



**FIGURE 3.8-3 View from Key Observation Point 2, 1.3 mi (2.1 km) East of Existing IV-La Rosita Line on State Route 98**

### **3.9 SOCIOECONOMICS**

A region of influence (ROI) comprising Imperial County was used to describe socioeconomic conditions for the projects area. The ROI is based on the residential locations of construction and operations workers directly related to transmission line activities and captures the area in which these workers would spend their wages and salaries. The ROI is used to assess the impacts of site activities on employment, income, and housing. Since it is assumed that construction of the lines would require no permanent in-migration of workers, there would be no impacts on population, community services, and community fiscal conditions. Because there may be some short-term relocation of workers during construction, the impacts on temporary housing within the county are assessed.

### 3.9.1 Population

A large proportion (77%) of the population of Imperial County (142,361 in 2000) is located in incorporated places in the Imperial Valley (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2001a), a region of irrigated agricultural land in the south-central part of the county. Over the period 1990 to 2000, the population in the county grew at an average annual rate of 2.7%, significantly higher than the annual state rate of 1.3%. Within Imperial Valley, the majority of the population is located in three incorporated places — El Centro (population of 37,835 in 2000), Calexico (27,109), and Brawley (22,052) (see Figure 1.1-1). Smaller communities in the Valley include Imperial (7,560), Calipatria (7,289), and Westmorland (2,131) (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2001a). Average annual population growth rates in El Centro and Brawley ranged from 1.5 to 2% over the period 1990 to 2000; growth rates in Calexico were slightly higher at 3.8% per year.

### 3.9.2 Employment

Irrigated agriculture is one of the dominant economic activities in the county, employing 9,100 people, nearly 28% of total county employment (Table 3.9-1). The most important crops include alfalfa, cotton, sugar beets, wheat, lettuce, carrots, and cantaloupes (USDA 1999). Services (9,350 people employed) and wholesale and retail trade (8,200 people employed) dominate the nonagricultural portion of the economy; activities in these industries contribute to more than 53% of total employment in the county.

**TABLE 3.9-1 County Employment by Industry, 2001**

Sector	Employment	% of County Total
Agriculture <sup>a</sup>	9,078	27.6
Mining	175	0.5
Public utilities	291	0.9
Construction	1,479	4.5
Manufacturing	1,588	4.8
Transportation and warehousing	1,274	3.9
Trade	8,199	24.9
Finance, insurance, and real estate	1,416	4.3
Services	9,348	28.4
Total	32,888	

<sup>a</sup> 1997 data (USDA 1999).

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (2001b).

### 3.9.3 Unemployment

Unemployment in the county has steadily declined during the late 1990s from a peak rate of 6.9% in 1993 to the current rate of 4.9% (Table 3.9-2) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2003). Unemployment in California currently stands at 6.6%.

### 3.9.4 Income

Personal income in Imperial County stood at almost \$2.7 billion in 2001 (in 2003 dollars) and is expected to remain at \$2.7 billion in 2003 (Table 3.9-3). Personal income grew at an annual average rate of growth of 0.7% over the period 1990 to 1999. With population growth exceeding income growth in the 1990s, county personal income per capita fell over the period from \$22,940 in 1990 to \$18,588 in 2001.

### 3.9.5 Housing

Housing in the county showed modest growth over the period 1990 to 2000, growing at 1.8% per year (Table 3.9-4). More than 7,300 new units were added to the existing housing stock during this period, with an additional 3,600 expected by 2003. Vacancy rates in 2000 stood at 10.2% for all types of housing. On the basis of annual population growth rates, more than 47,500 housing units are expected in the county in 2003, of which more than 2,000 would be vacant rental units available to transmission line construction workers. Of these 2,000, 300 would be seasonal-recreational and temporary housing.

**TABLE 3.9-2 County Unemployment Rates**

Period	Rate (%)
Imperial County	
1992–2002 Average	5.2
2003 (current rate)	4.9
California	
1992–2002 Average	7.0
2003 (current rate)	6.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2003).

**TABLE 3.9-3 County Personal Income (2003 dollars)**

Parameter	1990	2001	Average Annual Growth Rates	
			1990–2001	2003 <sup>a</sup>
Total personal income (\$ millions)	2,507	2,717	0.7%	2,700
Personal income per capita (\$)	22,940	18,588	-1.9%	17,573

<sup>a</sup> DOE/BLM projections.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce (2003).

**TABLE 3.9-4 County Housing Characteristics**

Type of Unit	1990	2000	2003 <sup>a</sup>
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

<sup>a</sup> 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