INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

RTI INFRASTRUCTURE, INC.
MANCHESTER SUBSEA CABLES PROJECT

April 2019

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: 39º 03.0’ N
Longitude: 123º 48.05’ W
NAD83 Datum

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(Photo courtesy of ICF)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) has been prepared by the California State Lands Commission (Commission or CSLC), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.), to analyze and disclose the environmental effects associated with the proposed RTI Infrastructure, Inc. Manchester Subsea Cables Project (Project). The Project would authorize RTI Infrastructure, Inc. (Applicant or RTI) to build the infrastructure in terrestrial and marine areas to be able to connect up to four fiber optic cables coming from Asia and Australia (Figure ES-1).

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

PROPOSED PROJECT

As the world relies on faster digital media and telecommunication systems (cell phones, Internet, voice, streaming videos, banking transactions, shopping online, etc.), the data transferring systems need to be updated to keep up with the technical advancements to transmit uninterrupted telecommunication data. The proposed Project is going to help transmit telecommunication data at a much faster speed with more connections between the United States and Asia and the United States and Australia (Figure ES-1).

The Project would be located both on land (terrestrial) and in ocean (marine) areas just north of the unincorporated town of Manchester, Mendocino County. The terrestrial components of the telecommunication cable systems would be located above submerged lands, or above the ordinary high-water mark to the onshore cable landing parcel (CLP) (Figure ES-2). The initial support facilities, including the horizontal directional drilling of four marine steel bore pipes offshore (5 or 6 inches in diameter), would be constructed in 2019 and 2020 for all of the cables coming to Manchester from 2020 until 2025. The four different routes in the ocean stabilize and diversify telecommunications connections in case of disasters interrupting data exchange.

Each cable would arrive offshore, it would be pulled through a marine steel bore pipe, and then brought on land to the CLP. Each cable would then be routed through an underground conduit system on both sides of State Route 1 (SR 1) and public roads to connect with one of the three existing cable landing stations in Manchester that would transmit signals to the technical hubs in Silicon Valley (south of San Francisco) (Figure ES-2).

The marine cables coming from Asia or Australia (Figure ES-1) would cross the Pacific Ocean, cross the continental shelf, would be pulled through the newly installed marine

steel bore pipes under the beach and bluff, and exit on land in the CLP (Figure ES-2). Each cable would be laid directly on the seafloor where the water is deeper than 5,904 feet. If the water is less than approximately 5,904 feet deep, then each cable would be buried. Depending on seafloor substrate, the cable would be plowed or post-lay buried under the seafloor.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

The environmental issues checked below in Table ES-1 would be potentially 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 the 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.

Table ES-1. Environmental Issues and Potentially Significant Impacts

☐ Aesthetics	☐ 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	☐ Wildfire	☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance

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

Biological Resources
MM BIO-1: Provide Environmental Awareness Training
MM BIO-2: Conduct Biological Surveying and Monitoring
MM BIO-3: Delineate Work Limits and Install Temporary Construction Barrier Fencing to Protect Sensitive Biological Resources
MM BIO-4: Identify and Avoid Sensitive Biological Resources through Use of Directional Boring
MM BIO-5: Implement Best Management Practices for Horizontal Directional Drilling and Directional Boring Activities
MM BIO-6: Prepare and Implement an Inadvertent Return Contingency Plan

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

MM BIO-7: Prepare and Implement a Site Restoration Plan
MM BIO-8: Install Escape Ramps in Open Trenches
MM BIO-9: Conduct Surveys for Point Arena Mountain Beaver
MM BIO-10: Limit Construction Period to Minimize Impacts on Point Arena Mountain Beaver
MM BIO-11: Avoid Point Arena Mountain Beaver Populations and Burrows
MM BIO-12: Survey for and Avoid Behren's Silverspot Butterfly and Lotis Blue Butterfly Habitat
MM BIO-13: Conduct Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Surveys and Implement Avoidance Measures
MM BIO-14: Conduct Appropriately Timed Floristic Surveys of Remaining Areas
MM BIO-15: Inspection and Burial of Cable
MM BIO-16: Cable Entanglements and Gear Retrieval
MM BIO-17: Prepare and Implement a Marine Wildlife Monitoring and Contingency Plan
MM BIO-18: Boring Beneath Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas
MM BIO-19: Locate Work and Staging Areas for the CLP and Associated Facilities outside Wet Meadow Habitat
MM BIO-20: Minimize Crossing of Hard Bottom Substrate
MM BIO-21: Contribute Compensation to Hard Substrate Mitigation Fund
MM BIO-22: Control of Marine Invasive Species
MM HAZ-1: Hazardous Materials Management and Contingency Plan
MM HYDRO-1: Prepare and Implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
Cultural Resources
MM CUL-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
MM CUL-5: Unanticipated Discovery of Human Remains
Cultural Resources – Tribal
MM TCR-1: Discovery of Previously Unknown Tribal Cultural Resources MM TCR-2: Tribal Cultural Resources Treatment Plan
Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources
MM HYDRO-1: Prepare and Implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
Greenhouse Gas Emissions
MM GHG-1: Purchase GHG Carbon Offsets for Construction Emissions
Hazards and Hazardous Materials
MM HAZ-1: Hazardous Materials Management and Contingency Plan
MM HAZ 2: Contaminated Materials Management Plan
MM HYDRO-1: Prepare and Implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
MM BIO-5: Implement Best Management Practices for Horizontal Directional Drilling and Directional Boring Activities
MM BIO-6: Prepare and Implement an Inadvertent Return Contingency Plan

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

Hydrology and Water Quality
MM HYDRO-1: Prepare and Implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
MM HAZ-1: Hazardous Materials Management and Contingency Plan
MM HAZ-2: Contaminated Materials Management Plan
MM BIO-5: Implement Best Management Practices for Horizontal Directional Drilling and Directional Boring Activities
MM BIO-6: Prepare and Implement an Inadvertent Return Contingency Plan
MM BIO-7: Prepare and Implement a Site Restoration Plan
Noise
MM N-1: Restrict Terrestrial Construction Work on Sundays
Recreation
MM T-1: Publication of U.S. Coast Guard Local Notice to Mariners
Transportation
MM N-1: Restrict Terrestrial Construction Work on Sundays
MM T-1: Publication of U.S. Coast Guard Local Notice to Mariners
Commercial Fisheries
APM-1: Fishing Agreement
APM-2: Marine Anchor Plan

Figure ES-1. Proposed Cable System Alignments

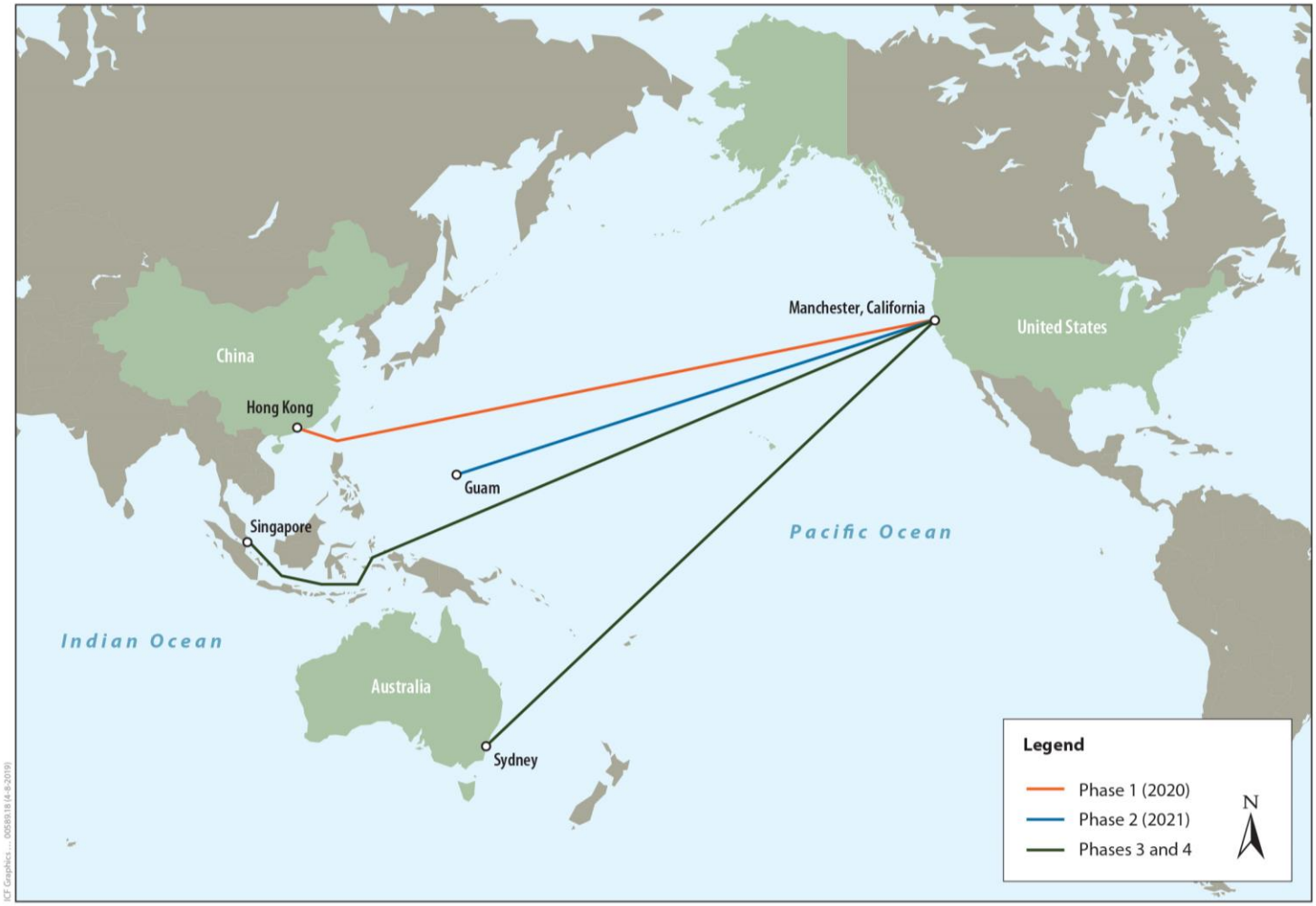

Figure ES-2. Project Location