

## 13 Cumulative Impacts

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CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 requires that an EIR discuss a project's potential to result in any significant cumulative impacts. "Cumulative impacts" are defined as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). The cumulative impact is the change in the environment that results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time. The EIR must determine whether the project's incremental effect is "cumulatively considerable." The definition of cumulatively considerable is provided in Section 15065(a)(3):

*"Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.*

According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b),

*The discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the project alone. The discussion should be guided by standards of practicality and reasonableness, and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects which do not contribute to the cumulative impact.*

For a project to have a significant cumulative impact, it must have some incremental impact in the category being studied. Thus, when the District's IMVMP makes no incremental contribution at all to a significant cumulative impact caused by other plans, programs, and projects, i.e., the "no impact" determination for a Program alternative, it cannot be called cumulatively considerable.

If a project has some potential to contribute to a significant cumulative impact, the CEQA consideration is whether the proposed project's incremental contribution is cumulatively "considerable" (i.e., significant) and, if so, whether the project's incremental contribution can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064 (h)(4) states that the mere existence of significant cumulative impacts caused by other projects alone shall not constitute substantial evidence that the proposed project's incremental effects are cumulatively considerable.

For purposes of this PEIR, the District's Program would have a significant cumulative effect if:

- (1) *The cumulative effect of related projects (past, current, and probable future projects) without the project are not significant and the project's incremental impact is substantial enough, when added to the cumulative effects, to result in a significant impact; or*
- (2) *The cumulative effects of related projects (past, current, and probable future projects) without the project are already significant and the project contributes considerably to the effect. The standards used herein to determine considerability are either that the impact must be substantial or must exceed an established threshold of significance.*

Two methods exist for analyzing the cumulative impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects: the "list method" and the "summary of projections method" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130). Both of these methods are most appropriate to the evaluation of land development or projects involving changes in land use and related activities.

- > The list method requires a discussion of related past, present, and future projects; and in the case of human health, it would require discovering and disclosing impacts to public health from all of these projects. This approach is not practical given the Program's extent to its Service Area and adjacent counties for a multi-county Program Area, which makes the development of a list of projects most difficult and would then require a human health impact assessment for a very long list and variety of projects potentially creating a physical change in the environment.
- > The summary of projections method relies on projections contained in approved land use documents such as general plans, specific plans, and local coastal plans to serve as the foundation for the cumulative analysis. The issue is whether the project under evaluation is consistent with the forecasts of economic and population growth contained in the planning documents and, therefore, already addressed in the certified EIRs on these plans and projects. Can the agency rely on the cumulative analyses addressed in a prior EIR to say that no further analysis is needed?

The listing of all of the projects occurring in an area is not practical for this evaluation of a Program that could occur over multiple counties in California. The District's IMVMP would not result in additional housing or commercial/industrial development in a treatment area. The alternative "summary of projections" method is also not practical because it is based on summaries of growth in city and county plans, which are not relevant for the Program as it does not induce growth or develop land. Because the Program Area is large, the impacts are explained in the context of a regional environmental concern, and the analysis includes consideration of regional trends in pesticide use from 2006 through 2010 (Section 13.4), where appropriate, as an alternative to the growth projections contained in local general plans.

The following discussion of cumulative impacts is for resources and environmental concerns with less-than-significant or potentially significant impacts and the geographic scope of the analysis is the District's Program Area (i.e., Service Area and adjacent counties where service could be provided upon request). A summary of the cumulative impact determinations by affected resources is presented at the end of the chapter.

### **13.1 Urban and Rural Land Uses**

None of the Program alternatives would have any potentially significant impacts on the quantity and/or quality of recreational opportunities within the District's Program Area; however, all of the alternatives except for Biological Control could have less-than-significant impacts. Concerning land use regulations and policies in the Program Area, none of the Program alternatives would have impacts (i.e., determinations of no impact). However, the Chemical Control Alternative may limit recreational access and diminish recreational quality on a short-term basis during application events, a less-than-significant incremental impact. Due to the isolated nature of these events and the extensive recreational opportunities on public lands within the Program Area (i.e., no existing significant cumulative impact within the Program Area), the small incremental potential impacts on recreational opportunities from five of the Proposed Program alternatives when combined would not likely cumulatively contribute to recreational impacts in the region. No cumulative significant impacts to urban and rural land uses are anticipated when all of the Program's incremental impacts and the impacts of other activities in the region are considered together.

### **13.2 Biological Resources – Aquatic**

Cumulative impacts, as they relate to aquatic resources, includes past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions that potentially impact aquatic organisms, including fish and nontarget invertebrates. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, projects taking place over a period of time. The determination is whether a proposed project's incremental contribution to a cumulative impact results in a potentially "considerable" (i.e., significant) cumulative impact, and, if so, whether that project's incremental contribution can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level.

The following is a discussion of how the Program impacts could become cumulatively considerable with other impacts in the region. To make this determination, consideration is given to the combined contribution of Program impacts considered together with impacts that exist outside of the Program Area. The issue is whether the Program's incremental contribution to the combined significant cumulative impact is "cumulatively considerable."

The cumulative impact issues addressed first are regional fisheries trends, loss of shallow-water habitats, loss of wetlands, weed control, and trends in pesticide use (Section 13.2.1). Then the impacts by alternative are evaluated (Section 13.2.2).

### **13.2.1 Regional Fisheries Trends**

#### **13.2.1.1 *Pelagic Organism Decline (POD)***

POD refers to the recent (2002–present) steep decline of pelagic fishes (i.e., fish that occupy open-water habitats) within the Bay-Delta estuary (Armor et al. 2005; CDWR and CDFG 2007; Sommer 2007; Baxter et al. 2010). This environmental issue has emerged as one of overwhelming concern in the Delta.

The issues surrounding POD were announced in early 2005 as a possible change in the estuary's ability to support pelagic species and appeared to be a "step-change" from the preceding long-term decline. Four fish species are of primary concern: delta smelt, longfin smelt, young-of-year striped bass, and threadfin shad. From 2002 to 2007, despite moderate hydrologic conditions in the estuary, which would have been expected to result in moderate increases in population sizes, the populations of these species experienced sharp declines. Populations of each of the four species have been at or near all-time record lows since 2002. The numbers of many pelagic species increased substantially in 2011, but declined again to values near historic lows in 2012, based on the fall mid-water trawl index (CDFW 2013). This change has persisted for a sufficiently long period to conclude that it is the result of something other than the pattern of widely variable population levels observed historically or as part of the long-term decline previously observed.

The factors considered most likely to be responsible for POD are previous abundance of these species; changes in habitat, particularly changes in turbidity and the salinity field in the Delta, invasive weeds and blue green algae blooms, and ammonia and pyrethroid toxicity; predation, particularly from introduced species such as striped bass, largemouth bass, and Mississippi silversides, and entrainment at the Central Valley Project and State Water Project Diversions; food-web effects from invasive clams; and changes in the phytoplankton and zooplankton community (CDWR and CDFG 2007; Sommer 2007; Baxter et al. 2010). These factors result in an existing significant cumulative impact.

Many of the Interagency Ecological Program studies to evaluate POD's causes have focused on these factors. To date, research has failed to identify a single factor responsible for the decline of all species or even that of a single species (CDWR and CDFG 2007; Sommer 2007; Baxter et al. 2010). POD researchers currently believe that important factors responsible for the decline may be different for each species and that even for a single species these factors may differ between seasons and by hydrologic condition (Wet and Dry years). These factors may operate cumulatively to cause the observed population declines.

The POD Management Team has hypothesized that a number of drivers have combined over time to decrease ecosystem resilience and result in a "regime shift" for the Delta and Suisun Bay region (Baxter et al. 2010). The drivers of the hypothesized regime shift include outflow, salinity, landscape, temperature, turbidity, nutrients, contaminants, and harvest. This hypothesis is currently under investigation.

The District borders on San Francisco Bay, which does not substantially affect San Pablo and Suisun Bays and the Delta, the Physical Control and Vegetation Management alternatives would contribute to landscape habitat modifications, while the Chemical Control Alternative could potentially contribute to some contaminants (but not substantially as explained in Section 9.2.7) primarily in San Francisco Bay that could be flushed through the Golden Gate Bridge into the Pacific Ocean. The BMPs associated with the implementation of these alternatives substantially reduce these potential effects to be less than

significant at the Program level. However, these less-than-significant Program effects, in combination with the regional context of impacts, would be cumulatively considerable.

- > The District's Physical Control and Vegetation Management alternatives are limited to small areas of highly modified habitat. These areas are not primary habitat for POD species. Because the areas where these activities occur are very small relative to the overall area of wetlands in the region, these activities are not expected to have any substantive effect on food production for POD species. Therefore, these two alternatives do not contribute substantially to POD.
- > The Chemical Control Alternative includes the use of pyrethroid pesticides, which have been linked to POD. The District uses pyrethroid pesticides as part of an IPM approach, where application of pyrethroids is several levels down in the selection of control measures, so the use of pyrethroids is limited. When pyrethroids are used, the District preferentially uses pyrethroids with limited persistence in the environment. The District applies them over aquatic habitats using only ULV application methods, which results in the minimal effective amounts for adult mosquitoes of these chemicals. Furthermore, the District applies these chemicals (for mosquitoes, yellow jackets, and potentially ticks) according to the product labels and BMPs. Labeled application rates for mosquito control tend to be low (compared to rates used for other insects); thus, the amounts of adulticide materials applied over terrestrial and aquatic habitats is low compared to other pest control uses. Thus, the Chemical Control Alternative does not contribute substantially to the concentrations of pyrethroids in the environment or to the POD.
- > The Surveillance, Biological Control, and Nonchemical Control Alternatives involve access, monitoring, and control activities with very limited potential to impact POD.

Therefore, all of the Program alternatives have a less-than-significant cumulative impact on POD. As stated earlier, the District's Program would have a significant cumulative effect if:

*The cumulative effects of related projects (past, current, and probable future projects) without the project are already significant and the project contributes considerably to the effect. The standards used herein to determine considerability are either that the impact must be substantial or must exceed an established threshold of significance.*

While the effects of related projects without the District's Program are already significant for POD and with the Program are significant as well, the District's Proposed Program does **not contribute considerably to this effect because the District-specific impacts are not substantial** for reasons explained above.

### **13.2.1.2 Salmonid Population Trends**

Salmonid population trends were evaluated in a number of 5-year status reviews completed by NOAA Fisheries in 2011 (NOAA Fisheries 2011 a-f). These reviews indicated that most populations of salmonids showed some evidence of decline, although data are very sparse for some distinct population segments (steelhead) or evolutionarily significant units (Chinook and Coho salmon) (also see NOAA 2011g). The declines in the 5-year period of review were largely due in part to poor ocean conditions in 2004 and 2005, which resulted in poor adult returns in 2007 through 2009 and drought (Lindley et al. 2009). However, based on the status reviews for these species, the principal factors resulting in their listing include:

- > Loss, degradation, simplification, and fragmentation of habitat caused by a variety of activities including logging, road construction, urban development, mining activities, agriculture, ranching, and recreation
- > Reduction or elimination of habitat or blocked access to habitat caused by water storage, withdrawal, conveyance and diversion facilities for agriculture, flood control, and domestic and hydropower purposes
- > Point and nonpoint sources of pollution
- > Loss of riparian habitats

The Physical Control and Vegetation Management alternatives could contribute to the first and last factors, while the Chemical Control Alternative could contribute to the third factor. These vector control activities generally occur over small areas and have little impact (if any) on primary salmonid habitat. The BMPs associated with the implementation of these alternatives substantially reduce these potential small impacts to be less than significant at the Program level, and these alternatives do not contribute substantially to the total amount of habitat loss for salmonids in the region.

The Chemical Control Alternative applies chemicals in aquatic environments at levels that have minimal impacts to fisheries resources or their food supply. BMPs restrict the application of chemicals with higher potential to harm fish from being used in water, and these chemicals are used in very small amounts and with low frequency relative to other sources in the region. The District also preferentially uses chemicals that degrade quickly in the environment, further reducing the risk associated with this alternative. Thus, the Chemical Control Alternative does not contribute substantively to chemical loads in salmonid habitats.

The Surveillance, Biological Control, and Other Nonchemical Control Alternatives involve access, monitoring, and control activities with very limited potential to impact salmonids. Therefore, all of the Program alternatives have a less-than-significant cumulative impact on salmonid population trends.

### **13.2.2 Program Alternatives**

The Surveillance Alternative's maintenance of access routes and the sampling/ monitoring of mosquito and vector populations have less-than-significant impacts on aquatic habitats, native fish or aquatic invertebrates, special status species, or HCPs and NCCPs along with the Biological Control Alternative's use of mosquitofish in artificial/man-made water bodies and the trapping associated with the Other Nonchemical Control Alternative are not cumulatively considerable given their limited disruption to natural habitats. Consequently, the focus of the analysis below is on the Physical Control, Vegetation Management, and Chemical Control Alternatives.

#### **13.2.2.1 *Physical Control Alternative***

The deepening and connecting of channels in shallow-water habitats in natural areas (to increase water circulation) under the Physical Control Alternative would be cumulative with historic and ongoing impacts to these habitats from other land management practices including flood control, urbanization, and channelization. The majority of such activities occurring as part of the action would occur in artificial environments such as drainage ditches, retention ponds, etc. As described in Section 4.2.4.1, shallow-water habitats can be important habitats for young fish and other sensitive aquatic organisms. Floodplains, off-channel pools, backwaters, and wetlands provide high quality habitat for fry and tadpoles that are subject to predation in deeper, connected habitats. However, where fry are present, they would prey on mosquito larvae and, thus, these areas would likely not need treatment. However, conditions in these habitats may change from seasonally or annually, depending on tides, flows, and precipitation patterns, so that a pool that supports fish or amphibians in one year may not have sufficient water to do so in other years.

This Program's Physical Control Alternative occurs in the context of an environment that is highly modified by human use, for agriculture, urbanization, and flood control. It is estimated that more than 90 percent of wetland and riparian habitats in California have been lost to human development (California Natural Resources Agency 2010). Today, recognition of the importance of wetlands is much greater and many wetland protection and restoration projects are underway throughout the state, including, but not limited to, the HCP/NCCPs described in Section 4.1.4. Activities affecting wetlands are subject to permitting requirements from a variety of agencies including the USACE, SWRCB or RWQCBs, CDFW, and others. However, wetlands continue to be affected by urban and agricultural development, roadwork, and other activities (California Natural Resources Agency 2010), an existing significant cumulative impact. The District's activities within this context do not contribute substantially to the cumulative effects of other activities within the region in part due to the focus on water circulation (rather than draining or filling) and

constraints of required permits. Therefore, the Program would have a less-than-significant cumulative impact on the amount or quality of aquatic habitat.

### **13.2.2.2 Vegetation Management Alternative**

The vegetation within and around aquatic habitats is an important component of the aquatic ecosystem, as described in Section 4.2.5. As described above, historic development has highly affected adversely wetland communities, in spite of their ecological importance. While these communities enjoy much more protection now than they have historically, impacts continue to occur because of human development.

The Vegetation Management Alternative includes measures to remove and maintain vegetation through manual, mechanical, and chemical treatments. Most of this activity would occur in artificial environments, where special-status species would not be impacted, but some activity in natural environments could occur. Similar activities may be undertaken by flood control or water supply agencies, and private and public landowners.

The District performs weed abatement activities in addition to other vector control activities as part of agreements with landowners. These weed abatement activities may involve the use of manual, mechanical, and chemical controls to reduce or eliminate noxious weeds. California Food and Agriculture Code 5261 defines a noxious weed as “any species of plant that is, or is liable to be, troublesome, aggressive, intrusive, detrimental, or destructive to agriculture, silviculture, or important native species, and difficult to control or eradicate, which the Secretary, by regulation, designates to be a noxious weed.” At present, the District is contracted by the Coastal Conservancy to work on their invasive spartina project but may engage in similar projects in the future.

Numerous entities throughout the Program Area have weed/invasive plant control programs that they implement. These entities include California Department of Transportation and local roads departments, local utilities, service districts, government, agricultural districts, and public and private landowners. Information about the coordination of such efforts can be obtained from the CDFA’s Noxious Weed Information Project (CDFA 2014). Fourteen federal, state, and county agencies founded the California Interagency Noxious Weed Coordinating Committee in 1995 to coordinate the management of noxious weeds. This group has assembled a variety of tools for those involved in weed control activities. These tools are designed to minimize disruption of native plants and to improve habitat for them. The District’s activities are compliant with these tools.

Invasive weeds can disrupt native habitats. They compete with and may displace native plants, which may interfere with ecosystem functions, by altering and reducing the food resources available to primary and secondary consumers. Weed control activities the District performs would be cumulative with those other entities perform. These activities would focus on areas with dense concentrations of weeds and not on individual weed plants distributed broadly in otherwise natural habitats. Thus, weed control activities may affect native plants, as these species may lie within treatment areas, but the effects on individuals of native species are minimized, and the overall effect is likely beneficial, as native species will have less competition in treated areas and, thus, would be expected to be more successful. Therefore, there is not an existing significant cumulative impact to native habitats. The District’s incremental activities associated with the control of invasive weeds would not be cumulatively considerable, i.e., less than significant.

### **13.2.2.3 Chemical Control Alternative**

As described in Section 13.4 (Ecological Health) and 13.5 (Human Health), historic trends in pesticide use vary from county to county based on information available from CDPR. Within the District’s Program Area as a whole, pesticide use decreased by approximately 144 tons in 2010 relative to 2006. This reduction may be due in part to strong public pressure to reduce the amount of pesticide used, along with extensive regulatory oversight of pesticide use by the USEPA, CDPR, USFWS, NMFS, SWRCB, CDFW, and others. However, the use of pesticides and herbicides will continue to be necessary. Many of these chemicals exhibit some environmental persistence and a number of water bodies have been listed as impaired for

sediment toxicity, pesticides, or unknown toxicity (see Table 9-1). The uses of pesticides under the Chemical Control Alternative would be cumulative with uses of pesticides by agricultural, industrial, governmental, and residential users, an existing significant cumulative impact. Contaminants and pesticides have been hypothesized to contribute to declines in fish populations. The District's relative contribution to the loads of such concentrations is very small compared with other users for the widely used pesticides in part due to District BMPs. Furthermore, the District's IPM approach preferentially uses nonchemical alternatives and when using chemical alternatives, uses chemicals (including possible use of naled) that are not persistent in the environment, i.e., break down within 30 to 150 days. As such, the District's Chemical Control Alternative does not contribute substantially to pesticide and herbicide loads in the aquatic environment. The Chemical Control Alternative has a less-than-significant cumulative impact on herbicide and pesticide loads.

### **13.3 Biological Resources – Terrestrial**

Cumulative impacts, as they relate to terrestrial resources, include past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions that potentially impact terrestrial mammalian and avian wildlife, herptiles, aquatic organisms, nontarget invertebrates and pollinators, and botanical resources. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, projects taking place over a period of time. The determination is whether a proposed project's incremental contribution to a cumulative impact results in a potentially "considerable" (i.e., significant) cumulative impact, and, if so, whether that project's incremental contribution can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level.

The following is a discussion of how the Program impacts could become cumulatively considerable with other impacts in the region. To make this determination, consideration is given to the combined contribution of Program impacts considered together with impacts that exist outside of the Program Area. The issue is whether the Program's incremental contribution to the combined significant cumulative impact is "cumulatively considerable."

In summary, only the Program alternatives' less-than-significant and potentially significant impacts have the potential to add an incremental effect to a cumulatively significant impact. In Section 5.2, the Surveillance, Physical Control, Vegetation Management, Chemical Control, and Other Nonchemical Control Alternatives' impacts to terrestrial resources were determined to be less than significant. (The Biological Control Alternative's use of mosquitofish had no impact to terrestrial resources.) The key issues for consideration herein are potential effects on beneficial insect pollinators from chemical applications and the potential cumulative impacts associated with Vegetation Management and Chemical Control Alternatives.

Program alternative impacts to terrestrial resources were identified as "less than significant" (LS) if the likely exposure to terrestrial habitats, to native terrestrial plant or animal populations, or to special-status species was either very short or the application medium (as a fog or liquid) was typically highly dilute (ULV techniques). Additionally, the LS determination was applied if it was indicated that exposure could be considered likely incomplete due to little or no overlap of application areas and typical habitat associated with nontarget special-status or sensitive terrestrial species.

#### **13.3.1 Effects on Pollinators**

Some of the currently available insecticides used to control mosquitoes and yellow jackets may also exhibit toxicity to selected beneficial insects. The District employs strict BMPs (along with pesticide label requirements) that are specifically designed to minimize or eliminate the impact of chemical treatments on nontarget insects such as honeybees. Of particular concern recently is a group of insecticides known as neonicotinoids, which target the nervous system of target insects, resulting in paralysis and death (Harmon 2012). However, reports implicate this group of pesticides as one of the possible contributors to reported decreases in bee colonies, known as colony collapse disorder (CCD). This disorder and the resulting decline in bee populations is an existing significant cumulative impact in the region. As reported, CCD has been used to correlate some reports of the apparent disappearance of honeybees from hives. A recent in

situ study attempted to replicate CCD wherein the authors claimed that the only variable that contributed significantly to hive death was exposure to sublethal levels of imidacloprid (a commonly used neonicotinoid insecticide), although the authors reported mortalities in bees that were fed only contaminated fructose (large doses of the insecticide) (Lu et al. 2012). After this report was published, peer reviews of the article indicated that the methodology was substantially flawed by the use of extremely high levels of pesticides in the tests that are actually already known to be very toxic to bees (400 ppb) when fed directly with no opportunity to obtain alternate, uncontaminated sources of food (fructose).

In addition to the potential impacts of some pesticides on bees and other insect pollinators, it is clear that many other factors can impact bee colonies in their hives. Activities such as housing development and expansion of public projects decrease the number and proximity of orchards, and in many urban or semi-urban areas the restrictions on keeping bees severely limit the number of hives. Other factors affecting bees and insect pollinators include loss of habitat, loss of flowering plants and trees, mite infections, viruses, stress due to movement of the bee colony for agricultural pollination, and predators to the colony. For example, loss of milkweed has been associated with a decline in monarch butterflies. These development, movement, and habitat loss activities, in conjunction with vector control activities, can be considered cumulatively considerable, without precisely accounting for relative impacts to bee colonies. The claims that the problems with bee colonies are purely due to pesticide applications are not supported. See Sections 5.2.7 and 6.2.7.

As an example of the conservative nature of pesticide applications the District practices, the District does not use neonicotinoid insecticides (e.g., imidacloprid and other pesticides recently claimed to be associated with CCD) and is not considering them for future use. As a result, the vector control and maintenance programs the District uses have not been associated with CCD. Insect control activities the District performs would be cumulative with vector control programs and habitat maintenance activities other, sometimes nearby, private and/or public groups perform that are within the range of influence of the bee hives and pollinators of interest. The Beekeeper's Guild of San Mateo County offers assistance with swarm removal or honey bee colony removal. In general, while it is true that insect abatement activities may affect local pollinators near or adjacent to treatment areas, the careful practice of label application restrictions and District BMPs greatly reduces the potential cumulative impacts to nontarget pollinators. Based on these conclusions, the Program's less-than-significant impacts on insect pollinators related to mosquito, yellow jacket, and tick abatement activities would not be cumulatively considerable or significant.

### **13.3.2 Vegetation Management**

The District performs vegetation management activities in addition to other vector control activities as part of agreements with landowners. These vegetation management activities may involve the use of manual, mechanical, and chemical controls to reduce or eliminate noxious weeds. California Food and Agriculture Code 5261 defines a noxious weed as "any species of plant that is, or is liable to be, troublesome, aggressive, intrusive, detrimental, or destructive to agriculture, silviculture, or important native species, and difficult to control or eradicate, which the Secretary, by regulation, designates to be a noxious weed."

Numerous entities throughout the Program Area have weed control programs that they implement. These entities include the California Department of Transportation and local roads departments, local utilities, service districts, government, agricultural districts, and public and private landowners. Information about the coordination of such efforts can be obtained from the CDFA's Noxious Weed Information Project (CDFA 2014). Fourteen federal, state, and county agencies founded the California Interagency Noxious Weed Coordinating Committee in 1995 to coordinate the management of noxious vegetation. This group has assembled a variety of tools for those involved in weed control activities.

Invasive vegetation can disrupt native habitats. It competes with and may displace native plants. This tendency may interfere with ecosystem functions, by altering and reducing the food resources available to primary and secondary consumers. Weed control activities the District performs would be cumulative with those other entities perform. Weed control activities may affect native plants, as these species may lie

within treatment areas, but the effects on individuals of native species are minimized, and the overall effect is likely beneficial, as native species will have less competition in treated areas and, thus, would be expected to be more successful. Based on this conclusion, the Program's incremental less-than-significant effects relating to weed abatement activities would not, when considered with other weed abatement activities in the Program Area, be cumulatively considerable or significant.

### **13.3.3 Chemical Control Alternative**

As described in Section 13.4 (Ecological Health), historic trends in pesticide use vary from county to county based on information available from CDPR. Within the District's Program Area as a whole, pesticide use varies by county in 2010 relative to 2006 including reductions of 144 tons. This reduction may be due in part to strong public pressure to reduce the amount of pesticide used, and regulatory oversight of pesticide use by the USEPA, CDPR, USFWS, NMFS, SWRCB, CDFW, and others is extensive. However, the use of pesticides and herbicides will continue to be necessary. Many of these chemicals exhibit some environmental persistence. The uses of pesticides under the Chemical Control Alternative would be cumulative with uses of pesticides by agricultural, industrial, governmental, and residential users, an existing significant cumulative impact. The District's relative contribution to the loads of such concentrations is small compared with other users for the widely used pesticides in part due to BMPs. The District preferentially uses nonchemical alternatives and when using chemical alternatives, uses chemicals that are not persistent in the environment, i.e., breakdown within 30 to 150 days. As such, the District's Chemical Control Alternative does not contribute substantially to pesticide and herbicide exposures in the terrestrial environment. The Chemical Control Alternative has a less-than-significant cumulative impact on terrestrial resource exposures to herbicides and pesticides.

## **13.4 Ecological Health**

Cumulative impacts, as they relate to ecological health include past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions that potentially impact aquatic/terrestrial mammalian and avian wildlife, herptiles, aquatic organisms, nontarget invertebrates and pollinators, and botanical resources. See also Sections 13.2 Aquatic Resources and 13.3 Terrestrial Resources for additional discussion of cumulative impacts. To make a determination of a cumulatively considerable impact, consideration is given to the combined contribution of Program impacts (mostly less than significant) considered together with impacts that exist outside of the Program from the activities of agencies and individuals. If those impacts, taken all together result in a significant impact, then the Program's incremental contribution to the combined significant cumulative impact is "cumulatively considerable" if it triggers the significant cumulative impact or if it has a substantial contribution to the existing significant cumulative impact

The Proposed Program does result in the use of pesticides and a potential increase in pesticide use over existing conditions for certain formulations. Local planning agencies, County Agricultural Commissioners, and CDPR do not forecast future pesticide use. However, the cumulative analysis for ecological health concerns can address the question of increases in pesticide use as a result of the Proposed Program as a variation of the "summary of projections method" to address regional cumulative impacts of pesticide use and whether the incremental contributions of the Program's chemical treatment methods contribute to cumulative significant ecological health-related impacts. The estimates of pesticide use in the District's Program Area are not based on population or housing units or employees in the state but rather on past trends in pesticide use from available data on pesticide sales of products, as active ingredients, reported to the CDPR for 2006, 2008, and 2010. The analysis seeks to provide the regional context needed for a reasonable discussion of cumulative impacts. Just as local and regional plans project growth based on past trends, the analysis below relies on past trends to address changes in pesticide use and potential cumulative ecological health impacts.

This analysis considers whether potential exists for any incremental contribution of chemical use from the Program, when combined with other reasonably foreseeable uses of the specific pesticides considered in this PEIR (and Appendix B), which would result in cumulative impacts that could be considered “cumulatively considerable” to ecological health. The District’s activities would involve the application of low concentrations of pesticide and herbicide active ingredients. Further, the District’s practices including avoidance of some habitat types and strict adherence to product labels, which typically require concentrations well below known toxicity values, would result in very short exposures. Program alternative impacts were identified as “less than significant” if the likely exposure to nontarget species was either very short or the application medium (as a fog or liquid) was typically highly dilute (ULV techniques). Additionally, the less-than-significant determination was applied if it was indicated that exposure could be considered likely incomplete due to little or no overlap of application areas and typical species habitat.

### **Trends in Pesticide Use 2006–2010**

Trends in pesticide use help to determine whether there is an existing cumulatively considerable impact in the region from the uses of pesticides by agricultural, industrial, governmental, and residential users. In general, there is an existing significant cumulative impact from the quantities of materials applied overall with some reductions in use of selected materials. Table 13-1, Historical Pesticide Use in the San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District’s Program Area illustrates the changes in relative pesticide use (as pounds per year of active ingredients) for the 46 chemicals in the counties represented in the District’s Program Area (Service Area plus adjacent counties) which is the focus of this PEIR. After inspection of the yearly data reported by the CDPR, it is difficult to determine any repeatable or linear trends in use patterns. The potential cumulative impact of the use of similar pesticides by numerous agencies, organizations, and individuals in the counties suggests that many potential interactions could lead to cumulative pesticide impacts without definitive determination of the relative volume of each of the sources. However, pesticide use in the Program Area has decreased since 2006. The amount of active ingredients used in the Program Area in 2006 was approximately 775,908 pounds (388 tons), but it decreased to 486,143 pounds (243 tons) in 2010 (CDPR).

Although the reported cumulative pesticide product used has a very wide range for each county in the table, some generalities can be made for each county although the data are limited to 2006 to 2010:

- > San Mateo County reported more than 23 tons fewer pesticides used in 2010 than in 2006.
- > Santa Clara County reported more than 121 tons fewer pesticide use in 2010 than in 2006.
- > San Francisco County reported use less than 0.005 lb. for each active ingredient, so there was no use quantified for 2006 through 2010.

Although large uncertainty and high variation exist in the reported amounts of pesticide use by these counties, they vary according to their particular needs, majority of habitat type, and seasonal vector outbreaks. The public is aware of these pesticide uses and, in general, is pressuring agencies within these counties to use less pesticide whenever possible.

**Table 13-1 Historical Pesticide Use within the SMCMVCD Program Area**

Active Ingredient	Vector	Service Area San Mateo County			Adjacent Counties								
		2006	2008	2010	Santa Clara			Santa Cruz			San Francisco		
					2006	2008	2010	2006	2008	2010	2006	2008	2010
2,4-D	Herbicide	659	1653	763	1145	931	2446	8.5	28	45			
Alcohol Ethoxylated Surfactant	Mosquito												
Aliphatic Solvents	Mosquito												
APEs	Herbicide												
Allethrins	Mosquito, Yellow Jacket / Wasp	0.9	0.4	0.3	5.6	1.7	1.8	0.2	0.2	0.04			
Bs	Mosquito	2826	3391	453.8	1250.7	120.9	31.8	404	235	149			
Bti	Mosquito	392	181.7	351.5	2752	649	500	99	130	325			
Benfluralin (Benefin)	Herbicide	5.9			17.3	19.5	14.7	2.3	2.6	1			
Bentazon	Herbicide	19.6	34.3	60.2				111	2				
Brodifacoum	Rodents	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.1	0.08	0.1	0.03	0.02	0.02			
Bromadiolone	Rodents	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.9	1.2	1.1	0.3	0.2	0.1			
Chlorophacinone	Rodents	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.01	0.01				
Cholecalciferol	Rodents	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.03	0.4	0.05			
DCPA	Herbicide												
Deltamethrin	Mosquito, Yellow Jacket / Wasp	61.8	57.8	68.5	219	209.2	79.7	26	50	5			
Difethialone	Rodents	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.01	0.01	0.01			
Diphacinone	Rodents	0.06	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.1	0.05	0.03			
Dithiopyr	Herbicide	59.8	161.6	84	273	540	318.8	21	94	14			
Diuron	Herbicide	677.8	240.3	100.9	9755	3194	929.4	347	386	120			
Esfenvalerate	Yellow Jacket / Wasp	4.3	8.8	9.1	314.1	231.2	265.2	37	20	20			
Etofenprox	Mosquito, Yellow Jacket / Wasp												
Glyphosate	Herbicide	9832	18317	19790	493540	38971	77190	7868	6417	5590			
Imazapyr	Herbicide	3362.5	3282	2222.3	76	293.4	70	12	8				
Lambda-cyhalothrin	Mosquito, Yellow Jacket / Wasp	11.1	47.8	8.5	132.8	312.5	135.7	97	109	116			
Lecithin	Herbicide	939	1499.2	3079.4	403.6	99.5	163.5	61	119	529			
Methoprene	Mosquito	141	176	153	604	145	23.4	57	20	5			
Metolachlor	Herbicide		5.7		1679	1478.3	1283.6						
Modified Vegetable Oil	Herbicide												
Naled	Mosquito	236.4	241.7	226.7	1911	1442.2	2168.3	1625	4069	4032			
Oryzalin	Herbicide	105315	1322.5	430.2	4598	5502	7786.4	329	31	6			
Pendimethalin	Herbicide	275	424	1239.1	4361	7343.1	7032.8	262	122	63			
Permethrin	Mosquito, Yellow Jacket / Wasp	1359.4	2629.7	654.9	8367	19178.7	20422.2	695	398	361			
Phenothrin	Yellow Jacket / Wasp	0.4	0.9	1	6	2.7	4.6	0.2	0.4	0.2			

**Table 13-1 Historical Pesticide Use within the SMCMVCD Program Area**

Active Ingredient	Vector	Service Area San Mateo County			Adjacent Counties								
					Santa Clara			Santa Cruz			San Francisco		
		2006	2008	2010	2006	2008	2010	2006	2008	2010	2006	2008	2010
PBO	Mosquito	466	100	157.5	268	611	1588.34	343	311	1536			
Polydimethylsiloxane Fluids	Herbicide												
Potassium Salts	All	12041	64053	61131	70022	294175	215255	66367	58920	53465			
Prallethrin	Mosquito			0.7			3.2			0.2			
Pyrethrins	Mosquito, Yellow Jacket / Wasp	92.9	28.8	34.1	83.2	112.7	220.9	69	102	274			
Resmethrin	Mosquito, Yellow Jacket / Wasp				0.1	0.08	0.03						
Sodium Nitrate	Fumigant	4.7			4.9	118.9	129						
Spinosad	Mosquito	71	90.7	46.4	758.3	712.8	284.4	975	503	351			
Sulfometuron methyl	Herbicide	30.3	12.8	34.2	150.6	115.4	127.4	27	45	32			
Sulfur	Fumigant	1351	768	1947.7	26812	22684.5	38424.1	58030	93926	58651			
Temephos	Mosquito												
Tetramethrin	Yellow Jacket / Wasp	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.01	0.01			
Triclopyr	Herbicide	1579	2545	2051	4581	2129	14138	657	405	432			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>141815.7</b>	<b>101275.14</b>	<b>95100.88</b>	<b>634092.62</b>	<b>401326.97</b>	<b>391041.72</b>	<b>138530.7</b>	<b>166453.9</b>	<b>126122.7</b>			

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> From the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, Pesticide Use Reporting database.

<sup>2</sup> All values are reported in weight (lbs) of Active Ingredient used in a county over the given year.

B = Blank cells mean that either no use was reported for that chemical in that county in that year or the reported data were less than 0.005 lb. Because data are usually reported as pounds of product, and the active ingredient needs to be calculated, the CDPR database has apparent problems for some of the chemicals used in quantities greater than the 0.005-pound threshold for reporting the pounds of active ingredient.

The District uses very strict and thorough BMPs in its pesticide applications for mosquito and vector control and is attempting to reduce total pesticide use where possible consistent with IPM practices. The District's annual use of pesticides in is reported to the San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner and provided here in Table 13-2, Pesticide Use within the SMCMVCD Service Area. The amount reported is pounds of total product used, not just the pounds of active ingredient, which has to be calculated for each formulation. Therefore, the amounts in Table 13-2 are not directly comparable to the pounds of active ingredient presented in Table 13-1. Although the units in Table 13-2 vary from Table 13-1 and are reported by product name, comparisons for the most heavily used Bs formulation (VectoLex CG) is 6,250.5 pounds in 2006 and 5,493.3 pounds in 2010. This weight is for the total product, not just the active ingredient. For the VectoLex CG formulation, the amount of active ingredient Bs would be approximately 469 pounds in 2006 and 412 pounds in 2010. The active ingredient in this example is approximately 7.5 percent of the total product amount. Pesticide product use by the District is affected by population growth, weather conditions (rainfall), and restoration projects in the Service Area. Also, at selected sites a large amount of product may have to be used or is required to abate a significant mosquito/vector problem, e.g., wastewater treatment plant and wetlands with invasive vegetation.

**Table 13-2 Pesticide Use within the SMCMVCD Service Area: 2006, 2008, 2010**

Pesticide Product (units)	Active Ingredient	Amount Used		
		2006	2008	2010
<b>Herbicides</b>				
(old) Spectracide (can)	2,4-D			1.25
AquaMaster (gal)	Glyphosate	2.50	2.11	
Blazon Blue (gal)	Polymeric colorant		0.74	
Habitat (gal)	Imazapyr	920.81		
Liberate by Constal Con. (gal)	Lecithin, alcohol ethoxylate			647.39
Liberate Lpl (gal)	Lecithin, alcohol ethoxylate	462.72	360.23	24.57
LI 700 (gal)	Adjuvant	0.50		
Polaris AQ (gal)	Imazapyr		663.66	49.14
Polaris by Coastal Con. (gal)	Imazapyr			763.90
Spectracide 3 (can)	2,4-D	24.00	19.50	53.50
Turf Trax Blue (gal)	Polymeric colorant	109.91	53.20	7.19
Turf Trax by USFS (gal)	Polymeric colorant			71.39
<b>Larvicides</b>				
Altosid 2.1 XR (briq)	Methoprene	6,946.00	6,171.50	5,596.00
Altosid 4.25 Packets (packets)	Methoprene	212.00	149.00	419.00
Altosid 4.25 Pellets (lbs)	Methoprene	796.33	1,225.49	865.97
Altosid 8.6 briq (briq)	Methoprene	14,910.25	15,382.00	22,835.60
Altosid Liquid Larvicide 20% (gal)	Methoprene	16.71	16.72	14.17
Altosid Liquid Larvicide 5% (gal)	Methoprene	10.78	9.23	14.89
Altosid XR-G 1.5% (lbs)	Methoprene	3,525.72	2,726.53	7,952.83
BVA 2 (gal)	Mineral oil		588.54	3,880.90

**Table 13-2 Pesticide Use within the SMCMVCD Service Area: 2006, 2008, 2010**

Pesticide Product (units)	Active Ingredient	Amount Used		
		2006	2008	2010
FourStar 45 Bti (briq)	Bti	15.00		
Golden Bear 1111 (gal)	Mineral oil	5,354.92	2,371.56	34.85
Natular XRT (lbs)	Spinosad			300.00
Teknar HP-D (gal)	Bti			11.02
VectoBac 12AS (gal)	Bti	603.20	602.23	378.44
VectoLex 7.5 WSP	Bs	136.00	331.00	919.00
VectoLex CG (lbs)	Bs and Bti	6,250.50	9,974.77	5,493.31
VectoLex WDG (lbs)	Bs	9.50	14.00	24.50
<b>Adulticides</b>				
1% Pyrenone Capsules	Pyrethrins, PBO	15.00		2.00
25.5% Pyrenone (gal)	Pyrethrins, PBO	214.02	0.12	0.25
Suspend (gal)	Deltamethrin	0.58		
<b>Pesticides</b>				
Delta Dust (lbs)	Deltamethrin	7.55	11.77	7.51
Drione (lbs)	Pyrethrins, PBO	0.66	0.05	0.03
Easy Gone Hornet Spray (can)	Tetramethrin, Permethrin, PBO	49.00		
Mosquito dunkets	Bti		184.00	
Ortho Wasp Spray (can)	Tetramethrin, Sumithrin	72.50	3.25	9.75
Spectracide Pro (can)	Tetramethrin, Permethrin, PBO	23.00	100.50	168.15
Victor Mint Oil (can)	Peppermint Oil		0.25	
Wasp Freeze (can)	d-trans Allethrin, Phenothrin	17.00	42.00	13.50

The District’s incremental contributions to overall pesticide use within its Program Area do not trigger a cumulatively considerable impact. While the overall use of pesticides throughout the Program Area may be considered cumulatively significant based on the use of a long list of active ingredients and quantities used by all users, and since the District is a major user of a few of these pesticides, the District’s less-than-significant incremental contributions to this impact are not cumulatively significant because the District does not use the ingredients with the greatest potential to harm nontarget species. For chemicals used, label requirements and District BMPs substantially avoid or minimize potential impacts. Therefore, the Program’s long-term activities including chemical applications would not contribute considerably to nontarget ecological receptor impacts. The Program alternatives combined into the overall Proposed Program would not result in significant cumulative impacts to the ecological health condition of the region.

### 13.5 Human Health

Cumulative impacts, as they relate to human health, include past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions that potentially impact humans. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, projects taking place over a period of time. To make a determination of a cumulatively considerable impact, consideration is given to the combined contribution of Program impacts

(mostly less than significant) considered together with impacts that exist outside of the Program from the activities of agencies and individuals. If those impacts, taken all together result in a significant impact, then the Program's incremental contribution to the combined significant cumulative impact is "cumulatively considerable" if it triggers the significant cumulative impact or if it has a substantial contribution to the existing significant cumulative impact.

The Proposed Program does result in the use of pesticides and a potential increase in pesticide use over existing conditions for certain formulations. Local planning agencies, County Agricultural Commissioners, and CDPR do not forecast future pesticide use. However, the cumulative analysis for human health concerns can address the question of increases in pesticide use as a result of the Proposed Program as a variation of the summary of projections method to address regional cumulative impacts of pesticide use and whether the incremental contributions of the Program's chemical treatment methods contribute to cumulative significant human health-related impacts. The estimates of pesticide use in the District's Program Area provided in the preceding analysis in Section 13.4 (Table 13-1 is not based on population or housing units or employees in the state but rather on past trends in pesticide use from available data on pesticide sales of products, as active ingredients, reported to the CDPR. The analysis seeks to provide the regional context needed for a reasonable discussion of cumulative impacts. Just as local and regional plans project growth based on past trends, the analysis below relies on past trends to address changes in pesticide use and potential cumulative human health impacts.

This analysis considers whether potential exists for any incremental contribution of chemical use from the Program, when combined with other reasonably foreseeable uses of the specific pesticides considered in this PEIR (and Appendix B), which would result in cumulative impacts that could be considered "cumulatively considerable" to human health. The District's activities would involve the application of low concentrations of pesticide and herbicide active ingredients. Further, the District's practices including minimization or avoidance of impacts to some habitat types (such as tidal marshes and seasonal wetlands) and strict adherence to product labels, which typically require concentrations well below known toxicity values, would result in very short exposures. Program alternative impacts were identified as "less than significant" if the likely exposure to humans was either very short or the application medium (spray or liquid) was typically highly dilute (ULV techniques). Additionally, the less-than-significant determination was applied if an indication existed that exposure could be considered likely incomplete due to little or no overlap of application areas.

The District's incremental contributions to overall pesticide use within its Program Area do not trigger a cumulatively considerable impact. While the overall use of pesticides throughout the Program Area may be considered cumulatively significant based on the use of a long list of active ingredients and quantities reported by all users, the District's incremental contributions to this overall impact are not cumulatively significant largely because label requirements and BMPs mitigate for potential impacts. Therefore, the Program's long-term activities including chemical applications would not contribute considerably to human health impacts. The Program alternatives when combined into the overall Proposed Program would not result in significant cumulative impacts to the human health condition of the region.

### **13.6 Public Services and Hazard Response**

The District's Program would not incrementally increase demand for police, fire, or health-care services, nor would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment, or through the operation of aircraft. In addition, the Program would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. In short, the Proposed Program does not have incremental impacts on public services, and implementation of any of the Program alternatives (individually or in combination) would not result in a significant contribution to any cumulative public services and hazard response impacts that could result from other projects in the vicinity of the treatment areas.

### 13.7 Water Resources

Less-than-significant impacts to water resources are identified for all Program activities, under the Vegetation Management Alternative and the Chemical Control Alternative with the exception of the use of naled for adult mosquito control. While Table 9-1 lists chemicals of concern for pesticide concentrations in surface water and sediment throughout the Program Area. Table 9-2 lists only one pesticide-impaired surface waterbody and TMDL status in the District's Service Area, lower San Mateo Creek. Because pyrethroids have been implicated in sediment toxicity, those impairments are also included in Table 9-2, with the likely cause being the use of common household insecticides containing pyrethroids by members of the public, not vector control activities the District conducts. Where receiving waters (such Central San Francisco Bay) have been designated as impaired by pesticides, pyrethroids, or sediment toxicity, an existing significant cumulative impact is associated with the combined applications of these pesticides. The District's use now or in the future of some of the more toxic and persistent pyrethroids (permethrin and resmethrin) would be unlikely to contribute to impairments of receiving water identified on the CWA 303(d) list as caused by pyrethroids and sediment toxicity primarily because of the method of application. Several studies have shown that pyrethrins applied using ULV techniques do not accumulate in water or sediment following repeated applications. These studies also determined that no toxicity is associated when exposure is limited to the amounts used when following ULV protocols for mosquito control from truck-mounted equipment (Lawler et al. 2008; Amweg et al. 2006). Concerning permethrin, when applied in accordance with ULV label instructions, studies have shown rapid dissipation, low persistence, and no observed aquatic fish and invertebrate toxicity following aerial ULV applications (Appendix B). Although one study found higher levels of permethrin on the surface microlayer of the waterbody, corresponding water samples did not contain detected residues, and higher surface microlayer concentrations were not correlated with toxic effects in the waterbody. There is minimal movement of pesticides in sediments or soils into water bodies that is determined by the binding and half-life characteristics of the chemical used. When applied directly to ground nests of yellow jacket wasps or around residences or parks for tick abatement, the product is used with careful techniques such as controlled applications to very small, localized areas.

Water quality monitoring efforts by the District and other vector control agencies in 2011 to 2012 found almost no differences in visual observations or physical measurements between background, event, and post-event observations that could not be explained by diurnal factors or subjective observations by different field personnel (Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California [MVCAC] NPDES Permit Coalition 2013). The single exception in more than a hundred visual observations and physical monitoring samples was an observation of "light" water surface oils following application of monomolecular films in an agricultural setting – effects to nontarget species were not observed. The results of the chemical monitoring of the active ingredients applied by the District were similar. A few water samples exceeded monitoring triggers, but an associated ecotoxicology study found no water toxicity during those application events (MVCAC 2013).

In addition to the use of naled, which was identified to cause a potentially significant and unavoidable impact, the District's use of some of the more toxic and persistent pyrethroids (permethrin and resmethrin) could potentially contribute to impairments of receiving water identified on the CWA 303(d) list as caused by pyrethroids and sediment toxicity. Where receiving waters have been designated as impaired for pesticides used under the District's IMVMP, a cumulatively considerable impact results from all uses of these pesticides or the receiving waters would not be designated as impaired. The District's use of these "impairment chemicals" is contributing in less-than-significant amounts to an existing cumulatively considerable impact in the Program Area and are not cumulatively considerable. No additional impacts were identified in association with the chemical and nonchemical Program alternatives, and no additional cumulative impacts are anticipated to occur (i.e., the District's less-than-significant impacts are not triggering a new cumulative impact). Monitoring of water quality for the District's NPDES permit has not shown an impact from vector control chemical applications.

### 13.8 Air Quality

Impacts to regional ambient air quality by all Program alternatives combined would be less than significant for criteria pollutant emissions. The majority of air districts in California, including BAAQMD and MBUAPCD, assume that if project-level emissions do not exceed significance thresholds, and no closely related project exists, then a project would not have a cumulatively considerable impact on air quality. In most of the areas the District is likely to target for Program activities, related projects would be similar programs other Districts conduct in their respective jurisdictions and CDFA's special campaigns to control specific threats such as gypsy moths, light brown apple moths, and Mediterranean fruit flies. These projects would not occur at the same times (days) and same locations. All of the Program alternative emissions (separately and combined for the District's entire Program) would be below the significance thresholds for criteria pollutant emissions. The incremental impacts on air quality from the Program alternatives are not individually significant nor are they cumulatively considerable. Therefore, cumulative impacts to regional air quality are less than significant.

The VOC emissions resulting from the volatilization of the products during applications of pesticides and herbicides are relatively inconsequential when compared to the sources from vehicles and mechanical equipment used during the application. The VOCs associated with pesticide use are a small fraction of the total emissions the District produces. Concerning the cumulative impact of the District's pesticide use when combined with pesticide use by agriculture, the CDPR restricts use of many agricultural pesticide products that are high in VOCs to comply with the CAA. Statewide use of agricultural pesticides on commercial crops account for approximately 2 percent of all VOCs produced in the state, while the VOC emissions of pesticides and herbicides the District typically uses for vector control are minimal to insignificant. State restrictions include some high-VOC products containing abamectin, chlorpyrifos (not used extensively), gibberellins, or oxyfluorfen (used primarily on some Central California crops), and this concern should not impact District use of pesticides for vector control. (CDPR 2014c)

### 13.9 Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change

Scientific consensus concurs that global climate change will increase the frequency of heat extremes, heat waves, and heavy precipitation events. Currently accepted models predict that continued GHG emissions at or above current rates will induce more extreme climate changes during the 21st century than were observed during the 20th century. A warming of about 0.2°C per decade is projected. Even if the concentrations of all GHGs and aerosols are kept constant at year 2000 levels, a further warming of about 0.1°C per decade would be expected. A faster temperature increase will lead to more dramatic, and more unpredictable, localized climate extremes. Other likely direct effects of global warming include an increase in the areas affected by drought, an increase in tropical cyclone activity and higher sea level, and the continued recession of polar ice caps. Already some identifiable signs exist that global warming is taking place. In addition to substantial ice loss in the Arctic, the top 7 warmest years since the 1890s have been after 1997. (IPCC 2007)

The overall global climate change will be comprised of social and economic losses. These negative effects will likely be disproportionately shouldered by the poor who do not have the resources to adapt to a change in climate. Some of the main ecosystem changes anticipated are that biodiversity of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems could be reduced and that the ranges of infectious diseases would likely increase.

Cumulative impacts were assessed in a qualitative manner by determining if the Program alternatives, in conjunction with other projects throughout the Program Area, would have the potential to contribute to a long-term cumulative impact on climate change. Given that GHG emissions and climate change are global issues, a statewide framework or cumulative approach for consideration of environmental impacts may be most appropriate. Virtually every project California, as well as those outside the state, would have GHG emissions.

All Program alternatives would generate some GHG emissions individually but would not conflict with current plans, policies, and regulations. No potentially significant impact would occur as a result of any of the Program alternatives (individually or when combined for the entire Program), and no mitigation is required for GHGs and climate change. However, optional mitigation measures (BMPs) for all alternatives are listed in Section 11.2.11. Even with mitigation, the alternatives would generate GHG emissions and incrementally contribute to climate change, however minor.

When all Program emissions are viewed in combination with global emission levels that are contributing to the existing cumulative impact on global climate change, the incremental contribution of these Program emissions would not be cumulatively considerable because they occur intermittently on a very small scale (i.e., not stationary sources). Therefore, all Program alternatives (either individually or in combination) would not have a cumulatively considerable impact on global climate change. If optional mitigation measures (BMPs) are implemented, the Program alternatives' incremental contribution would be reduced further.

### **13.10 Noise**

Program activities would result in temporary, sporadic noise impacts from equipment use, and any given surveillance or treatment area would be affected only for a brief period. Cumulative impacts would result from the implementation of Program activities in combination with those of other reasonably foreseeable projects and actions occurring at the same time and in the same place. The likelihood of this happening and resulting in noise levels that would exceed thresholds or cause a substantial temporary increase in noise levels is remote; moreover, noise impacts from the Program would be temporary, lasting only a brief period of time at any given location, after which time the noise would cease. Thus, the potential for cumulative impacts is low, and any impacts that could occur would be of short duration and less than significant. The incremental noise impacts from any of the Program alternatives, individually or in combination for the entire Program, would not be cumulatively considerable and would not trigger cumulative noise impacts in a given area.

### **13.11 Summary of Cumulative Impacts**

None of the Program alternatives would have incremental impacts that would be cumulatively considerable. Furthermore, when the alternatives are combined into the overall Proposed Program, the incremental impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. The cumulative impacts by resource or environmental topic are summarized as follows:

- > Urban and Rural Land Uses: No cumulative significant impacts to urban and rural land uses are anticipated when all of the Program's incremental impacts and the impacts of other activities in the region are considered together.
- > Biological Resources- Aquatic: All of the Program alternatives have a less-than-significant cumulative impact on POD. All of the Program alternatives have a less-than-significant cumulative impact on salmonid population trends. The Program would have a less-than-significant cumulative impact on the amount or quality of aquatic habitat from the Physical Control Alternative. The District's incremental activities associated with the control of invasive weeds under the Vegetation Management Alternative would not be cumulatively considerable,
- > Biological Resources-Terrestrial: The District's Proposed Program does not contribute substantially to pesticide and herbicide exposures in the terrestrial environment. The Chemical Control and Vegetation Management Alternatives have a less-than-significant cumulative impact on terrestrial resource exposures to herbicides and pesticides. The Program's incremental less-than-significant effects relating to weed abatement activities would not, when considered with other weed abatement activities in the Program Area, be cumulatively considerable or significant.

- > Ecological Health: While the overall use of pesticides throughout the Program Area may be considered cumulatively significant for nontarget ecological receptors including honey bees, the District's incremental contributions to this impact are not cumulatively significant. Therefore, the Program's long-term activities including chemical applications would not contribute considerably to ecological health impacts.
- > Human Health: While the overall use of pesticides throughout the Program Area may be considered cumulatively significant, the District's incremental contributions to this impact are not cumulatively significant. Therefore, the Program's long-term activities including chemical applications would not contribute considerably to human health impacts.
- > Public Services and Hazard Response: The Proposed Program does not have incremental impacts on public services, and implementation of any of the Program alternatives (individually or in combination) would not result in a significant contribution to any cumulative public services and hazard response impacts that could result from other projects in the vicinity of the treatment areas
- > Water Resources: Where receiving waters have been designated as impaired for pesticides used under the District's IMVMP, a cumulatively considerable impact results from all uses of these pesticides or the receiving waters would not be designated as impaired. The District's use of these "impairment chemicals" is contributing in less-than-significant amounts to an existing cumulatively considerable impact in the Program Area and are not cumulatively considerable.
- > Air Quality: All of the Program alternative emissions (separately and combined for the District's entire Program) would be below the significance thresholds for criteria pollutant emissions. The incremental impacts on air quality from the Program alternatives are not individually significant nor are they cumulatively considerable.
- > Climate Change: When all Program emissions (all alternatives combined) are viewed in combination with global emission levels that are contributing to the existing cumulative impact on global climate change, the incremental contribution of these Program emissions would not be cumulatively considerable because they occur intermittently on a very small scale (i.e., not stationary sources).
- > Noise: Any impacts that could occur would be of short duration and less than significant. The incremental noise impacts from any of the Program alternatives individually and when combined would not be cumulatively considerable and would not trigger cumulative noise impacts.

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