

2.4.6 Invasive Species

2.4.6.1 Regulatory Setting

On February 3, 1999, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13112, requiring federal agencies to combat the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States. The order defines invasive species as “any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.” Federal Highway Administration guidance issued August 10, 1999, directs use of the state’s invasive species list, maintained by the California Invasive Species Council, to define the invasive species that must be considered as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for a proposed project.

2.4.6.2 Affected Environment

This section is based on the Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts) prepared for the Project (Caltrans 2025).

Invasive plant species occur in the Biological Study Area and Project’s construction footprint. The most common invasive plant species in the Project area include mustard (*Brassicaceae*), Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia robusta*), Peruvian pepper tree (*Schinus molle*), and tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*).

2.4.6.3 Environmental Consequences

Temporary Impacts

Build Alternatives

Build Alternative 1

In compliance with Executive Order 13112, as well as guidance from the Federal Highway Administration, landscaping and erosion control included in the Project will not use species that have been listed as invasive. None of the species on the California list of invasive species is used by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for landscaping or erosion control. All equipment and materials will be inspected for the presence of invasive species and cleaned if necessary. In areas of particular sensitivity, extra precautions will be taken if invasive species are found in or next to the construction areas. These include the inspection and cleaning of construction equipment and implementation of eradication strategies should an invasion occur.

Although no temporary impacts on natural communities are anticipated, Project Feature **PF-BIO-1**, as described in Section 2.4.1, *Natural Communities*, includes measures to prevent the introduction or spread of invasive species that could affect native plant communities during construction.

Design Variation: Build Alternative 1a

The design variation considered under Build Alternative 1a is substantively similar to Build Alternative 1 and would not result in additional temporary impacts from invasive species.

Build Alternative 3

Build Alternative 3 would not result in any ground disturbance or other activities that would result in temporary direct or indirect impacts from invasive species.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, Interstate (I-) 5 would remain in its current condition and no improvements would be implemented. Therefore, there would be no Project-related temporary impacts from invasive species.

Permanent Impacts

Build Alternatives

Build Alternative 1

In compliance with Executive Order 13112, as well as guidance from the Federal Highway Administration, landscaping and erosion control included in the Project will not use species that have been listed as invasive. None of the species on the California list of invasive species is used by Caltrans for landscaping or erosion control. All equipment and materials will be inspected for the presence of invasive species and cleaned if necessary. In areas of particular sensitivity, extra precautions will be taken if invasive species are found in or next to the construction areas. These include the inspection and cleaning of construction equipment and implementation of eradication strategies should an invasion occur.

Design Variation: Build Alternative 1a

The design variation considered under Build Alternative 1a is substantively similar to Build Alternative 1 and would not result in additional permanent impacts from invasive species.

Build Alternative 3

Build Alternative 3 would not result in any ground disturbance or other activities that would result in temporary direct or indirect permanent impacts from invasive species.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, I-5 would remain in its current condition and no improvements would be implemented. Therefore, there would be no Project-related permanent impacts from invasive species.

2.4.6.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No avoidance and minimization measure are required for invasive species.