

Chapter 8

Significant Irreversible Changes

8.1 Introduction

Pursuant to Section 15126.2(c) of the State CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must consider any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the proposed project should it be implemented. Section 15126.2(c) reads as follows:

Uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irrecoverable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.

8.2 Analysis of Irreversible Changes

The proposed project would require the use of non-renewable resources, such as lumber, metal alloys, and aggregate resources, for the physical construction components of the project. However, the project does not represent an uncommon construction project that uses an extraordinary amount of raw materials in comparison to other urban development projects of a similar scope and magnitude.

The proposed project would develop the site for recreational/commercial activities. Resources that are committed irreversibly and irretrievably are those that would be used by a project on a long-term or permanent basis. Resources committed to this project include habitats, air quality, fossil fuels, capital, labor, and construction materials such as rock, concrete, and gravel.

Fossil fuels and energy would be consumed during construction and operation activities. Fossil fuels in the forms of diesel oil and gasoline would be used for construction equipment and vehicles. During operations, diesel oil and gasoline would be used by vehicles and recreational boaters. Electrical energy and natural

gas would be consumed during construction and operation. These energy resources would be irretrievable and irreversible.

Commitments of other resources that could occur include loss of habitat for marine life and degradation of air quality during construction and operation of the project. Construction materials such as rock and gravel, which would be required to construct the facilities, would be irretrievably committed for the life of the project.

Non-recoverable materials and energy would be used during construction and operational activities, but the amounts needed are easily accommodated by existing supplies. Although the increase in the amount of materials and energy used would be insignificant, they would nevertheless be unavailable for other uses.