

## 5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

This section contains a discussion of the possible environmental effects of the proposed project for the specific issue areas that were identified by Santa Barbara County Planning and Development staff through a public scoping process as having the potential to experience significant impacts.

“Significant effect” is defined by the *State CEQA Guidelines* §15382 as “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment, but may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.”

The assessment of each issue area begins with an italicized introduction that summarizes the environmental effects considered for that issue area. This is followed by the setting and impact analysis. Within the impact analysis, the first subsection identifies the methodologies used and the “significance thresholds”. Significance thresholds are those criteria adopted by the County or other agencies, which are universally recognized, or are developed specifically for this analysis to determine whether potential effects are significant. The next subsection describes the impacts of the proposed project. Each effect under consideration for an issue area is separately listed in bold text, with the discussion of the effect and its significance following. The following subsection lists mitigation measures for significant impacts, and the fourth subsection discusses the level of significance after mitigation with a statement of the significance determination for the environmental impact, as follows:

*Class I. Significant and Unavoidable: An impact that cannot be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires a Statement of Overriding Considerations to be issued if the project is approved per §15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines.*

*Class II. Significant but Mitigable: An impact that can be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires findings to be made under §15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines.*

*Class III. Adverse, but less than Significant: An impact that may be adverse, but does not exceed the threshold levels and does not require mitigation measures. However, mitigation measures that could further lessen the environmental effect may be suggested if readily available and easily achievable.*

*Class IV. Beneficial: An effect that would reduce existing environmental problems or hazards.*

The residual impact discussion identifies the level of significance for project impacts ~~after all available mitigation measures have been applied~~ as to the level of significance that may be obtained. The impact analysis concludes with a final subsection that discusses cumulative effects, which evaluates the impacts associated with the proposed project in conjunction with other future development in the area.

The analyses in Sections 5.1 to 5.8 focus on the impacts that could occur at buildout of the program (3.0 million sf of greenhouse development in the proposed AG-I-CARP zone district). The proposed AG-I-CARP zone district retains the same provisions as the existing AG-I zone district for all other (i.e. non-greenhouse development) uses.

The AG-I-OF zone district retains the provisions of the existing AG-I zone district except for greenhouse development of 20,000 sf or more. The conversion of land to open field and orchard agriculture and the construction of less than 20,000 sf of greenhouse development per legal lot are permitted under the existing zone district, as well as the proposed AG-I-OF. As stated in Section 3.0, most land that is suitable for greenhouse cultivation has already been converted to agriculture. Eliminating the opportunity to construct greenhouses on slopes greater than 5% will not create an incentive to bring more natural lands into cultivation, as greenhouse development would not have occurred on these slopes anyway. Furthermore, conversion of natural lands to open field and orchard cultivation could occur irrespective of the proposed project. As discussed in Section 3.0, Environmental Setting, these zone district provisions and the impacts associated with their continuation are a part of the environmental baseline and will continue whether or not the project is approved. Therefore, there are no reasonably foreseeable significant impacts associated with the proposed AG-I-OF zone district and only limited discussion is warranted in the following analyses.