

Chapter 6

Significant Irreversible Changes

6.1 Introduction

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15126.2(d), an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must consider any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by a proposed project should it be implemented. Section 15126.2(d) states:

Uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts, and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.

6.2 Analysis of Irreversible Changes

Resources that are committed irreversibly and irretrievably are those that would be used by a project on a long-term or permanent basis. Construction of the Proposed Project would require the use of non-renewable resources such as fossil fuels and some types of construction materials such as steel and concrete. Fossil fuels and other forms of energy would be consumed during operation of the Proposed Project. Diesel, gasoline, and propane would be used for facility operations for several years and for on-road vehicles (trucks and employee automobiles) until the Project transitions to 100 percent zero-emissions technology by January 1, 2030 as required by the Project Feature AQ-1 (*Zero-Emissions Operational Equipment*). Any diesel operations would cease by December 31, 2029, and would be tracked and enforced once an entitlement is issued. Electric charging infrastructure would be constructed to meet the energy demand of on-site equipment and to meet zero emissions regulations. Additionally, MM AQ-1 (*Zero-Emission Cargo-Handling Equipment*) would require use of zero-emission cargo-handling equipment at the start of operations and MM GHG-1 (*GHG Reduction Offsets*) would require carbon offsets to be purchased and retired. Electrical energy would be consumed during operation, which may come from both renewable and non-renewable sources. Non-recoverable materials and energy would be used during construction and operation, but the amounts needed would be accommodated by existing supplies. Although the increase in the amounts of materials and nonrenewable energy used would

1 be limited, they would nevertheless be unavailable for other uses. The minimal irrever-
2 sible changes likely would be justified by the economic growth in the area, which the
3 Proposed Project would provide. The Proposed Project would also improve time
4 efficiencies and reduce inefficient use of nonrenewable sources at the Port by reducing
5 container dwell time for empty containers at the marine terminal; reducing inefficient
6 chassis trips; providing on-terminal efficiency by providing a centralized location with
7 readily available chassis; providing a full-service depot to improve the efficiency of
8 terminal operations; and providing off-terminal maritime support to increase the
9 efficiency of goods movement in the Port. The irreversible changes associated with the
10 Proposed Project and alternatives are considered justified under CEQA.