areas throughout the County would be in areas designated for development uses as shown on the land use designation figures in the General Plan. As described in Table 4.9-7, development was overlaid on GIS vegetation mapping to estimate conversions based on assumptions about cover conversions for different types of development, to provide a rough estimate of potential conversion. Thus, parcel specific assumptions about the amount of conversion were not developed; this is an appropriate approach as this is a Program EIR and it would be speculative to determine in advance the precise amount of conversion on any specific parcel as this is a matter for project level analysis. However, the overall method of analysis is considered reasonably representative based on the available data.

The DEIR describes the potential natural land cover conversions to farmland by use of GIS mapping of prior conversion patterns and projecting continuation of these trends into the future. As explained on page 4.9-63, based on historic trend, the likely location of the majority of future natural land cover conversions to farmland would be along the slopes of the Salinas Valley along with tributary valleys. Additional discussion of agricultural conversion is provided in Master Response 3. See also the discussion of the potential for conversions in Master Response 3, *General Plan Agricultural Policies*, and Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*. A specific parcel-based forecast of agricultural conversions was not completed, nor would be feasible without parcel-specific information about site conditions (soil, water, sun exposure, elevation etc.) as well as landowner intent, which is not available at this time. The DEIR's approach of using historic trends as a reasonable basis for estimating future conversions is an evidence-based approach. The TOMP letter provides no evidence in this comment as to why the conversion methodology used is inadequate.

Regarding changes in GHG flux due to land cover changes, an analysis of the potential GHG emissions has been added to the FEIR (see Chapter 4 of the FEIR). Changes of one land cover to another (for example oak woodland to vineyard or agricultural cropland to urban use) results in a change in both the *carbon stock* (which is the amount of carbon stored in the organic matter in vegetation and soils) and *carbon sequestration* (which is the amount of carbon annually sequestered from the atmosphere due to incorporation in organic matter). As noted in the DEIR, there are a number of uncertainties in estimated changes in carbon stock and carbon sequestration. While crude estimates of carbon stock and carbon sequestration can be made by use of broad literature values for different land cover types, the specific carbon stock or sequestration for specific land covers can vary dramatically based on many factors: the character of site vegetation (type, density, and extent), site soils and their organic content, seasonal growing conditions such as temperature and precipitation, maturity of site vegetation (for example - age class of forests and woodlands), land management, and fire regimes, and other factors. Thus, use of literature values from research sources may provide factors for a land cover that may substantially overestimate or underestimate the actual amount of carbon stock or sequestration for a specific location or region. Due to this uncertainty, the DEIR did not provide a specific estimate of such changes in carbon stock or sequestration. However, in order to provide a rough estimation of GHG emissions related to changes in land use cover, such an analysis has been incorporated into Chapter 4 in the FEIR based on

reasonably available data and incorporated into the 2030 and buildout estimates of GHG emissions.

Inclusion of the emissions related to land use changes, along with other changes made to the GHG estimate, result in an increase in estimated emissions in the baseline year (2006) of four percent and an increase in estimated emissions in 2020, 2030, and buildout of six to nine percent. The addition of these estimated emissions in the FEIR does not change the fundamental conclusion of the DEIR that the GHG emissions within the unincorporated County can feasibly be reduced through a combination of state and local requirements (as reflected in General Plan Policy OS-10.11 and the identified mitigation measures) to below the County's identified reduction target.

- O-21k.298 See Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, Section 4.1.1 for a discussion of the definition of long-term water supply. GPU5 and the Area Plans are not inconsistent, as alleged by the commenter. The Area Plans provide more area-specific policies. As explained in the Land Use Element of GPU5:

Monterey County's General Plan consists of policies that apply countywide and policies unique to a specific region. Countywide policies are applicable to the entire unincorporated area and are included within this Land Use Element. More focused policies that address specific regional or local issues are found in Area Plans. The Land Use Maps and land use designation descriptions in this general plan cover all inland, unincorporated, areas of the county. Due to the size of the County, Land Use Maps are divided by Planning Areas and are included as part of this Land Use Element (*Policy LU-1.11*).

- O-21k.299 The comment questions whether Table PS-2 is incorporated into any GPU5 Policy. Table PS-2 is intended to be an additional clarification to footnote 5 of table PS-1. A reference to this effect has been added to footnote 5 of table PS-1. (See Chapter 5 of the FEIR.)
- O-21k.300 The comment asserts that the DEIR fails to assess the impacts of Goal AG-4 and Policy AG-4.1, which the comment reads as placing no limits on support for the wine industry. "Support" is defined in the General Plan glossary to mean "an endorsement" with a high level of county support, but it does preclude the application of other General Plan policies or other applicable regulations. The 2007 General Plan comprises "an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies", as required under Government Code Section 65300.5. The wine industry and its activities are subject to the other goals and policies of the 2007 General Plan, as well as pertinent state and federal regulations, and regulations contained in the Monterey County Code.
- O-21k.301 The mitigation measure for park and recreation facilities on page 4.12-30 of the DEIR will require the revision of General Plan Policy PS-11.10 to include a park and recreational facility standard of at least three acres per 1,000 residents. This provides a specific level of service for the acquisition of parks and recreational facilities.
- O-21k.302 The comment states that the alternatives analysis is inadequate and does not adequately compare the project's impacts with those of the alternatives. The analysis of Alternatives to the 2007 General Plan is adequate under CEQA. (Throughout the response to

comments regarding the Alternatives, we will continue to use the name “2007 General Plan” to denote the draft General Plan which is the subject of this EIR, although the title of plan will be updated, as shown in Chapter 5 of this FEIR.) CEQA requires an EIR to “include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the proposed project.” (CEQA Guidelines, §15126.6(d)) The discussion of the significant effects of each alternative shall provide “less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed.” (Id.) The DEIR provides a description of each project alternative and a qualitative comparison of the alternative and the project for each resource area. (DEIR, Chapter 5.)

Analyzing the alternatives in this manner highlights the aspects of the alternative that would avoid significant environmental effects of the proposed project as well as those aspects that would have greater impacts than the proposed project. This facilitates a meaningful evaluation of the comparative merits of each alternative.

The comment states that the alternatives analysis does not adequately support its conclusions. Please see the responses to comments on alternatives that follow, including responses O-21k.317, O-21k.318, O-21k.323, O-21k.325, O-21k.329, O-21k.330, O-21k.357, and O-21k.358, which address commenter’s specific remarks regarding conclusions commenter believes are not adequately supported.

Revisions have been made in the Alternatives section of the DEIR (Section 5) to clarify the projected residential development under each of the alternatives. The conclusions reached in the analysis are largely unchanged by the revised numbers. See Chapter 4 of the FEIR for these revisions.

The comment states that by paraphrasing the requirements of CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6 in the DEIR, the DEIR has imposed a different legal standard than what is called for under CEQA. Section 5.1 of the DEIR excerpts the legal requirements for the alternatives analysis in a bulleted list, which succinctly and accurately conveys the relevant CEQA standards for the DEIR’s alternatives analysis. The full text of CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6 is lengthy, and it is unnecessary to include the full text, verbatim, in order to state the applicable legal standards. The DEIR specifically quotes the following requirements from section 15126.6: “An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project” and, an “EIR should [also] identify any alternatives that were considered by the lead agency, but rejected as infeasible during the scoping process.” (DEIR, Section 5.1; CEQA Guidelines §§15126.6 (a); 15126.6 (c)) The DEIR states the following requirements of section 15126.6 (c), with slight alterations in the wording which have no effect on their meaning: reasons for rejecting an alternative include failure to meet most of the basic project objectives, infeasibility, and/or inability to avoid or reduce any of the project’s significant environmental effects. (DEIR, Section 5.1; CEQA Guidelines § 15126.6 (c)) The manner in which the DEIR presented the legal requirements of CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6 in no way altered those requirements or the way in which the alternatives were analyzed.

- O-21k.303 The comment asserts that the DEIR has an inadequate discussion of the 2007 General Plan’s alleged “inconsistency and tension between the two ‘project objectives’ listed at 5-1 and 5-2.” These relate to preserving scenic and environmental resources, and facilitating winery development within the AWCP.

The DEIR does not address this topic because the objectives are not inconsistent. Government Code Section 65300.5 requires the General Plan to “comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies.” The County Board of Supervisors determines whether objectives are consistent and compatible, and that the General Plan is internally consistent. (See, for example, *Friends of Lagoon Valley v. City of Vacaville* (2007) 154 Cal.App.4th 807 [recognizing that some aspects of a proposed business park project deviated from particular planning provisions, the City determined that the project was consistent overall with the General Plan]) The cited policies are not incompatible. The development of wineries within the AWCP is subject to a number of policies and requirements that protect scenic and environmental resources. See Master Response 3, Section 3.2, regarding policies in the AWCP.

O-21k.304 The commenter asks which of the plans the TOD alternative modifies. As stated on page 5-50 in the description of this alternative, except as described on that page, “this alternative would share the same policies as the 2007 General Plan.” The three tiers are described on p. 5-51. The full description is provided on pages 5-50 to 5-53; the summary on pages 5-5 and 5-6 to which the commenter refers is a summary of that more complete description.

O-21k.305 The comment asks what the following sentence means: “Overall, impacts under the No Project Alternative would be significant and unavoidable.” This sentence is the conclusion to the introductory paragraph discussing the land use impacts of the No Project Alternative. The word “overall” in the sentence means “when considered in total.” The sentence is conveying the conclusion that the No Project Alternative, that is the continued application of the 1982 General Plan to the inland areas of the County, would have a significant and unavoidable impact on land use. The reasons are described on DEIR page 5-8.

O-21k.306 The DEIR does not state that “land use conflicts” “have greater impacts on land use.” The analysis in section 5.3.2.1 follows the impact criteria set out in the individual impact sections of the DEIR. Accordingly, it discusses whether the No Project Alternative (the 1982 General Plan) would result in land use conflicts. The policies of the 1982 General Plan would not result in discrete higher-density community areas and rural centers to the same extent that the 2007 General Plan would, and as a result, land use conflicts would be more likely to occur under the 1982 General Plan. Examples include large lot subdivisions outside of established communities adjoining agricultural land (bringing housing into conflict with the results of agricultural practices such as dust from plowing and pesticide drift), and subdivision of existing lots of record resulting in conflicts with open space uses. The paragraph cited in the comment is comparing the relative level of impacts of the No Project Alternative and the 2007 General Plan.

The word “impact” is synonymous with “effect” and is used throughout the DEIR in a manner that is consistent with the definition provided in CEQA Guidelines Section 15358.

O-21k.307 Please see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*. The AWCP would authorize future full-scale and artisan wineries within defined corridors, along with ancillary uses. This provides value added for growers who can sell their wines direct to the buyer, provide tourist services that generate income

beyond that of the wine, and provide marketing opportunities to take advantage of Monterey County's wine region appellations to "brand" higher-value wines.

- O-21k.308 The first paragraph of the discussion at section 5.3.2.2 identifies the potential for agricultural land conversion as a result of the 1982 General Plan. Rural development under the 1982 General Plan will result in the conversion of agricultural land and have a significant, unavoidable impact. The second paragraph of this discussion describes the potential impact under the 2007 General Plan. As described in Section 4.2, the 2007 General Plan would also have a significant and unavoidable impact on agriculture. The third paragraph provides a comparison of the two plans, noting that while both will have significant and unavoidable impacts, the No Project Alternative's impact will be "slightly greater" because more of its growth would occur outside of focused growth areas. Please also see Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail required of a program EIR prepared for a general plan.

The comment also asks for clarification regarding the comparison of the buffer policies under the 1982 General Plan and the 2007 General Plan. Although the 1982 General Plan has a stronger buffer policy (requiring permanent buffers), the policy in the 2007 General Plan is more detailed with regard to the requirements for buffer areas and compensation for loss of agricultural lands and has a stronger provision with respect to preventing the subdivision of agricultural lands for non-agricultural purposes. Furthermore, the 2007 General Plan has incentives for the continuation of agricultural uses including numerous policies in the Agricultural Element. Accordingly, the 1982 General Plan would have greater impacts on agricultural lands than the GP2007 (DEIR, § 5.2.3.2)

The DEIR alternatives analysis provides sufficient information about the No Project Alternative's impacts on agriculture to allow a meaningful comparison with the proposed project. (CEQA Guidelines, § 15126.6) A quantification of the amount and location of land that could be affected by the 2007 General Plan buffer policy as compared to the 1982 General Plan buffer policy is not required, and is not feasible because these policies are not project- or site-specific. (CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15151; 15204 (a)) Please also see Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail required of a program EIR prepared for a general plan.

- O-21k.309 The steep slope policies of the 2007 General Plan are taken into account in the discussion of water resources impacts. The key policies will not, as the comment implies, result in significant erosion in the future, nor will they result in extensive new development or agricultural conversion on steep slopes compared to the 1982 General Plan (taking into account the revised Policy OS-3.5). See the response to comment O-21k.149. See also Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, and Master Response 9, *Water Quality*, for discussions of the slope development restrictions embodied in Policy OS-3.5.

- O-21k.310 The comment asserts that the analysis at Section 5.3.2.3 fails to identify or discuss the impacts of the water supply mitigation measures proposed for the 2007 General Plan. The comment does not identify which mitigation measures it is alluding to, thus preventing specific response. The impacts of new water supply infrastructure are fully analyzed in Section 4.3 under Impact WR-5 and thus the comment's assertion that this is not analyzed is wrong. In addition, the Alternatives analysis need not provide an impact-

by-impact comparison of the proposed project and the No Project Alternative, and is sufficient if it assesses the relative merits of the proposed project and the alternatives. (*Del Mar Terrace Conservancy, Inc. v. City Council* (1992) 10 Cal. App.4th 712) In addition, the level of detail provided for the alternatives analysis should correspond to the level of specificity involved in the activity considered in the EIR, which in this case is a planning level action. (CEQA Guidelines, § 15146) See Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail required of a program EIR prepared for a general plan.

O-21k.311 In practice, the County's current level of service (LOS) standard is LOS C. That is discussed, along with descriptions of the LOS ratings, in the Transportation section of the DEIR on page 4.6-6. Going from LOS C to LOS D indicates an increase in roadway delays. (DEIR, § 4.6.2.5, Table 4.6-3) Please see DEIR section 4.6.3.5 for an in depth analysis of impacts to roadways, including measures to improve transportation throughout the County. See also Master Response 6, *Traffic Mitigation*.

O-21k.312 The 2007 General Plan includes policies designed to encourage the conservation and maintenance of native plant communities and to require careful planning in areas that are of value to wildlife, as does the 1982 General Plan. Section 5.3.2.9 of the DEIR provides a comparative analysis between the 1982 General Plan policies and the 2007 General Plan policies relating to biological resources. An analysis of the comparative impacts of the two general plans does not require a listing of each specific policy or impact. See the responses to comments O-21k.302, O-21k.310, and Master Response 10, *Level of Detail for the General Plan and the General Plan EIR* regarding the level of detail required in the Alternatives analysis. The policies of the 2007 General Plan relative to native plant communities and conservation of native vegetation are found in the Goal 5 policies under "Biological (Natural) Resources" in the Conservation-Open Space Element.

As described beginning on page 4.9-68 of the DEIR, there are a number of 2007 General Plan policies that encourage conservation of native plant communities and promote conservation of areas of native vegetation. These include the following.

Policy OS-5.3 stipulates that development be carefully planned to provide for the conservation of critical habitat. Policy OS-5.4 stipulates the avoidance of impacts to listed species and critical habitat through the use of clustering lots to avoid critical areas, dedications of permanent conservation easements, and other appropriate means. Policy OS-5.5 encourages landowners and developers to preserve the integrity of existing terrain and native vegetation in visually sensitive areas such as hillsides, ridges, and watershed, but exempts Routine and Ongoing Agricultural (which is already in operation) from this policy. Policy OS-5.6 stipulates that native and native compatible species, especially drought resistant species, be utilized in fulfilling landscaping requirements. Policy OS-5.11 promotes conservation of large, continuous expanses of native trees and vegetation as the most suitable habitat for maintaining abundant and diverse wildlife. Policy OS-5.14 requires that policies and procedures that encourage exclusion and control or eradication of invasive exotic plants and animals be established.

Further, a number of mitigation measures recommend adoption of policies that will conserve natural vegetation and native plant communities. For example, Mitigation Measure BIO-1.2 (Policy OS-5.19) would result in a conservation strategy for San Joaquin kit fox that will necessarily include a vegetation component. BIO-2.1 (Policy

OS-5.22) would result in a stream setback ordinance that will conserve vegetation along waterways. BIO-2.2 (Policy OS-5.3) would result in an oak woodlands compensation program that will mitigate losses of that plant community.

- O-21k.313 Please see Master Response 3 regarding agricultural policies. With the revision to Policy OS-3.5, the potential for agricultural conversion on slopes is not increased relative to the 1982 General Plan. This has been added to discussion of the biological resource comparative impacts of the 1982 General Plan and the proposed 2007 General Plan. Regarding biological resources in the County and those affected by the 2007 General Plan, Section 5.3.2.9 is not meant to provide a comprehensive analysis of the steep slope policy (OS-3.5) on biological resources. The impact of 2007 General Plan policy OS-3.5 on biological resources is discussed in DEIR section 4.9.5.4. Please see responses to comments O-21k.302, O-21k.310, and Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail required in the Alternatives analysis. Please see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, regarding the extent and distribution of development that would occur pursuant to OS-3.5 and the impact of OS-3.5 on biological resources. The 2007 General Plan would have a cumulatively considerable (significant) impact on biological resources. (DEIR, § 6.4.3.7)
- O-21k.314 Please see responses to comments 302, 310, and Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail required in the Alternatives analysis. The impact of the 2007 General Plan on Public Services and Utilities is not discussed in detail in the alternatives analysis because it is addressed in detail in section 4.11 of the DEIR.

The significant effect referred to in the first paragraph under DEIR § 5.3.2.11 is the significant effect on potable water supply. The third paragraph of that section addresses how the 2007 General Plan will reduce impacts to potable water supply as compared to the 1982 General Plan. As stated there, the 2007 General Plan includes policies for the development of a Hydrologic Resources Constraints and Hazards Database to assist in managing conservation and water quality improvement. 2007 General Plan policies will also require that all projects be designed to increase the site's predevelopment absorption of rainfall and to recharge groundwater where appropriate, and to require the management of construction of impervious surfaces in important groundwater recharge areas through discretionary permits. These policies would result in reduced impacts on potable water supply as compared to the 1982 General Plan.

Although the impacts of the proposed 2007 General Plan on groundwater are mainly discussed in DEIR sections 4.3 and 5.3.2.3, Water Resources, the commenter's assertion that the discussion of potable water is misplaced here is incorrect. Potable water is a service provided to residents and is pertinent to a discussion of "Public Services and Utilities." In Monterey County, the source of most potable water is groundwater. Therefore, groundwater overdraft and General Plan policies designed to conserve water are relevant to the discussion. Therefore, a brief comparison of the impact on groundwater between the 1982 General Plan and the proposed 2007 General Plan is also provided in DEIR section 5.3.2.11, Public Services and Utilities. This is a reasonable way to organize the information.

One key consideration in comparing the 2007 General Plan with the 1982 Plan are the draft General Plan policies under Goal PS-3; more specifically, proposed Policies PS-3.1

and PS-3.3 requiring demonstrated long-term water sustainable supply for new discretionary development, with limited exceptions, in the County. Although the 1982 General Plan has broad language also protecting water supplies, the 2007 General Plan mandates a formalized determination of long-term sustainable water supply which will help to better manage water supplies.

- O-21k.315 See the response to comment O-21k.310. Impacts of new water infrastructure are fully analyzed in the DEIR Chapter 4.3 under Impact WR-5 contrary to the comment's assertion.
- O-21k.316 The comment asks that the specific 1982 General Plan policies relied upon in the analysis be cited specifically. See the responses to comments O-21k.302, O-21k.310, and Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail required in an alternatives discussion. The 1982 General Plan policies for public services and utilities are those policies and objectives for Goals 46 through 56. The 1982 General Plan policies related to land use development are those policies and objectives for Goals 26 through 35.
- O-21k.317 Although the 1982 General Plan does have policies encouraging parks, those do not include standards for the amount of land that may be acquired for parks or for the exaction of park and recreation facilities from subdividers (as provided for under Government Code Section 66477). Although the County's subdivision ordinance does contain such standards, Section 66477 requires such standards to appear in the General Plan. As a result, the Alternatives analysis concluded that with implementation of Mitigation Measure PAR-1, the impacts of the 2007 General Plan would be less than those of the 1982 General Plan.
- O-21k.318 The 1982 General Plan reflects Monterey County as it existed nearly 30 years ago. Since that time, there have been substantial changes in the economy of the County, with tourism expanding on the Monterey Peninsula; in the land use, with the closure of Fort Ord and rapid growth in Salinas; in water supply, groundwater recharge, and seawater intrusion; in the regulatory environment, with new regulations on water quality, for example; and in many other areas. The 2007 General Plan incorporates these considerations into changes into its policies. Following are some examples of policies. Policies PS-1.1 through PS-1.6 require the provision of adequate public facilities and financing for those facilities concurrent with new discretionary development in order to ensure that water supply and other public utilities are in place to serve growth in a timely manner. Policies PS-2.8 and PS-2.9 promote groundwater recharge by limiting impervious coverage in new development. Policies PS-3.1 through PS-3.15, as well as Policies PS-3.16 through PS-3.18 being proposed for addition to the General Plan, address issues such as "long-term, sustainable water supply," groundwater overdraft, well interference, and long-term planning for future water supplies. Policies PS-4.10 and PS.4.12 establish requirements for onsite wastewater treatment in order to improve water quality in areas served by septic tanks. Policy PS-5.5 establishes an aggressive new goal for solid waste diversion in order to reduce the burden on landfills. Policies under the AWCP are intended to support the continued vitality of the County's agricultural industry, particularly its wineries.

These parameters were used as part of the comparison here because under CEQA, an alternative must be able to "feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project."

(CEQA Guidelines, 15126.6 (a)) As a result, part of the analysis of a project alternative is whether it can meet the objectives of the proposed Project. Many of the proposed Project objectives relate to the need to approve a general plan that reflects changing economic conditions, land use patterns, socioeconomics, and technological advances. (See DEIR, §3.2.1) Therefore, these parameters were used to compare the 1982 General Plan with the 2007 General Plan to determine whether the 1982 General Plan (the No Project Alternative) would be able to attain most of the basic objectives of the project.

- O-21k.319 See Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Agricultural Policies*, and Master Response 9, *Water Quality*, for discussions of the slope restrictions and their potential for impact on land use, water, biology, and other environmental issues. With the revision in Policy OS-3.5, the 2007 General Plan will have similar constraints on development and agricultural conversion on steep slopes as the 1982 General Plan. Revised Policy OS-3.5 prohibits development and agricultural conversion of uncultivated lands on slopes exceeding 25%, except under special circumstances. The 1982 General Plan applies a 30% cut off. Arguably, on that count the 2007 General Plan is stricter than the 1982 Plan.
- O-21k.320 The comment summarizes the commenter's issues with the DEIR comparison of the 2007 General Plan with the GPU3 Alternative. Responses to the specific comments follow.
- O-21k.321 The commenter asks for clarification of what is meant by tiers and phases. GPU3 identified a preferential pattern of sequential development in the Rural Centers. Tier I Rural Centers would be encouraged to develop before Tier II, and Tier II before Tier III.
- O-21k.322 The commenter asserts that the discussion of GPU3 is confusing because it would affect the coastal zone. GPU3 proposes to amend the County's Local Coastal Program. As discussed in the response to comment O-21k.258, the 2007 General Plan does not propose amendments in the Coastal Zone. This differentiates the two alternatives. The numbers for GPU3 do include the Coastal Zone. See Master Response 2 regarding growth projections for a discussion of the assumptions made for the 2007 General Plan. The numbers of units in Table 5-2 have been updated (the DEIR inadvertently included the 2006 to 2030 number of 10,015 units when it should have included 13,420 units between 2000 and 2030 to compare to the 13,675 units for GPU3 between 2000 and 2030); although GPU3 still includes more units than the 2007 General Plan, the difference is now much smaller (255) units. The analysis of GPU3 has been revised accordingly (see Chapter 4 of this FEIR).
- O-21k.323 The discussion of alternatives need not be exhaustive and is not expected to be as detailed as the discussion of the project. (*Sierra Club v. City of Orange* (2008) 163 Cal.App.4th 523) Subsection (d) of CEQA Guidelines §15126.6 requires that the evaluation of alternatives "include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the proposed project. The level of detail provided for the alternatives analysis should correspond to the level of specificity involved in the activity considered in the EIR, which in this case is a planning level action. (CEQA Guidelines, § 15146) See Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail required of a program EIR prepared for a general plan. The cited comparison of the GPU3 alternative and the 2007 General Plan meets this requirement. As noted earlier, the 2007 General Plan does not apply in the coastal region of the County. The

impacts of both the GPU3 alternative and the 2007 General Plan are similar, because in practice the floodplain restrictions of County ordinance (Monterey County Code Chapters 16.16 and 21.24, described on page 4.3-79 of the DEIR) rather than the General Plan regulate development within mapped 100-year floodplains.

- O-21k.324 The impacts on water resources of the 2007 General Plan's slope policy is addressed in Section 4.3, on page 4.3-100. As described in Master Response 9, *Water Quality*, revised Policy OS-3.5 will require discretionary permits for development on steep slopes and discourage agricultural conversion of such slopes as a result. GPU3 generally proposed to prohibit development on slopes exceeding 30% (with an exception for cases where the prohibition would make an existing legal lot unbuildable) and to prohibit the conversion of uncultivated land on slopes exceeding 30%. This is similar to the 2007 General Plan's revised Policy OS-3.5, which prohibits development and conversion of uncultivated lands on slopes exceeding 25%, with limited exceptions. Policy OS-3.5 also includes provisions for discretionary permits and a management plan for erosion, water quality, and vegetation/habitat protection for agricultural conversions, which GPU3 does not. On the whole, Policy OS-3.5 appears to be more stringent.
- O-21k.325 The conclusion in Section 5.4.2.4 is based on the fact that GPU3 would allow a higher degree of and slightly more expansive development than the 2007 General Plan. Table 5-2 has been revised to illustrate the difference in residential development potential.
- O-21k.326 This comment alleges that the steep slope policies of the 2007 General Plan creates erosion potential that outweighs the GPU3 impacts and asks why the analysis discusses County erosion control ordinances. See Master Response 9, *Water Quality* and Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies* for discussions of the erosion controls in the 2007 General Plan. The Alternatives analysis discusses the County's erosion control ordinances based on the premise that the ordinance would remain in effect under either GPU3 or the 2007 General Plan. As noted in the response to comment O-21k.324, with revised Policy OS-3.5, the 2007 General Plan would have similar (though somewhat more stringent) constraints as GPU3 as to development and agricultural development on slopes.
- O-21k.327 These terms are intended to describe general locations. South County and southern Salinas Valley are essentially synonymous terms, the only difference being that South County would include the uplands that rise from the southern portion of the Salinas Valley.
- O-21k.328 Mineral resources are a minor issue and accordingly covered only briefly. The policies of the 2007 General Plan are discussed in Section 4.5.4 of the DEIR. GPU3 policies relative to mineral resources provide for the continued access to such resources, balanced with mitigation to avoid conflicts between mineral extraction and other incompatible land uses. This is not substantially different, in practical terms, from the policies proposed under the 2007 General Plan.
- O-21k.329 GPU3 provides a roadway level of service (LOS) standard of LOS C, whereas the 2007 General Plan provides (with certain exceptions) for a standard of LOS D. LOS C requires the maintenance of free flowing traffic. In order to do that, roads will need to be expanded as traffic levels increase with future growth. The 2007 General Plan provides

for a more congested traffic condition, but less compulsion to widen roadways. The discussion concludes that GPU3 would have less impact on traffic than the 2007 General Plan due to less congestion. Summary Tables 1-3 and 5-6 erroneously listed this as a “greater” impact, and both tables have been corrected in Chapter 4 of the FEIR.

O-21k.330 As described on page 5-17 of the DEIR, GPU3 would establish 8 Community Areas and 18 Rural Centers compared to fewer of both types of focused growth areas under the 2007 General Plan. Although development will be encouraged to locate in these areas, the fact that there are more of them over a larger area (in comparison to the 2007 General Plan) indicates that they will result in a more expansive pattern of development. This can reasonably be assumed to result in greater vehicle miles traveled. A more dispersed development pattern does not result in a reduced impact from traffic. However, the stricter standard for level of service would result in smoother flow and therefore, GPU3 would presumably result in somewhat less congestion than the 2007 General Plan.

O-21k.331 The comment raises the issue of the alleged effects of the proposed slope policies. See Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, Master Response 9, *Water Quality*, and Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*. As noted in the response to comment O-21k.324, with the revised Policy OS-3.5, the 2007 General Plan would have similar, albeit more restrictive, constraints as GPU3 as to development and agricultural development on slopes.

O-21k.332 The commenter asserts that the 2007 General Plan would exempt “huge swaths of land from further CEQA review” in the proposed Wine Corridor and therefore the CEQA process would not mitigate the impacts from site-specific development projects consistent with the General Plan.

The comment assumes the AWCP will result in development occurring absent regulatory controls. That assertion is not correct. See Master Response 3 for a discussion of the AWCP and further CEQA review, as well as Master Response 8 regarding the effect of the AWCP on biological resources. Also see the responses to comments O-21k.277, O-21k.278, and O-21k-293 above.

O-21k.333 There is no practical distinction between “avoiding a significant effect” and having a “less than significant effect.”

O-21k.334 The discussion references state law in section 5.4.2.10, which analyzes the GPU3’s impacts on cultural resources relative to the 2007 General Plan, because statute includes provisions for notification of most likely descendants in the event of the discovery of Native American burials, establishes the criteria for determining whether a cultural resource is eligible for listing on the state or federal registers, and other requirements that can reduce the impacts of projects on cultural resources.

O-21k.335 The County’s adopted historic preservation ordinance (County Municipal Code, Chapter 18.25) is an underlying regulation that would apply whether GPU3 or the 2007 General Plan were adopted. It is noted under the 2007 General Plan comparison, because its provisions offer sufficient protection for resources that ensure that the 2007 General Plan’s implementation would be no more damaging than that of GPU3.

O-21k.336 The comment suggests that “massive water supply projects” would be necessary under the 2007 General Plan. The proposed policies under Goal PS-1 (adequate public facilities) and Goal PS-3 (long term sustainable water supply) will ensure that development, with very limited exception (e.g., first single family dwelling on a legal lot of record), does not occur in advance of the provision of public services, including water supplies. The 2007 General Plan does not propose “massive water supply projects,” but objectively evaluates water supply. (See, e.g., Chapter 4.3 of the DEIR, discussion of Impact 4 beginning on page 4.3-113) Future water projects are discussed in general terms under Impact WR-5, beginning on page 4.3-135.

Given that GPU3 would result in a similar amount of overall buildout as the 2007 General Plan, and the DEIR describes that additional infrastructure would be necessary to provide water for future growth on the Monterey Peninsula, in the Pajaro Valley groundwater basin, the North County areas within the Salinas Valley watershed, and in the Salinas Valley after 2030, GPU3 would also require additional water supply infrastructure, similar to the 2007 General Plan. If that infrastructure is “massive” for the 2007 General Plan in the commenter’s terms, then it would be equally “massive” for GPU3.

O-21k.337 The comment notes that Table 5-3 “does not make sense” and asks that it be explained. In response, Table 5-3 has been revised in Chapter 4 in the FEIR. The entry for the 2007 General Plan should be 13,420 units and the difference between the GPI and 2007 General Plan 553 units (the DEIR had the 2007 General Plan total between 2006 to 2030, but should have shown the difference between 2000 and 2030 to allow for the right comparison). Please see Chapter 4 of the FEIR for the new table and explanatory note.

O-21k.338 The commenter asks that the analysis of the GPI alternative reference the particular pages of the BAE report that are referenced, each time it is referenced.

This is not required by CEQA. CEQA Guidelines Section 15148 relates to technical reports. It states that page specific citations shall be given where possible, but does not require them. The comparison of development potential between the two plans has been revised, as explained in response to comment O-21k.337 above.

O-21k.339 The California Coastal Commission reviews all major amendments to certified Local Coastal Programs, and it must certify such amendments before they are included in the County’s Local Coastal Program. The GPI would constitute such an amendment. The Commission is an independent body, authorized under the California Coastal Act to carry forward the objectives of that Act. The analysis in the DEIR that is questioned by the comment is a recognition of the discretion that the Coastal Commission has over whether or not to certify amendments to the County’s Local Coastal Program.

O-21k.340 Until the recent collapse of the housing market, the Salinas Valley cities have had rapid growth. For example, Salinas grew from 108,777 residents to an estimated 152,597 residents between 1990 and 2009, and Gonzales from 4,660 residents to 9,025 residents during that same period. (California Department of Finance 2007c, 2009) The DEIR reasonably assumes, given past growth in the cities, the AMBAG assumption that 75 percent of future growth within Monterey County will be in the cities, the extent of farmland conversion that has occurred as a result of past growth, and the existing density

of the Salinas Valley cities, that they will continue to expand as population increases (see page 5-29). The comment provides no substantial evidence as to why these assumptions are not reasonable.

- O-21k.341 As discussed in the DEIR in Section 4.3, Water Resources, the SVWP will provide sufficient water to meet the needs of the Salinas Valley during the 2030 planning horizon. See Master Response 4, *Water Supply* and responses to comments O-21k.16, O-21k.40, and O-21k.42 for an additional discussion.
- O-21k.342 The Community Areas and Rural Centers are, with the exception of Castroville and Pajaro Community Areas, located on land that is not in intensive agricultural production. This is evident from inspection of the sites and review of the exhibits in Chapter 3 of the DEIR.
- O-21k.343 The area of greatest urban growth within Monterey County is the Salinas Valley where, coincidentally, the highest value farmland is located. All of the cities of the Salinas Valley are surrounded by farmland. As explained in Section 5.5.1.3, beginning on page 5-28, the GPI's limitations on growth within the County would shift additional demand to the cities which, in turn, would mean that additional productive land would be lost. In comparison, the 2007 General Plan would place a portion of that growth in Rural Centers located on less productive lands that are not in intensive agricultural use.
- O-21k.344 See Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail expected of a program EIR for a general plan. See also the response to comment O-21k.323.
- O-21k.345 The analysis assumes the County's erosion control ordinance would not be weakened or repealed under the 2007 General Plan. It is discussed in the regulatory setting in Section 4.3 of the DEIR (see page 4.3-78), and no 2007 General Plan policy directs a weakening or repeal of that ordinance.
- O-21k.346 Assuming that this comment is in reference to the discussion in Section 5.5.1.4, the 2007 General Plan policies relating to water resources are discussed in Section 4.3 (beginning on page 4.3-121) of the DEIR. The GPI would have slightly greater amount of growth, but the difference in water demand in comparison to the 2007 General Plan would be minimal. Accordingly, the DEIR's conclusion on water resources has been revised in Chapter 4 of the FEIR to note that the GPI alternative and the 2007 General Plan would have the same impact on water resources.
- O-21k.347 See Master Response 7 regarding urban development outside of focused growth areas under the 2007 General Plan. The GPI would have slightly greater amount of growth, requiring a slightly greater water supply (and more development outside the focused growth areas), however, the difference is minimal. See also the response to comment O-21k.346 above.
- O-21k.348 The GPI alternative would locate more housing on lots of record than would the 2007 General Plan. As a result, a greater segment of new growth would potentially be reliant on individual wells rather than wells that serve an entire Rural Community. This would complicate the ability of the County and other agencies to regulate water use. Since release of the DEIR, a number of state laws and regulations have been enacted (see the

response to comment O-21k.249) that will diminish the difference between the GPI and 2007 General Plan by requiring greater water conservation from new development. The reference to an offset of rural growth by city growth refers to the tendency of city-centered growth to have lower water use levels per capita than rural residential development. See the response to comment O-21k.346 regarding the revision to the conclusion in the 2007 General Plan.

- O-21k.349 The GPI prohibits residential subdivisions, agricultural, commercial, or industrial development projects without a long-term water supply (Policy #55 of the GPI), but at the same time, allows a greater amount of development on lots of record than does the 2007 General Plan. Individual lots of record, where no subdivision is required, would not be subject to the requirement for a proven water supply. The County's ability to deny water well permits is limited and would not be made stronger by Policy #61, which simply reiterates existing requirements for a permit from the Environmental Health Bureau for any domestic water well. The 2007 General Plan and the GPI are similar on their approach to subdivisions; the difference in water use is more due to the absolute level of buildout predicted, which are slightly different. Nonetheless, given the similar growth numbers at the 2030 planning horizon, the 2007 General Plan and the GPI will have basically the same impact.
- O-21k.350 See the responses to comments O-21k.346 through O-21k.349. The level of detail provided for the alternatives analysis should correspond to the level of specificity involved in the activity considered in the EIR, which in this case is a planning level action. (CEQA Guidelines, § 15146.) See Master Response 10 regarding the level of detail required of a program EIR prepared for a general plan. The comparison in the EIR meets this standard.
- O-21k.351 See Master Responses 3 (relating to agricultural policies), 4 (relating to water supply), and 8 (relating to biological resources and the potential for conversion of steep slopes). The proposed Policy OS-3.5, as revised, would not result in extensive development on steep slopes (all conversions over 15% are subject to discretionary permit review and conversions over 25% would be strictly limited) and therefore would not result in a substantial difference in erosion and sedimentation in comparison to the application of existing policies or the policies of the GPI alternative. The analysis does not, however, "hide" the differences; the EIR analysis concludes that GPI have fewer potential adverse impacts on geology and soils than the 2007 General Plan.
- O-21k.352 The comment draws a conclusion regarding the prior discussion of the relative water resource impacts of the GPI alternative and the 2007 General Plan. These comments have been addressed above and no further response is necessary.
- O-21k.353 The comment suggests that the transportation analysis incorrectly concludes that the GPI alternative would result in a significant effect on traffic. The GPI will result in additional growth within the County, albeit growth that is concurrent to the provision of infrastructure. The analysis at section 5.5.1.7 acknowledges this advantage of the GPI alternative over the 2007 General Plan and concludes that the GPI alternative will have less impact on traffic than the 2007 General Plan. The GPI alternative requires infrastructure to be installed concurrent with development but, like all such requirements, does not provide for the installation of infrastructure between development projects.

Limitations on exactions relating to the U.S. Constitution's prohibition on "regulatory takings" prevent infrastructure requirements that would exceed the project's fair share. This is likely to result in congestion and, conservatively speaking, may result in a significant effect.

- O-21k.354 The conclusion that sprawl development would occur on lots of record is based on the fact that the number of lots of record in the County is a constant under either the 2007 General Plan or the GPI Alternative. The 2007 General Plan would provide for additional development opportunities in Rural Centers that are not available under the GPI alternative. Accordingly, given that growth within the County cannot legally be constrained (e.g., no one can be told that they cannot move to Monterey County), under the GPI alternative development pressures would focus on the cities, the Community Areas, and the lots of record. A portion of the development that would be accommodated in Rural Centers under the 2007 General Plan can reasonably be assumed to occur instead on the existing lots of record. Less focused growth would translate to greater sprawl.
- O-21k.355 Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, subsection (d), an EIR is not required to analyze alternatives at the same level of detail as the project. The analysis of noise impacts is qualitative, not quantitative. The analysis considered not only noise as a result of development, but the additional traffic noise resulting from the widening of roads that would be the result of the GPI alternative's LOS C congestion standard. In order to maintain LOS C for traffic flow, roads would be widened to a greater extent than under the 2007 General Plan. In any case, as discussed on page 5-32 of the DEIR, the two plans would have similar levels of noise impact.
- O-21k.356 The DEIR contains a comprehensive discussion of the environmental baseline relative to biological resources in Section 4.9. See also Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*. As explained in Master Response 8, the potential for the conversion of hillsides has been overstated in the comments received. Section 5.5.1.10 discusses the GPI alternative's lesser impact as a result of its more restrictive policy relative to the conversion of slopes. However, this advantage would be overshadowed by having less effective policies regarding protection for listed species.

On its face, the GPI alternative would appear to have much more stringent protections for biological resources than does the revised 2007 General Plan. However, several of the GPI policies, both individually and in concert, are so restrictive as to be unfeasible to implement. Because they could not be implemented, they would not provide the protections that they espouse. Here are the key policies from the GPI's Conservation Element.

The GPI's Conservation Policy #22 provides, in part, that "Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) and the wildlife they support shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values and only uses dependent on those resources shall be allowed within SEAs." This would include "Routine and Ongoing Agricultural Activities" when they are new operations or activities (Agricultural Policy #5). SEAs are defined in the GPI as including "[a]ny area in which plant or animal life and their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could easily be disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments." The definition goes on to list 29 categories of habitat types that are considered SEAs. These

include, among others: habitats important to state or federal listed or candidate species, areas that provide habitat for state species of special concern, areas that provide habitat for species that are federally-listed or identified by the California Native Plant Society, areas adjacent to essential habitats of listed species, wildlife corridors, habitat for certain species of local importance, all streams and rivers, all riparian habitats, all oak woodlands, and all nesting areas.

Conservation Policy #23 goes on to state that, with limited exceptions, “no grading, filling, land clearance or land disturbance, use of a toxic material, timber harvesting, land subdivision, or any other development or construction activity shall take place within any Significant Ecological Area (SEA).” Policy #23 makes an exception in cases where “to prohibit such activity would make an existing parcel unusable,” and would require consideration of a use permit in any such situation. Grant of a use permit would be limited to a location that minimizes environmental effects “to the maximum extent feasible,” the permitted use would be required to be mitigated to a less than significant level, and compensatory mitigation would be required, where pertinent. Further, no use permit could be granted until “all applicable federal and state regulations are met.”

Conservation Policy #24 would require all new development, “even when not itself located in a Significant Ecological Area,” to avoid impacts to SEAs. The Policy provides minimum setback requirements from selected SEAs.

As illustrated in Exhibits 4.9-1 through 4.9-5 and the discussion in Chapter 4.9 of the DEIR, the GPI Conservation policies effectively place the entire unincorporated county jurisdiction, other than existing urban areas that are not within federally-designated “critical habitat,” or otherwise within or adjacent to SEAs, under these protective restrictions. The Conservation policies are unfeasible and unenforceable for the following reasons:

- Policies #22 and #23 together would, for practical purposes, exclude most of the unincorporated County jurisdiction from development. Under Policy #22, uses within the SEAs would be limited to activities that are resource dependent and that do not adversely affect the SEAs. Policy #23 does not provide an adequate exception to this policy because: (1) it would prohibit grant of a use permit when the project could not reduce the impact on an SEA below the level of significance, and (2) it would require meeting all federal and state permits before a County permit could be approved. The GPI definition of SEA is so broad as to cover most of the unincorporated county. By establishing a broad definition of SEA, arguably any project that would eliminate habitat or encroach on an SEA could not be mitigated below a level of significance. Consideration of federal and state permits is dependent upon the prior approval of a local permit, which creates a “Catch-22” for development permits. The County is the lead agency for permits under its jurisdiction, such as a use permit, and federal and state regulators will not act to approve the federal and state approvals necessary to the project being considered by the County until the County has granted approval. If federal and state agencies cannot act, then the project cannot demonstrate that it has met “all applicable federal and state regulations,” and, therefore, the County permit cannot be approved.
- Despite the provisions of the GPI Housing Element, the restrictions established by Policies #22 and #23 would prevent the County from providing sufficient

development opportunities to meet the RHNA numbers established for the County's Housing Element and, as a result, the County would not be able to comply with Housing Element Law. The current AMBAG-assigned RHNA number for the unincorporated County is 1,554 units for the 2009-2014 housing element cycle. This number cannot be reached by practically halting all residential development outside of the five Community Areas identified in the GPI. As a result, the County would be unable to meet its legal obligation under state Housing Element Law.

- Policy #24 will require substantial minimum setbacks from selected SEAs, including 300 feet from the top of the bank of perennial streams and rivers. This will apply to projects that are not otherwise within SEAs. No provision is made for exceptions to this rule. As a result, there will be properties that cannot be developed due to their proximity to SEAs. This will leave the County vulnerable to claims of "regulatory takings" under the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Under the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Dolan v. City of Tigard* (1994) 512 U.S. 374, which invalidated dedications of a greenway and a bicycle path not related to impacts from store expansion, a legal property exaction must be linked to an impact resulting from the project and roughly proportional to the impact of the project on the resource. An across-the-board setback may not meet this test. In order to avoid a takings claim, the County would be obligated to pay or otherwise provide the property owner just compensation for the affected land.
- Policies #22 and #23, along with the broad definition of SEA, similarly establish a strong potential for extensive takings claims against the County. As discussed previously (see the response to comment O-21k.168, for example), the County will choose to avoid situations that would lead to an unconstitutional taking (and the associated litigation) or that would require paying compensation to property owners for regulatory takings.

The biological resources policies of the 2007 General Plan, as revised, are designed to be protective, enforceable, and avoid questions of regulatory takings. Further, they would allow the County to meet its Housing Element obligations.

- O-21k.357 See the response to comment O-21k.354 regarding development on lots of record under the GPI alternative.
- O-21k.358 See the response to comment O-21k.354 regarding development on lots of record under the GPI alternative.
- O-21k.359 The 2007 General Plan policies that are protective of biological resources, are described in the impact analyses under Section 4.9.5.4 of the DEIR. For an updated discussion of the revised biological resource policies, please see Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*.
- O-21k.360 The comment is a general complaint about the alleged difficulty in finding the 2007 General Plan policies related to a particular subject. The 2007 General Plan policies related to each impact analyzed in the DEIR are found in the impact analyses. They are not repeated in the alternatives section in order to spare the reader further repetition. However, they are easily referenced by going to the particular impact in Sections 4.1 through 4.16 of the DEIR.

O-21k.361 The comment raises the issue of feasibility of the proposed mitigation measures for biological impacts of the 2007 General Plan. See Master Response 8 regarding the biological resource mitigation measures and Master Response 10 regarding the deferral of mitigation in a program EIR prepared for a general plan project. The comment is based on the incorrect assumption that the General Plan is a compilation of specific regulatory actions which must meet the standards of specificity and enforceability required of ordinance-level regulations or project-specific mitigation measures. As explained in Master Response 10, a general plan is a long term comprehensive plan for the physical development of the County. (Gov't Code section 65300) The General Plan will guide later implementing actions to be undertaken during General Plan implementation, and these other actions must, by law, be consistent with the general plan. (See, e.g., Government Code Sections 65860 [zoning actions], 65402 [property acquisition and disposal], 65454 [specific plans], and 66474 [subdivisions]). Government Code Section 65860 requires conforming revisions to the zoning ordinance to be made "within a reasonable time" of adoption of the General Plan update. In addition, Policy LU-9.1 requires the Director of Planning to bring a work program to implement the General Plan to the Board of Supervisors within three months after adoption of the General Plan.

The comment focuses on the species inventory called for in Mitigation Measure BIO-1.1, but there are numerous biological resource mitigation measures suggested in the analysis of the 2007 General Plan biological impacts. The commenter is referred to Section 4.9 of the DEIR and Master Response 8, *Biological Resources* which describes all of the 2007 General Plan policies and all of the proposed mitigation measures that were all taken into consideration when evaluating the comparative impacts to the 2007 General Plan to the alternatives. The biological mitigation measures contain specific timelines, such as Policies OS-5.20 and OS-5.2, and a biological study is required for development projects that require a discretionary permit and that have the potential to substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species. (Policy OS-5.16, as revised)

The mitigation suggested by the commenter, to place moratoria on all development until all inventories are complete, is not legally feasible for the same reasons other prohibitions on all development suggested by the commenter are not legally feasible. See, for example, the response to comment O-21k.168.

O-21k.362 The comment asks why housing development is relevant to the analysis of cultural resource impacts. Development of housing units is important because it could result in direct impacts to previously unknown archeological or significant historical resources. Large development in the AWCP is not exempt from CEQA. Please see DEIR, Section 3.4.6, *Agricultural Winery Corridor Plan*, for a detailed description of the limits on the amount of development within the AWCP. In addition, the draft AWCP has been revised to require a biological study of permanent facilities with the potential to affect biological resources. If the biological study indicates a potential for a significant impact on a biological resource, then a discretionary permit will be required. See also Master Response 3 to comments about the anticipated additional development that would be permitted under the AWCP.

As discussed in Section 5.5.1.11, the 2007 General Plan contains more protective policies (see Section 4.10.3.7, the cultural resources impact analysis for a discussion of these policies) than does the GPI. The additional development expected to occur on existing lots of record under the GPI will be more widespread than the up to 40 sites within the wine corridor that may support ministerially-approved artisan wineries and related facilities. For that reason, and the more protective policies in the 2007 General Plan, the 2007 General Plan is considered to have less potential for significant effect than the GPI alternative.

- O-21k.363 The comment requests that the DEIR quantify the area of focused development under the GPI alternative and under the 2007 General Plan. At the same time, the comment acknowledges that the GPI alternative would have a numerically smaller area.

This information is not necessary for informed decision-making, nor is it pertinent to the analysis of parks and recreation impacts. The 2007 General Plan proposes the establishment of seven Rural Centers (totaling approximately 4,400 acres) in addition to the five Community Areas common to the GPI alternative. As discussed in Section 5.5.1.13, the GPI alternative would result in less adverse impact on parks and recreation than the 2007 General Plan as a result of its smaller area of focused development.

- O-21k.364 A brief discussion of state responsibility for wildland fire protection is found in Section 4.13.4 of the DEIR on page 4.13-3. The State Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) provides primary response within State Responsibility Areas pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 4125 (areas “in which the financial responsibility of preventing and suppressing fires is primarily the responsibility of the state”). The CalFire adopts, on a regular basis, maps delineating the State Responsibility Areas. State Responsibility Areas are established by action of the Board of Forestry and encompass the following types of terrain (Public Resources Code Section 4126):

- Lands covered wholly or in part by forests or by trees producing or capable of producing forest products.
- Lands covered wholly or in part by timber, brush, undergrowth, or grass, whether of commercial value or not, which protect the soil from excessive erosion, retard runoff of water or accelerate water percolation, if such lands are sources of water which is available for irrigation or for domestic or industrial use.
- Lands in areas which are principally used or useful for range or forage purposes, which are contiguous to the lands described in the two preceding bullets.

Federal land and lands within and adjoining incorporated cities are not included in State Responsibility Areas, although the State will assist in fire fighting when there is a mutual aid agreement between the jurisdictions.

In Monterey County, the State Responsibility Areas cover a substantial area of the County outside of federal lands and above the Salinas Valley floor both east and west of the valley. This includes large portions of the Monterey Peninsula and Big Sur. For the most recent map of State Responsibility Areas in Monterey County, see the CalFire fire hazard severity zone website:

http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/webdata/maps/monterey/fhszs_map.27.jpg.

County policies apply to development within the unincorporated area of the county. Although the state has adopted “fire safe” building codes and other standards that require clear zones to be maintained around buildings and specify building materials in wildfire hazard areas, the policies of the County have a direct effect on the design of subdivisions and other land uses, whether within State Responsibility Areas or not. See the section on Wildland Fires beginning on page 4.13-18 of the DEIR for a discussion of the protective policies found in the 2007 General Plan.

- O-21k.365 The comment asserts that the discussion in Section 5.5.1.15 regarding aesthetics fails to include the additional impacts that would occur from development of the wine corridor. Although the AWCP does not result in “extensive industrial, commercial, and residential development” (see response to comment O-21k.-362 above), the conclusion reached in Section 5.5.1.15 is that the GPI alternative would have fewer impacts on aesthetics than the 2007 General Plan.
- O-21k.366 The comment asks why future employment and economic growth are discussed in the conclusion of the GPI alternative analysis. The conclusion discusses the extent to which the alternative meets the objectives of the 2007 General Plan. Future growth is discussed because the Housing Element of the General Plan is required to accommodate the projected future housing needs for all economic segments of the population. (Government Code Section 65583) A general plan that does not provide for sufficient growth opportunities will not allow the County to meet its state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocation over time and would not meet the third objective of the 2007 general plan, as identified on page 3-4 of the DEIR.
- O-21k.367 The comment asks that the fourth bullet under section 5.6.1.1 clarify that the policy listed applies only to Carmel Valley. The pertinent language reads: “The 2007 General Plan would limit additional residential subdivision in the Carmel Valley to 266 new lots. It would also prohibit conversion of previously uncultivated land on slopes in excess of 25%.” The bullet point clearly references the Carmel Valley. The comment is noted.
- O-21k.368 The comment asks what the consequences might be if, after adopting the general plan, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan is not adopted within 24 months and Capital Improvement and Financing Plan is not adopted in 18 months.
- The policies themselves detail the consequences for new development pending adoption of these plans
- These plans are mentioned in Section 5.6.1.1 because the topic of that section is differences between GPU4 and the 2007 General Plan. Neither of these plans is proposed as part of GPU4 (GPU4 mentions capital improvements, but does not provide for preparation of comprehensive financing plans).
- O-21k.369 The term “non-discretionary commercial uses” refers to “non-discretionary use for commercially designated properties,” an exception stated in proposed Policy C-1.3. Under County’s current zoning, this would be limited to uses allowed as of right in commercial zones, which are limited in nature.

- O-21k.370 The comment inquires about Table 5-4. This table has been corrected in the FEIR. Please see Chapter 4, Changes in the Text, in the FEIR.
- O-21k.371 The comment asks for clarification of the terms “Williamson Act lands” and “Williamson Act contract lands.” The two terms are intended to be synonymous.
- O-21k.372 The comment asks why, if the GPU4 alternative provides for proof of availability of a long-term sustainable water supply (as does the 2007 General Plan), it is nonetheless described as contributing to the existing severe cumulative effect of groundwater supplies and overdraft conditions. The proof of availability policy, which is shared by both this alternative and the 2007 General Plan is not the sole distinguishing feature. The discussion at the top of page 5-44 explains the reasoning. It includes the pass-fail nature of the DES under the 2007 General Plan, ensuring that marginal projects will not be approved, and the express limitation of development in portions of the areas governed by the Greater Salinas, North County, and Toro Area Plans to the first residence on vacant, existing lots of record. All of these components of the 2007 General Plan, not found in GPU4, would reduce water demand.
- O-21k.373 The paragraph in section 5.6.2.3 which states that the potential increase in density resulting from the AHOs (and associated increase in water demand) is “tempered” by the restrictions on water availability within the MPWMD is describing the ways in which the 2007 General Plan “would result in increase water demand over GPU4.” The term “tempered” is intended to express that development of the Mid-Carmel Valley and Hwy 68/Airport AHOs would be dependent upon the availability of water. If water is not available (per Policy PS-3.1 and PS-3.3), then those properties will not develop to the potential densities provided under the 2007 General Plan. When used later in that paragraph in the discussion of water use under the AWCP, the term is intended to mean that Policies PS-3.4 and PS-3.5 (referenced in that discussion) would act to reduce water use in the AWCP.
- O-21k.374 Policy OS-3.5 contains the restrictions on development on steep slopes referenced on page 5-45. This policy has since been proposed for revision and the discussion on page 5-45 has been similarly revised. The revised policy is found in Chapter 5 of the FEIR. See also Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, and Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, for discussions of the proposed revision.
- O-21k.375 The comment asks for a comparison of the slope development policies in GPU4 and the 2007 General Plan. For a discussion of the extent of land that may be subject to the 2007 General Plan’s Policy OS-3.5 (relating to development on slopes), see Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*.

GPU-4:

GPU4 contains the following two policies restricting development on slopes (all references in these policies are to other GPU4 policies):

OS-3.5 A permit process will be established as follows:

1. A discretionary permit process for development on slopes greater than 25-percent (25%) or that contain geologic hazards and constraints shown on the County's GIS Geologic (*Policy S-1.2*) or Hydrologic (*Policy PS-2.7*) Hazard Databases shall be established. The process shall be designed to:
 - a. evaluate possible building site alternatives that better meet the goals and policies of the general plan.
 - b. identify development and design techniques for erosion control, slope stabilization, visual mitigation, drainage, and construction techniques.
 - c. minimize development in areas where potentially unstable slopes, soil and geologic conditions, or sewage disposal pose substantial risk to public health or safety.
2. The conversion for agricultural purposes of previously uncultivated lands on slopes in excess of 25-percent (25%) shall require a grading permit.
3. A ministerial permit process shall be developed and implemented for proposed development, including for purposes of this policy conversion of previously uncultivated lands, on slopes between 15- and 24-percent (15-24%), and 10- to 15-percent (10-15%) on highly erodible soils. The permit process shall be designed to require that an erosion control plan be developed and implemented that addresses slope stabilization, and drainage and flood hazards.
4. All Routine and Ongoing Agricultural Activities, except for conversion of previously uncultivated lands as described in this policy above, are exempt from the above permit requirements.

OS-3.6 Except in Community Areas where Community Plans or Specific Plans are adopted (*Policy LU-10.4*), areas designated as Medium Density Residential or High Density Residential, or in areas designated as commercial or industrial where residential use may be allowed, a formula based on slope shall be established to calculate the maximum possible residential density for individual parcels.

- a. Those portions of parcels with cross-slope of between zero and 19.9-percent shall be assigned one (1) building site per each one (1) acre.
- b. Those portions of parcels with a cross-slope of between 20 and 29.9-percent shall be assigned one (1) building site per each two (2) acres.
- c. Those portions of parcels with a cross-slope of 30-percent or greater shall be assigned zero building sites.
- d. The density for a particular parcel shall be computed by determining the cross-slope of the various portions of the parcel applying the assigned densities listed above according to the percent of cross-slope and by adding the densities derived from this process. The maximum density derived by the procedure shall be used as one of the factors in final determination of the actual density that shall be allowed on a parcel.

Clustering is encouraged as a technique to avoid development on slopes over 25-percent (25%). Where an entire parcel would not be developable because of plan policies, an extremely low density of development or single family home will be allowed, as appropriate.

2007 General Plan:

The 2007 General Plan contains the following policies regarding development on slopes. Note that Policy OS-3.5 has been revised since publication of the DEIR.

OS-3.5 The County shall regulate activity on slopes to reduce impacts to water quality and biological resources:

- 1) **Non-Agricultural.** Development on slopes in excess of twenty five percent (25%) shall be prohibited except as stated below; however, such development may be allowed pursuant to a discretionary permit if one or both of the following findings are made, based upon substantial evidence:
 - A) there is no alternative which would allow development to occur on slopes of less than 25%;
 - B) the proposed development better achieves the resource protection objectives and policies contained in the Monterey County General Plan, accompanying Area Plans, and all applicable master plans.

Such development shall require adequate special erosion control and construction techniques.

Where proposed development impacting slopes in excess of twenty five percent (25%) does not exceed ten percent (10%), or 500 square feet of the total development footprint (whichever is less), a discretionary permit shall not be required. It is the general policy of the County to require dedication of a scenic easement on a slope exceeding twenty five percent (25%).

- 2) **Agricultural.** Conversion for agricultural purposes of previously uncultivated lands containing slopes exceeding fifteen percent (15%) but not exceeding twenty five percent (25%) shall require a discretionary permit. Conversion of such lands containing slopes exceeding ten percent (10%) but not exceeding fifteen percent (15%) shall require a discretionary permit where the lands to be converted contain highly erodible soils. Conversion of previously uncultivated lands shall be prohibited where the slope exceeds twenty five percent (25%) except as noted below; however, such conversion may occur pursuant to a discretionary permit where the area(s) containing slopes exceeding twenty five percent (25%) meets all of the following criteria:
 - a) does not exceed ten percent (10%) of the total area to be converted;
 - b) does not contain a slope in excess of fifty percent (50%);
 - c) is designated for Farmland, Permanent Grazing, or Rural Grazing land use;
 - d) is planted to a permanent crop such as trees or vines, and,
 - e) is situated in the interior of the parcel(s) in which the permit is sought.

Approval of discretionary permits for these purposes shall follow the submission of an adequate management plan. Such plans should address appropriate measures to ensure the long term viability of agriculture on that parcel, and include an analysis of soils, erosion potential and control, water demand and availability, proposed methods of water conservation and water quality protection, and protection of important vegetation and wildlife habitats.

For lands designated Rural Density Residential and Low Density Residential (LDR) there shall be no cultivation of any lands exceeding 25%.

OS-3.6 Except in Community Areas where Community Plans or Specific Plans are adopted (*Policy LU-2.24*), areas designated as Medium Density Residential or High Density Residential, or in areas designated as commercial or industrial where residential use may be allowed, a formula based on slope shall be established to calculate the maximum possible residential density for individual parcels:

- a. Those portions of parcels with cross-slope of between zero and 19.9 percent shall be assigned one (1) building site per each one (1) acre.
- b. Those portions of parcels with a cross-slope of between 20 and 29.9 percent shall be assigned one (1) building site per each two (2) acres.
- c. Those portions of parcels with a cross-slope of 30 percent or greater shall be assigned zero building sites.
- d. The density for a particular parcel shall be computed by determining the cross-slope of the various portions of the parcel applying the assigned densities listed above according to the percent of cross-slope and by adding the densities derived from this process. The maximum density derived by the procedure shall be used as one of the factors in final determination of the actual density that shall be allowed on a parcel.

Clustering is encouraged as a technique to avoid development on slopes over 25 percent (25%). Where an entire parcel would not be developable because of plan policies, an extremely low density of development or single family home will be allowed, as appropriate.

Table 3-6. Comparison Table of GPU4 and the 2007 General Plan Policies

Slope	GPU4 Provisions	2007 GP Provisions
Non-Agricultural		
25% and over	Discretionary permit required ¹	Prohibited, except with discretionary permit ^{2,3}
Ag Conversion of Uncultivated Land		
10-15% on highly erodible soils	Ministerial permit process to be developed ⁴	Discretionary permit required
15-25% on any soil	Ministerial permit process to be developed ⁴	Discretionary permit required
25% and over	Grading permit required	Prohibited, except with discretionary permit ⁵
Routine and Ongoing Ag Activities	Provisions do not apply	Provisions do not apply

¹ Also applies to any slope with known geologic or floodplain hazard. GPU4 establishes standards for permit considerations.

² Discretionary permit only issued when specific findings of fact can be made. If approved, will require special erosion control and construction techniques.

³ No discretionary permit required if 25% slope does not exceed 500 square feet or 10% of the total development footprint, whichever is less.

⁴ Process will require an erosion control plan be developed to address slope stabilization and flooding and drainage hazards.

⁵ Specifies criteria for approval of discretionary permit.

The respective Policies OS-3.6 in GPU4 and the 2007 General Plan are identical.

The comparison, particularly where discretionary permits are required, makes it clear that the proposed Policy OS-3.5 in the 2007 General Plan is more restrictive than its counterpart in the GPU4 alternative. It is not necessary to examine the amount of land that would be affected by the policies. Because they apply to basically the same slopes, that can be considered a constant in the comparison.

O-21k.376 The discussion in section 5.6.2.6 is concerned with the concurrency requirement of GPU4 traffic policy on mitigating the traffic impacts of new development. Both GPU4 and the 2007 General Plan contain similar policies requiring concurrent traffic mitigation fees. Traffic impact fees are collected from new development projects (see revised Policy C-1.12 and, for discretionary projects Policies C-1.3 and C-1.4 in Chapter 5 of this FEIR).

Both GPU4 and the 2007 General Plan provide for the ministerial approval of certain uses in the winery corridor. These uses are described in response to comment O-21k.362 above. Under Policy C-1.12 of the 2007 General Plan, ministerial projects would be subject to preparation of a traffic impact analysis and a traffic impact mitigation fee if necessary to pay for project-related improvements. Both GPU4 and the 2007 General Plan include policies requiring the preparation of a countywide Capital Improvement and Financing Plan to help fund road improvements. To the extent that such a plan relies on funding from benefit assessment districts or other such mechanisms instead of impact fees linked to discretionary approvals, it may fund the improvements needed to serve ministerial projects as well. The 2007 General Plan provides a more comprehensive solution to project-related road improvements needs than does GPU4.

Agricultural conversion on slopes of 25% or greater would be subject to some form of discretionary permit under the 2007 General Plan, but not under GPU4.

O-21k.377 See the response to comment O-21k.375.

O-21k.378 As discussed in section 5.6.2.14, the 2007 General Plan would allow up to 10 full scale wineries within the AWCP that would not be provided for in the AWCP contemplated in GPU4 and those additional wineries would be sources of light and glare. However, the AWCP does not result in "extensive industrial, commercial, and residential development" (see response to comment O-21k.-362 above). By contrast, GPU4 provides for more Community Areas and Rural Centers than the 2007 General Plan. As disclosed on page 5-41, these additional focused development areas would cover approximately 1,831 acres. The 10 full scale wineries are not likely to encompass that amount of land with lighted development. As a result they would not have the same level of impact as the larger development footprint authorized under the GPU4 alternative.

O-21k.379 The comment asks for clarification as to whether a winery would be considered an industrial use under County codes and the 2007 General Plan. A winery is defined as an "agricultural processing plant" under Section 21.06.020 of the County Zoning Code. No distinction is made between full-scale and artisan wineries in the County Code. Agricultural processing plants may be allowed, upon approval of a use permit, in the Agricultural Industrial (AI), Light Industrial (LI), Heavy Industrial (HI), Farmlands (F), Rural Grazing (RG), and Permanent Grazing (PG) zoning districts.

The 2007 General Plan Glossary similarly defines a winery as an agricultural processing plant. It defines full-scale and artisan wineries, as well as “winery adjunct uses” and “wine tasting facility.” For the GPU policies toward full scale and artisan wineries in the Agricultural Winery Corridor, the AWCP would govern.

- O-21k.380 The comment asks why the number of 2007 General Plan dwelling units in Table 5-5 doesn’t match the number in comparable tables. A number of the tables in Section 5, Alternatives, contained numerical errors. The tables have been revised to provide a common year 2000 starting point for residential growth, providing a better comparison.

The tables have been corrected in Chapter 4 of the FEIR. With regard to Table 5-5, the correct number of dwelling units for both the TOD alternative and the 2007 General Plan is 13,420. The correct amount of target housing under the TOD alternative is one-third of 13,420 or 4,026 units. It is a subset of the 13,420 units, not an addition, and represents the amount of housing that would be encouraged to locate within the TODs.

- O-21k.381 The grading ordinance is referenced in the water resources discussion at section 5.7.3.3 because it helps to control erosion. Erosion and sedimentation reduce surface water quality. The grading ordinance is assumed to apply in both the TOD alternative and the 2007 General Plan.

- O-21k.382 The comment notes that the EIR “fails to suggest” an alternative similar to the proposed 2007 General Plan that would prohibit “any intensification of steep slope development over the levels allowed by the 1982 General Plan.”

Policy 26.1.10 of the 1982 General Plan provides that the County will prohibit development on slopes greater than 30%, except where specific findings are made that either there is no alternative that would allow development on slopes less than 30% or the proposed development better achieves the resource protection objectives of the General Plan and all applicable other County plans.. Grant of the exception requires a discretionary approval process.

Policy OS-3.5 has been revised since the publication of the DEIR to require discretionary permits for development on steep slopes and to prohibit development on slopes in excess of 25%, except under prescribed circumstances. With this revision, proposed GPU5 is similar in its prohibition on intensification of steep slope development. The comment that this would avoid many of the impacts of the proposed additional development of steep slopes is noted.

- O-21k.383 The comment notes that the EIR “fails to suggest” an alternative similar to the proposed 2007 General Plan that would not include a winery corridor, or include one allowing far less intensity of development and requiring all development to undergo project-level CEQA review.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, the range of reasonable alternatives to the project is to include alternatives that are feasible, reduce one or more of the project’s significant effects, and meet most or all of the project’s objectives. The objectives of the 2007 General Plan are described in Section 3.2.1, beginning on page 3-4, of the DEIR. One of the objectives is to “[e]stablish the Agricultural Winery Corridor Plan (AWCP) to

facilitate the development of wineries along a corridor in the central and southern Salinas Valley to achieve a balance between the wine-grape production and wine processing capacity within the County.” The suggested alternative that would delete the winery corridor would not meet this objective. As explained on page 3-4, “[t]he complexity of the general plan, with its interacting goals and policies, requires that it meet all of the following objectives to be effective.” Those objectives include the AWCP. This proposed alternative is rejected for that reason.

Revision of the draft AWCP has been proposed since publication of the DEIR. (See Chapter 5 of the FEIR.) Per the proposed revision, all permanent projects within the winery corridor will be required to undertake a biology study prior to approval. If the biology study indicates the potential to significantly affect biological resources, the project will be subject to a discretionary permit and, therefore, subject to CEQA review. This change means that artisan wineries with the potential to impact biological resources will be subject to project-level environmental review under CEQA. This is similar to the alternative suggested.

- O-21k.384 The comment suggests that the EIR consider an alternative that minimizes impacts on water resources by establishing a moratorium on all further development in all overdrafted basins until additional, sustainable, adequate supplies are provided and the basin comes into “long term sustainable balance.”

Although the 2007 General Plan policies under Goal PS-3 (addressing long term water supply) do not establish a moratorium on all development, they do require proof of “a long-term, sustainable water supply, both in quality and quantity, to serve the development” (except for the first residence on existing lots of record). The broad moratorium on development suggested by the comment could amount to a “regulatory takings” without compensation, in contravention of the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. CEQA requires mitigation measures to be “consistent with all applicable constitutional requirements.” (CEQA Guidelines §15126.4(a)(4)) This is not a legally feasible alternative. See also response to comment O-21.k-168.

- O-21k.385 The comment asks for clarification of the agricultural permit process proposed under the prior version of Policy OS-3.5 of the 2007 General Plan. The revisions to Policy OS-3.5 clarify that the approval of agricultural conversion of uncultivated land on steep slopes would be subject to a discretionary permit process, except under a narrow exception delineated in the revised policy. See the response to comment O-21k.375 for the text of the revised proposal, including the standards applicable to issuance of a permit and the requirements for the related management plan.

- O-21k.386 See the response to comment O-21k.385.

- O-21k.387 The comment states that the DEIR should analyze the environmental effects of mitigation measures that require the adoption of policies and/or ordinances. The DEIR is a program EIR or “first-tier document,” which provides a broad analysis of the environmental effects of the program with the acknowledgment that site-specific environmental review will be required when future development projects are proposed under the approved regulatory program. (CEQA Guidelines Section 15168) As discussed by the California Supreme Court “it is proper for a lead agency to use its discretion to focus a first-tier EIR

on only the general plan or program, leaving project-level details to subsequent EIR's when specific projects are being considered.” (*In re Bay-Delta Programmatic Environmental Impact Report Coordinated Proceedings* (2008) 43 Cal.4th 1143; see also *Rio Vista Farm Bureau Center et al. v. County of Solano* (1992) 5 Cal.App.4th 351)

Mitigation Measures are components of the DEIR and are subject to the same requirements regarding their level of detail. (See CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4, 15143, 15146, 15151, 15204) While the County strives to provide as much detail as possible in the mitigation measures and policies, given the long-term nature of a general plan, and its geographic scope, the project should be general enough to allow a degree of flexibility in decision-making as times change. (OPR 2003, page 14) This is acceptable under CEQA. (*Koster v. County of San Joaquin* (1996) 47 Cal. App. 4th 29 [“a first-tier EIR may contain generalized mitigation criteria and policy-level alternatives”]) CEQA case law has also held that deferral of the specifics of mitigation is permissible where the lead agency commits itself to mitigation and, in the mitigation measure, either describes performance standards to be met in future mitigation or provides a menu of alternative mitigation measures to be selected from in the future. (*California Native Plant Society v. City of Rancho Cordova* (2009) 172 Cal.App.4th 603 [the details of exactly how the required mitigation and its performance standards will be achieved can be deferred pending completion of a future study])

The DEIR analyzed the impacts of the General Plan and its policies at a programmatic level of detail. If and when future ordinances and other implementation measures are under consideration for adoption, project-level CEQA review will be provided. Until that time, the environmental impacts of such ordinances is too speculative to meaningfully analyze, and thus need not be included in the DEIR. (CEQA Guidelines, §15145) Please see Master Response 10, which discusses the level of detail for the General Plan and General Plan’s EIR.

- O-21k.388 The comment states that the DEIR does not analyze the impacts resulting from the ministerial permit process under GPU steep slope policies (Policy OS-3.5). GPU Policy OS-3.5 has been revised and no longer provides a ministerial permit process for proposed development on slopes between 15-24% or on slopes between 10-15% on highly erodible soils. The policy now requires discretionary permits. Please see the revisions to Policy OS-3.5 in FEIR Chapter 5, and Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*. Additionally, please see Master Response 10 which discusses the level of detail for the General Plan and General Plan’s EIR.

The comment also suggests that existing policy would be a “...significant departure from current policy.” Please see response to comment O-21k.2 which discusses the CEQA requirements for discussion of the existing General Plan.

- O-21k.389 The comment suggests that the EIR consider prohibiting development on slopes over 25% and over 30% as a mitigation measure. It is not clear from the comment whether it refers to non-agricultural or agricultural development. The 2007 General Plan Policy OS-3.5, as revised, prohibits non-agricultural development on slopes in excess of 25%, except when certain findings can be made. The findings are similar to those required under the existing 1982 General Plan for approval of development on slopes in excess of 30%. Policy OS-3.5 as revised prohibits conversion of previously uncultivated lands to

agricultural uses where the slope exceeds 25% except under a narrow exception delineated in the policy. The revisions made to Policy OS-3.5 since publication of the DEIR have effectively incorporated the recommendation of the comment. The comment that the comment's proposed mitigation would significantly reduce the impacts of GPU5 is noted.

O-21k.390 See the response to comment O-21k.345.

O-21k.391 The commenter contends that Jones & Stokes (now ICF International), the preparer of the DEIR, is biased because it has a "financial interest in multiple projects in Monterey County," and these interests create a conflict for Jones & Stokes in the preparation of the DEIR, resulting in the integrity of the DEIR being called into question.

This is not a comment on the environmental analysis in the DEIR that requires a response under CEQA; however, the fact that ICF International is under contract with other persons or entities for work in Monterey County does not create either bias or a conflict. There is no requirement in CEQA that the preparer of an EIR not have any other business interests in the jurisdiction for which the EIR is being prepared. In addition, nothing in the Political Reform Act (Government Code section 81000 et seq.), or any other provision of law, compels a conclusion that Jones & Stokes has a conflict of interest or is biased. The commenter alleges, in particular, that the fact that ICF International has a contract for particular work with the MPWMD at the same time it prepared the DEIR creates a conflict. The mere assertion does not make it so, and there are no facts presented that show a conflict or bias. In regard to the comment's assertions about the Rancho Canada Village project, ICF International has no financial interest in the approval or denial of that project, as ICF International's contract is with Monterey County to prepare the CEQA analysis. ICF International is not under contract to the project proponent and has no expectation of future work or financial interest related to the project should it be approved or denied. The comment's hearsay report of applicant's opinion of the Rancho Canada Village EIR is not evidence of a conflict of interest or bias on the part of ICF International.

Whether or not future work related to implementation of the General Plan or mitigation might be done by ICF International or another consultant firm or other parties is not evidence of bias in the preparation of this EIR. All future awards of work for consulting firms, including ICF International, must follow the County's contracting procedures.

The County went through a very thorough review process to select the preparer for the EIR on this draft General Plan, and ICF International met the County's needs and was therefore selected. ICF International's professional involvement with the DEIR is to prepare the analysis and identify mitigations in accordance with CEQA requirements and based on the evidence identified. Under CEQA, the County as lead agency is "ultimately responsible for the adequacy and objectivity of the DEIR." (CEQA Guidelines § 15084) Additionally, if the County certifies the FEIR, the County will have to certify that the FEIR reflects the County's independent judgment and analysis. (Public Resources Code Section 21082.1; CEQA Guidelines § 15090)

O-21k.392 CEQA only requires recirculation of an EIR when significant new information is added to the EIR after public notice, which changes the EIR "in a way the deprives the public of

a meaningful opportunity to comment upon a substantial adverse environmental effect of the project or a feasible way to mitigate or avoid such an effect (including a feasible project alternative)." (CEQA Guidelines, §15088.5(a)) Revisions that have been made to the DEIR merely clarify or amplify the analysis and do not make significant modifications. (See FEIR Chapter 4 for a list of all revisions to the DEIR.) See also Master Response 12, *Recirculation*. Therefore, recirculation is not required under CEQA. (CEQA Guidelines, §15088.5(b)) Please see responses O-21k.2 through O-21k.391 regarding commenter's specific remarks on the adequacy of the DEIR.

Individuals

I-1 Brennan, Janet

- I-1.1 The commenter raises questions about data pertaining to 2030 “buildout” (development to the planning horizon) and 2092 (full buildout of the General Plan)

Table 3.9 on page 3-20 of the DEIR indicates that there could be 1,481 units developed in the Affordable Housing Opportunity areas (AHOs) by 2030. Full buildout of the AHOs could equal 3,870. The discussion on page 4.15-15 of the DEIR relates to population growth through 2030.

Table 3.9 has been revised (see Chapter 4 of this FEIR) to estimate that the AHOs will have the potential to house up to 1,269 units by 2030. This is less than the number calculated in the DEIR, but does not result in a conflict with any significance determinations. Full buildout is discussed on Page 4.15-17, but does not distinguish the number for the AHOs. It provides total dwelling units, since the ability to forecast that far into the future is limited. The DEIR number is unchanged in the revised Table 3.9.

I-2 California Water Service Company

- I-2.1 The commenter has indicated that the DEIR should provide more information on nitrate contamination. There are several sections in Section 4.3 of the DEIR that address groundwater contamination including pages 4.3-22 –4.3-25; Section 4.33.2, and pages 4.3-90-4.3-99. In addition, the DEIR addresses nitrate contamination from septic systems. Tables 4.3-2, 4.3-3, 4.3-8 and Exhibit 4.3-8 all contain detailed information on the extent and degree of nitrate contamination.

The County concurs that the excerpts regarding nitrate contamination levels on Page 4.3-22 should be clarified. Please refer to Chapter 4 for the pertinent text changes.

- I-2.2 The commenter has suggested changes to the text on page 4.3-23 of the DEIR (mistakenly referenced in the comment as page 4.3-22) regarding BMPs to reduce existing nitrate contamination in the Salinas Valley. The proposed General Plan Update already contains several policies that are consistent with this comment. OS-3.1 requires that BMPs be established and enforced; OS-3.2 encourages support of the projects between landholders and state and federal soil conservation and restoration program; OS-3.3 requires establishment of criteria that would be used to establish design parameters and BMPs to address soil stability, slope and water quality issues. AG-5.2 promotes policies and program to protect and enhance surface water and groundwater resources. The General Plan also includes strict provisions with respect to the reduction of nitrate contamination from septic systems including requirements for adequate infrastructure financing for new development and connections to public systems (Policy PS-4.12). Therefore, it is not necessary to make the textual change requested in the comment, and

no additional policies are proposed at this time. The comment will be forwarded to the decision makers for their consideration.

- I-2.3 In order to address the ongoing issue of high nitrate contamination in wells, the draft General Plan includes new infrastructure and service standards (Policy PS-1.1 and Table PS-1) for new development. Policies PS-2.2 and PS-2.5 address water and water quality testing of wells. In addition, Policy PS-3.4 requires that specific water quality and quantity criteria be developed to evaluate the adequacy of new wells. Policies PS-4.1 through PS-4.12 include measures to address wastewater management. PS-4.12 requires the development of On-site Wastewater Management Plans for areas with high concentrations of development served by individual sewage systems. The DEIR evaluates the impact of the 2007 General Plan Update on the availability of water supply to serve existing and future demands in Impact WR-4 (Section 4.3, p. 4.3-113 – 4.3-135.)
- I-2.4 Please refer to responses I-2.2 and I-2.3 above. In addition Policy PS-3.1-3.15 provides measures for water conservation and enhancement of long term water supplies. Policies PS-3.12 and PS-3.14 specifically address agricultural water conservation.
- I-2.5 The text in the DEIR has been revised to address this comment. Please refer to Chapter 4.
- I-2.6 The commenter has requested additional evidence beyond statements on Page 4.3-1 regarding how the SVWP will meet water demands in the basin to 2030. The DEIR, on Pages 4.3-32 through 4.3-35 provides additional information on the SVWP. The text (see Page 4.3-33) refers to information in the EIR/EIS for the SVWP that contains the background information, demand estimates and modeling data to support the information provided in the General Plan DEIR with respect to supply and reversal of seawater intrusion. This document was included in Section 11, *Documents, Plans, and Reports Cited*, of the DEIR.

To address some of the comment provided on the DEIR with respect to water supply/demand through 2030 and post-2030 strategies, the FEIR includes changes to Mitigation Measure WR-2 that provide a review of actual growth against projections every five years and links this review to the development of future supply alternatives. See Chapter 4 for the revised Measure WR-2.

Please also refer to Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, for additional information on water supply demand and water supply projects in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin.

The commenter questioned the inconsistency between statements in the DEIR that there will be a sufficient water supply in the Salinas Valley with Impact WR-4 which states that capacity will exceed supply. WR-4 addresses Monterey County as a whole and distinguishes between the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin and other groundwater basins (i.e., El Toro, Pajaro, Carmel Valley, Seaside). Based on an analysis of these other areas of the County, the DEIR concludes that the impact will be significant and unavoidable. WR-4 also addresses the post-2030 timeframe and for 2030 to 2092 Buildout concludes that there will not be sufficient supply. The mitigation proposed is to develop additional alternative projects and sources.

- I-2.7 The commenter is correct that the CSIP project delivers water to agricultural customers only. However, the intent is to thereby to free up water for urban customers. In addition, the CSIP will provide benefits with respect to the halting of seawater intrusion.
- I-2.8 Please refer to Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, for a discussion of the MCWRA modeling with respect to seawater intrusion. With respect to the comments regarding the second phase of the SVWP, the FEIR includes proposed revisions to Mitigation Measure WR-2 as mitigation for impacts beyond 2030. This measure includes requirements for initiating planning for Phase 2 by 2020 in order to have a new project on-line by 2030. In response to comments, WR-2 has been revised to track, at 5-year intervals, actual growth with projected growth against the SVWP modeling projections. The timeframe for planning phase 2 would be coordinated with information gained in the periodic review. Please refer to Chapter 4 of this FEIR.
- I-2.9 Based upon all the modeling completed to date, there does not appear to be an issue with the spread of the plume. As stated on p. 4.3-130 of the DEIR, the SVWP will provide sufficient supply to reverse existing overdraft and seawater intrusion problems and to provide water for new development. The DEIR relies upon the information provided in the EIS/EIR prepared for the SVWP to support this statement, as discussed in response to comment I-13.6. The SVWP EIS/EIR reflects the results of the SVIGSIM model in its conclusions. The SVIGSIM model is well accepted as a locally-calibrated simulation of the Salinas Valley's groundwater and has been used extensively in water supply planning within the Salinas Valley. The SVIGSIM runs for the SVWP conclude that that project will reverse overdraft conditions within all basins within the Salinas Valley. To clarify a statement in the DEIR regarding the "reversal" of seawater intrusion: while existing seawater intrusion cannot be reversed to the extent that the existing line of seawater intrusion is pushed westward, the DEIR intends to say that the existing *trend* of eastward movement of that line will be halted. As noted in the SVWP EIS/EIR, additional delivery systems will be needed in order to deliver water to some parts of the Zone 2C zone of benefit. The MCWRA shall continue monitoring over time to determine success and adapt as necessary. Please refer also to Master Response 4, *Water Supply*.
- I-2.10 Please refer to response I-2.6 above. The information requested is in the SVWP EIR/EIS.
- I-2.11 The comment regarding overestimation of demand is noted. The 181 gallon per day (gpd) rate assumed for purposes of the general analysis provided in this EIR, as contrasted with the actual data from CWSC of 146 gpd, will become a factor in the five-year review process of actual growth against projections that will be required by Mitigation Measure WR-2 (revising Policy PS-3.18), as revised in the FEIR. This factor, in addition to the conservative growth projections utilized in the DEIR analysis may therefore suggest that the SVWP estimates regarding the ability to provide water up to 2030 are likewise conservative. The issue of the SVWP's estimates is discussed in Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, which addresses a number of the comments raised with respect to water supply.

I-3 Clark, David and Madeline

- I-3.1 These comments pertain to policies included in the Draft General Plan. These comments reflect the opinions of the commenter regarding these policies and are not comments on the adequacy or content of the EIR. The decision-makers will consider these comments during their deliberations on the Draft General Plan. No further response is necessary.

I-4 Del Piero, Marc

- I-4.1 Commenter has indicated that he affirms the comments provided by the Agricultural and Historical Lands Conservancy and Land Watch Monterey County. Commenter should refer to the responses to comment letters O-1a, O-1b, and O-11a through O-11g for responses to the comments submitted by these organizations. In addition, please refer to Master Response 3 on General Plan Agricultural Policies for further discussion of the proposed project's impact on farmland.

I-5 Doering, John

- I-5.1 The commenter has suggested that cultivation on slopes greater than 25% should be prohibited. Based upon comments received on the issues of erosion and water quality, proposed Policy OS-3.5 has been modified to include provisions that further restrict cultivation on slopes over 25%. Please refer to the discussion in Master Response 3 on General Plan Agricultural Policies for a discussion of the proposed changes to Policy OS-3.5. These can also be found in Chapter 5 of the FEIR.
- I-5.2 The commenter is suggesting that circulation policies in the General Plan be modified regarding levels of service. These comments reflect the opinions of the commenter regarding policies of the Draft General Plan and are not substantive comments on adequacy or content of the EIR. All comments will be forwarded to the decision-makers for their consideration prior to a final decision on the proposed project.

I-6 General Farm Investment Company (C. Bunn)

- I-6.1 This comment asserts that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) evaluations of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change are based on "faulty premises" and "fake data". The comment in specific claims that the IPCC's evaluation is based on data generated by Dr. James Hansen of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) and alleges that Dr. Hansen's data is questionable due to questions about prior temperature data for October 2008, arctic ice levels, and whether the 1990s were the hottest decade in the 20th century (compared to the 1930s). Based on these concerns, the commenter questions the reliance of the EIR on data from the IPCC.

The commenter disagrees with the scientific evidence on climate change presented in the DEIR. CEQA Guidelines Section 15151 states that "disagreement among experts does

not make an EIR inadequate.” The DEIR relies on the findings of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Contrary to the commenter’s claim, the IPCC is highly respected and is the leading international body related to the issue of climate change. The IPCC is composed of leading climate scientists from around the world and was established by the United Nations Environmental Programme and the World Meteorological Organization in 1988. The panel itself is made up of more than 2,500 scientific and technical experts from more than 60 countries all over the world. The scientists are from widely divergent research fields including climatology, ecology, economics, medicine, and oceanography. The IPCC is referred to as the largest peer-reviewed scientific cooperation project in history. (California Climate Change Portal 2009)

The IPCC prepares predictions of the potential impact of the greenhouse effect according to existing climate models and peer-reviewed literature information. It reviews and assesses the most recent peer-reviewed scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide relevant to the understanding of climate change (the IPCC itself does not conduct any research, nor does it monitor climate related data or parameters). Review is an essential part of the IPCC process, to ensure an objective and complete assessment of current information. Differing viewpoints existing within the scientific community are reflected in the IPCC reports. (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2009)

The commenter has not provided any reference to peer-reviewed scientific articles that question the conclusions in the IPCC’s Fourth Assessment Report, which is the report cited in the EIR as the source of information about projected global warming and associated temperatures. Instead the commenter references undated newspaper reporting from the London Telegraph concerning Dr. Hansen (which makes it difficult to track down the newspaper assertions and the basis for them). Further, the comment quotes two researchers (McIntyre and Watts) as disputing Dr. Hansen’s data without citing the source of Mr. McIntyre’s and Mr. Watts evidence.

Beginning in 1990, the IPCC has prepared a series of Assessment Reports on Climate Change. The most recent, the Fourth Assessment Report, was released in 2007. The County has relied, in part, upon the work of IPCC because it is highly regarded and scientifically sound. Other agencies relying upon the work of the IPCC include the California ARB, Natural Resources Agency, and other members of the State’s Climate Action Team.

According to “The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change”, *Science*, 3 December 2004, p. 1686:

“The scientific consensus is clearly expressed in the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Created in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environmental Programme, IPCC’s purpose is to evaluate the state of climate science as a basis for informed policy action, primarily on the basis of peer-reviewed and published scientific literature. In its most recent assessment, IPCC states unequivocally that the consensus of scientific opinion is that Earth’s climate is being affected by human activities: ‘Human activities ... are modifying the concentration of atmospheric constituents ... that absorb or scatter radiant energy. ...

[M]ost of the observed warming over the last 50 years is likely to have been due to the increase in greenhouse gas concentrations' [p. 21 in (4)].

IPCC is not alone in its conclusions. In recent years, all major scientific bodies in the United States whose members' expertise bears directly on the matter have issued similar statements. For example, the National Academy of Sciences report, *Climate Change Science: An Analysis of Some Key Questions*, begins: 'Greenhouse gases are accumulating in Earth's atmosphere as a result of human activities, causing surface air temperatures and subsurface ocean temperatures to rise' [p. 1 in (5)]. The report explicitly asks whether the IPCC assessment is a fair summary of professional scientific thinking, and answers yes: 'The IPCC's conclusion that most of the observed warming of the last 50 years is likely to have been due to the increase in greenhouse gas concentrations accurately reflects the current thinking of the scientific community on this issue' [p. 3 in (5)].

Others agree. The American Meteorological Society, the American Geophysical Union), and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) all have issued statements in recent years concluding that the evidence for human modification of climate is compelling."

The IPCC uses multiple sources of data, including those from GISS, as well as other temperature series. If the commenter is interested in examining such data it is explicitly described and fully referenced to peer-reviewed scientific research in the report cited in the EIR: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). *Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis, Summary for Policy Makers* (Working Group 1 Fourth Assessment Report) which is available on the web at: <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg1/ar4-wg1-spm.pdf> and was made available at the Monterey County Planning front counter during the public review period for the DEIR. Given that the comment presents no actual evidence countering the IPCC's conclusion that global temperatures are rising whereas the IPCC reports do, there is no reason to conclude that the IPCC's conclusions are "faulty" or "fake".

The concern about global climate change is a concern about long-term trends, not the immediate changes over a period of one year which can be subject to short-term climate variability. As described in IPCC (2007), the long-term concern about arctic ice is a documented 7 percent decline per decade in the extent of summer minimum from the early 1970s through 2005. The change over one year is not the relevant issue, but rather the long-term change is of concern. The IPCC report, unlike the only reference made by the commenter, is based solely on peer-reviewed scientific research and all information is extensively referenced as can be verified by examination of the IPCC 2007 report on the physical science basis for climate change. As such, it represents a far more reliable basis for evaluation of climate change than the claims made by this comment.

I-6.2 The commenter asserts that the link between changes in global temperatures and deleterious impacts on natural and human environments is speculative. Please see Response to I-6.1.

The conclusion in the DEIR is supported by numerous studies of the potential effects of global climate change. The State of California has undertaken an extensive interagency response to the potential adverse effects of climate change on California. This includes, among many other examples, formation of the interagency Climate Action Team, the

Governor's Executive Order S-3-05 (establishing goals for the reduction of greenhouse gas reduction in California), and the activities of the ARB to coordinate many agencies in implementing AB 32 (the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006).

California agencies continue to examine the potential effects of global climate change on California, methods to analyze that change, and means to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to predicted changes. These studies are too numerous to list here. For example, the California Energy Commission's Public Interest Energy Research (PIER) Program alone produced over 40 reports on issues related to climate change and greenhouse gas emissions between January and August 2009.

The comment provides no evidence or references to back up their claim for speculation. The potential for deleterious impacts on natural and human environments are well documented in the IPCC 2007 Fourth Assessment report (IPCC 2007). As described in this report, increasing atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and temperature increases will result in agricultural output increases in the middle latitudes of the northern (northern U.S and Canada, for example) and southern hemisphere, but at the expense of decreasing agricultural outputs in the lower latitudes (particularly in sub-Saharan Africa) that may increase risk of hunger in a number of vulnerable countries. As to spreading "beneficial flora", it is unknown what this refers to, the above report concludes that approximately 20-30% of plant and animal species assessed so far are likely to be at an increased risk of extinction if increases in global average temperature exceed 1.5-2.5°C. This hardly indicates any purported movement of beneficial flora.

I-6.3 The commenter questions the use of the term "global pollutant" in regards to greenhouse gases such as water vapor, CO₂, nitrogen, and other common emissions.

The commenter misconstrues the use of this term in the context of global climate change. Greenhouse gases are not necessarily directly harmful to human health. Obviously, many of the so-called greenhouse gases are found naturally. However, it is their part in causing global climate change, as discussed in Section 4.16, *Climate Change* of the DEIR that raises them to the level of pollutants. The intent was not to claim that GHGs are toxic pollutants as a group. The federal Clean Air Act defines a pollutant as any compound which "contribute to, air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare." As discussed there, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Massachusetts vs. Environmental Protection Agency et al.* 549 U.S. 497 (2007) that greenhouse gases fit within the Clean Air Act's definition of a pollutant.

In response to *Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency*, on December 7, 2009, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) stated that: after thorough examination of the scientific evidence and careful consideration of public comments, the EPA found that GHGs threaten the public health and welfare. GHGs are the primary driver of climate change, which can lead to hotter, longer heat waves that threaten the health of the sick, poor or elderly; increases in ground-level ozone pollution linked to asthma and other respiratory illnesses. EPA also found that GHG emissions from on-road vehicles contribute to that threat. EPA's ruling can be found at:
<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/endangerment.html>

- I-6.4 The commenter asserts that the possible environmental changes discussed in Section 4.16, *Climate Change* are “reckless speculation” and asks for the source of the information, and asks whether climate change will have any positive impacts. The comment states that commenter is concerned about EIR consultants’ intelligence and political persuasions.

The reference for Section 4.16.3.2 was inadvertently not provided in this section, but has been provided in the FEIR. The reference was actually “Scenarios of Climate Change in California: An Overview” (Climate Scenarios report), published in February 2006 (California Climate Change Center 2006). This reference was made available by the County during the DEIR review. The potential environmental changes that are expected to happen to California are well documented in the literature. Most recently, the May 2009 PIER report entitled *The Future is Now: An Update on Climate Change Science Impacts and Response Options for California* outlines the variety of adverse effects that are reasonably foreseeable as a result of global climate change. However, the science of climate change research is not so advanced as to be able to predict the particular impacts that may occur at the local level.

CEQA requires the disclosure of significant environmental effects. A significant effect is defined as “a substantial, or potentially substantial adverse change in the environment.” (Public Resources Code Section 21068) Accordingly, the DEIR focuses on the potential adverse effects of global climate change.

The impacts of Climate Change on California are documented fully in “2009 California Adaptation Strategy: A Report to the Governor of the State of California”. The Report, which provides information on the impacts on Public Health, Biodiversity, Ocean and Coastal Resources, Water Management, Agriculture, Forestry and Transportation and Energy Infrastructure, can be found at: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/2009publications/CNRA-1000-2009-027/CNRA-1000-2009-027-F.PDF> Please also see Response I-6.1.

Thus, the presentation of the adverse effects of climate change on California and Monterey County is well supported by research and evidence in the record, whereas the commenter provides no evidence to support his claim. As such, the commenter’s aspersions about the intelligence or political bias of Jones & Stokes (now ICF International) are contradicted by the demonstration that the DEIR is based on credible and substantial evidence in the record.

- I-6.5 The commenter points out that California contributes only a small amount of the additional CO₂ being released into the atmosphere. This comment relates to the veracity of global warming and to the level of response by California. See responses I-6.1 and I-6.2.

The comment confuses the atmospheric concentration of GHGs with the annual share (12th to 16th) of California emissions as part of global anthropogenic emissions on page 4.16-4. The comment does not make any specific assertion about the adequacy of the EIR, but is clearly trying to imply that California’s emissions are too small to matter and to question where GHGs could actually cause global warming. Although GHG concentrations in the atmosphere are relatively small as the commenter notes, there is a

delicate balance of these concentrations that most scientists believe has been altered by anthropogenic emissions since the Industrial Revolution. Without natural GHG emissions, the earth's average temperature would be below the freezing point of water and would make human habitation of the earth difficult (IPCC 2007a). However, anthropogenic GHG emissions can result in an excess of greenhouse gas emissions that can result in warming of the atmosphere and result changes in climate.

As the evidence for anthropogenic GHGs resulting in global warming is grounded in peer reviewed science as best summarized in the IPCC reports and the commenter provides no scientific evidence to dispute those conclusion, no further response is necessary. The commenter is referred to the IPCC 2007 report on the Physical Science basis for climate change noted above for a detailed description of the science as understood today.

- I-6.6 The comment asks why nuclear power is not considered under Mitigation Measure CC-3 as part of alternative energy promotion. Licensing and approval of power plants over 50 MW is under the jurisdiction of the California Energy Commission (CEC) and is not under the jurisdiction of Monterey County. Existing law prohibits the CEC from approving any new nuclear fission power plant until the CEC has determined that technologies exist for the reprocessing of nuclear fuel rods and the disposal of high-level nuclear waste. (Chapters 194 and 196, Statutes of 1976) The commenter is correct that nuclear power does not have operational GHG emissions associated with combustion of fossil fuels like natural gas-fired power plants and thus could be part of a strategy to reduce GHG emissions associated with electricity generation emissions. Since the County does not have the authority to pursue large-scale power plants, and state law establishes a moratorium on same, whereas it can promote small-scale alternative energy within its jurisdiction, nuclear power is not included in Mitigation Measure CC-3. Should the Board wish to consider the potential promotion of nuclear power in the future, the environmental impacts of policies to promote potential new nuclear power would need to be evaluated under CEQA.
- I-6.7 The commenter asks why 75% has been recommended as a waste reduction goal in Mitigation Measure CC-4, Promote Recycling and Waste Reduction.
- The 75% goal was selected as an achievable level of landfill diversion on the basis of the diversion rates of other communities. AB 479 (Chesbro), currently under consideration in the State Legislature, would set a 75% goal for diversion from landfills.
- I-6.8 The comment asks why the DEIR discusses the need for additional reductions in GHG emissions beyond 2020 when the DEIR notes that Executive Order S-03-05 does not create legal mandates for local government. The commenter is correct that Executive Order S-03-05 does not create a legal requirement to comply with the 2050 targets. However, the scientific understanding of climate change science today has identified that changes of greater than 2 degrees Celsius will likely result in substantial and far-reaching climate change effects (see IPCC 2007b) and that substantial reductions on the order of 50 percent reduction of GHG emissions below 1990 global levels may be necessary to keep the temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Celsius (see IPCC 2007). In order to achieve the 50 percent reduction from 1990 levels globally, it is estimated that developed countries (U.S./Canada, Europe, Japan etc.) will need to reduce emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels while developing countries have lesser levels of reductions (given their

lesser economic ability to control GHG emissions). Thus, the reason that the DEIR discusses the period after 2020, is that further GHG reductions will be necessary in Monterey County and globally in order for the emissions in the County to not contribute considerably to GHG emissions that will result in temperature rises greater than 2 degrees Celsius.

- I-6.9 The commenter asks about the need to analyze full build out in the year 2092 in light of the 20-year timeframe of the General Plan.

The County is making a good faith effort to comply with CEQA's requirement that it analyze the reasonably foreseeable impacts of development under the General Plan. Since the level of development expressed in the General Plan would theoretically reach build out in 2092, the DEIR examines (to the level reasonably possible) impacts in 2092. As described in the DEIR, the full buildout of the 2007 General Plan would not occur by 2030 (only about 28% of the total buildout is expected by 2030). Given that the General Plan can be expected to be updated long before that time, the County will adjust its analysis and policies in accordance with the conditions at that time of those updates. Where conditions have changed sufficiently to make the long-term mitigation measures identified in the DEIR infeasible or no longer pertinent, then those measures can be deleted or revised as needed.

- I-6.10 The comment requests that Mitigation Measure BIO-1.5 (which calls for a Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP) to be developed for the period after 2030 - not an HCP as asserted in comment) be deleted due to concerns about cost and justification as needed to address impacts. The comment also asserts that Jones & Stokes (the consultant drafting the EIR) has a conflict of interest because it prepares conservation plans.

Habitat conservation planning is a long-established approach to comprehensively addressing impacts to species protected (or expected to qualify for protection in the future) under the federal Endangered Species Act. The Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP) Act provides for a similar process under the California Endangered Species Act. An NCCP provides greater certainty for both conservation and development by establishing rules and procedures for the protection of species and habitat that are specific to the region included within the NCCP.

First, the justification for Mitigation Measure BIO-1.5 is presented in the DEIR as the lack of a comprehensive framework to provide for protection of threatened and endangered species and to prevent rare species from becoming threatened and endangered. Second, cost has not been an impediment to the development of landscape-level HCPs and NCCPs in eastern Contra Costa County, Santa Clara County, western Riverside County, and large portions of San Diego County and thus HCPs and NCCPs are not considered to be infeasible mitigation as there is evidence they have been completed in other counties. Third, the DEIR was prepared with the direct involvement and approval of Monterey County planning staff and thus all mitigations included in the EIR are those with the County staff, and in its independent judgment found to be justified under CEQA. Jones & Stokes' professional involvement with the DEIR is to prepare the analysis and identify mitigations in accordance with CEQA requirements and based on the evidence identified. Whether or not future work related to implementation of the

General Plan or mitigation might be done by Jones & Stokes or another consultant firm or other parties is immaterial to the task at hand and is not evidence of bias in the preparation of this EIR. All future awards of work for consulting firms, including Jones & Stokes, must follow the County's contracting procedures. Pursuant to Pub. Res. Code Section 21082.1 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15084(e), the EIR reflects the independent judgment of the County, not its consultants.

In response to concerns about the NCCP process, the County has revised Measure BIO-1.5 to call for preparation of a detailed conservation strategy, as opposed to a formal NCCP.

- I-6.11 The commenter expresses concern over the establishment of a regional group or other process that would result in the transfer of water out-of-basin. Water taken out of Zone 2C, for example, would further exacerbate the ability to combat seawater intrusion.

Mitigation Measure WR-1 does not endorse any specific solution to water needs on the Monterey Peninsula and does specify that water transfers from Zone 2C need to be part of the solution. The comment is noted, but does not require any revision to the DEIR.

The commenter misunderstands the intent of Mitigation Measure WR-1, which is to encourage dialogue between the County and other interested entities toward the end of finding acceptable solutions to chronic water supply problems. This would not include approaches that are contrary to law, such as the transfer of water from Zone 2C which defines the zone of benefit for the assessments funding the SVWP to users outside of Zone 2C; that would reverse hard-won programs dealing with seawater intrusion; or that are otherwise unacceptable to the cooperating entities. Solutions to the water supply problems of the Monterey Peninsula are focusing on new water supplies from desalination, not on transfers of water from the Salinas Valley that is already committed to Salinas Valley activities under the Salinas Valley Water Project and limited by existing financing and other agreements.

The comment also expresses that the DEIR should have conducted its own evaluation of potential solutions to problems in the Seaside Aquifer and the Monterey Peninsula. Please see Master Response 4 concerning water resources and Chapter 4, which has an updated summary of water demands and supply on the Monterey Peninsula. The DEIR disclosed a wide range of possible solutions to water issues on the Monterey Peninsula and described the efforts of the CPUC, MPWMD, Cal-Am, and others to promote alternative supplies and address resource challenges such as seawater intrusion. The 2007 General Plan is not a water supply project and thus the analysis in the DEIR appropriately describes water demands, water supplies, and water infrastructure projects relative to the development allowed by the General Plan.

- I-6.12 The commenter disagrees with the use of 2004 AMBAG growth projections in the DEIR.

AMBAG's growth projections may vary, based on the ups and downs of the economy. The reasons for using the AMBAG projections are outlined in the DEIR Section 2.5. Using the 2004 AMBAG numbers provides a more conservative approach to determining environmental impacts. See Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions* Utilized in the DEIR.

- I-6.13 The commenter requests that the DEIR be re-written to reflect “an impartial point of view, as opposed to the biased and agenda-driven point of view of the DEIR consultants.”

The DEIR reflects the independent judgment of the County, based on substantial evidence, not the single point of view of the consultants. This comment is noted but provides no evidence to support the allegations of speculation or bias on the part of the DEIR preparers. The DEIR offers an objective, and at times conservative, analysis of the potential for the General Plan to result in significant environmental impacts. This is consistent with the requirements of CEQA.

I-7a Haines, Jane (letter)

- I-7a.1 The comment points out that Figure CA-3 of the draft General Plan Update and Exhibit 3.16 of the DEIR incorrectly cite to “LU-2.23(f)” as the General Plan policy that governs establishment of the boundary of the Chualar Community Area. The comment also contends that the list of references in Section 11 of the DEIR contains an incorrect web address for California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program data. The comment claims both errors are prejudicial and requests that the DEIR be temporarily withdrawn from circulation until the errors are corrected.

Both issues were resolved following receipt of the comment. The comment is dated October 21, 2008. At that time, the comment period on the DEIR was scheduled to end on November 18, 2008. Subsequently, the County issued revisions of the DEIR, issued a new Notice of Availability, and began a new public comment period on the DEIR, beginning December 16, 2008 and ending February 2, 2009, to allow for public review of the DEIR with the revisions. The revisions consisted of: a revised Section 11 with updated citations; errata with modifications to reference citations in the text of the DEIR; a revised reference list for the Technical Supporting Data at the end of this DEIR; and corrections of typographical errors in maps. The revisions addressed both of the issues raised in the comment.

In regard to the commenter’s first point, General Plan Figure CA-3 (an aerial photo) and Figure LU-4 (a map) had contained an explanatory note stating that “the boundary for the Chualar Community Area will be established at a later date pursuant to LU-2.23f.” The identical figure and map, with the same explanatory note, were reproduced as Exhibits 3.6 and 3.16 of the DEIR. The policy number referenced in the explanatory note contained a typographical error; the number should have been LU-2.22(c) rather than LU-2.23f. Prior to the commencement of the new comment period in December 2008, the reference to Policy “LU-2.23f” was corrected to refer to “LU-2.22(c)” in the explanatory note on Figure CA-3 and Figure LU-4 of the Draft General Plan. The Figures, with the reference to the corrected policy number, were among the revisions issued in December 2008, prior to the new public comment period. In addition to issuing a new Notice of Availability of the DEIR as revised on December 15, 2008, the County issued a letter to the EIR distribution list explaining that Figures CA-3 and LU-4 of the General Plan Update are identical to Exhibit 3.6 and Exhibit 3.16 of the DEIR and the corrections apply to both. A note to this effect was placed on the County website. Individuals who requested CDs of the General Plan and DEIR were mailed a CD that included both sets of changes - General Plan figures and DEIR exhibits. A notice of

correction was also sent to the State Clearinghouse, and a new state agency review period was set.

Following the County's correction of the maps and figures, the commenter acknowledged the corrections and thanked the County. (See Letter I-7g, comment 3.) See Chapter 5 of the FEIR for GPU Figures LU-4 and CA-3 as corrected as described above. For corrected Exhibits 3.6 and 3.16 of the DEIR, please see the corresponding identical corrected GPU Figures LU-4 and CA-3.

In regard to the commenter's second point, prior to the start of the new public comment period on December 16, 2008, the County reviewed and updated the reference list and issued a revised Section 11 (entitled "Documents, Plans and Reports Cited (updated 12/05/08)") of the DEIR. The County began a new public comment review period for the DEIR following the issuance of the revised Section 11. The revisions to Section 11 include clarifications of the citation to which the commenter referred.

While the County does not agree that these errors were prejudicial, any informational inadequacy resulting from the typographical errors or citations was cured by the December 2008 revisions and new public comment period following the revisions. The commenter is also referred to Master Response 12, *Recirculation*, for further discussion of EIR references.

I-7b Haines, Jane (Joining TOMP)

I-7b.1 The comment draws attention to the commenter's previous letter (comment I-7a) and joins in an October 17, 2008 request by The Open Monterey Project to correct deficiencies in the DEIR's list of references and to extend the period for public comment on the DEIR. The commenter gives examples to highlight the importance of correct citations and argues that the cumulative effect of the deficiencies in the references create an information inadequacy in the DEIR. The comment requests the County to correct the deficiencies in the references and extend the cutoff date for comments, counting from the date the corrections become publicly available. The comment is dated October 23, 2008. Subsequent to that date, the County reviewed and updated the reference list and issued a revised Section 11 (entitled "Documents, Plans and Reports Cited (updated 12/05/08)"). Following the issuance of the revised Section 11, the County began a new public comment review period which ran from December 16, 2008 through February 2, 2009. The revisions to Section 11 include clarifications of the citations to which the commenter referred. Any informational inadequacy was cured by the December 2008 revisions and new public comment period following the revisions. See also response to comment I-7a and response to the October 17, 2008 letter from The Open Monterey Project (response to comment O-21d.)

Subsequent to receiving letters regarding access to and errors in references, the County revised the reference section, provided better identification of the referenced materials, made copies available to the public, and extended the DEIR's public review period as noted above. The County has made the necessary good faith effort at full disclosure regarding the reference documents for the DEIR. Please see Master Response 12, *Recirculation*, for greater detail. As noted in Master Response 12, while several

comments have suggested that CEQA Guidelines Section 15087(c)(5) mandates availability of “all documents referenced,” this section must be read in context. As discussed in a leading CEQA treatise:

“[t]he requirement that the EIR public review notice indicate the address where copies of the EIR and all ‘referenced’ documents are available has also led to some confusion. This notice requirement should be read together with 14 Cal. Code Regs. §15150(b), which requires that documents incorporated by reference in an EIR be made available for inspection. See also 14 Cal. Code Regs. §15087(c)(5). This requirement should not be interpreted to apply to documents that are cited in an EIR under 14 Cal. Code Regs. 15148, because there is no requirement that such documents be made available for public inspection.” (Kostka & Zischke, *Practice Under the California Environmental Quality Act*, (2d ed. Cal CEB, January 2010 Update), p. 472, § 9.18.)

I-7c Haines, Jane

- I-7c.1 The commenter corrects a mistake in commenter’s prior letter (comment I-7b) and provides an example to support the commenter’s argument that having a correct citation makes an informational difference. In the example provided, the commenter calculates that the post-2004 average annual acreage loss of Monterey County prime farmland is three times greater than the average annual loss in the preceding twenty years and contends that the DEIR does not disclose this trend. The comment is dated October 24, 2008. See responses to comments I-7a and I-7b regarding County’s subsequent revision to references and new public review period following that revision.

In regard to the comment concerning trends in the loss of prime farmland, Table 4.2-7 in the DEIR (Agricultural Land Converted to Urban Uses 1992-2006) includes the data for 2004-2006 and shows that 151 acres of Important Farmland and 277 acres of grazing land were converted to urban uses. Table A-19 Attachment 3 provided by the commenter includes note 1 which reads: “Conversion among irrigated agricultural categories is due to the incorporation of updated digital soil survey data (SSURGO) into the 2006 Important Farmland data. This reflects modifications made to soil mapping by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as opposed to land use conversions”. In other words, some of the change in the most recent conversion data is due to a change in methodology, not actual conversions of agricultural land. This points out one risk of using a short time frame for trend analysis, instead of a longer period. Accordingly, the trend that is discussed in the DEIR (average loss of 319 acres per year between 1992 and 2006 remains relevant to the analysis.

I-7d Haines, Jane

- I-7d.1 The comment, which was sent by e-mail on October 24, 2008, states that Figure CA-3 and DEIR Exhibit 3.16 as they appear on County’s website have not yet been corrected and still have the erroneous reference to policy LU 2.23f. The commenter explains that her concern is that the reference to the incorrect policy number leaves Chualar residents inadequately informed about constraints on the future boundaries of the Chualar Community Area that stem from a prior settlement agreement. General Plan Policy LU-

2.22.c regarding the Chualar Community Area states that the Community Plan for Chualar must be consistent with that certain settlement agreement in *Chualar Area Concerned Citizens, et al v. County of Monterey* (Monterey County Superior Court Case No. 107519), executed on or about October 16, 2001. Subsequent to the date the County received this comment, the County corrected the policy number referenced on Figures CA-3 and LU-4 from "LU.2.23F" to "LU-2.22c." The County also subsequently made corrections to Exhibits 3.6 and 3.16. As noted in the response to comment I-7a, the County began a new comment public period following issuance of the revisions. Therefore, the General Plan Update and DEIR adequately informed the public about the future boundaries.

I-7e Haines, Jane

- I-7e.1 This comment is a series of e-mails from October 23 to 27, 2008 criticizing the County for its inadequate response to commenter's complaint about access to references listed in Section 11 of the DEIR. The October 27 e-mail also expresses concern that the County had not yet made corrections to the typographical error pertaining to Chualar Community Area boundaries which commenter had requested a week earlier.

The issues raised in this comment have been resolved. Subsequent to receipt of these e-mails, the County reviewed and updated the reference list and issued a revised Section 11 (entitled "Documents, Plans and Reports Cited (updated 12/05/08)"), corrected the policy number referenced in the map and photo explaining the Chualar Community Area boundaries, and commenced a new public comment review period on the revised DEIR which ran from December 16, 2008 through February 2, 2009. Any informational inadequacy was cured by the December 2008 revisions and a new public comment period was initiated following the revisions. See also responses to comments I-7a, I-7b, and I-7d above. The earliest of the series of e-mails in this comment transmitted the October 23, 2008 letter that is comment I-7b. See I-7b for specific response to that comment.

I-7f Haines, Jane

- I-7f.1 The comment seeks explanation of proposed policy AG-1.12 of the General Plan Update and is not a comment on the EIR. The comment does not address significant environmental issues or analysis in the EIR. Under CEQA, agencies, in responding to comments, "need only respond to significant environmental issues and do not need to provide all information requested by reviewers, as long as a good faith effort at full disclosure is made in the EIR." (CEQA Guidelines § 15204)

The commenter should note that Mr. Holm of the Monterey County Planning Department responded to the e-mail on November 19, 2008 and provided an explanation of policy AG-1.12. See also Master Response 12, *Recirculation*.

I-7g Haines, Jane

I-7g.1 The comment contends that the DEIR analysis advances the misleading notion that Monterey County has been gaining rather than losing farmland because the DEIR groups together Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland and refers to them together as “Important Farmland.” The comment requests that the FEIR distinguish the loss of Prime Farmland from the loss of lesser quality farmland.

As commenter notes, Table 4.2-5 does show that there has been a 5.2% loss of prime farmland from conversion to urban uses for the timeframe 1984-2006. Table 4.2-7 shows that there have been a total of 4,463 acres of Important Farmland and 2,153 acres of grazing land converted to urban uses during the same timeframe, even though, as noted in the text, the percent of lands in agricultural use in the County has remained constant (61%).

The DEIR also distinguishes between conversion of Important Farmland - which includes three categories in Monterey County - prime, statewide importance, and unique – and grazing land. This reflects the distinction made by the California Department of Conservation in its Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.

The DEIR does not understate the loss of Important Farmland to urban use and provides and impact analysis in AG-1 noting that even with mitigation, the loss would result in a significant unavoidable impact. However, because of the importance of agricultural production in Monterey County, the DEIR does point out that that the amount of land that is in production has remained relatively constant.

I-7g.2 The comment requests a revision of General Plan Policy AG-1.12 to discourage the loss of irreplaceable land, to provide an incentive for converting Unique Farmland rather than Prime Farmland, and to specify proportional mitigation requirements that distinguish between the types of land that are converted. The comment also incorporates by reference her September 20, 2006 comment letter on the DEIR for the previous version of the General Plan Update (GPU4).

The County believes that the policy as drafted provides a range of options for consideration in a program, all of which are necessary to address the loss of agricultural land. The policy specifically recognizes that not all farmland will have the same value with respect to the mitigation required. The policy intentionally did not state a percent value to distinguish prime farmland from other lands, because there may be site specific differences in the quality of the acre impacted. For example, is an acre of prime farmland that is already surrounded by urban or industrial land of the same “value” as pristine prime farmland? Location, climate, access to water, as well as many other factors will be considered as the program is developed. It is also possible that the ratio could be greater than five times.

The commenter should also note that AG-1.12 stresses the importance of purchasing conservation easements and having the easements managed by a non-profit that specializes in this type of program. The purchase of conservation easements in Monterey County has played an important role in the long term preservation of agriculture land and reduction in encroachment by the expansion of cities into prime agricultural land.

The suggestions of the commenter will be provided to the decision-makers for their consideration.

- I-7g.3 The comment acknowledges that the County corrected the errors in the maps and text as they referred to the Chualar Community Area and thanks the County. Comment is noted.

I-8 Hale, Robert

- I-8.1 The draft General Plan policy on slopes is proposed for revision based upon input received at workshops conducted by the Planning Commission. Please refer to Master Responses 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*, and Master Response 8, *Biological Resources*, for responses to issues raised in the comment letter, including the acreage of agricultural conversions and impacts on specific resources. These Master Responses also describe additional protections for steep slopes afforded by the proposed policy revisions.

- I-8.2 The DEIR biological impact analysis (especially Impact BIO-1) specifically addresses impacts on special status species. Draft General Plan policies and DEIR mitigation measures do provide protection to non-listed special status species, as described in responses to comments O-13a, O-13b, and O-14b. As explained in the response to comment O-17.1, the County has recognized that the DEIR did not apply the definition of special status species in the glossary of the 2007 General Plan; to resolve this inconsistency, the County is proposing to eliminate this definition of special status species from the General Plan. See Master Response 8, *Biological Resources* section 8.4 for a more detailed discussion.

I-9 Houston, Lance (Fort Ord Concerns)

- I-9.1 This comment includes a letter from a representative of the Fort Ord Community Advisory Group to the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) regarding hazardous contamination on the former Fort Ord site. This letter does not directly address the proposed 2007 General Plan or the DEIR. However, to the extent the comments in this letter relate to the proposed project and/or the DEIR, they are responded to here. The County will consider all comments received on the General Plan in its deliberations prior to a final decision on adoption of the General Plan. Hazardous materials as well as the unexploded ordnance on portions of the former Fort Ord are discussed in section 4-13 of the DEIR. Under the base reuse agreement, the unexploded ordnance must be removed or otherwise disarmed before the area can be developed. Several proposed 2007 General Plan policies would reduce the potential for exposure to hazardous materials to a less than significant level. The proposed 2007 General Plan policies summarized below set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts from potential exposure effects from routine use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials.

Policy S-5.2 provides that the Monterey County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan shall include general procedures to implement the nationwide National Incident Management System (NIMS), statewide Standardized Emergency Management System

(SEMS), activate and operate the Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (EOC), coordinate responders, and implement other tactical response measures.

Fort Ord Master Plan Hazardous and Toxic Materials Safety Policy A-1 (Record of Decision reporting) ensures that the County monitors and reports to the public all progress made on the remedial action Records of Decision (RA-ROD) as part of the land transfer process.

Fort Ord Master Plan Hazardous and Toxic Materials Safety Policy B-1 (RA-ROD implementation) requires the County to monitor implementation procedures of the RA-ROD and work cooperatively with the U.S. Army and all contractors to ensure safe and effective removal and disposal of hazardous materials, ensure compliance with all applicable regulations and hazardous materials, and provide for the protection of the public during remediation activities.

Fort Ord Master Plan Hazardous and Toxic Materials Safety Policy B-2 (RA-ROD implementation at Fort Ord) requires that the County monitor implementation procedures of the RA-ROD and work cooperatively with the U.S. Army and all contractors and future users/operators of landfill or hazardous materials storage sites at the former Fort Ord.

Fort Ord Master Plan Hazardous and Toxic Materials Safety Policy C-1 (hazardous material management and disposal plans) ensures that the County requires hazardous material management and disposal plans for any future projects involving the use of hazardous materials.

An extensive process of remediation is currently underway at the former Fort Ord. For more information, see the U.S. Army's "Former Fort Ord Environmental Cleanup" website available at: <http://www.fortordcleanup.com/>.

In addition, the federal and state statutes and regulations discussed in Section 4-13 of the DEIR govern the transport, handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous wastes. Any future land uses anticipated by the 2007 General Plan would be subject to these requirements as well.

The proposed 2007 General Plan Policies identified above would avoid and minimize adverse impacts from hazardous materials. Additionally, as discussed above, federal and state statutes and regulations (including the DTSC's hazardous waste tracking authority), the Environmental Health CUPA (covering use, storage, and disposal as described above) and local response agencies such as the ERT, are in place to reduce potential exposure to hazardous materials, their routine transport, and potential spills. Therefore, the potential for hazardous material exposure related to implementation of the 2007 General Plan is less than significant.

I-10 Kasunich, Doug and Susan

I-10.1 The commenter suggests that the proposed General Plan policy limiting further subdivision of lands in the North County will lead to litigation that would result in further growth (on the assumption that the County would lose or concede such litigation) and incur substantial public costs. The commenter suggests that instead the General Plan policies allow land subdivision upon meeting specific conditions, including a restriction on subdivisions to areas served by large community water system and sanitary sewers that flow to the Regional Water Reclamation Plant near Marina. Since these utilities do not exist in the Planning Area, the commenter suggests that this would have the same effect as the proposed policy, but at lesser legal risk.

The comment regarding potential future litigation is the opinion of the commenter, relates to the proposed policy rather than the environmental effect, and does not require a response. The policies of the proposed General Plan and objectives of the EIR are intended to guide new urbanization into the existing cities and the proposed community areas, rural centers, and affordable housing overlay zones. That will ensure that higher density will be located in areas with public services and will reduce the environmental impacts that might otherwise occur from less focused urbanization. The commenter's suggestion would be contrary to that approach in that their proposal could allow development within the county outside the designated areas, upon the provision of services. This does not foster orderly development (which tends to reduce the environmental effects associated with sprawl) and, for that reason, is rejected.

I-10.2 The commenter suggests that this proposed policy regarding water and sanitary sewer service would lead the private sector to help solve area wide groundwater supply and quality problems. The commenter provides no evidence that the policy revision that they propose would have the desired effect. The County declines to make the suggested revision.

I-10.3 See response I-10.2.

I-10.4 The commenter opines that the General Plan must have clear language and a mechanism to limit future amendments in order to minimize litigation. This comment relates to the policies of the General Plan, not the impacts, and no response is necessary.

I-11 Knauf, Katherine (Don)

I-11.1 The commenter has suggested that the Board of Supervisors consider her concerns about development on steep slopes. In response to this and similar comments, the County is proposing to change Policy OS-3.5 in the draft General Plan. Please refer to the discussion in Master Response 3, *Agricultural Growth and General Plan Agricultural Policies*.

I-12 L&W Land Company and Sakata Ranch (prepared by Brian Finegan Attorney at Law)

- I-12.1 The EIR preparer utilized the land use map from the General Plan and overlaid it on Important Farmland map. Wherever the 2007 General Plan designated non-agricultural use in Important Land, such as residential, commercial or industrial, this was identified as an impact. This equated to 2,571 acres. The EIR preparer utilized California Department of Conservation website maps to ascertain which newly-developed lands had the Important Farmland designation.
- I-12.2 The commenter requests a citation for a statement on Page 4.3-15 to verify that thousands of persons had been displaced as a result of Pajaro River flooding. The appropriate citation has been added to the text. Data is also available on the web site of the Monterey County Water Resource Agency: <http://www.mcwra.co.monterey.ca.us/Floodplain%20Management/Historical%20Flooding.htm>, accessed February 15, 2010. This site includes information on the numbers of persons displaced during each year that there were record floods.
- I-12.3 Please refer to Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions*, for a detailed response to concerns regarding the post 2030 timeframe.
- I-12.4 The Commenter mentions confusion caused by the attempt to speculate beyond the life of the 2007 General Plan and cites data in Tables 3-8 and 3-9 of the EIR. The commenter is referred to Master Response 2, *Growth Assumptions*.

The County has reviewed these tables and notes that there are several data points that will be corrected which would change the acreage assumptions pertaining to the Pajaro Area. In particular, in Table 3-9, the number of potential units by 2030 in the Pajaro Community Area has been reduced from 259 to 222 and the amount of industrial development from 293 acres to 34. The revised tables can be found in Chapter 4 of this FEIR.

However, the impact analysis was not affected by these changes in the table, because the overall acreage did not change and the specific number for Pajaro through 2030 was not utilized. Other methods were utilized for the impact analyses (traffic, air, and noise, water and habitat). For example, the traffic impact analysis was based upon the AMBAG 2004 employment projections for 2030.

With respect to the comments regarding the speculative nature of the Post 2030 growth projections, the commenter is again referred to Master Response 2.

- I-12.5 The commenter has requested an analysis of the impacts of removing row crop lands due to water constraints and a discussion of alternative land uses that might be permitted. The assumption that row crops would be removed is highly speculative. Nothing in the DEIR or in the draft 2007 General Plan policies suggests that the County will be solving the water supply problem in the Pajaro area or elsewhere by requiring removal of row croplands from production. PS 3.8 and PS-3.9 provide for coordination to address the water supply problem and development of a Capital Improvement Finance Plan. PS-3.12

provides for the development of an ordinance to identify conservation measures to reduce agricultural water demand.

Please also refer to Response to Comment L-8.1 for a description of changes to Mitigation Measure WR-1 concerning Policy PS-3.16 to address collaborative long range planning for the Pajaro Groundwater Basin. The text of modified Mitigation Measure WR-1 can also be found in Chapter 4.

I-13 Mitchell, Eddie

I-13.1 The commenter asks why the DEIR does not include the 12 guiding principles approved by the Board of Supervisors during preparation of the General Plan Update. The 12 guiding principles are not addressed in the EIR because they are not part of the proposed 2007 General Plan Update, per direction to staff from the Board of Supervisors regarding the project description. The EIR identifies ten objectives of the proposed project in Section 3.2.1 as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15124. The comment does not address significant environmental issues or analysis in the EIR, and, therefore, no further response is required. The comment will be forwarded to the decision makers for their consideration.

I-13.2 The commenter asks why the DEIR does not address “general scale” considerations related to the availability of future water supplies and water supply infrastructure. Water supply is discussed in Section 4.3 of the DEIR. Section 4.3.3.3 in particular discusses local regulations that will act to reduce the impacts of water shortages. The analysis under Impact WR-4 in Section 4.3.4.2 discusses the availability of water supply to serve existing and future demands. Impacts related to the secondary impacts of water supply infrastructure are discussed in Impact WR-5 in Section 4.3.4.2. For an additional discussion of future water supply needs, known planned infrastructure, and General Plan policies that will reduce the potential for future development to exceed water supplies, please see the Master Response 4 on Water Supply issues.

The commenter is concerned that the DEIR does not adequately consider the potential environmental impacts that would result if there are droughts, no new water sources are established, and build-out occurs in accordance with the draft General Plan. Each of the major public water suppliers in the County is required to have an Integrated Watershed Management Plan that describes the supplier’s current and future water supply, projected demands, and provisions for service reductions during droughts. Watershed Management Plans that have been developed for Monterey County are discussed in Section 4.3.3.2. These plans and contingency strategies ensure that existing and future development within those areas will not exceed the water supply. The EIR provides sufficient information to enable decision makers to make a decision that takes account of environmental consequences related to water supply. “CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commentors.” (CEQA Guidelines § 15204.).

The draft General Plan contains a number of policies that will greatly reduce the potential for new development within the County to exceed long-term water supplies. These policies will augment the provisions of the major water suppliers within their service

areas, as well as provide a regulatory safety net outside of the service areas. Pertinent policies include PS-3.1 through PS-3.15 (see Chapter 5 of this FEIR for the text of these policies).

These proposed policies, and the ordinances that would be enacted to implement them, would apply strict water supply requirements to new development proposals. Development proposals that fail to conform to these policies would not be allowed. Therefore, future development will be required to ensure that long-term water supplies exist to serve it. In areas where there are insufficient supplies to support substantial future growth, such as the portion of the Pajaro Valley within Monterey County and Monterey Peninsula (where the Coastal Water Project may provide a new source), development would be constrained.

- I-13.3 The commenter asks why the DEIR does not present probability analysis or assessment of “depending upon unproven new sources of water to meet development demand.” Such analysis is not necessary. Policies PS-3.1, -3.2, -3.3, -3.4, -3.5, -3.7, -3.9, and -3.11 of the proposed General Plan (see Chapter 5 of this FEIR) greatly reduce, if not eliminate, the possibility that new development will occur without proof “that there is a long-term, sustainable water supply, both in quality and quantity, to serve the development” (Policy PS-3.1). Additionally, the EIR analyzes the availability of water supply to serve existing and future demands under Impact WR-4 in Section 4.3.4.2. The EIR addresses impacts related to the secondary impacts of water supply infrastructure in that analysis of Impact WR-5 in Section 4.3.4.2. Master Response 4, *Water Supply* includes an additional discussion of future water supply needs, known planned infrastructure, and General Plan policies that will reduce the potential for future development to exceed water supplies.

For individual parcels, County Municipal Code Section 15.04.140 (within Chapter 15.04, Domestic Water Systems) requires that: “Every domestic water system shall provide sufficient water from the water sources and storage facilities to adequately, reliably and safely meet the maximum water demand at all times.” It further requires that: “Water sources shall demonstrate reliability and capability of a long term sustained yield in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 16 of Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations.”

In summary, the policies of the proposed General Plan will require new development (other than a single-family residence on an existing lot) to demonstrate the availability of a long-term, sustainable water supply in order to be approved. Owners of existing lots must demonstrate that they can reasonably extract water of sufficient quality and quantity if they intend to rely on a well source or demonstrate that they have a “can and will serve” letter from a water purveyor.

The EIR is not required to provide the “probability analysis/assessment” requested in the comment. “CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commentors” (CEQA Guidelines § 15204.). The information provided in the EIR is sufficient.

- I-13.4 The commenter asks why the DEIR does not assess the risks to the public should a 2-year or 5-year drought occur in the County before required water projects are built. At this juncture, there is sufficient supply to extend through a continued drought for most areas

of the County. The County is currently addressing the water supply problem in select areas of the County that have site-specific deficiencies and problems. This type of drought is not rare in California and is typically addressed through the drought policies and conservation regulations of water suppliers and, where necessary, action by the County to mandate conservation in areas within its jurisdiction. California is currently in the third year of a drought that began in 2007. The most recent previous statewide droughts occurred in 1987-92 and 1976-77. Please see the responses to comments O-21k.39 and O-21k.40.

Water suppliers throughout the County have instituted conservation plans in response to the current drought. As examples, the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District and the California Water Company (serving Salinas) have instituted their Stage 1 water conservation rules. These limit watering and other non-essential water uses. An example of a County drought regulation can be found in Title 15.12 of the County Municipal Code (enacted in 1976) that establishes limits on water use on the Monterey Peninsula.

The policies described in response to comment I-13.2 above, limiting the approval of new development to projects that have a demonstrated long-term water supply, will avoid substantially increasing demand within those areas of the County, such as the Monterey Peninsula, where water supplies are tight.

In conclusion, there are existing regulations in place that limit development where water supplies are short, including those situations where supplies are short due to drought conditions. The EIR analyzes the availability of water supply to serve existing and future demands under Impact WR-4 in Section 4.3.4.2. Master Response 4 includes discussion of future water supply needs, known planned infrastructure, and General Plan policies that will reduce the potential for future development to exceed water supplies. The EIR is not required to provide the "assessment of the risks to the public" requested in the comment. "CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commentors" (CEQA Guidelines § 15204.). The information provided in the EIR is sufficient, and the impact on water supply from a 2-5 year drought would be less than significant.

I-13.5

The commenter asks why the DEIR does not address "the potential environmental impacts to coastal cities and other community areas, by the General Plan establishing a public policy of allowing years of housing buildout before 'new sources' of water are built." The proposed General Plan does not propose any substantial changes to existing land use designations within the Coastal Zone. (See EIR, Sec. 4.1, Land Use.) Further, the proposed General Plan does not include any policy that would allow years of housing to be built before new sources of water are available. Please refer to Master Response 11, *Effect of GPU5 on the Local Coastal Program and Impacts to Coastal Resources*. Please see response to comment I-13.2 above, which addresses the proposed General Plan policies that would limit the approval of new development to projects that have a demonstrated long-term water supply and avoid substantially increasing demand within those areas of the County, such as the Monterey Peninsula, where water supplies are tight. The EIR analyzes the availability of water supply to serve existing and future demands under Impact WR-4 in Section 4.3.4.2. Master Response 4 includes additional discussion of future water supply needs, known planned infrastructure, and General Plan policies that will reduce the potential for future development to exceed water supplies.

On paper, the Monterey Peninsula holds the greatest potential for additional development within the Coastal Zone. However, in reality that potential is severely constrained by existing development restrictions. As discussed in Chapter 4.3 of the DEIR, the Monterey Peninsula has only limited water resources available. The Monterey Peninsula Water Management District has imposed restrictions on additional connections, including connections within the cities, because of the limited water supply. As discussed in the Master Response 4, *Water Supply* the State Water Resources Control Board has issued a cease and desist order against California American Water (the major water purveyor on the Monterey Peninsula) that will eliminate over time that portion of their use of Carmel River water for which they have no permit. The cease and desist order's mandate is loosely linked to the availability of water from the Coastal Water Project, but is not specifically based on the operation of that project. There is no evidence that the existing restrictions on connections and water use would be eased before a new source of water is available. Nor is there any evidence of an inconsistency with the proposed General Plan's goal to restrain development without a proven sustainable water supply.

- I-13.6 The commenter asserts that the CSIP has failed to halt seawater intrusion and asks that the EIR reveal that condition. The CSIP treats water received at the regional wastewater treatment plant and currently delivers the treated water to 12,800 acres of farmland in the Castroville area. This allows farmers to reduce the groundwater extraction that leads to seawater intrusion.

The CSIP is part of a joint effort by the Monterey County Regional Pollution Control Agency (MCRPCA) and the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) to halt seawater intrusion at the western end of the Salinas Valley groundwater basin. The CSIP will work in conjunction with the SVWP to provide surface water to area farmers, reducing their groundwater demands, and to infiltrate Salinas River water directly into the aquifer. The DEIR, on Pages 4.3-32 through 4.3-35 provides additional information on the SVWP. As discussed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/EIR) prepared for the SVWP, sophisticated groundwater modeling indicates that these operations will halt seawater intrusion. The text of the DEIR for the General Plan (see Page 4.3-33) refers to information in the EIS/EIR for the SVWP that contains the background information, demand estimates and modeling data to support the information provided in the General Plan DEIR with respect to supply and reversal of seawater intrusion. This document was included in Chapter 11, *Documents, Plans, and Reports Cited*, of the DEIR. The DEIR references that information in Chapter 4.3.

Therefore, the analysis in the DEIR is supported by substantial evidence, and no change to the DEIR is necessary.

- I-13.7 The commenter asks why mitigations related to coastal water projects will be beneficial when fully restoring groundwater basins to pre-intrusion levels is undocumented.

The DEIR notes that full restoration of groundwater basins that are subject to seawater intrusion has not been documented anywhere. Full restoration would constitute actually pushing seawater intrusion out of the aquifer. Full restoration is not realistic and is not the goal of the agencies (MCRPCA and MCWRA) and their CSIP and SVWP programs. The projects are beneficial because they will halt further seawater intrusion into the groundwater aquifers at their existing levels. The General Plan update will not result in a

worsening of the existing condition of seawater intrusion, as addressed in Section 4.3 of the EIR. Please refer to Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for a more detailed discussion of water issues including the CSIP and SVWP.

- I-13.8 The commenter asks why the DEIR does not address the potential impact of increased saltwater intrusion caused by additional buildout. See the response to comment I-13.7.
- I-13.9 The commenter asks why the DEIR does not include mitigation to not allow development until new water sources are established or until MCWRA can provide empirical proof that the mitigations are reducing seawater intrusion near coastal cities. CEQA requires mitigation of significant environmental impacts, when feasible. The mitigation measures included in the DEIR are feasible. To address some of the comment provided on the DEIR with respect to water supply/demand through 2030 and post-2030 strategies, the FEIR includes changes to Mitigation Measure WR-2 that provide a review of actual growth against projections every five years and links this review to the development of future supply alternatives. Please also refer to Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for additional information on water supply demand and water supply projects.

Existing restrictions on development outside the General Plan process provide additional protections against development that would jeopardize local water supplies prior to the completion of additional supply projects. As discussed previously in response to comment I-13.6, modeling undertaken by the MCWRA for the SVWP indicates that the CSIP and SVWP will halt further intrusion of seawater into the Salinas Valley aquifers. As discussed in the Master Response 4 and in response to comment I-13.5, portions of the County lack adequate water supplies to support development to 2030. The Salinas Valley will have sufficient water as a result of the SVWP now in operation.

On the Monterey Peninsula, however, Cal-Am Water (the major water provider on the Peninsula) is currently diverting water from the Carmel River beyond its permitted volume for most of its supplies to existing development. See Master Response 4 regarding the water supply limitations on the Monterey Peninsula. Any substantial increase in development will not occur until additional supplies are made available. As discussed under Impact PSU-1 in Section 4.11 of the EIR and Impact WR-4 in Section 4.3 of the EIR, proposed Public Services Element Policies PS-1.1 through PS-1.6 set forth general standards for the provision of adequate public facilities.

Taking into account the existing and reasonably expected limitations on development on the Monterey Peninsula, the DEIR provides all feasible mitigation to avoid or reduce significant effects in the future.

- I-13.10 The commenter asks why the DEIR does not include empirical engineering evidence of when water benefits will accrue to the urban and rural centers as a result of the SVWP. An EIR is required to provide sufficient information for decision makers to make a reasoned and informed decision. Evidence is provided in the form of the results of the EIS/EIR prepared for the SVWP, as discussed above in response to comment I-13.6. Engineering studies will be prepared when facilities are to be installed. This provides sufficient data for the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to make an informed choice at the general plan level of land use decision making.

Proposed Policies PS-1.1 through -1.3 of the draft General Plan establish Adequate Public Facility and Services (APFS) standards for Community Areas and Rural Centers and require the provision of services concurrently with new development within those areas. In this way, more detailed analysis will be required prior to development, including engineering studies if necessary to provide services and establish funding mechanisms.

- I-13.11 The commenter asks why the DEIR claims a mitigation benefit from future water projects “without sizing the current and increased water draw down/demand” and comparing it to the expected supply from these projects in the three watersheds. Each of the major water supply projects (Coastal Water Project, Regional Urban Water Project, and others discussed in the Master Response 4, *Water Supply*) is proceeding or will proceed under its own CEQA analysis. The purpose of these projects is to provide adequate water supplies for current and, where possible, future needs. The specific demand and supply analyses are being or will be detailed in the project-specific EIRs.

See also the Master Response 4 for clarifications on the information contained in Chapter 4.3 of the DEIR, additional discussion of future water supply needs, known planned infrastructure, and General Plan policies that will reduce the potential for future development to exceed water supplies. The Master Response summarizes the general supply and demand data for the three watersheds.

- I-13.12 The commenter asks what is the empirical data that substantiates the SVWP can provide “the amount of new water demand summarized in table 4.3-9 (over 49,000 AFY).” Table 4.3-9 of the DEIR does not say that new water demand will be 49,000 acre-feet per year. It is not clear what information the comment is referencing, and no further response is possible. Please see and response to comment I-13.13 below for information about the SVWP. Please refer to Master Response 4 for a detailed discussion of the SVWP analysis of future water demand and how it will be addressed by the implementation of the Project.

- I-13.13 The commenter asks for the empirical data that substantiates the assertion in the DEIR that the SVWP will provide sufficient supply to reverse existing overdraft and provide water for new development. The DEIR relies upon the information provided in the EIS/EIR prepared for the SVWP to support this statement, as discussed in response to comment I-13.6. The SVWP EIS/EIR reflects the results of the SVIGSIM model in its conclusions. The SVIGSIM model is well accepted as a locally-calibrated simulation of the Salinas Valley’s groundwater and has been used extensively in water supply planning within the Salinas Valley. The SVIGSIM runs for the SVWP conclude that that project will reverse overdraft conditions within all basins within the Salinas Valley. To clarify a statement in the DEIR regarding the “reversal” of seawater intrusion: while existing seawater intrusion cannot be reversed to the extent that the existing line of seawater intrusion is pushed westward, the DEIR intends to say that the existing *trend* of eastward movement of that line will be halted. As noted in the SVWP EIS/EIR, additional delivery systems will be needed in order to deliver water to some parts of the Zone 2C zone of benefit. Please refer to Master Response 4, *Water Supply*, subsection 2.4 for further discussion of this issue.

- I-13.14 The commenter asks for documentation of instances where a project like the SVMP has re-balanced a water basin similar to the Salinas Valley and supplied water demand to dispersed sites. This request is outside of the scope of this EIR. The project at hand is the proposed General Plan, not the SVWP. The DEIR relies upon the information resulting from the SVIGSIM run for the SVWP. That is sufficient to support the conclusions of the DEIR. See also the response to comment I-13-13.
- I-13.15 The commenter asks how new water from the SVWP and other sources will reach new development areas within the Salinas Valley. Proposed Policies PS-1.1 through -1.3 of the draft General Plan establish Adequate Public Facility and Services (APFS) standards for Community Areas and Rural Centers and require the provision of services concurrently with new development within those areas. Implicit in this requirement is that future development will require the installation of new water facilities (consistent with the policies under proposed Goal OS-3 of the General Plan) or the extension of existing facilities to provide service. Under these policies, new development will not occur absent the provision of adequate services. Therefore, the impacts of development within those areas will not occur absent the availability of water.
- I-13.16 The commenter asks what empirical data substantiates how new water sources will reach upgradient locations such as North County and mid-valley cities. See the response to comment I-13.15. See also the Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for a discussion of initiatives currently underway outside of the General Plan update to deliver water to the North County.
- I-13.17 The commenter asks why the DEIR does not state that the 9,700 acre-feet per year supplied by the SVWP will only match the average annual irrigation usage and provides no new source of water for new development, nor overcomes existing overdraft. See the Master Response 4, *Water Supply* for a discussion of the expected reduction in agricultural water demand within the Salinas Valley.
- I-13.18 The commenter asks why the DEIR fails to reveal that allowing build-out prior to the availability of new water sources will result in a draw-down of the basin four times the amount the SVWP will provide. See the Master Response 4, *Water Supply*. See also the responses to comments I-13.2 and I-13.3, above. There is no evidence that build-out would occur in advance of water availability, thereby increasing seawater intrusion and endangering farms and cities as claimed by the commenter. As noted in Section 2.5 of the DEIR, although the DEIR relies on the AMBAG 2004 growth forecasts, the updated AMBAG 2008 forecast indicates that future growth will be significantly constrained from earlier predictions. There is no basis for the commenter's assertion that buildout will occur prior to the completion of the SVWP (the SVWP is expected to go into service in 2010). Please also refer to the changes to Mitigation Measure WR-1 which will require an analysis of actual growth against projected growth. These can be found in Chapter 4 of this FEIR.
- I-13.19 The commenter notes that numerous water sources are listed as impaired water bodies and asks why the DEIR allegedly fails to reveal the environmental and engineering difficulties with the regional and coastal water projects associated with the removal of pollutants. The DEIR is analyzing the proposed General Plan, not the proposed water projects now being considered by other agencies. The questions of environmental and

engineering challenges are being or will be addressed in the design and CEQA processes for those projects.

- I-13.20 The commenter asks why the DEIR does not reveal the degree that pesticide removal from water flowing past the Marina landfill will impact the SVWP and CSIP. Pesticide removal is a technical issue that may or may not be of importance to operation of the SVWP and CISP. Both of those projects are obligated to provide their customers with water of sufficient quality to allow its application to crops. The degree of pesticide removal and its potential impact on the SVWP or the CISP is not an impact of the proposed General Plan and, therefore, is not within the scope of this EIR.
- I-13.21 The commenter asks why the DEIR does not provide an analysis of the impact of new development on the overdraft condition. See the Master Response 4 on Water Supply for clarification of North County water issues, including overdraft. The DEIR discloses that North County is in overdraft (see Section 4.3.1) and that additional development will exacerbate that problem. However, based on the policies of the draft General Plan, development will be limited in areas where water is not yet available and will be limited to lots of record only in North County, as discussed in the analysis of Impact WR-7 in Section 4.3 of the DEIR.
- I-13.22 The commenter asks why the DEIR does not include a risk analysis of the timing (i.e., optimistic, most likely, and pessimistic estimates) of completion of the proposed water projects. The DEIR identifies potential water supply projects, some of which are currently unfunded, in Section 4.3.2.4. The DEIR and the Master Response 4, *Water Supply* explain that funding is not currently available for projects that would provide water in the North County, although planning has begun on the water system for the Granite Ridge/Highland South area. With regard to the Coastal Water Project, Cal-Am is before the California Public Utilities Commission with a request to raise its water rates to recover the cost of that project. This information is sufficient to allow the County to make an informed decision about the proposed General Plan. The EIR is not required to provide the risk analysis requested in the comment. "CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commentors" (CEQA Guidelines § 15204). The information provided in the EIR is sufficient.

This EIR is prepared for the proposed General Plan, not for the potential water supply projects. See the responses to comments I-13.2 and I-13.3, above. At such time as the agencies involved should decide to proceed with those projects, those agencies will undertake engineering studies and prepare the requisite CEQA analyses, as is occurring with the Granite Ridge/Highland South water supply project.

- I-13.23 The commenter asserts that the DEIR is structured on the assumption that the projects for generating and distributing new water supplies will come on line early in the life of the General Plan and asks why this assumption is neither stated nor evaluated for risk. The DEIR properly assumes that the SVWP, which is approved, funded, and under construction, will come on line relatively early in the life of the General Plan. The Coastal Water Project is currently under consideration by the California Public Utilities Commission and is expected to be in service by 2014 according to the information in the