

Visual blight: a scenic rural landscape will become an industrial landscape

County of Sacramento

2014 Comments on BDCP

Complete document here:

<http://northdeltacares.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Sacramento-County-BDCP-Comments-June-2014.compressed.pdf>

pp 82-83

Chapter 17: Aesthetics and Visual Resources

The DEIR/EIS (pp. ES-118 – ES-119.) identifies seven significant aesthetic impacts of the BDCP. The identified degradation of the visual values and resources is directly attributable to a menu of activities and physical features including, but not limited to, the construction of physical structures, new transmission line corridors, and fugitive light emitting from the various water operation locations (i.e., intakes). Despite its conclusion that five of the seven impacts will remain adverse and significantly unavoidable even after the implementation of proposed mitigation measures, the DEIR/EIS downplays their real world effect. For example, the DEIR/EIS concludes that construction that would “last up to 9 years and would change the existing visual character in the vicinity of project elements from those of agricultural, rural residential, or riparian and riverine settings to areas involving heavy construction equipment, temporary construction structures, work crews, other support vehicles and other activities that would modify and disrupt short- and long- range views” would merely “be disruptive to some viewers.” (DEIR/EIS, p. 17-60, emphasis added.)

Far from being just “disruptive” to “some,” the construction and operation of the large-scale physical features of the proposed conveyance and water operations facility, in concert with the addition of significant levels of artificial light/glare to the night sky of this rural portion of County, will result in a substantial adverse permanent change in the scenic quality and natural beauty of the Delta.

As stated in the County’s comments on the Land Use chapter, the size and scale of the proposed conveyance and water operation facility (i.e., CM-1), including the intakes, forebay, pumping plants, surge towers, and transmission line corridors, are massive and will alter the physical landscape of the Delta, substantially degrading its unique scenic qualities and values in perpetuity. Invasive impacts also will occur from the extensive lighting required during both construction and operation of the completed conveyance facility. Dewatering near the intakes and pumping plants, and certain pipeline and intermediate forebay construction would take place seven days per week and 24 hours per day, while other construction activities would occur five days per week (Monday through Friday) up to 24 hours per day. (DEIR/EIS, p. 3-83.) Further, construction of each intake structure would take up to four years to complete and would occur Monday through Friday for up to 24 hours per day. To facilitate nighttime construction large-scale lighting systems will be needed. The

DEIR/EIS acknowledges that evening and nighttime construction activities will require the use of “extremely bright lights” which would negatively affect nighttime views of and from the work area. (DEIR/EIS, p. 17-75.) Nighttime construction could also result in headlights flashing into nearby homes when construction vehicles are turning onto or off of construction access routes. In addition, significant artificial light and/or glare occurring during construction and post-construction of BDCP infrastructure could have an indirect effect on wildlife in the vicinity of the BDCP facilities. It is also possible that this newly introduced artificial light source could reduce the productivity of local livestock.