2.3 Termination

To assist reviewers in understanding this EIR, the following terms are defined:

- **Project** means the whole of an action that has the potential for resulting in a physical change in the environment, directly or ultimately.

- **Environment** means the physical conditions that exist in the area and that would be affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historical or aesthetic significance. The area involved is where significant direct or indirect impacts would occur as a result of the project. The environment includes both natural and artificial conditions.

- **Impacts** analyzed under CEQA must be related to a physical change. Impacts are:
  - Direct or primary impacts that would be caused by the proposed project and would occur at the same time and place; or
  - Indirect or secondary impacts that would be caused by the proposed project and would be later in time or farther removed in distance but would still be reasonably foreseeable. Indirect or secondary impacts may include growth-inducing impacts and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use; population density or growth rate; and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.

- **Significant impact on the environment** means a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions in the area affected by the proposed project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historical or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself is not considered a significant impact on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.

- **Mitigation** consists of measures that avoid or substantially reduce the proposed project’s significant environmental impacts by:
  - Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
  - Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;
  - Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
  - Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; or
  - Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

- **Cumulative impacts** are two or more individual impacts that, when considered together, are considerable or that compound or increase other environmental impacts. The following statements also apply when considering cumulative impacts:
  - The individual impacts may be changes resulting from a single project or separate projects.
  - The cumulative impact from several projects 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 time.

This EIR uses a variety of terms to describe the level of significance of adverse impacts. These terms are defined as follows:
- **Less than significant.** An impact that is adverse but that does not exceed the defined thresholds of significance. Less-than-significant impacts do not require mitigation.

- **Significant.** An impact that exceeds the defined thresholds of significance and would or could cause a substantial adverse change in the environment. Mitigation measures are recommended to eliminate the impact or reduce it to a less-than-significant level.

- **Significant and unavoidable.** An impact that exceeds the defined thresholds of significance and cannot be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of mitigation measures.

### 2.4 Decision-Making Process

CEQA requires lead agencies to solicit and consider input from other interested agencies, citizen groups, and individual members of the public. CEQA also requires the project to be monitored after it has been permitted to ensure that mitigation measures are carried out.

CEQA requires the lead agency to provide the public with a full disclosure of the expected environmental consequences of the proposed project and with an opportunity to provide comments. In accordance with CEQA, the following is the process for public participation in the decision-making process:

- **Initial Study (IS)/Notice of Preparation (NOP).** Kern County prepared and circulated an IS/NOP to responsible, trustee, and local agencies for review and comment on November 24, 2010. The IS/NOP and responses to the NOP are included in Appendix A of this EIR. In conjunction with this public notice, a scoping meeting was held by Kern County on December 17, 2010 to provide a forum for public comments on the scope of the EIR.

- **Draft EIR Preparation.** A Draft EIR is circulated for review and comment to appropriate agencies and additional individuals and interest groups who have requested to be notified of EIR projects. Per Section 15105 of the State CEQA Guidelines, Kern County will provide for a 45-day public review period on the Draft EIR. Kern County will subsequently respond to each comment on the Draft EIR received in writing through a Response to Comments chapter in the Final EIR. The Response to Comments will be provided to each agency or person who provided written comments on the EIR two weeks before the scheduled Planning Commission hearing on the Final EIR and project.

- **Preparation and Certification of Final EIR.** The Kern County Planning Commission will consider the Final EIR and the project, acting in an advisory capacity to the Kern County Board of Supervisors. Upon receipt of the Planning Commission’s recommendation, the Board of Supervisors will also consider the Final EIR, all public comments, and the project and take final action on the project. At least one public hearing will be held by both the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to consider the Final EIR, take public testimony, and then approve, conditionally approve, or deny the project.

### Notice of Preparation (NOP)

Pursuant to Section 15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines, as amended, the Kern County Planning and Community Development Department circulated an NOP to the State Clearinghouse, public agencies, special districts, and members of the public for a public review period beginning November 24, 2010, and ending on December 27, 2010. The purpose of the IS/NOP is to formally convey that the County, as the lead agency, solicited input regarding the scope and proposed content of the EIR. The NOP and all comment letters are provided in Appendix A of this EIR.