7.17 Public Services

This section describes the environmental setting and potential impacts on public services that may result from changes in hydrology or changes in water supply.

The actions associated with changes in hydrology or changes in water supply would not increase demand on the public services presented in this section and, therefore, would have no potential impacts related to these public services. Potential wildfire hazard risk is evaluated in Section 7.11, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials.* Potential recreation impacts associated with parks are described and evaluated in Section 7.18, *Recreation*. Additional information on flood control is included in Section 7.12.1, *Surface Water*, and information regarding municipal water supply is addressed in Section 7.20, *Utilities and Service Systems*.

Section 7.1, *Introduction, Project Description, and Approach to Environmental Analysis*, describes reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance and response actions, including actions that would require construction. These actions are analyzed for potential environmental effects in Section 7.21, *Habitat Restoration and Other Ecosystem Projects*, and Section 7.22, *New or Modified Facilities*.

7.17.1 Environmental Checklist

XIV. Public Services	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Parks? (*see Section 7.18, Recreation, for an evaluation of impacts on city and county parks associated with recreation*)	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

7.17.2 Environmental Setting

This section describes the public services setting to inform the impact discussion in this section and in Section 7.21, *Habitat Restoration and Other Ecosystem Projects*; Section 7.22, *New or Modified Facilities*; Chapter 9, *Proposed Voluntary Agreements*; and Chapter 13, *Revised Proposed Plan Amendments*. The setting for city and county parks is described in Section 7.18, *Recreation.*

7.17.2.1 Emergency Services

Fire Protection

Protection from fire and emergency medical response is provided by cities, counties, and special districts in California. Protection of state parks and forests is provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The U.S. Forest Service is responsible for fire protection in national forests. Fire protection entities responsible for responding to wildfires depend on the county and whether fires are in incorporated or unincorporated areas. City fire departments, rural county fire districts, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection are among the entities providing wildfire protection and suppression services throughout the study area.

Although fire departments are trained to protect the public from fires, most of their emergency response calls involve medical emergencies. Consequently, some fire districts have their own ambulances and paramedic squads or place paramedics on fire engines.

Fire stations are strategically placed throughout service areas to minimize response times. Because fewer fire stations are in rural areas, response time tends to be longer there than in urban areas. However, response times in urban areas may be delayed by traffic or high frequency of emergency calls.

Law Enforcement

Several law enforcement agencies in California serve various regions. Cities are protected by individual police departments, and unincorporated lands are protected by the county sheriffs' offices. A total of 669 of California's 980 police stations and sheriffs' offices are in the study area. Services provided by police and sheriffs' offices include response to 911 calls, surveillance, criminal investigation, and routine patrolling. California Highway Patrol (CHP) polices state highways. CHP has 144 offices, dispatch centers, and other facilities; 93 of these are in the study area, with over 8 districts covering the state (CHP 2017). In addition to law enforcement, CHP provides services such as accident investigation, traffic control, and hazardous material spill management. Additional enforcement is provided by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for laws related to hunting and fishing. The U.S. Coast Guard patrols Delta waterways and the coasts.

Search and Rescue

Search and rescue in California is the responsibility of each county sheriff's office, except within certain national parks. Volunteers provide a large part of the labor for conducting search and rescues and are trained by the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES 2018). Many fire districts, fire departments, and county sheriff's offices also maintain special squads or response units for handling water rescues.

Emergency Medical Services

Emergency medical services include first responder services, ambulance transportation, and hospital and emergency room service. Ambulances often are provided by private companies or by fire departments. Like other public services, hospitals, emergency rooms, and availability of ambulances usually are related to the population density in a given area. In rural counties, there may be three or fewer hospitals and emergency rooms in the entire county, and travel time to an emergency facility may take more than 1 hour. In populated areas, each city may have several hospitals, with travel time depending more on traffic than on distance.

7.17.2.2 Other Public Services

Public Schools

California has more than 1,000 public school districts containing more than 10,000 public schools, nearly 9,000 of which are in the study area (CDE 2016). The number of schools in an area, size of schools, and teacher-to-student ratio depend heavily on population density. Because the study area includes both rural areas and highly populated cities, the profiles of schools in the study area are quite variable.

Public Libraries

Libraries are funded by local property taxes, state funds, library fees, donations, and grants. Traditionally, libraries have been public resources for obtaining access to written materials. In recent years, libraries have broadened their community services, hosting activities and learning programs, and providing Internet access. Like other public services, libraries are concentrated where demand and population are greatest. More than 490 public libraries are in the study area, most of them in highly populated areas (Public Libraries 2015).

7.17.3 Impact Analysis

Activities that lead to impacts on public services generally are associated with an increase in population and changes in land use. As a location's population increases, the need for additional or new public services and public service facilities generally increases (i.e., police or fire protection, search and rescue, emergency medical services, schools, libraries, or city and county parks). These increased demands could have a significant impact on service providers' ability to maintain acceptable service ratios and response times or could lead to a need to construct new governmental facilities.

The actions associated with changes in hydrology and changes in water supply are not expected to result in significant land use changes or population growth, either directly or indirectly (see Section 7.13, *Land Use and Planning*, and Section 7.16, *Population and Housing*). These actions would not include new structures, such as housing or businesses, or indirectly increase housing or businesses, and therefore would not result in an increase in population needing new or additional fire, police, or other public facilities. In addition, actions associated with changes in hydrology and changes in water supply do not include proposals for new housing and, therefore, would not generate students or increase demands for school services or facilities.

Changes in hydrology affecting flows and reservoir levels would not involve construction or result in an increase in population or change in land use that would increase demand for emergency services

(i.e., fire or police protection, search and rescue, or emergency medical services) or other public services (i.e., schools, libraries, or parks). Changes to patterns of use at some recreational facilities could occur as discussed in Section 7.18, *Recreation*, but these changes would not result in population growth or a change in land use that would increase demand for public services. There would be no impact from changes in hydrology under Impact PS-a.

Changes in water supply include reduced Sacramento/Delta supply to agricultural and municipal use. These actions would not involve construction or result in an increase in population or change in land use that would increase demand for public services. As discussed in Section 7.18, *Recreation*, although patterns of use at some city and county park facilities could change, changes are not expected to increase population or change land use in a manner that would affect demand for public services. In response to reduced water supply, water districts or agencies may increase groundwater pumping or use of other water management actions (groundwater storage and recovery, water transfers, water recycling, and water conservation). Increased groundwater pumping or use of other water management actions would not involve construction; these actions would not result in an increase in population or change land use such that demand for emergency services or other public services would increase. There would be no impact from changes in water supply under Impact PS-a.

Section 7.21, *Habitat Restoration and Other Ecosystem Projects*, and Section 7.22, *New or Modified Facilities,* describe and analyze potential public services impacts from various actions that involve construction.

7.17.4 References Cited

California Department of Education (CDE). 2016. *Fingertip Facts on Education in California—CalEdFacts*. Available: http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/ceffingertipfacts.asp. Accessed: August 5, 2017.

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