

PM₁₀ per day. Maximum fugitive dust emissions for the project site are therefore estimated to be 186 lb. PM₁₀ per day, decreasing to 121.9 lb. PM₁₀ per day and then to 102.8 lb. PM₁₀ per day.

4.2.2 Impacts from Transmission Line Operation

The newly installed transmission lines would require periodic maintenance of the transmission towers, insulators, and conductors. Operations and maintenance (O&M) would involve operators driving to the appropriate towers and performing the tasks required. This would generate additional traffic in the area, but should not be noticeable due to the existing traffic conditions generated mostly by the U.S. Border Patrol. Any increases in PM₁₀ generated by operations and maintenance procedures would be negligible.

4.2.3 Conformity Review

Section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act requires that federal actions conform to the appropriate State Implementation Plan (SIP). The final rule for “Determining Conformity of Federal Actions to State or Federal Implementation Plans” was promulgated by the U.S. EPA on November 30, 1993 (58 FR 63214), and took effect on January 31, 1994 (40 CFR Parts 6, 51, and 93). This rule established the conformity criteria and procedures necessary to ensure that federal actions conform to the SIP and meet the provisions of the Clean Air Act. In general, this rule ensures that all criteria air pollutant emissions and volatile organic compounds are specifically identified and accounted for in the SIP’s attainment or maintenance demonstration and conform to a SIP’s purpose of eliminating or reducing the severity and number of violations of the national ambient air quality standards and achieving expeditious attainment of such standards. If the action would be undertaken in a nonattainment or maintenance area, the provisions of the final rule for conformity apply.

The proposed action would be within an ozone and PM₁₀ nonattainment area in Imperial County. However, actions are exempted when the totals of direct and indirect emissions are below specified emissions levels [40 CFR §51.853(b)1]. The applicable level for PM₁₀ is 100 tons per year.

As illustrated in the preceding subsections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, PM₁₀ emissions are considered to be the principal emissions from the construction and maintenance of the transmission lines in Imperial County, California, and total approximately nine tons in the year of construction, and much less in subsequent years for maintenance thereafter—totals that are considerably less than the specified level of 100 tons per year.

Additionally, the provisions of the final rule do not apply in a nonattainment area if the emissions of concern are less than 10 percent of this area’s total emissions [40 CFR