

INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

RTI INFRASTRUCTURE, INC. GROVER BEACH SUBSEA FIBER OPTIC CABLES PROJECT

April 2020



CEQA Lead Agency: California State Lands Commission 100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100 South Sacramento, California 95825

Applicant:

RTI Infrastructure, Inc. 268 Bush Street, #77 San Francisco, CA 94104



MISSION STATEMENT

The California State Lands Commission provides the people of California with effective stewardship of the lands, waterways, and resources entrusted to its care through preservation, restoration, enhancement, responsible economic development, and the promotion of public access.

CEQA DOCUMENT WEBSITE

www.slc.ca.gov/ceqa/

Geographic Location (Point at Mean High-Water Line)

Latitude: 35° 07.21' N Longitude: 120° 38.09' W NAD83 Datum

Cover Photo: Looking at the cable landing site and staging area from Le Sage Drive (Photo courtesy of Devin Jokerst, ICF)

2 The California State Lands Commission (CSLC) is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) and has 3 prepared this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) that analyzes and 4 discloses the environmental effects associated with the proposed RTI Infrastructure, Inc. 5 Grover Beach Subsea Fiber Optic Cables Project (Project). The Project would authorize RTI 6 7 Infrastructure, Inc. (Applicant or RTI) to build telecommunication infrastructure on land 8 (terrestrial) and in ocean (marine) areas within and offshore of Grover Beach in San Luis 9 Obispo County. The infrastructure includes transpacific fiber optic cables that would carry 10 telecommunication data to connect the United States with Singapore, Guam, Hong Kong, and Australia (Figure ES-1). 11

- 12 The CSLC prepared an MND because it determined that, while the IS identifies potentially 13 significant impacts related to the Project, mitigation measures (MMs) incorporated into the
- 14 Project proposal and agreed to by the Applicant would avoid or mitigate those impacts to a
- 15 point where no significant impacts would occur.

16 **PROPOSED PROJECT**

- The Applicant proposes to install and operate up to four fiber optic cables using the following(Figure ES-2):
- Marine Cables: The Applicant would drop the transpacific cables on the ocean floor
 in water deeper than 5,904 feet and bury them when water is less than 5,904 feet
 deep.
- Cable Landing Site: This landing site would be in the Grover Beach parking lot. The Applicant would use this site to install landing pipes (each 5 or 6 inches in diameter) by using large horizontal directional drilling (HDD) equipment. The landing pipes would go at least 35 feet under Grover Beach and exit about 3,600 feet (0.6 mile) offshore and under 33 feet of water.
- Underground Conduit System: The Applicant would use small HDD equipment to install a 1.5-mile-long underground conduit system under the Grover Beach streets. The underground conduit system would end at an existing cable landing station in Grover Beach (Figure ES-2). This station would hold equipment for all four cables.
- This Project would be built in four phases. Phase 1 (year 2020) would be the initial phase that would build the infrastructure to receive up to four fiber optic cables and bring the very first fiber optic cable from Singapore to Grover Beach. Phase 2 (year 2021) would connect California to Guam. Phase 3 (year 2023) and Phase 4 (year 2025) would connect California to either Asia or Australia; it has not yet been determined which connection would be installed first.

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

The environmental issues checked below in Table ES-1 have the potential to be affected by this Project; a checked box indicates that at least one impact would be a "potentially significant impact." The Applicant has agreed to Project revisions, including implementation of MMs and Applicant proposed measures (APMs) that would reduce the potential impacts to "less than significant with mitigation," as detailed in Section 3.0, *Environmental Checklist and Analysis* of this MND. Table ES-2 lists the proposed MMs and APMs designed to reduce or avoid potentially significant impacts. With implementation of the proposed MMs and APMs, all Project-related impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels.

	Agriculture and Forestry Resources	🛛 Air Quality
Biological Resources	☐ Cultural Resources	Cultural Resources – Tribal
Energy	Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	 Hydrology and Water Quality 	Land Use and Planning
Mineral Resources	🖂 Noise	Population and Housing
Public Services	Recreation	☑ Transportation
Utilities and Service Systems	U Wildfire	Mandatory Findings of Significance

Table ES-1. Environmental Issues and Potentially Significant Impacts

Table ES-2. Summary of Mitigation Measures and Applicant Proposed Measures

Air Quality

MM AQ-1: Standard Control Measures for Construction Equipment

MM AQ-2: Best Available Control Technology

MM AQ-3: Fugitive Dust Mitigation

Biological Resources

MM BIO-1: Provide Environmental Awareness Training

MM BIO-2: Conduct Biological Surveying and Monitoring

MM BIO-3: Delineate Work Limits to Protect Sensitive Biological Resources

MM BIO-4: Install Metal Covers or Some Kind of Escape Ramps in Open Trenches

MM BIO-5: Implement Best Management Practices for Horizontal Directional Drilling Activities

MM BIO-6: Prepare and Implement an Inadvertent Return Contingency Plan

MM BIO-7: Conduct Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Surveys and Implement Avoidance Measures

Table ES-2. Summary of Mitigation Measures and Applicant Proposed Measures

MM BIO-8: Inspection and Burial of Cable

MM BIO-9: Cable Entanglements and Gear Retrieval

MM BIO-10: Prepare and Implement a Marine Wildlife Monitoring and Contingency Plan

MM BIO-11: Minimize Crossing of Hard Bottom Substrate

MM BIO-12: Contribute Compensation to Hard Substrate Mitigation Fund

MM BIO-13: Control of Marine Invasive Species

MM HAZ-1: Develop and Implement Spill Contingency and Hazardous Materials Management Plans

APM-1: Fishing Agreement

Cultural Resources

MM CUL-1/TCR-1: Discovery of Previously Unknown Cultural Resources

MM CUL-2: Conduct a Pre-Construction Offshore Archaeological Resources Survey

MM CUL-3: Conduct a Pre-Construction Offshore Historic Shipwreck Survey

MM CUL-4: Prepare and Implement an Avoidance Plan for Marine Archaeological Resources

MM CUL-5/TCR-3: Unanticipated Discovery of Human Remains

Cultural Resources – Tribal

MM CUL-1/TCR-1: Discovery of Previously Unknown Tribal Cultural Resources

MM CUL-2/TCR-2: Cultural Resources Monitoring

MM CUL-6/TCR-3: Unanticipated Discovery of Human Remains

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

MM GHG-1: Purchase GHG Carbon Offsets for Construction Emissions

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

MM HAZ-1: Develop and Implement Spill Contingency and Hazardous Materials Management Plans

MM BIO-1: Provide Environmental Awareness Training

MM BIO-3: Delineate Work Limits to Protect Sensitive Biological Resources

MM BIO-5: Implement Best Management Practices for Horizontal Directional Drilling Activities

MM BIO-6: Prepare and Implement an Inadvertent Return Contingency Plan

Hydrology and Water Quality

MM BIO-5: Implement Best Management Practices for Horizontal Directional Drilling Activities MM BIO-6: Prepare and Implement an Inadvertent Return Contingency Plan

MM HAZ-1: Develop and Implement Spill Contingency and Hazardous Materials Management

Plans

Noise

MM NOI-1: Construction Noise Control Plan

MM NOI-2: Construction Vibration Notification and Disturbance Coordinator

MM BIO-10: Prepare and Implement a Marine Wildlife Monitoring and Contingency Plan

Recreation

MM REC-1: Advanced Local Notice to Mariners

Table ES-2. Summary of Mitigation Measures and Applicant Proposed Measures

Transportation

MM REC-1: Advanced Local Notice to Mariners

APM-2: Marine Anchor Plan

Commercial Fisheries

APM-1: Fishing Agreement

APM-2: Marine Anchor Plan



Figure ES-1. Proposed Project Phases



Figure ES-2. Project Location