

TABLE 3.9-4 County Housing Characteristics

Type of Unit	1990	2000	2003 ^a
Owner occupied	18,907	22,975	24,900
Rental	13,935	16,409	17,800
Total unoccupied units	3,717	4,507	4,900
Total units	36,559	43,891	47,500

^a DOE/BLM projections.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1994, 2001a).

3.10 MINORITY AND LOW-INCOME POPULATIONS

Executive Order 12898 (February 16, 1994) formally requires Federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice as part of their missions. Specifically, it directs them to address, as appropriate, any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their actions, programs, or policies on minority and low-income populations.

The analysis of potential environmental justice issues associated with the proposed transmission lines followed guidelines described in the CEQ's *Environmental Justice Guidance under the National Environmental Policy Act* (CEQ 1997a). The analysis method has three parts: (1) a description of the geographic distribution of low-income and minority populations in the affected area is undertaken; (2) an assessment of whether the impacts of construction and operation of the transmission lines would produce impacts that are high and adverse; and (3) if impacts are high and adverse, a determination is made as to whether these impacts disproportionately impact low-income or minority populations. Information on item (1) is provided in this section. Information on items (2) and (3) is in Section 4.12.

A description of the geographic distribution of minority and low-income population groups was based on demographic data from the 2000 Census (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2001a). The following definitions were used to identify low-income and minority populations:

- **Minority.** Persons are included in the minority category if they identify themselves as belonging to any of the following racial groups: (1) Hispanic, (2) Black (not of Hispanic origin) or African American, (3) American Indian or Alaska Native, (4) Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander.

Beginning with the 2000 Census, where appropriate, the census form allows individuals to designate multiple population group categories to reflect their ethnic or racial origin. In addition, persons who classify themselves as being of multiple racial origin may choose up to six racial groups as the basis of

their racial origins. The term minority includes all persons, including those classifying themselves in multiple racial categories, except those who classify themselves as not of Hispanic origin and as White or "Other Race" (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2001a).

The CEQ guidance proposed that minority populations should be identified where either (1) the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50% or (2) the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis.

This EIS applies both criteria in using the Census Bureau data for census block groups, wherein consideration is given to the minority population that is both over 50% and 20 percentage points higher than in the county (the reference geographic unit).

- **Low-Income.** Individuals who fall below the poverty line threshold. The poverty line threshold takes into account family size and age of individuals in the family. In 1999, for example, the poverty line for a family of five with three children below the age of 18 was \$19,882. For any given family below the poverty line, all family members are considered as being below the poverty line for the purposes of analysis (U.S. Bureau of Census 2001a).

The CEQ guidance proposed that a low-income population exists where the percentage of low-income persons in any geographic unit is more than 20 percentage points higher than in the reference geographic unit. A low-income population also exists in any geographic unit where the number of low-income persons exceeds 50% of the total population.

Data in Table 3.10-1 show the minority and low-income composition of the total population for Imperial County on the basis of 2000 census data and CEQ guidelines. Individuals identifying themselves as Hispanic or Latino are included in the table as a separate entry. However, because Hispanics can be of any race, this number also includes individuals identifying themselves as being part of one or more of the population groups listed in the table. Almost 80% of the total county population can be classified as minority, with almost 23% in the low-income category.

The geographic distributions of minority and low-income populations in Imperial County are shown in Figures 3.10-1 and 3.10-2. A large majority of census block groups in the county were more than 50% minority in 2000, although none had a percent minority more than 20 percentage points higher than the county average. Only a small number of census block groups in the county had a percent low-income more than 20 percentage points higher than the county average in 2000; one block group was more than 50% low-income in 2000.