3.13 Noise and Vibration

This section identifies the ambient noise environment for the project area and describes applicable federal, state, and local regulations, potential project-related noise and vibration impacts, and recommended mitigation measures to avoid or reduce potential impacts of the proposed project. The information for this section is summarized from a project-specific Noise Technical Report, prepared by Catalyst Environmental Solutions (Catalyst). This report is included in Appendix K of this EIR.

3.13.1 Existing Conditions

Fundamentals of Sound and Environmental Noise

Sound is mechanical energy transmitted by pressure waves in a compressible medium such as air. When sound becomes excessive or unwanted, it is referred to as noise. Although exposure to high noise levels has been demonstrated to cause hearing loss, the principal human response to environmental noise is annoyance. The response of individuals to similar noise events is diverse and influenced by the type of noise, the perceived importance of the noise and its appropriateness in the setting, the time of day and the type of activity during which the noise occurs, and the sensitivity of the individual.

Sound (noise) levels are measured and quantified with several metrics. All of them use the logarithmic decibel (dB) scale with 0 dB roughly equal to the threshold of human hearing. A property of the decibel scale is that the sound pressure levels of two separate sounds are not directly additive. For example, if a 50 dB sound is added to another 50 dB sound, the total is only a 3 dB increase (to 53 dB). Thus, every 3 dB change in sound levels represents a doubling or halving of sound energy. Related to this is the fact that a less-than-3 dB change in sound levels is imperceptible to the human ear. Sound power level is the acoustic energy emitted by a source which produces a sound pressure level at some distance. While the sound power level of a source is fixed, the sound pressure level depends upon the distance from the source and the acoustic characteristics of the area in which it is located.

The frequency of sound is a measure of the pressure fluctuations per second, measured in hertz (Hz). Most sounds do not consist of a single frequency but consist of a broad band of frequencies differing in level. The characterization of sound level magnitude with respect to frequency is the sound spectrum. Many rating methods exist to analyze sound of different spectra. The method used for this analysis is A-weighting. The A-weighted scale (dBA) most closely approximates how the human ear responds to sound at various frequencies by progressively deemphasizing frequency components below 1,000 Hz and above 6,300 Hz and reflects the relative decreased sensitivity of humans to both low and extremely high frequencies (Appendix K of this EIR).

The duration of noise and the time period at which it occurs are important factors in determining the impact of noise. Several methods are used for describing variable sounds including the equivalent level (L_{eq}), the maximum level (L_{max}), and the percent-exceeded levels. These metrics are derived from a large number of moment-to-moment A-weighted sound level measurements. Some common metrics reported in community noise monitoring studies are described below:

- L_{eq}, the equivalent level, can describe any series of noise events of arbitrary duration, although the most common averaging period is hourly. Because sound levels can vary markedly over a short period of time, a method for describing either the average character of the sound or the statistical behavior of the variations must be utilized. Most commonly, sounds are described

in terms of an average level that has the same acoustical energy as the summation of all the time-varying events, and L_{eq} is the common energy-equivalent sound/noise descriptor.

- L_{max} is the maximum sound level during a given time. L_{max} is typically due to discrete, identifiable events such as an airplane overflight, car or truck passing by, or a dog barking.
- L_{90} is the sound level in dBA exceeded 90 percent of the time during the measurement period. L_{90} is close to the lowest sound level observed. It is essentially the same as the residual sound level, which is the sound level observed when no obvious nearby intermittent noise sources occur.
- L_{50} is the median sound level in dBA exceeded 50 percent of the time during the measurement period.
- L_{10} is the sound level in dBA exceeded only 10 percent of the time. It is close to the maximum level observed during the measurement period. L_{10} is sometimes called the intrusive sound level because it is caused by occasional louder noises like those from passing motor vehicles.

In determining the daily measure of community noise, it is important to account for the difference in human response to daytime and nighttime noise. Noise is more disturbing at night than during the day, and noise indices have been developed to account for the varying duration of noise events over time as well as community response to them. The Day-Night Average Level (L_{dn}) is such an index. L_{dn} represents the 24-hour A-weighted equivalent sound level with a 10 dBA penalty added to the "nighttime" hourly noise levels between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Because of the time-of-day penalties associated with the L_{dn} index, the L_{eq} for a continuously operating sound source during a 24-hour period will be numerically less. The Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL), similar to L_{dn}, applies a 10 dBA penalty for noise levels occurring during the nighttime hours between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., and a 5 dBA penalty for noise levels the sound levels occurring during evening hours between 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. CNEL has been adopted by the State of California to define the community noise environment for development of the community noise element of a General Plan. Noise is also more disturbing the closer a receptor is to the source; noise levels decrease by 6 dB as the distance from its source doubles (Appendix K of this EIR).

Fundamentals of Vibration

Ground-borne vibration consists of waves transmitted through solid material. Several types of wave motions exist in solids, unlike air, including compressional, shear, torsional, and bending. The solid medium can be excited by forces, moments, or pressure fields. Ground-borne vibration propagates from the source through the ground to adjacent buildings by surface waves. Vibration may be composed of a single pulse, a series of pulses, or a continuous oscillatory motion. The frequency of a vibrating object describes how rapidly it is oscillating, measured in Hz.

Vibration may be defined in terms of the displacement, velocity, or acceleration of the particles in the medium material. In environmental assessments, where human response is the primary concern, velocity is commonly used as the descriptor of vibration level, typically expressed in inches per second (in/sec) or millimeters per second (mm/s). The amplitude of vibration can be expressed in terms of the wave peaks or as an average, called the root mean square. The root mean square level is generally used to assess the effect of vibration on humans. Like noise, vibration can be expressed in terms of decibels with a reference velocity of $1x10^{-6}$ in/sec. The abbreviation "VdB" is often used for vibration decibels to reduce the potential for confusion with sound decibels.

The two primary concerns with project-induced vibration, the potential to damage a structure and the potential to annoy people, are evaluated against different vibration limits. Studies have shown that the threshold of perception for the average person is a peak particle velocity (PPV) in the range of 0.2 to 0.3 mm/s (0.008 to 0.012 in/sec). Human perception to vibration varies with the individual and is a function of physical setting and the type of vibration. Persons exposed to elevated ambient vibration levels, such as people in an urban environment, may tolerate a higher vibration level (Appendix K of this EIR).

Ambient Noise Levels

Existing ambient noise in the vicinity of the project site is consistent with a rural agricultural landscape with the dominant noise sources consisting of vehicular traffic on local roads, the existing Heber 2 Complex, and the operation of agricultural equipment. The major source of vehicular noise is traffic along SR 86 and SR 111 and the Regional Arterials Dogwood Road and Jasper Road. SR 86 is a principal farm-to-market route for Imperial County agricultural products and carries a high percentage of heavy trucks.

The existing geothermal facilities adjacent to the project site also contribute to the existing noise environment. Typical sound power levels for the existing power plants and geothermal well pads are in the range of 113 dBA at the loudest noise source of the power plant and 92 dBA directly adjacent to each well. Noise from these stationary sources lessens at a rate of approximately 6 dB per doubling of distance, depending on such environmental conditions as topography, vegetation, and weather. Specifically, operational noise levels of an existing geothermal facility in Imperial County were recorded at 70 dBA L_{eq} at approximately 100 feet (Appendix K of this EIR).

Sensitive Receptors

Noise-sensitive land uses are generally considered to include those uses where noise exposure could result in health-related risks to individuals, as well as places where quiet is an essential element of their intended purpose. Residential dwellings are of primary concern because of the potential for increased and prolonged exposure of individuals to both interior and exterior noise levels, and because of the potential for nighttime noise to result in sleep disruption. Additional land uses such as schools, transient lodging, historic sites, cemeteries, and places of worship are also generally considered sensitive to increases in noise levels. These land use types are also considered vibration-sensitive land uses, as are commercial and industrial buildings where vibration would interfere with operations within the building, including levels that may be well below those associated with human annoyance.

There are numerous sensitive receptors in proximity to project components including residences, Mt. View Cemetery, and Heber Elementary School. Table 3.13-1 summarizes the sensitive receptors in the project area and the distance to the nearest project component.

Proximity to Airports

The nearest airport to the project site is the Calexico International Airport, located approximately two miles southeast of the project site.

Table 3.13-1. Sensitive Receptors in Proximity to Project Components

Sensitive Receptor	Nearest Project Component	Distance to Nearest Project Component (feet)
Residence (104 East Jasper Road)	Heber 2 Parasitic Solar Facility	540
Residence (600 Dogwood Road)	Dogwood Parasitic Facility	2,900
Residential Area (East Fawcett Road)	Production Well	2,985
Heber Elementary School	Production Well	3,400
Residences (153, 185, 195 East Cole Boulevard)	Dogwood Parasitic Facility	3,825
Mt. View Cemetery	Production Well	6,890

Source: Appendix K of this EIR

3.13.2 Regulatory Setting

This section identifies and summarizes federal, state, and local laws, policies, and regulations that are applicable to the project.

Federal

No federal regulations govern offsite (community) noise. The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 specifies measures designed to protect workers against the effects of noise exposure and lists permissible noise level exposure as a function of the amount of time to which a worker is exposed. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations also dictate hearing conservation program requirements and workspace noise monitoring requirements. OSHA requirements limit worker noise exposure to 90 dBA over an 8-hour work shift. Furthermore, if 8-hour worker noise exposure at a work site exceeds 85 dBA, the area must be posted as a noise hazard zone; and a hearing conservation program would be required.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has established a level of 60 dBA equivalent continuous noise level (L_{eq}) as the maximum permissible noise level to which certain riparian bird species may be subjected during the mating and nesting seasons.

State

State Government Code requires counties to draft a Noise Element for their General Plans to establish acceptable noise limits for various land uses. The Imperial County General Plan contains a Noise Element which provides land use compatibility criteria as Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) for acceptable land use noise levels. CEQA Guidelines defining a significant noise effect require that the impacts of a project be considered cumulatively in conjunction with those of other projects planned for the area.

Local

Imperial County Regulations

Imperial County is the agency responsible for regulating and controlling noise through the Noise Element of the County General Plan and the Noise Ordinance of the County's Codified Ordinances.

The Noise Element of the Imperial County General Plan provides a program for incorporating noise issues into the land use planning process with a goal of minimizing adverse noise impacts to noise-sensitive receptors. The Noise Element specifies construction hours and noise limits and the acceptable property line operational noise levels at various land uses for day, evening, and night periods for the County Noise Ordinance.

Imperial County General Plan Noise Element

The Noise Element of the Imperial County General Plan examines noise sources and provides information to be used in setting land use policies to protect noise-sensitive land uses and for developing and enforcing a local noise ordinance. The Noise Element provides a program for incorporating noise issues into the land use planning process with a goal of minimizing adverse noise impacts to receptors such as residences, schools, and hospitals, which are sensitive to noise. The County identifies Noise Impact Zones for sensitive receptors likely to be exposed to significant noise (greater than 60 dB CNEL or 75 dB L_{eq}) from roadways, railroads, airports, and agricultural activities. The purpose of the Noise Impact Zone is to define areas and properties where an acoustical analysis of a Project is required to demonstrate project compliance with land use compatibility requirements and other applicable environmental noise standards. Any property within 1,500 feet of an interstate highway or 1,100 feet of a State highway is within a Noise Impact Zone, as is any property within 0.25 mile (1,320 feet) of existing farmland that is in an agricultural zone.

An acoustical analysis is required for any action that would be located, all or in part, in a Noise Impact Zone. According to the Noise Element, if the future noise levels from the action are within the normally acceptable noise level guideline but result in an increase of 5 dBA CNEL or greater, the action would have a potentially significant noise impact and mitigation measures must be considered. If the future noise level after the action is completed is greater than the normally acceptable noise level, a noise increase of 3 dBA CNEL or greater should be considered a potentially significant noise impact; and mitigation measures must be considered.

Land use compatibility defines the acceptability of a land use in a specified noise environment. Noise/Land Use Compatibility Guidelines are provided in the Noise Element to evaluate potential noise impacts and provide criteria for environmental impact findings and conditions for project approval. An acoustical analysis is required to demonstrate conformance of a Project with Noise/Land Use Compatibility Guidelines. These guidelines categorize noise levels at residential land uses as “normally acceptable” up to 60 dBA day-night average sound level (L_{dn}) or CNEL and as “conditionally acceptable” up to 70 dBA L_{dn} or CNEL.

Construction noise standards included in the Noise Element restrict construction equipment noise levels to 75 dBA L_{eq} when averaged over an eight-hour period and measured at the nearest sensitive receptor. This standard assumes a construction period, relative to an individual sensitive receptor of days or weeks. In cases of extended length construction times, the standard may be tightened so as not to exceed 75 dB L_{eq} when averaged over a one-hour period. In addition, construction equipment operation is limited to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday. Further, no commercial construction operations are permitted on Sunday or holidays.

Noise Ordinance

The County enforces construction and operation noise standards specified in the Noise Element through the Noise Ordinance. Noise-generating sources in Imperial County are regulated under the Imperial County Codified Ordinances, Title 9, Division 7 (Noise Abatement and Control) (Imperial

County 2022). The noise standards of the Ordinance limit the hours of construction and the level of noise emitted by the construction, as well as the operational noise levels at various land uses for day, evening, and night. Noise limits are established in Chapter 2 of this ordinance and shown in Table 3.13-2.

Table 3.13-2. Imperial County Property Line Noise Limits

Zone	Time	Average Hourly Sound (L_{eq})
Residential Zones	7 a.m. to 10 p.m.	50
	10 p.m. to 7 a.m.	45
Multi-Residential Zones	7 a.m. to 10 p.m.	55
	10 p.m. to 7 a.m.	50
Commercial Zones	7 a.m. to 10 p.m.	60
	10 p.m. to 7 a.m.	55
Light Industrial/Industrial Park Zones	Anytime	70
General Industrial Zones	Anytime	75

Source: Imperial County Ordinance § 90702.00

Note: When the noise-generating property and the receiving property have different uses, the more restrictive standard shall apply. When the ambient noise level is equal to or exceeds the Property Line noise standard, the increase of the existing or proposed noise shall not exceed 3 dB Leq.

Property line noise limits apply to noise generation from one property to an adjacent property. The standards imply the existence of a sensitive receptor on the adjacent, or receiving, property. In the absence of a sensitive receptor, an exception or variance to the standards may be appropriate. These standards do not apply to construction noise. These standards are enforced through the County's code enforcement program on the basis of complaints received from persons impacted by excessive noise. The County may act to restrict disturbing, excessive, or offensive noise which causes discomfort or annoyance to reasonable persons of normal sensitivity residing in an area. Noise received at the property line of a residence is limited to 50 dBA L_{eq} in the daytime and 45 dBA L_{eq} at night.

Under Section 90702.00 of the County's Codified Ordinances, sound level limits for industrial noise are set at 75 dBA L_{eq} on or beyond the boundary of the property line at any time. Average hourly noise in residential areas is limited to 50 to 55 dBA from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and to 45 to 50 dBA from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

3.13.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section presents the significance criteria used for considering project impacts on noise and vibration, the methodology employed for the evaluation, an impact evaluation, and mitigation requirements, if necessary.

Thresholds of Significance

Based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, project impacts related to noise and vibration are considered significant if any of the following occur:

- Generate a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies.
- Generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.
- For a project located in the vicinity of a private airstrip of an airport land use plan, or where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels.

Methodology

The project construction and operation noise levels were estimated using the computer noise propagation model SoundPLAN Essential (version 5.1), which calculates noise impacts taking into account terrain features including relative elevations of noise sources, receivers, and intervening objects, ground effects due to areas of pavement and unpaved ground, and atmospheric effects on sound propagation.

Construction

The potential construction noise levels onsite associated with project construction activities were estimated for each distinct construction phase (site preparation, project construction, well drilling and pipe interconnection, substation development and interconnection, and testing). The noise model conservatively assumes that construction equipment for each respective construction activity will be operated simultaneously and in a concentrated area nearest to the closest sensitive receptors. In actual practice, however, the types and numbers of construction equipment near any specific receptor location will vary over time. The project is anticipated to take approximately16 to 24 months to install, test, and become fully operational.

Estimated vehicle trips associated with each phase of construction is presented in Table 2.4-2 and 2.4-3 of the Noise Technical Report (Appendix K of this EIR). For the purpose of this analysis, the principals of logarithmic summation are applied to estimate the maximum noise increase associated with construction traffic along local surface streets. Specifically, noise levels increase by 3 dBA when the number of similar noise sources double. The increase in delivery/haul trucks and construction worker vehicle trips are not anticipated to double the amount of traffic that currently exists in the surrounding area. As such, the increase in delivery/haul trucks and worker vehicles in the surrounding roadways is not anticipated to incrementally increase noise levels in the surrounding area by 3 dBA or more and are not analyzed further herein.

Operation

Noise data from the ORMAT Tungsten Mountain facility, which is similar in design to the project, was used to model noise associated with geothermal plant operations using SoundPLAN Essential methodology for industrial sites. Accordingly, operation of the power plant is assumed to generate an average noise level of 62 dBA at 450 feet (equivalent to approximately 105 dBA at the source) with continuous operation (i.e., 24-hours per day). Similarly, the project wells would generate an average noise level of 72 dBA at 25 feet (equivalent to approximately 90 dBA at the source) with continuous operation. In addition to these sound source inputs, potential sound-occluding terrain and project features that define the three-dimensional sound were included in the propagation model space.

Due to the low number of additional trips associated with operation of the project, vehicles traveling to/from the project site are not expected to result in changes to noise levels in the surrounding area.

Impact Analysis

Impact 3.13-1 Would the project generate a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Construction

Short-term construction noise impacts could result from land clearing and grading for well pads, solar fields, and work areas; transporting the drilling rig, associated equipment, workers, and materials to the well pad sites; well drilling; and construction of facilities at plant and parasitic solar fields, in addition to accessory facilities (including installing pipelines, power poles, and pumping units associated with each well).

For a conservative analysis, the cumulative noise for both phases of construction including drilling of all three production wells and injection well is assumed to occur simultaneously (although only one well would actually be drilled at any given time) and is propagated to the nearest sensitive receptors to estimate the maximum change in noise levels resulting from the proposed project as summarized in Table 3.13-3. As shown in Table 3.13-3, construction activities would not exceed the Imperial County daytime noise standard for construction activities of 75 dBA L_{eq} at the nearest sensitive receptor and nighttime well drilling activities would not result in perceptible noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptors. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Table 3.13-3. Modeled Maximum Project Construction Sound Levels (Leq, dBA)

Modeled Receptors	Modeled Daytime Construction Noise Level[1]	Modeled Nighttime Construction Noise Level	Presumed Ambient Noise Level (Day/Night)	Noise Standard[2] (Day/Night)	Exceed Standard?
S1 (Resident at 104 E. Jasper Road)	30.2	25.8	50/45	75	No
S2 (Residential Area off E. Fawcett Road)	7.4	4.7	50/45	45	No

Source: Appendix K of this EIR

Notes:

1. Modeled noise level is associated with construction equipment. Modeled construction noise levels less than ambient would not be expected to increase noise levels at the modeled receptors.

2. The noise standard for as provided in the Imperial County Noise Element specifies that noise levels shall not increase more than 5 dBA CNEL from measured ambient noise level in Noise Impact Zones that are currently within normally acceptable noise level guidelines. Per Section 90702.00 of the County's Codified Ordinances, sound level limits for industrial noise are set at 75 dBA Leq on or beyond the boundary of the property line at any time.

Operation

Predicted daytime/nighttime noise levels attributed to concurrent operation of the project onsite stationary sources (i.e., OEC, ITLU, substation transformers, auxiliary facilities, production wells, injection wells) were propagated to two nearest sensitive receptors using the SoundPLAN noise model. Table 3.13-4 presents a summary of predicted project operational noise levels at the two nearest sensitive receptors. As summarized in Table 3.13-4, project-related operational noise would be below, and thus in compliance with the Imperial County noise standards which limits the increase in future noise levels to 5 dBA CNEL as a result of the action within Noise Impact Zones that are currently within normally acceptable noise level guidelines (i.e., 60 dB CNEL). Specifically, the project-related operation noise is estimated to be less than the assumed ambient daytime noise level of 50 dBA L_{eq} and nighttime noise level of 45 dBA L_{eq}. Thus, the project would not result in an increase in the assumed ambient noise level of 60 dBA CNEL. Therefore, the project would also not result in noise levels exceeding the threshold of 65 dBA CNEL established by the Imperial County noise standards, and impacts would be less than significant.

Table 3.13-4. Modeled Maximum Project Operations Sound Levels (dBA)

Modeled Receptors	Modeled 24-Hour Project Operation Noise Level[1] (L_{eq})	Presumed Ambient Noise Level (CNEL)	Calculated CNEL (Project + Ambient)	Noise Standard[2] (CNEL/L_{eq})	Exceed Standard?
S1 (Resident at 104 E. Jasper Road)	27.7	60	60	65/75	No
S2 (Residential Area off E. Fawcett Road)	14.3	60	60	65/75	No

Source: Appendix K of this EIR

Notes:

1. Modeled noise level is associated with construction equipment. Modeled construction noise levels less than ambient would not be expected to increase noise levels at the modeled receptors.

2. The noise standard for construction activities as provided in the Imperial County General Plan Noise Element specifies that construction noise shall not exceed 75 dBA at the nearest sensitive receptor. This standard is applicable for daytime noise given the restrictions on construction hours per the Noise Element. Nighttime noise standards are presumed to be any perceptible noise at the nearest sensitive receptor (i.e., and increase in 3 dBA above presumed ambient nighttime noise level of 45 dBA).

Mitigation Measure(s)

No mitigation measures are required.

Impact 3.13-2 Would the project generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Construction

Construction would result in temporary ground vibration. Construction activities most likely to cause vibration include heavy construction equipment and drilling. Vibration levels from surface construction including demolition, excavation, pile driving, etc. are typically less than 0.10 to 0.20 in/sec at 10 feet from the source. Ground-borne vibration dissipates very rapidly with distance, reducing the typical

construction-related vibrations to less than the threshold of 0.2 in/sec for typical non-engineered timber and masonry buildings at a distance greater than 10 feet from the source and to an imperceptible level at about 200 feet from the source (Appendix K of this EIR).

Construction would result in varying degrees of temporary ground vibration, depending on the specific construction equipment used and operations involved. Construction would result in additional heavy vehicle trips on local roadways accessing the project site. Rubber-tire heavy vehicles traveling on roadways typically will not produce perceptible vibration at adjacent buildings. Roadways providing access to the project are located at a distance of more than 100 feet from any offsite residence or any other sensitive receptor structure.

Construction activities most likely to cause vibration include heavy construction equipment and site grading operations. Although all heavy, mobile construction equipment has the potential to cause at least some perceptible vibration when operating close to buildings, the vibration is usually short term and is not of sufficient magnitude to cause building damage. Heavy equipment such as dozers, loaders, and drill rig equipment would not be operated close enough to any residences or structures to cause vibration impact. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

Operation of the project would not result in vibrations perceptible to nearby receptors. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure(s)

No mitigation measures are required.

Impact 3.13-3 For a project located in the vicinity of a private airstrip of an airport land use plan, or where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

The nearest airport to the project site is the Calexico International Airport, located approximately two miles southeast of the project site. According to Figure 4G of the Imperial County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP), the project site is located outside of the noise contours of the Calexico International Airport (ALUC 1996). Therefore, the proposed project would not expose people to excessive airport noise levels and no impact is identified.

Mitigation Measure(s)

No mitigation measures are required.

3.13.4 Decommissioning/Restoration and Residual Impacts

Decommissioning/Restoration

At the end of the project's useful life, all equipment and facilities will be properly abandoned and dismantled. The solar facilities require the project applicant to implement a comprehensive reclamation plan that would restore the project site to preexisting (pre-project) conditions following decommissioning of the project. Adhering to Imperial County standards for construction noise levels would reduce the noise and vibration impacts to below a level of significance.

All abandonment and decommissioning activities would be short-term and any noise from decommissioning equipment (e.g., cranes; excavators) would be similar to the construction impacts discussed in Section 3.13.3 above and would not be significant. Noise from energy operations would entirely cease with the discontinuation of geothermal energy generation activities/facilities.

Residual

Adhering to the Imperial County standards for construction noise levels would reduce the noise and vibration impacts to below a level of significance.

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