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Chapter 6 Significant Irreversible Changes

3 6.1 Introduction

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

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

17 6.2 Analysis of Irreversible Changes

18 Resources that are committed irreversibly and irretrievably are those that would be used
19 by a project on a long-term or permanent basis. Construction of the Proposed Project
20 would require the use of non-renewable resources such as fossil fuels and some types of
21 construction materials such as steel, concrete, and rock.

22 Fossil fuels and other forms of energy would be consumed during operation of the
23 Proposed Project. Ocean-going vessel fuels, diesel, and gasoline would continue to be
24 used for ships, tugboats, facility operations, and on-road vehicles (trucks and employee
25 automobiles). Electrical energy and natural gas would be consumed during operation.

26 Non-recoverable materials and energy would be used during construction and operation,
27 but the amounts needed would be accommodated by existing supplies. Although the
28 increase in the amounts of materials and energy used would be limited, they would
29 nevertheless be unavailable for other uses. The minimal irreversible changes likely would
30 be justified by the economic growth in trade, which the Proposed Project would provide.
31 The irreversible changes associated with the Proposed Project and alternatives are
32 considered justified under CEQA.