



COUNTY OF LAKE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Planning Division
Courthouse - 255 N. Forbes Street
Lakeport, California 95453
Telephone: (707) 263-2221 FAX: (707) 263-2225

Attachment 3

Mireya G. Turner
Community Development
Department Director

CEQA Memo for Recirculating a Revised Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)

DATE: June 9, 2025

TO: Interested Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals

FROM: County of Lake, Community Development Department

SUBJECT: Recirculation of Revised Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Assurance Development Project (SCH# 2023090147 State Clearinghouse Number)

Dear Interested Parties,

The County of Lake, Community Development Department has prepared a revised Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the proposed Assurance Development Project. This revised MND is being recirculated for public review and comment in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, specifically Section 15073.5, due to:

- **Identification of a new, avoidable significant effect:** A new potentially significant environmental effect has been identified that was not previously addressed in the initial public review draft MND. Mitigation measures or project revisions have been added to reduce this effect to a less than significant level.
- **Determination that proposed mitigation measures are insufficient:** It has been determined that previously proposed mitigation measures or project revisions was missing key information, needed for determining the impact on the environment.

Project Location: The project is located at 6720 Leslie Place, Lucerne, County of Lake (APN: 006-003-01).

Project Description: Major Use Permit (PL-25-63/ UP 23-03) to construct a new 150' tall monopine (designed to look like a pine tree) cell tower, including twelve (12) antennas, one (1) MW antenna, six (6) RRUS, one (1) GPS antenna, two (2) ground-mounted radio cabinets and a 50' x 50' lease area to house equipment needed to support the tower. The lease area will be enclosed by a 6' tall chain link fence. The applicant has attempted to co-locate the facility but was not able to find an existing tower within this area that would allow co-location.

Summary of Revisions in the Revised MND:

The revised MND includes significant changes, primarily focused on Biological Resources Tree Removal, Waterway BMP's, and Access Road with Grading

Key revisions include:

- **Revised Section III, Air Quality, with new mitigation measure AQ-2.**
- **Revised Section IV , Biological Resources, a submitted Biological Assessment and Arborist Report and Tree Protection Plan, with new mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-3.**
- **Revised Section V, Cultural Resources, with the language changed in the mitigation measures and added an additional mitigation measure CUL-1 through CUL-3.**
- **Revised Section VII, Geology and Soils, with new mitigation measure GEO-2.**
- **Revised Section X, Hydrology and Water Quality, added detailed information regarding the waterway located on site, as well as added mitigation measures GEO-1 and GEO-2.**
- **Revised Section XVIII, Tribal Cultural Resources, added new mitigation measures TCR-1 and TCR-2.**

Public Review Period:

The revised MND will be available for public review and comment for a **30-day** period, beginning on **June 09, 2025**, and concluding on **July 10, 2025, at 5:00 PM PST**.

Availability of Documents:

The revised MND and all associated technical appendices are available for public review at the following locations:

- **County of Lake, Community Development Office:** 255 N. Forbes Street, Lakeport Courthouse, third floor, during regular business hours Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
- **Online:** <https://ceqanet.lci.ca.gov/2023090147>

How to Submit Comments:

Written comments on the revised MND should focus on the adequacy of the document in identifying and analyzing the potential environmental impacts of the project as revised, and the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation measures. Comments must be received by **July 10, 2025, at 5:00 PM**. Please include your name and contact information with your comments.

Please submit comments to:

Trish Turner, Associate Planner
Community Development Department
255 N. Forbes Street, Lakeport, CA 95453

Trish.Turner@lakecountyca.gov

707-263-2221 ext. 38112

Next Steps:

Following closure of the public review period, the Lead Agency will review and consider all comments received. Responses to substantive comments will be prepared and included in the Final MND. The revised MND, along with the responses to comments, will then be presented to the Planning Commission for consideration and potential adoption at a public hearing. Notice of this public hearing will be provided separately.

We encourage your continued participation in the environmental review process for this project.

Sincerely,



Trish Turner, Associate Planner
County of Lake, Community Development Department



COUNTY OF LAKE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Planning Division
Courthouse - 255 N. Forbes Street
Lakeport, California 95453
Telephone: (707) 263-2221 FAX: (707) 263-2225

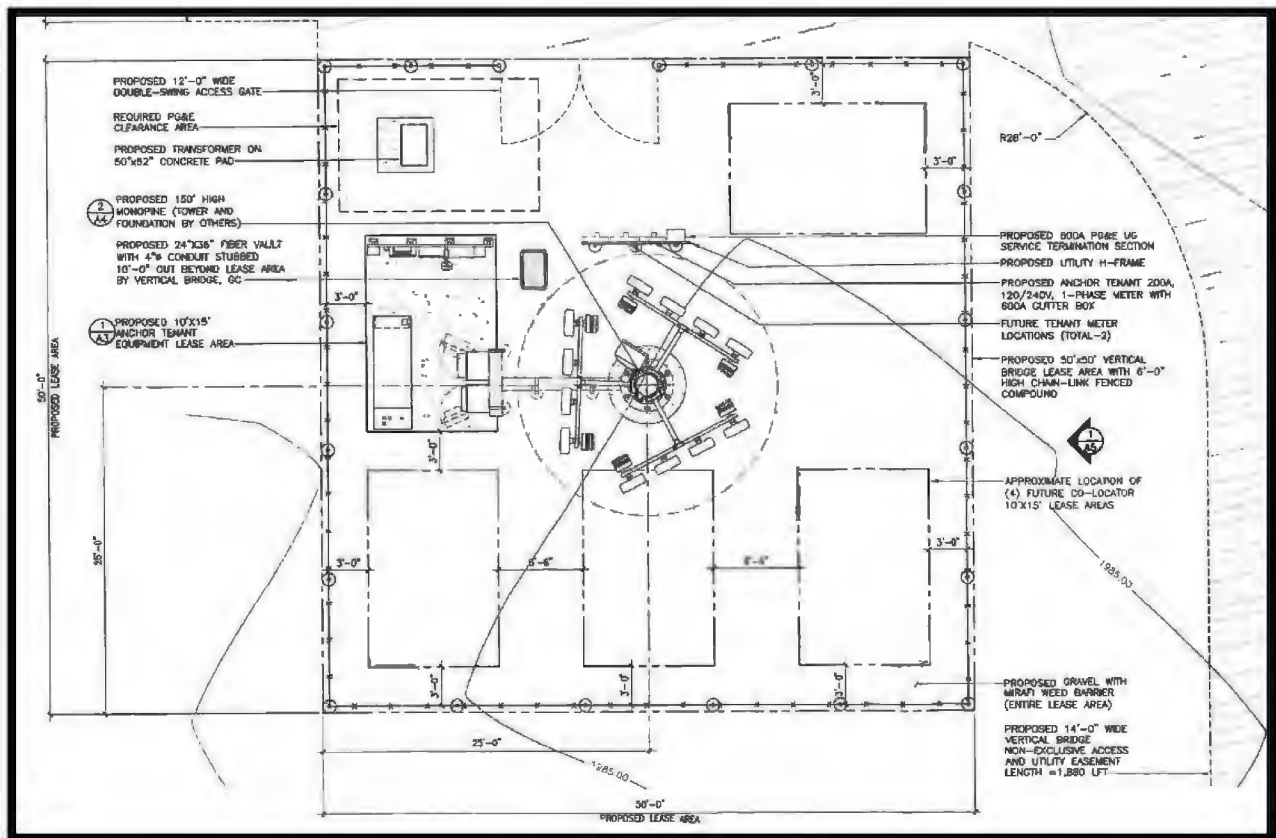
August 24, 2023
Revised May 28, 2025

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM INITIAL STUDY (PL-25-63/ UP 23-03, IS 23-07)

1. Project Title: Assurance Development Tower; 150' tall Monopine Cell Tower
2. Permit Numbers: Major Use Permit PL-25-63/ UP 23-03
Initial Study PL-25-63/ IS 23-07
3. Lead Agency Name and Address: County of Lake
Community Development Department
Courthouse, 3rd Floor, 255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453
4. Contact Person: Trish Turner, Associate Planner
(707) 263-2221
5. Project Location(s): 6720 Leslie Place, Lucerne
APN: 006-003-01
6. Project Sponsor's Name & Address: Assurance Development / Kyle Benalcazar
1499 Huntington Dr., 305
S. Pasadena, CA 91030
7. General Plan Designation: Rural Lands
8. Zoning: "RL-WW", Rural Lands – Waterway
9. Supervisor District: District Three
10. Flood Zone: "D", Areas in which flood hazards are undetermined.
11. Slope: The average cross slope of the parcel is 41.3319%
12. Hazards: SRA Very High Fire Area
13. Earthquake Fault Zone: None mapped
14. Dam Failure Inundation Area: Not located within Dam Failure Inundation Area
15. Parcel Size: 47.97 Acres
16. Description of Project:
Major Use Permit (PL-25-63/ UP 23-03) to construct a new 150' tall monopine (designed to look like a pine tree) cell tower, including twelve (12) antennas, one (1) MW antenna, six (6) RRUS, one (1) GPS antenna, two (2) ground-mounted radio cabinets and a 50' x 50' lease area to house equipment needed to support the tower. The lease area will be enclosed by a

6' tall chain link fence. The applicant has attempted to co-locate the facility but was not able to find an existing tower within this area that would allow co-location.

FIGURE 1 – LEASE AREA (PROPOSED)



Source: Site Plans (Attachment 1)

Construction

Construction activities are anticipated to span a period of two to three months. During this construction phase, an estimated 1 to 2 daily vehicle trips are projected to and from the site. This equates to a total of approximately 120 trips over the three-month construction period. Construction will be limited to weekdays, specifically Monday through Friday, between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Earthwork and Grading Details

Based on the submitted site plans, the project will involve no import or export of graded material. Approximately 100 cubic yards of material will be cut, and this same volume will be utilized as fill on-site, in the leased area.

Roadway Improvements

There is roadway expansion that is proposed. The proposal will be to over excavate the existing road, remove and replace 12-inches of soil, then compact to 90% minimum, construct 4-inch minimum aggregate base over the recompacted soil. Construct 4-inches of asphalt concrete over the aggregate base in areas where the slope exceeds 16%.

Due to the erosive characteristics of the on-site soils, a complex grading permit must be obtained from the Lake County Community Development Department prior to commencement of any earthwork activities. This permit requirement ensures compliance with local erosion control and grading standards.

The following equipment is expected to be required to construct the proposed project facilities:

- Excavator
- Bulldozer
- Cement trucks
- Auger (fence post holes)

The tower is unmanned. It is anticipated that between 1 and 4 annual trips will result for routine maintenance of the tower.

[illegible]

Energy Usage

The tower will rely on 'grid power' from PG&E who were notified of this proposed project and had no issues. The grid is not at capacity in this location, and the tower will have minimal power demands.

Water Usage

The tower does not require water – no impact.

Solid Waste Management

The facility is unmanned, no impact to solid waste.

Wastewater Management

No new septic systems are needed since the tower is unmanned.

Stormwater Management

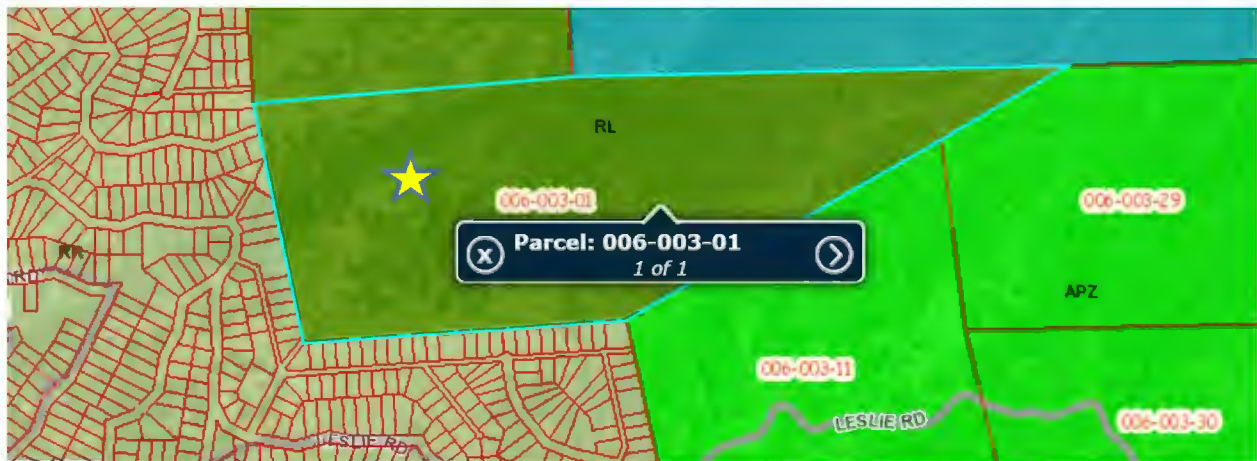
The applicant will be required to submit an engineered Drainage and Erosion Control plans that show Best Management Practices for erosion control on the relatively small (50' x 50') lease area, with the building permit application.

17. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

The sizes, zoning and status of neighboring properties is as follows;

- North: "RL-WW", Rural Lands – Waterway; the parcel is 72.97 acres in size and is undeveloped.
- North: "O-WW-SC", Open Space – Waterway – Scenic Combining; vacant lot, 585 acres in size, owned by BLM.
- East: "APZ", Agricultural Preserve; parcel is 31.14 acres in size and is undeveloped.
- East: "APZ-WW", Agricultural Preserve – Waterway; parcel is 47.01 acres in size and is developed with a dwelling and accessory buildings.
- South and West: "RR-SOS", Rural Residential – Substandard Older Subdivision. Multiple small parcels that are undeveloped.

FIGURE 3 – ZONING OF SITE AND VICINITY



Source: Lake County GIS Mapping

18. Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., Permits, financing approval, or participation agreement).

The extent of this environmental review falls within the scope of the Lead Agency, the Lake County Community Development Department, and its review for compliance with the Lake County General Plan, the Kelseyville Area Plan, the Lake County Zoning Ordinance, and the Lake County Municipal Code. Other organizations in the review process for permitting purposes, financial approval, or participation agreement can include but are not limited to:

- Lake County Community Development Department, Grading Permit
- Lake County Building Division
- Lake County Department of Environmental Health
- Lake County Air Quality Management District
- Lake County Department of Public Works
- Lake County Department of Public Services
- Lake County Sheriff Department
- Northshore Fire Protection District
- CAL FIRE
- State Water Resources Control Board
- California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW)
- California Department of Public Health
- California Department of Consumer Affairs
- Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
- Bureau of Land Management

19. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, lead agencies, and Project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process, per Public Resources Code §21080.3.2. Information may also be available from the California Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands File per Public Resources Code section 5097.96 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that Public Resources Code section 21082.3 (c) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.

The County sent an AB52 notice to 11 Lake County-based Tribes on August 24, 2023, informing tribes of the proposed project and offering consultation under AB-52. On August 24, 2023, the Upper Lake Habematolel Tribe contacted staff to request a copy of the Cultural Study that was submitted to the County. The Upper Lake Habematolel Tribe deferred any comments to Robinson Rancheria

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Site Plans

Attachment 2: Simulation Photos

Attachment 3: Biological Assessment

Attachment 4: Public Comments

Attachment 5: Arborist and Tree Preservation Plan prepared by Davey Resource Group

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this Project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| ☒ Aesthetics | ☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions | ☐ Public Services |
| ☐ Agriculture & Forestry Resources | ☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials | ☐ Recreation |
| ☒ Air Quality | ☒ Hydrology / Water Quality | ☐ Transportation |
| ☒ Biological Resources | ☐ Land Use / Planning | ☒ Tribal Cultural Resources |
| ☒ Cultural Resources | ☐ Mineral Resources | ☐ Utilities / Service Systems |
| ☐ Energy | ☐ Noise | ☒ Wildfire |
| ☒ Geology / Soils | ☐ Population / Housing | ☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance |

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☒ I find that although the proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the Project have been made by or agreed to by the Project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ I find that the proposed Project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- ☐ I find that the proposed Project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed Project, nothing further is required.

Initial Study Reviewed By: Trish Turner, Associate Planner

Signature: 

Date: 05/28/2025

SECTION 1

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to Projects like the one involved (e.g., the Project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on Project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the Project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a Project-specific screening analysis).
- 2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as Project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, and then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from Section XVII, "Earlier Analyses," may be cross-referenced).
- 5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c) (3) (D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures, which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the Project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.

- 7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
- 8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a Project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
- 9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a) The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance

I. AESTHETICS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
Except as provided in Public Resource Code Section 21099, would the project:					
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☒	☐	☐	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☒	☐	2, 3, 4, 9
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9
d) Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9

Discussion:

- a) Within the Lake County General Plan and the Shoreline Communities Area Plan, scenic vistas are generally identified as views of Clear Lake, Mt. Konocti, Pinnacle Rock, Bartlett Springs, Walker Ridge, and High Valley. The 150' tower site is not in a mapped scenic corridor, and the lot is not zoned as being in a Scenic Combining overlay district. Some screening of the equipment area is both proposed and required-the following mitigation measures are added:
 - AES-1: Prior to operation, the applicant shall install a minimum 6' tall screening fence around the tower's lease area. Fabric screening shall not be used due to poor durability; the screening material shall be chain link with slats, or a solid wood or metal fence.
 - AES-2: All lighting shall be downcast and shall not be directly visible from public roads or neighboring lots. All lighting shall comply with fixture recommendations found in darksky.org.

- AES-3: Approval is for a 150' tall Monopine cell tower. Any changes to the appearance of the tower that do not qualify for a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Eligible Facilities Request shall require a new use permit application.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measure AES-1 through AES-3 incorporated

- b) The proposed project's visual impact on nearby lots and public roads is anticipated to be minimal due to several design and environmental factors. The existing topography and significant tree coverage in the vicinity will largely screen views of the facility.

Furthermore, the project includes a design feature to disguise the tower, making it resemble a pine tree, which will further reduce its visual prominence.

However, the project proposes the removal of 16 trees to facilitate the widening of the access road to the tower location. The environmental impacts associated with this tree removal, including but not limited to impacts on biological resources, will be thoroughly analyzed in Section IV, "Biological Resources," of this document.

To aid in the assessment of potential visual impacts, the applicant has provided visual simulations illustrating the project's appearance from key public viewpoints. These simulations will be used to further evaluate the project's consistency with applicable visual resource policies and to determine the significance of any unavoidable visual impacts.

Less than Significant Impact

- c) The site is located in a rural portion of Lucerne on a hilltop; the area is characterized by large lots, SOS lots that are cost-prohibitive to develop, and the township of Lucerne which is located about 1/2 mile from the tower site. The area contains sparsely populated lots and SOS lots that likely would not develop due to the lack of public services available. The applicant has made an attempt to disguise the tower by designing the tower to look like a pine tree.

Less Than Significant Impact

- d) The project has potential to create additional light based on FAA lighting that is typically required for cell towers for flight safety due to tower heights. The FAA safety lighting is exempt from County's dark skies lighting regulations; therefore, this project is regarded as being 'less than significant' regarding federally required lighting.

Less than Significant Impact

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
--------------------------------	--	------------------------------	-----------	---------------

Would the project:

- | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 13, 39 |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|

California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

- | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13 |
| c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13 |
| d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 |
| e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13 |

Discussion:

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

- a) The project site is zoned "RL", Rural Lands which allows agricultural crop production. No agriculture is proposed on site or in the immediate vicinity. The two lots to the south are zoned "APZ" Agricultural Preserve, however neither lot has agricultural activities occurring on them.

Less Than Significant Impact

- b) The site is zoned "RL" Rural Lands and is not under a Williamson Act contract. The two lots to the south are zoned "APZ" Agricultural Preserve but are not agriculturally productive. Should either or both of the southern "APZ" lots choose to grow crops, the use of the land for crop production would not interfere with the functionality of the tower, and the tower would have a neutral impact on crop production.

Less Than Significant Impact

- c) The project site is zoned "RL" Rural Lands and is not zoned for forestland or timberland, nor has it been used historically for timber production.

Less Than Significant Impact

- d) The project will not result in the loss or conversion of forest land to a non-forest use since no timber production is occurring on the land.

No Impact

- e) As proposed, this project would not induce changes to existing farmland that would result in its conversion to non-agricultural use.

No Impact

III. AIR QUALITY	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
Would the project:					
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☒	☐	☐	1, 3, 4, 5, 21, 24, 31, 36
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under and applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 21, 24, 31, 36
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 21, 24, 31, 36
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors or dust) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 21, 24, 31, 36

Discussion:

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.

- a) The Project site is located within the Lake County Air Basin, which is under the jurisdiction of the Lake County Air Quality Management District (LCAQMD). The LCAQMD applies air pollution regulations to all major stationary pollution sources and monitors air quality. The Lake County Air Basin is in attainment with both state and federal air quality standards.

Typically, short-term construction related air quality impacts result from large projects requiring a significant amount of grading, demolition, or new construction that results in increased emissions and dust. Additionally, projects that require a large amount of vehicle trips and use of diesel equipment over an extended period (months) of time can result in air quality impacts. Long-term air quality impacts are typically from land uses that produce a significant amount of emissions, or sources of dust or other airborne irritants.

The project would involve the removal of 16 trees, primarily oak trees, to accommodate the required access road. There is some potential for dust / dirt impacts during access road preparation and tree removal, and the applicant will need to apply palliatives (water) to the ground prior to and during disturbance to minimize dust from the site work. Emissions that may result during site construction and operation of the tower will be insignificant as it is anticipated at between two and four ADT will result from the construction of the site.

- AQ-1: During site disturbance, the applicant shall apply palliatives (water) to the ground to minimize dust migration.
- AQ-2: Prior to installation, the applicant must obtain all necessary permits for the use of any diesel generators from the Lake County Air Quality Management District.

Less Than Significant Impact with mitigation measure AQ-1 and AQ-2 incorporated.

- b) The Project area is in the Lake County Air Basin, which is designated as in attainment for state and federal air quality standards for criteria pollutants (CO, SO₂, NO_x, O₃, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, VOC, ROG, Pb). Any Project with daily emissions that exceed any of the thresholds of significance for these criteria pollutants should be considered as having an individually and cumulatively significant impact on both a direct and cumulative basis.

A project is generally considered to have a significant impact on air quality if its daily emissions exceed established thresholds for any of these criteria pollutants, either individually or when combined with other projects (cumulatively).

We anticipate that this project will not generate significant levels of pollutants during its operational phase. Air quality impacts during construction will be limited, primarily occurring during the preparation of access roads and tree removal. The construction period is estimated to last two to three months, with a total of 120 to 180 vehicle trips anticipated for construction-related traffic. Once operational, the tower will be unmanned, resulting in only occasional vehicle trips for maintenance.

Less Than Significant Impact

- c) Sensitive receptors (i.e., children, senior citizens, and acutely or chronically ill people) are more susceptible to the effects of air pollution than the general population. Land uses that are considered sensitive receptors typically include residences, schools, playgrounds, childcare centers, hospitals, convalescent homes, and retirement homes.

The proposed project is not expected to result in significant measurable pollutant generation. Construction activities, spanning approximately 60 to 90 days, will involve an estimated 120 to 180 vehicle trips. To minimize potential air quality impacts, all construction equipment will be required to comply with all applicable Title 24 energy efficiency standards and air quality regulations aimed at reducing pollutants and emissions. Following construction, the project will require only routine annual maintenance.

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measure AQ-1 and AQ-2 incorporated.

- d) The tower site is located in a rural and sparsely populated portion of Lucerne. The cell tower will not produce any odors or emissions following construction, and the construction-related impacts are negligible and can be mitigated with the application of water on the disturbed portions of the site during construction.

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measure AQ-1 and AQ-2 incorporated.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
Would the project:					
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐	2, 5, 11, 12, 13, 16, 24, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 45
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 45
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal wetlands, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 21, 24, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 45
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☒	☐	☐	13
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☒	☐	☐	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 13
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒	1, 2, 3, 5, 6

Discussion:

- a) A Biological Assessment (BA) of the Project Property was prepared by Environmental Assessment Specialists, Inc., dated June 24, 2024, with a field survey being conducted on May 23, 2024. The applicant also submitted an Arborist Report and Tree Protection Plan (Plan), prepared by Davey Resource Group, dated August 2023 (Attachment 5).

The BA concludes that a review of the CNDDDB and the CNPS Electronic Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants resulted in a list of 10 sensitive plant species, 21 sensitive wildlife species, and 3 sensitive plant communities that occur within Lucerne, California as well as the surrounding USGS topographic quadrangles. A field survey was conducted on May 23, 2024. No amphibian, reptilian, or mammalian species were observed or detected during the field survey. One common raven (*Corvus corax*) was observed. Other wildlife species expected to occur onsite include side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburinia*), Steller's jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*), and desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*). Vegetation within the proposed lease area location primarily consists of non-native grasses and ruderal (weedy) species. An oak woodland occurs within the vicinity of the site and within portions of the proposed access road and utility trench route. Several oak trees (*Quercus sp.*) and pine trees (*Pinus sp.*) will be removed during the proposed road improvements to the site. Common species observed on and within the vicinity of the site include slender wild oats (*Avena barbata*), coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), red brome (*Bromus madritensis ssp. rubens*), Star thistle (*Centaurea sp.*), and manzanita (*Arctostaphylos sp.*). No sensitive plant species were detected during the survey and the BA notes that habitat to support sensitive plants is not present.

Although the BA notes that no avian nests or nesting activity were observed during the field survey. The trees and shrubs located within the immediate vicinity of the site provide suitable avian nesting habitat. The proposed construction activities and tree removal could impact nesting and roosting species. In accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the California Fish and Game Code, installation of the proposed facility should be conducted outside the nesting season. The nesting season generally extends from early February through August but can vary slightly from year to year based upon seasonal weather conditions. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 is proposed to ensure impacts to nesting avian species are mitigated.

The following mitigation measure is added to protect potentially sensitive raptors, birds and / or bats:

BIO-1: If ground disturbing activities occur during the breeding and nesting season of nesting or roosting species (February 1 through September 15), surveys for active nests will be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than 10 days prior to start of activities.

- Pre-construction nesting surveys shall be conducted for nesting migratory avian and raptor species in the project site and buffer area. Pre-construction biological surveys shall occur prior to the proposed project implementation, and during the appropriate survey periods for nesting activities for individual avian species. Surveys shall follow required CDFW and USFWS protocols, where applicable. A qualified biologist shall survey suitable habitat for the presence of these species.
- If a migratory avian or raptor species is observed and suspected to be nesting, a buffer area shall be established to avoid impacts to the active nest site. Identified nests should be continuously surveyed for the first 24 hours prior to any construction-related activities to establish a behavioral baseline.
- If no nesting avian species are found, project activities may proceed and no further Standard Construction Conditions measures shall be required.

- If active nesting sites are found, the following exclusion buffers shall be established, and no project activities shall occur within these buffer zones until young birds have fledged and are no longer reliant upon the nest or parental care for survival:
 - Minimum no disturbance of 250 feet around active nest of non-listed bird species and 250 foot no disturbance buffer around migratory birds;
 - Minimum no disturbance of 500 feet around active nest of non-listed raptor species; and 0.5-mile no disturbance buffer from listed species and fully protected species until breeding season has ended or until a qualified biologist has determined that the birds have fledged and are no longer reliant upon the nest or parental care for survival.
 - Once work commences, all nests should be continuously monitored to detect any behavioral changes as a result of project activities. If behavioral changes are observed, the work causing that change should cease and the appropriate regulatory agencies (i.e. CDFW, USFWS, etc.) shall be consulted for additional avoidance and minimization measures.
 - A variance from these no disturbance buffers may be implemented when there is compelling biological or ecological reason to do so, such as when the project area would be concealed from a nest site by topography. Any variance from these buffers shall be supported by a qualified wildlife biologist and CDFW and USFWS shall be notified in advance of implementation of a no disturbance buffer variance.

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures BIO-1 incorporated

- b) There is an unnamed riparian corridor that runs east to west through the Project parcel. The proposed tower location is approximately ± 659.26 feet to the south of the top of the bank slope and approximately ± 799.48 feet from the stream bed. The road at the nearest location to the unnamed water course is approximately ± 42.03 feet from the top of the bank slope and approximately ± 139.83 feet from the stream bed.

Less Than Significant Impact

- c) There are no federally-protected wetlands located on the portions of the lot that would be disturbed by this project.

Less Than Significant Impact

- d) The BA documented minimal wildlife presence (one common raven observed), with the site dominated by non-native grasses and ruderal species. The expected species (side-blotched lizard, Steller's jay, desert cottontail) are common, adaptable species that typically don't rely on specific movement corridors. No sensitive species or critical nursery habitats were identified. The common species expected to use the area are habitat generalists that can utilize alternative nesting/breeding sites in the surrounding landscape. The BA was also assessed for the presence of potential jurisdictional water features, including riparian areas, isolated wetlands and vernal pools, and other biologically-sensitive aquatic habitats and yielded negative results.

The Study concluded that “no critical habitat for any Federally-protected species occurs in the Project Area or surrounding Study Area during the field survey other than ephemeral watercourses. A nesting study is required by BIO-1 prior to the removal of any tree.

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measure BIO-1 incorporated.

- e) The Arborist and Tree Preservation Plan prepared by Davey Resource Group (November 2023) (Attachment 5), evaluates the existing trees on-site, their health, and potential impacts from the proposed project. The trees were assessed if they were 4 inches or greater (diameter), and had any part of the drip line overhanging the proposed project site. Thirty-eight (38) trees were assessed within the planned project area, comprising seven (7) species: interior live oak (*Quercus wislizeni*, 16 trees), gray pine (*Pinus sabiniana*, 14 trees), manzanita (*Arctostaphylos manzanita*, 3 trees), Northern California black walnut (*Juglans hindsii*, 2 trees), Chinese pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*, 1 tree), bay laurel (*Umbellularia californica*, 1 tree), and deodar cedar (*Cedrus deodara*, 1 tree). Below contains a summary of the trees surveyed, as indicated in Figure 4 below.

Summary of Tree Survey:

- Trees #1, 2, 3 5-8, 10-15, 17, 32, and 33 are within the limits of or have SRZs that will be impacted by the proposed plan for the road expansion. The trees ranged from good to poor. Removal is recommended.
- Trees #4, 9, 16, and 18-31 are near the proposed road expansion. The trees are predicted to have low to moderate impacts. Tree protection fencing should be installed at or beyond the driplines as they are close to the project site. Any excavation within the TPZ of trees must be done by hand and supervised by a Certified Arborist. Any necessary pruning shall follow ANSI A300 standards, with no more than 25% of the tree's live tissue removed.
- Trees #34-36 are near the proposed pad of the new tower. The trees are predicted to have low to moderate impacts. Tree protection fencing should be installed at or beyond the driplines as they are close to the project site. Any excavation within the TPZ of trees must be done by hand and supervised by a Certified Arborist. Any necessary pruning shall follow ANSI A300 standards, with no more than 25% of the tree's live tissue removed.
- Trees #37-38 were collected due to the possibility of utility lines. The plans do not state the proposed utility lines and the trees will have no impacts from construction.

The twenty two (22) trees that are located near the limits of disturbance should have fencing installed along the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ), as described in the Conclusions and Recommendations. Any excavation within the TPZ of protected trees must be done under arborist supervision and may require adjustment if substantial roots are encountered. No trees would be removed for the tower lease area; however, a total of 16 trees as required by PRC 4290 fire access standards.

The sixteen (16) trees proposed for removal include the following:

- 2 - Northern California black walnut (*Juglans hindsii*)
- 2 – Gray pine (*Pinus sabiniana*)
- 1 - Chinese pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*)
- 11 – Interior live Oak (*Quercus wislizeni*)

Figure 4 - Map of Trees Surveyed



Aerial view of site and tree locations.

Tree removal and earthwork associated with the project requires a Grading Permit from the County of Lake. Chapter 30, Grading Ordinance, of the Lake County Municipal Code references Public Resources Code Section 21083.4 regarding the loss of Oak woodlands. As part of the determination made pursuant to the discretionary approvals (Use Permit, in this case), a county shall determine whether a project within its jurisdiction may result in a conversion of oak woodlands that will have a significant effect on the environment. If a county determines that there may be a significant effect to oak woodlands, the county shall require one or more of the following oak woodlands mitigation alternatives to mitigate the significant effect of the conversion of oak woodlands:

- (1) Conserve oak woodlands, through the use of conservation easements.
- (2) Plant an appropriate number of trees, including maintaining plantings and replacing dead or diseased trees.
- (3) Contribute funds to the Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund, as established under subdivision (a) of Section 1363 of the Fish and Game Code, for the purpose of purchasing oak woodlands conservation easements, as specified

under paragraph (1) of subdivision (d) of that section and the guidelines and criteria of the Wildlife Conservation Board. A project applicant that contributes funds under this paragraph shall not receive a grant from the Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund as part of the mitigation for the project.

- (4) Other mitigation measures developed by the county.

The site is undeveloped and has no means of irrigating 'replacement trees' should they be required. Ordinarily the County requires a 3:1 replacement for any oak tree with a diameter greater than 5" that is removed, assuming the tree is in fair to good condition. However, in this case it is impractical to require replacement trees on this land, particularly given that the tower will not require water and there are no means to irrigate the new trees, which have a high mortality rate under ideal circumstances. In lieu of tree replacement the County would require the applicant to submit payment to the CA Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund.

BIO-2: The applicant shall submit a fee to the California Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund for the removal of healthy trees from the site. The fee shall be calculated at a rate of **\$325.00 per inch of Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)** for each healthy tree removed, or at the established rate if it differs from this amount at the time of payment. For multi-stemmed trees, the DBH shall be averaged to determine the applicable fee. The maximum total payment required under this measure shall not exceed \$19,000. Proof of payment, in the form of a receipt from the California Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund, shall be submitted to the Community Development Department prior to the commencement of project operations.

BIO-3: Prior to construction or earthwork, the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ), Structural Root Zone (SRZ) and Critical Root Zone (CRZ) shall be identified and flagged per the Tree Protection Management Plan and Arborist Report. The Tree Preservation Guidelines noted in the Arborist and Tree Preservation Plan prepared by Davey Resource Group (November 2023) (Attachment 5) shall be implemented if they are applicable.

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measure BIO-2 and BIO-3 incorporated

- f) The Project area is not subject to any adopted Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs), Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs), or other local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans. Nevertheless, in light of the proposed tree removal and the demonstrated inability to accommodate replacement tree planting within the Project site, the applicant will be required to provide a compensatory payment of **\$325.00 per diameter at breast height (DBH) inch for each tree removed**. This payment shall be made to the **California Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund**.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measure BIO-2 incorporated

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
--------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	--------------	------------------

Would the project:

- | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | 1, 3, 4, 5,
11, 14c,
15 |
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archeological resource pursuant to §15064.5? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | 1, 3, 4, 5,
11, 14, 15 |
| c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | 1, 3, 4, 5,
11, 14, 15 |

Discussion:

- a) A Cultural Resource Evaluation (CRE) was prepared for this project by Environmental Assessment Specialists Inc. (EAS) and is dated August 1, 2023.

The CRE stated that the site has a low probability of containing significant historic or prehistoric artifacts, relics or remains given its location on a hilltop, which were traditionally not used as settlement areas, which are much more likely found near a water source. The CRE recommended that the project should proceed as planned.

The County sent an AB52 notice to 11 Lake County-based Tribes on August 24, 2023, informing tribes of the proposed project and offering consultation under AB-52. On August 24, 2023, the Upper Lake Habematolel Tribe contacted staff to request a copy of the Cultural Study that was submitted to the County. The Upper Lake Habematolel Tribe deferred any comments to Robinson Rancheria

Because of the rich Tribal heritage present in Lake County, the following mitigation measures are added as a precautionary measure in case of inadvertent discovery of significant items, relics, artifacts or remains:

CUL-1: Should any archaeological, paleontological, or cultural materials be discovered during site development, all activity shall be halted within 100 feet of the find(s). A professional archaeologist certified by the Registry of Professional Archeologists (RPA) shall be notified and shall evaluate the find(s) and recommend mitigation procedures, if necessary. The findings and mitigation measures shall be reviewed and approved by the Lake County Community Development Director prior to commencing work.

CUL-2: All employees shall be trained in recognizing potentially significant archaeological, paleontological, or cultural materials that may be discovered during ground disturbance. Prior to ground disturbing activities, the Permittee shall submit a Cultural Resources Plan, identifying methods of sensitivity training for site workers, procedures in the event of an accidental discovery, and documentation and reporting procedures. Prior to ground disturbing activities, the Permittee shall submit verification that all site workers have reviewed the Cultural Resources Plan and received sensitivity training.

CUL-3: Should any human remains be encountered, the applicant shall halt all work within 100 feet, notify the Sheriff's Department, the culturally affiliated Tribe(s), and a qualified archaeologist for proper internment and Tribal rituals per Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 and Health and Safety Code 7050.5.

Less than Significant Impacts with Mitigation Measures CUL-1 through CUL-3 incorporated.

- b) Site disturbance will take place as part of project and site preparation, particularly with the improvements required to the interior driveway and the removal of 38 trees, so there is a potential for inadvertent discovery of as-of-yet undiscovered resources during project construction. Therefore, this impact is considered significant. Mitigation measures CUL-1 and CUL-2 will reduce potential effects of inadvertent discovery to less than significant levels.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures CUL-1 through CUL-3 incorporated.

- c) The Project site does not contain a cemetery and no known formal cemeteries are located within the immediate site vicinity. In the event that human remains are discovered on the Project site, the Project would be required to comply with the applicable provisions of Health and Safety Code §7050.5, Public Resources Code §5097 et. seq. and CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(e). California Health and Safety Code §7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin. Pursuant to California Public Resources Code §5097.98(b), remains shall be left in place and free from disturbance until a final decision as to the treatment and disposition has been made by the Coroner.

If the Coroner determines the remains to be Native American, the California Native American Heritage Commission must be contacted and the Native American Heritage Commission must then immediately notify the "most likely descendant(s)" of receiving notification of the discovery. The most likely descendant(s) shall then make recommendations within 48 hours, and engage in consultations concerning the treatment of the remains as provided in Public Resources Code §5097.98. Mandatory compliance with these requirements would ensure that potential impacts associated with the accidental discovery of human remains would be less than significant.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures CUL-1 through CUL-3 incorporated.

VI. ENERGY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
Would the project:					
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resource, during construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐	5

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | 1, 3, 4, 5 |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|

Discussion:

- a) The project consists of a 150-foot tall monopine cell tower enclosed within a 50' x 50' enclosure. The tower and support equipment will use 'on grid' power. Cell towers have minimal power demands, and there are no grid capacity issues at this location.

PG&E was notified of this project on August 24, 2023. No adverse comments from PG&E have been received to date.

Less than Significant Impact

- b) There are no requirements for renewable energy for cell towers.

Less Than Significant Impact

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
--------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	--------------	------------------

Would the project:

- a) Directly or indirectly cause potentially substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

- i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.
- ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?
- iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?
- iv) Landslides?

☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 18, 19
--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------	-----------------------

- b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

☐	☒	☐	☐	1, 3, 4, 5, 19, 21, 24, 25, 30
--------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------

- c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on-site or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?

☐	☒	☐	☐	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 18, 21
--------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | 5, 7, 39 |
| e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | 2, 4, 5, 7, 13, 39 |
| f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 14, 15 |

Discussion:

- a) The Project site is located in a seismically active area of California and is expected to experience moderate to severe ground shaking during the lifetime of the Project. That risk is not considered substantially different than that of other similar properties and projects in California. Additionally, the project does not propose habitable structures.

Earthquake Faults (i)

According to the USGS Earthquake Faults map available on the Lake County GIS Portal, there are no mapped earthquake faults within two miles of the Project Property. Thus, no rupture of a known earthquake fault is anticipated, and the proposed Project would not expose people or structures to an adverse effects related rupture of a known earthquake fault as no structures for human occupancy are being proposed. Further, the 150' tall tower is set back more than ½ mile from the nearest dwelling and road, so the impact(s) from an earthquake would not affect any dwellings or roads as the result of the tower falling during an earthquake in the unlikely event that this were to occur.

Seismic Ground Shaking (ii) and Seismic-Related Ground Failure, including liquefaction (iii)

Lake County contains numerous known active faults. Future seismic events in the Northern California region can be expected to produce seismic ground shaking at the site. All proposed construction is required to be built under Current Seismic Safety Construction Standards.

Landslides (iv)

The Project site is flat where the where the tower will be placed. According to the Landslide Hazard Identification Map prepared by the California Department of Conservation's Division of Mines and Geology, the area is considered generally stable. As such, the Project site is considered unlikely to be susceptible to landslides and will not likely expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects involving landslides, including losses, injuries or death.

Less Than Significant Impact

- b) The soil on the site is type 178 soil, "Millsholm-Bressa-Hopland association, 30 to 50 percent slopes" with a 'severe' erosion hazard risk rating. A Complex Grading Permit is required for equipment pad preparation, interior driveway improvements and tree removal.

GEO-1: Prior to ground disturbance and/or tree removal, the applicant shall obtain a grading permit. The applicant shall submit an engineered Grading and Erosion Control Plan to the County that estimates the amount of earth that will be moved, and how dust

will be mitigated during the ground disturbance. Grading activities shall be limited to April 15-October 15, unless otherwise adjusted according to weather and soil conditions, at the discretion of the Administrative Official. Grading and Erosion Plans, and grading activities shall comply with Chapter 30, Grading Ordinance of the Lake County Municipal Code.

GEO-2: The applicant shall submit a Stormwater Erosion Control Plan to the Lake County Building Division with the building permit application. The Best Practice Management Plan shall be submitted with the Stormwater Erosion Control Plan

Less Than Significant Impact with mitigation measure GEO-1 through GEO-2 and BIO-1 are incorporated.

- c) The project property is generally flat at the tower site but is significantly sloped elsewhere on the property. According to the Landslide Hazard Identification Map, prepared by the California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology, the project parcel is not located within and/or adjacent to an existing known "landslide area".

Less Than Significant Impact

- d) The soil on the site is type 178 soil, "Millsholm-Bressa-Hopland association, 30 to 50 percent slopes" with a 'severe' erosion hazard risk rating. This soil type is found on hills; the vegetation is mainly brush and annual grasses. This soil type is characterized by having rapid runoff and severe erosion. This soil is typically used for grazing land and firewood production. The soil on the site is type 178 soil, "Millsholm-Bressa-Hopland association, 30 to 50 percent slopes" with a 'severe' erosion hazard risk rating, but no habitable structures are proposed. A Complex Grading Permit will be obtained for the project.

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures GEO-1 and GEO-2 incorporated.

- e) The proposed project will be unmanned and will not have any need for plumbing, septic systems or on-site water sources.

No Impact

- f) According to the Cultural Assessment submitted, the project site does not contain any known unique geologic feature or paleontological resources that might otherwise require protection or avoidance.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures CUL-1 through CUL-3 incorporated

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	--	------------------------------	-----------	---------------

Would the project:

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | 1, 3, 4, 5, 36 |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|

- b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐ 1, 3, 4, 5, 36

Discussion:

- a) The Project Property is located within the Lake County Air Basin, which is under the jurisdiction of the Lake County Air Quality Management District (LCAQMD). The LCAQMD applies air pollution regulations to all major stationary pollution sources and monitors countywide air quality. Climate change is caused by greenhouse gases (GHGs) emitted into the atmosphere around the world from a variety of sources, including the combustion of fuel for energy and transportation, cement manufacturing, and refrigerant emissions. GHGs are those gases that have the ability to trap heat in the atmosphere, a process that is analogous to the way a greenhouse traps heat. GHGs may be emitted as a result of human activities, as well as through natural processes. Increasing GHG concentrations in the atmosphere are leading to global climate change. The Lake County Air Basin is in attainment for all air pollutants and has therefore not adopted thresholds of significance for GHG emissions.

The proposed Project consists of a 150' tall cell tower inside a 50' x 50' enclosure that will contain mechanical equipment needed to serve the tower. The tower will be unmanned during operations, with an estimated 120 to 180 vehicle trips occurring over 60-to-90-day period of time for construction. Annual trips are anticipated to be one trip every three months for routine maintenance.

Lake County uses the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) thresholds of significance as a basis for determining the significance of air quality and GHG impacts. The BAAQMD threshold of significance for a project is 1,100 metric tons of CO₂ emissions per project. As stated in the Air Quality section of this document, the projected amount of CO₂ emissions is negligible during construction and would have virtually no emissions during operations.

To date, the County has not yet formally adopted its transportation significance thresholds or its transportation impact analysis procedures. As a result, the project related VMT impacts were assessed based on guidelines described by the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) in the publication Transportation Impacts (SB 743) CEQA Guidelines Update and Technical Advisory, 2018. The OPR Technical Advisory identifies several criteria that may be used to identify certain types of projects that are unlikely to have a significant VMT impact and can be "screened" from further analysis. One of these screening criteria pertains to small projects, which OPR defines as those generating fewer than 120 new vehicle trips per day on average. OPR specifies that VMT should be based on a typical weekday and averaged over the course of the year to take into consideration seasonal fluctuations. Less than Significant Impact

- b) For purposes of this analysis, the Project was evaluated against the following applicable plans, policies, and regulations:
- The Lake County General Plan
 - The Lake County Air Quality Management District
 - AB 32 Climate Change Scoping Plan
 - AB 1346 Air Pollution: Small Off-Road Equipment

Policy HS-3.6 of the Lake County General Plan on Regional Agency Review of Development Proposals states that the “County shall solicit and consider comments from local and regional agencies on proposed projects that may affect regional air quality. The County shall continue to submit development proposals to the Lake County Air Quality Management District for review and comment, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) prior to consideration by the County.” The proposed Project was sent out for review from the LCAQMD and the only concern was restricting the use of an onsite generator to emergency situations only.

The Lake County Air Basin is in attainment for all air pollutants with a high air quality level, and therefore the LCAQMD has not adopted an Air Quality Management Plan, but rather uses its rules and regulations for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. The proposed Project does not conflict with any existing LCAQMD or BAAQMD rules or regulations and would therefore have a less than significant impact.

The 2017 AB Climate Change Scoping Plan recognizes that local government efforts to reduce emissions within their jurisdiction are critical to achieving the State’s long term GHG goals, which includes a primary target of no more than six (6) metric tons CO₂e per capita by 2030 and no more than two (2) metric tons CO₂e per capita by 2050. The Project will have up to three individuals working on site during construction, and no employees during operations.

Less than Significant Impact

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
Would the project:					
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 3, 5, 13, 21, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonable foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 3, 5, 13, 21, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒	1, 2, 5
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒	2, 40

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | 1, 3, 4, 5, 20, 22 |
| f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | 1, 3, 4, 5, 20, 22, 35, 37 |
| g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | 1, 3, 4, 5, 20, 35, 37 |

Discussion:

a) Chemicals

According to the applicant, no chemicals other than propane for the backup power generator will be stored on site. Spill containment during construction will be in place. Staging will occur on disturbed areas on the site.

Solid Waste Management

The project will likely generate some solid waste during construction, and no solid waste during operations.

Site Maintenance

The site will be visited about every three months by a maintenance employee. The site is not expected to have any issues related to trash or other eyesores since it is located on a hilltop on a steep sloped parcel, will be fenced and unmanned.

Less Than Significant Impact

- b) The Project will not require any chemicals, fertilizers or other potentially harmful elements other than propane for the backup generator and possibly some fuel for vehicles during construction. The risk of the release of hazardous substances is extremely minimal.

Less Than Significant Impact

- c) There are no schools located within one-quarter mile of the proposed Project site. The nearest school is located in Upper Lake, which is located about three miles north of the Project site.

No Impact

- d) The California Environmental Protection Agency (CALEPA) has the responsibility for compiling information about sites that may contain hazardous materials, such as hazardous waste facilities, solid waste facilities where hazardous materials have been reported, leaking underground storage tanks and other sites where hazardous materials have been detected. Hazardous materials include all flammable, reactive, corrosive, or toxic substances that pose potential harm to the public or environment.

The following databases compiled pursuant to Government Code §65962.5 were checked for known hazardous materials contamination within ¼-mile of the project site:

- The SWRCB GeoTracker database
- The Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor database
- The SWRCB list of solid waste disposal sites with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit.

The Project site is not listed in any of these databases as a site containing hazardous materials as described above.

No Impact

- e) The Project site is located about fifteen miles from Lampson Field, the nearest public airport. Lampson Field is administered by the Lake County Airport Land Use Commission, which has not adopted an Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. There will be no hazard for people working in the Project area from a public airport.

No Impact

- f) The Project would not impair or interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan. Following construction, the project will generate virtually no additional vehicle trips, and no change to the existing road network is needed.

Less Than Significant Impact

- g) The project site has been identified as being within a **Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ)** per the CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map for Lake County. While this classification indicates a comparatively lower risk than areas designated as High or Very High, the potential for wildland fire impacts exists. A comprehensive discussion of wildfire hazards and potential mitigation measures is presented in **Section XX, Wildfire**, of this document.

Less than Significant Impact

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
Would the project:					
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☒	☐	☐	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 29, 30
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 29, 30, 45

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner that would: | | | | | |
| i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on-site or off-site; | | | | | |
| ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site; | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 15, 18, 29, 32, 45 |
| iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or | | | | | |
| iv) Impede or redirect flood flows? | | | | | |
| d) In any flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 23, 32 |
| e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 29 |

Discussion:

- a) There is an unnamed riparian corridor that runs east to west through the Project parcel. The proposed tower location is approximately ± 659.26 feet to the south of the top of the bank slope and approximately ± 799.48 feet from the stream bed. The road at the nearest location to the unnamed water course is approximately ± 42.03 feet from the top of the bank slope and approximately ± 139.83 feet from the stream bed. There is roadway expansion that is proposed. The proposal will be to over excavate the existing road, remove and replace 12-inches of soil, then compact to 90% minimum, construct 4-inch minimum aggregate base over the recompacted soil. Construct 4-inches of asphalt concrete over the aggregate base in areas where the slope exceeds 16%. Based on the submitted site plans, the project will involve no import or export of graded material. Approximately 100 cubic yards of material will be cut, and this same volume will be utilized as fill on-site, in the leased area. The applicant is required to implement Best Practice Management Plan within the Stormwater Erosion Control Plan with the building permit and grading permit application.

Less Than Significant Impact with GEO-1 through GEO-2 incorporated.

- b) The proposed project will not use any water when the project is complete. During construction, there will be a water tender on site for dust mitigation.

Less Than Significant Impact

- c) . Grading needed for the site and access driveway requires a Complex Grading Permit, in accordance with Chapter 30, Grading Ordinance, of the Lake County Municipal Code.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures GEO-1 through GEO-2 incorporated.

- d) The Project site is not located in an area that has the potential to be inundated by seiche or tsunami. The Project site is not located within a flood plain.

No impact

- e) There are no groundwater management plans for the affected groundwater basin(s) at this time.

No Impact

XI. LAND USE PLANNING

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
--------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	--------------	------------------

Would the project:

- | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a) Physically divide an established community? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 |
| b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | 1, 3, 4, 5, 20, 21, 22, 27 |

Discussion:

- a) The Project Property is located in a rural area outside of the township of Lucerne. The tower and support equipment would be fully contained on site, and would have no effect on the overall community in regards to dividing the community.

No Impact

- b) The proposed project is consistent with the Lake County General Plan policies regarding telecommunications infrastructure development. The project supports the General Plan's objectives for providing adequate communication services while maintaining community character and environmental quality.

The project complies with the Shoreline Communities Area Plan's provisions for telecommunications facilities and does not conflict with any specific policies designed to avoid or mitigate environmental effects within the planning area.

The project fully complies with the Lake County Zoning Ordinance requirements for wireless communication facilities, specifically:

Article 71.3(d) - Visual Impact Minimization Requirements:

- The facility has been sited in the least visually obtrusive location possible, as determined by the Community Development Director
- The tower, antennas, and associated equipment have been designed and located to minimize visual impact on adjacent residences and public vantage points
- Appropriate screening, landscaping, and architectural treatments have been incorporated to ensure the facility visually blends with the surrounding environment

Less than Significant Impact

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
Would the project:					
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒	1, 3, 4, 5, 26
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒	1, 3, 4, 5, 26

Discussion:

- a) The project site is zoned Rural Lands and is not located within any designated mineral resource zones or areas identified for mineral extraction activities. The Rural Lands zoning designation does not prioritize or protect mineral resource extraction as a primary land use.

No Impact

- b) The proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site. There are no known mineral resources delineated within the project area or its immediate vicinity. Therefore, the project would not impact any existing or potential mineral resource recovery sites.

No Impact

XIII. NOISE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
Would the project:					
a) Result in the generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 3, 4, 5, 13
b) Result in the generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 3, 4, 5, 13
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project	☐	☐	☐	☒	1, 3, 4, 5, 11, 14, 15

expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

Discussion:

- a) Construction activities for the project are anticipated to last approximately two to three months, occurring weekdays between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. An estimated one to two daily vehicle trips to and from the site will generate approximately 120 total trips over the construction period. While temporary, localized increases in ambient noise levels will occur during construction, these will not result in a substantial permanent increase in noise. The nearest sensitive receptors are a single-family dwelling on the same site and a few homes located approximately 995 feet west of the tower. All construction noise will adhere to the standards established in Article 41.11 of the Lake County Zoning Ordinance, which regulates temporary construction noise. Therefore, the project will not result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in excess of established standards.

Less than Significant Impact

- b) Vibration from construction equipment such as excavators, bulldozer and cement trucks would be temporary. Once operational, there would be no sources of vibration. Additionally, there are no known sources of ground-borne vibration or noise that affect the Project site such as railroad lines or truck routes. Therefore, the Project would not create any exposure to substantial ground-borne vibration or noise.

Less Than Significant Impact

- c) The Project site is located approximately 9.68 air miles from the nearest airport. This distance places the Project well outside the typical two-mile radius considered for potential excessive noise exposure from a public airport or public use airport, and also beyond the immediate vicinity that would be covered by a private airstrip or airport land use plan.

Therefore, the Project would not expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels from air travel.

While there are single-family dwellings in the area, construction noise will be temporary in nature and will adhere to the Lake County Zoning Ordinance, Article 41.11, Noise, which includes regulations to minimize construction-related noise impacts.

No Impact

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
Would the project:					
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒	1, 3, 4, 5

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | 1, 3, 4, 5 |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|

Discussion:

- a) The Project will not generate population growth to the area.

No Impact

- b) The Project will not displace any existing housing.

No Impact

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
--------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	--------------	------------------

Would the project:

- a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

☐	☐	☒	☐
--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------

1, 2, 3, 4,
5, 20, 21,
22, 23, 27,
28, 29, 32,
33, 34, 36,
37

- 1) Fire Protection?
- 2) Police Protection?
- 3) Schools?
- 4) Parks?
- 5) Other Public Facilities?

Discussion:

- a) The Project has very little impact on public services. The tower is unmanned and requires little power to operate. The tower requires no water or sewer and is unlikely to place any demand on police or fire services. The tower will provide additional cell phone coverage, which would be used by emergency service providers if needed.

Less than Significant

XVI. RECREATION

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
--------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	--------------	------------------

Would the project:

- | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | 1, 3, 4, 5 |

Discussion:

- a) The project places no demand on local parks.

No Impact

- b) The project does not include any recreational facilities and will not require the construction or expansion of existing recreational facilities.

No Impact

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
Would the project:					
a) Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 20, 22, 27, 28, 35
b) For a land use project, would the project conflict with or be inconsistent with CEQA guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(1)?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 20, 22, 27, 28, 35
c) For a transportation project, would the project conflict with or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(2)?	☐	☐	☐	☒	1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 20, 22, 27, 28, 35
d) Substantially increase hazards due to geometric design features (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒	1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 20, 22, 27, 28, 35
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 20, 22, 27, 28, 35

Discussion:

- a) The project does not conflict with any program plan, ordinance, or policies. The proposed cell tower project includes roadway improvements consisting of widening the existing on-site access road and applying aggregate gravel base with asphaltic concrete surfacing on slopes exceeding 16% grade to provide safe vehicular access to the telecommunications facility.

Less Than Significant Impact

- b) State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, Subdivision (b) states that for land use projects, transportation impacts are to be measured by evaluating the proposed Project's vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

To date, the County has not yet formally adopted its transportation significance thresholds or its transportation impact analysis procedures. As a result, the project-related VMT impacts were assessed based on guidelines described by the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) in the publication *Transportation Impacts (SB 743) CEQA Guidelines Update and Technical Advisory*, 2018. The OPR Technical Advisory identifies several criteria that may be used to identify certain types of projects that are unlikely to have a significant VMT impact and can be "screened" from further analysis. One of these screening criteria pertains to small projects, which OPR defines as those generating fewer than 110 new vehicle trips per day on average. OPR specifies that VMT should be based on a typical weekday and averaged over the course of the year to take into consideration seasonal fluctuations.

The proposed Project would not generate or attract more than 110 trips per day during construction and will generate up to four vehicle trips per year during operations.

Less Than Significant Impact

- c) The Project is not a transportation project. The proposed use will not conflict with and/or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(2).

No Impact

- d) The Project is required to upgrade the interior driveway for PRC 4290 fire access standards, but does not propose any changes to a road alignment or other features, that would result in the introduction of any obstacles, nor does it involve incompatible uses that could increase traffic hazards.

No Impact

- e) The roadway will be widened to meet California Public Resources Code Sections 4290 and 4291 fire safety standards, which specify minimum road widths, turning radii, and grade requirements for emergency vehicle access. This compliance ensures adequate clearance and maneuverability for fire trucks and other emergency vehicles. Implementation of erosion control and stormwater BMPs will prevent roadway runoff from entering nearby creek systems, protecting water quality while maintaining safe roadway conditions. The improved access road serves a telecommunications facility, which represents a compatible infrastructure use that does not introduce hazardous operations or incompatible vehicle types (such as farm equipment) that could create circulation conflicts.

Less than Significant

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
--------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	--------------	------------------

Would the project Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k)? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | 1, 3, 4, 5,
11, 14, 15 |
| b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | 1, 3, 4, 5,
11, 14, 15 |

Discussion:

- d) A Cultural Resource Evaluation (CRE) was prepared for this project by Environmental Assessment Specialists Inc. (EAS) and is dated August 1, 2023.

The CRE stated that the site has a low probability of containing significant historic or prehistoric artifacts, relics or remains given its location on a hilltop, which were traditionally not used as settlement areas, which are much more likely found near a water source. The CRE recommended that the project should proceed as planned.

The County sent an AB52 notice to 11 Lake County-based Tribes on August 24, 2023, informing tribes of the proposed project and offering consultation under AB-52. On August 24, 2023, the Upper Lake Habematolel Tribe contacted staff to request a copy of the Cultural Study that was submitted to the County. The Upper Lake Habematolel Tribe deferred any comments to Robinson Rancheria

Because of the rich Tribal heritage present in Lake County, the following mitigation measures are added as a precautionary measure in case of inadvertent discovery of significant items, relics, artifacts or remains.

TCR-1: All on-site personnel of the project shall receive tribal cultural resource sensitivity training prior to initiation of ground disturbance activities on the project. The training must be according to standards of NAHC or the culturally affiliated tribe(s). Training will address the potential for exposing subsurface resources and procedures if a potential resource is identified. The training will also provide a process for notification of discoveries to culturally affiliated tribes, protection, treatment, care and handling of tribal cultural resources discovered or disturbed during ground disturbance activities of the project. Tribal monitors will be required to participate in any necessary environmental and/or safety awareness training prior to engaging in any tribal monitoring activities for the project.

TCR-2: If previously unidentified tribal cultural resources are encountered during the project altering materials and their stratigraphic context shall be avoided, and work shall halt immediately. Project personnel shall not collect, move, or disturb cultural resources. A

representative from a locally-affiliated tribe(s) shall be contacted to evaluate the resource and prepare a tribal cultural resource plan to allow for identification and further evaluation in determining the tribal cultural resource significance and appropriate treatment or disposition

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures TCR-1 and TCR-2 incorporated.

- a) No prehistoric sites were discovered during the field survey conducted for the CRE. The lead agency has determined that, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, no resources pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code section 5024.1 will be affected by the Project with implementation of mitigation measures CUL-1 and CUL-2.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures TCR-1 and TCR-2 added

XIX. UTILITIES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
Would the project:					
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐	1, 3, 4, 5, 29, 32, 33, 34, 37, 45
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☐	☒	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 22, 31, 45
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 22
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☐	☒	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 35, 36
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 35, 36

Discussion:

- a) The project entails the construction of a new telecommunication tower and associated facilities, upgrades to the existing access road, and will utilize on-grid power service. A comprehensive evaluation of the potential environmental impacts resulting from the tower installation and access road improvements is presented in this document.

Less Than Significant Impact

- b) The tower does not require water to operate. No Impact
- c) The Project will not require any on-site sewer, septic, water or other public services other than on-grid power.
- No Impact
- d) It is estimated that the construction will generate some waste and no waste would be generated during operations. The Lake County landfill in Clear Lake has capacity to accept the construction-related waste from the project.
- No Impact
- e) The Project will be in compliance with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.
- No Impact

XX. WILDFIRE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:					
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☒	☐	☐	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 23, 25, 28, 29
b) Would the project, due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☒	☐	☐	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 23, 25, 28, 29
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐	1, 2, 3, 5, 6
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☒	☐	☐	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 21, 23, 32

Discussion:

- a) The Project site is in a Moderate Fire Severity Zone. The applicant will be required to keep a water tender on site during construction; this is required by mitigation measure WILD-1 below. The project will not impair an adopted emergency response plan or evacuation plan, and the requirement to improve the interior driveway to meet Public Resource Code 4290 standards for width, surface material and slope will aid on-site fire mitigation if needed. The applicant shall adhere to all regulation of California Code Regulations Title 14, Division 1.5, Chapter 7, Subchapter 2, and Article 1 through 5 shall apply to this project; and all regulations of California Building Code, Chapter 7A, Section 701A, 701A.3.2.A.

The following mitigation measures are proposed:

WILD-1: The applicant shall keep a water tender truck on site during site disturbance to reduce the impacts that might result from a spark creating a wildfire on site.

WILD-2: Prior to operation, the applicant shall improve the interior driveway to meet Public Resource Code 4290 and 4291 driveway standards.

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures WILD-1 and WILD-2 incorporated.

- b) The Project site is located in a mapped Moderate Fire Severity Zone area and has some potential to have a risk of wildfire. Mitigation measures are in place that will enable the site to be accessed by emergency service providers, and a water tender truck will be on site during site preparation in the event of a spark from site disturbance.

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures WILD-1 and WILD-2 incorporated.

- c) The proposed site improvements are limited to road improvements, installing a 50' x 50' pad to house support equipment, and the 150' tall monopine cell tower. There is some potential for sparks from construction equipment during site preparation; the County is requiring certain mitigation measures to help reduce the potential for fires occurring as the result of site disturbance.

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures WILD-1 and WILD-2 incorporated.

- d) There is some wildfire risk associated with this project primarily during construction. This is addressed in mitigation measures WILD-1 and WILD-2

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures WILD-1 and WILD-2 incorporated.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Source Number
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or	☐	☒	☐	☐	ALL

animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

- b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)? ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐ ALL
- c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐ ALL

Discussion:

- a) The project proposes the installation of a 150' tall monopine cell tower on a 50' x 50' pad needed for the support equipment to serve the tower.

The proposed Project does not have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory when mitigation measures are implemented.

Mitigation measures are listed herein to reduce impacts related to Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Wildfire to less than significant levels.

Less than significant impact with mitigation measures added.

- b) Potentially significant impacts have been identified related to Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Wildfire. These impacts in combination with the impacts of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects on the site could cumulatively contribute to significant effects on the environment.

Implementation of and compliance with the mitigation measures identified in each section as Project Conditions of Approval would avoid or reduce potential impacts to less than significant levels and would not result in any cumulatively considerable environmental impacts.

Less than significant impact with mitigation measures added

- c) The proposed Project has the potential to result in adverse indirect or direct effects on human beings. In particular, Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural/Tribal Resources, Geology and Soils, and Wildfire have the potential to impact human beings. Implementation of and compliance with the mitigation measures identified in each section as conditions of approval would not result in substantial adverse indirect or direct effects on human beings and impacts would be considered less than significant.

Less than significant with mitigation measures added

Impact Categories defined by CEQA

Source List

1. Lake County General Plan
2. Lake County GIS Database
3. Lake County Zoning Ordinance
4. Shoreline Communities Area Plan
5. Vertical Bridge Tower Application – Major Use Permit.
6. U.S.G.S. Topographic Maps
7. U.S.D.A. Lake County Soil Survey
8. Lake County Important Farmland Map, California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
9. Department of Transportation's Scenic Highway Mapping Program, (<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways>)
10. Lake County Serpentine Soil Mapping
11. California Natural Diversity Database (<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB>)
12. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory
13. Biological Assessment (BA) of the Project Property, prepared by Lotis Environmental, LLC, undated. The applicant also submitted an Arborist Report and Tree Protection Plan (Plan), prepared by Davey Resource Group and dated August 2023
14. Cultural Resource Evaluation (CRE), prepared by Environmental Assessment Specialists Inc. (EAS) and is dated August 1, 2023.
15. California Historical Resource Information Systems (CHRIS); Northwest Information Center, Sonoma State University; Rohnert Park, CA.
16. Water Resources Division, Lake County Department of Public Works Wetlands Mapping.
17. U.S.G.S. Geologic Map and Structure Sections of the Clear Lake Volcanic, Northern California, Miscellaneous Investigation Series, 1995
18. Official Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone maps for Lake County
19. Landslide Hazards in the Eastern Clear Lake Area, Lake County, California, Landslide Hazard Identification Map No. 16, California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology, DMG Open –File Report 89-27, 1990
20. Lake County Emergency Management Plan
21. Lake County Hazardous Waste Management Plan, adopted 1989
22. Lake County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, adopted 1992
23. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection - Fire Hazard Mapping
24. National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)
25. FEMA Flood Hazard Maps
26. Lake County Aggregate Resource Management Plan
27. Lake County Bicycle Plan
28. Lake County Transit for Bus Routes
29. Lake County Environmental Health Division
30. Lake County Grading Ordinance
31. Lake County Natural Hazard database
32. Lake County Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan and Siting Element, 1996
33. Lake County Water Resources
34. Lake County Waste Management Department
35. California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
36. Lake County Air Quality Management District website

37. Lake County Fire Protection District
38. Site Visit – August 24, 2023
39. United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Web Soil Survey
40. Hazardous Waste and Substances Sites List,
41. State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
42. Lake County Groundwater Management Plan, March 31st, 2006.
43. Lake County Rules and Regulations (LCF) for On-Site Sewage Disposal
44. Lake County Municipal Code: Sanitary Disposal of Sewage (Chapter 9: Health and
Sanitation, Article III)