4.16.1 Introduction

This section of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) addresses potential impacts of the proposed project on transportation and traffic, and describes the environmental and regulatory settings. Mitigation measures that would reduce impacts, where applicable, are also discussed. Information pertaining to surface traffic analysis within this report was provided primarily by the Preliminary Traffic Assessment North Sky River Wind Energy Project, Kern County, California April, 2011, prepared by CH2M Hill, and the Traffic Study Jawbone Wind Energy Project, Kern County, California November 2010, prepared by Ruettgers & Schuler. Both of these traffic studies are included as Appendix K of this EIR and incorporated by reference herein.

Potential project impacts to existing traffic levels and roadways were determined for both construction and operation of the proposed project using the most recently published roadway traffic volumes and project proponent prepared vehicle trip calculations. Discussion of additional transportation facilities is based on site surveys and applicable thresholds where indicated.

4.16.2 Environmental Setting

Regional and Local Roadway Facilities

The primary regional transportation corridors within the study area include State Route (SR) 14 and SR 58. The local circulation system near the project site consists of Jawbone Canyon Road, South Kelso Valley Road, and Pine Tree Canyon Road (see Figure 4.16-1). The local roadway characteristics are generally rural in nature, with limited access control. Traffic volumes on the major roadways in the project vicinity are under capacity and the roadways currently operate at acceptable levels of service. The following describes these regional and local access roadways.

SR 14 (also called the Antelope Valley Freeway in the project area) is the principal regional access route leading to the project site. SR 14 is a two- and four-lane north/south state highway that, along with U.S. Highway 395 (US 395), connects the community of Mojave, south of the project site, to the communities of Lone Pine, Big Pine, Bishop, and the Mammoth Mountain Resort areas to the north. Access to the project is provided via a “T” intersection controlled by a stop sign on Jawbone Canyon Road. Near this intersection, SR 14 carries less than 7,000 average daily trips (Caltrans, 2011a). According to the most recently published Caltrans Transportation Concept Reports for SR 14, the level of service (LOS) assignment for SR 14 south of SR 58 is LOS C, with the segment north of SR 58 designated LOS D (Caltrans, 2004a).

SR 58 provides for interregional and interstate travel, and is one of two major east/west thoroughfares through Kern County. SR 58 also serves as an alternative route to Interstate 5, to and from the Central Valley. The route accommodates significant volumes of heavy trucks traveling between central and southern California. Within the vicinity of the project area, SR 58 connects regional traffic with SR 14 and provides two lanes in each direction. Interchanges along SR 58 in the area are located at Bealville Road, Hart Flat Road, Woodford-Tehachapi Road, Broome Road,