Section 4.14
Public Services

4.14.1 Introduction

This section of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) addresses potential impacts of the proposed project on public services, which include fire protection, law enforcement services, schools, parks, scenic trails, medical services, and other public facilities. This section also describes the environmental and regulatory settings and discusses mitigation measures to reduce impacts, where applicable. The project would potentially increase demand on public services and it is the purpose of this section to ascertain if the potential increase in demand would exceed the capacity of existing public services, result in the need for additional personnel, or require construction of new facilities.

4.14.2 Environmental Setting

Fire Protection

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) established the Kern County Fire Department’s (KCFD) Wildland Fire Management Plan (WFMP) in 2004, which is the adopted plan for fire protection and prevention within Kern County (CAL FIRE, 2010). According to CAL FIRE, the proposed project site is located on a checkerboard of parcels designated as State Responsibility Areas (SRA) (CAL FIRE 2007). Although the project site is within the State’s jurisdiction, the KCFD provides fire suppression and emergency medical services throughout Kern County. As such, the WFMP designates the proposed project site within the jurisdiction of Battalion 1 of the KCFD. The California Aqueduct, running north and south, establishes the eastern edge of the SRA, and the western boundary is defined by the southeastern edge of the San Joaquin Valley (KFCD, 2004).

The KCFD operates 46 full-time fire stations, one seasonal station, and is divided into seven battalions for operational management (KCFD, 2010a). Battalion 1 consists of seven fire stations whose area is bounded by the Central Valley to the west, the Tehachapi Mountains in the center, and the Mojave Desert to the east (MHMP, 2005). The following three stations are within 30 miles of the project:

Station 12: Tehachapi Station. This station is located to the north off of State Route (SR) 58 (800 South Curry Street) and is 24.1 miles southwest of the project site entrance. Station 12 covers a response area of 220 square miles (KCFD, 2010b).

Station 14: Mojave Station. This station is located to the west off of SR-58 (1953 State Highway 58), east of SR-14, and is 22.4 miles south of the project site entrance. Station 14 covers a response area of 431 square miles, and would be the primary response unit for fire protection (KCFD, 2010b).

Station 78: Piute Station. This station is to the north off of Walker Basin Road (16001 Walker Basin Road) and 15.5 miles west of the project site entrance. Station 78 covers response area of 289 square miles (KCFD, 2010b).

The response area for all of these stations encompasses high desert watershed, highway, and rural communities. Although Station 78 (Piute) is geographically closer, Station 14 (Mojave) would be