

Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

This chapter describes the affected environment and analyzes the environmental consequences for each resource that the Proposed Acquisition and No-Action Alternative could affect. OEA determined the resources to analyze through thresholds set forth in the Board’s environmental regulations at 49 C.F.R. § 1105.7(e), scoping comments, and agency and tribal consultation.

OEA took the following steps to analyze each resource:

1. Reviewed regulations and guidance relevant to each resource, which are described in applicable sections.
2. Defined a study area or study areas to analyze.
3. Developed analysis approaches.
4. Reviewed the current conditions of the resource in the relevant study area(s).
5. Analyzed the potential impacts that the Proposed Acquisition and No-Action Alternative would or could have on the resource.
6. Identified mitigation that would minimize or compensate for impacts, if warranted.¹
7. For cumulative impacts, analyzed the effects of the Proposed Acquisition when combined with impacts of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects and actions.

¹ The Applicants have proposed voluntary mitigation and OEA is preliminarily recommending additional mitigation measures for the Board to consider. OEA will make its final recommendations on mitigation to the Board in the Final EIS after considering all public and agency comments on the Draft EIS. If the Board decides to authorize the Proposed Acquisition, it may decide to impose the Applicants’ voluntary mitigation measures and OEA’s additional recommended mitigation measures as conditions to address environmental impacts. *Chapter 4, Mitigation*, contains the complete list of mitigation measures. Each mitigation measure has a unique identifier that consists of a prefix and a number. The Applicants’ voluntary mitigation measures have a prefix of VM while OEA’s recommended mitigation measures include the prefix MM.