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Facility closure of the Project can be either temporary or permanent. Facility closure will include plans for all structures on the 473 surface acres, underground objects, and associated linear facilities such as transmission lines, water pipelines, and the carbon dioxide pipeline.

Facility closure can result from two circumstances: (1) the power plant is closed suddenly or unexpectedly due to unplanned circumstances, such as a natural disaster or other unplanned event; or (2) the power plant is closed in a planned, orderly manner, such as at the end of its useful economic or mechanical life or due to gradual obsolescence. Temporary and permanent closure processes are discussed in the following sections.

3.1 TEMPORARY CLOSURE

Temporary or unplanned closure can result from a variety of unforeseen circumstances ranging from natural disaster to economic forces. For a short-term unplanned closure, the power plant will be kept “as is,” ready to resume operating when the unplanned closure event is resolved or ceases to restrict operations.

Depending on the expected duration of the shutdown, chemicals may need to be drained from storage tanks and other equipment in accordance with prudent safety practices. The Project will develop a site-specific Emergency Action Plan/Emergency Response Plan, as described in Section 5.7, Worker Safety and Health. Premature closure or unexpected cessation of plant operations will be outlined in the Project’s closure plan. The plan will outline steps to secure hazardous and non-hazardous materials and wastes. Such steps will be consistent with best management practices and the Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) described in Section 5.12, Hazardous Materials Handling. All waste (hazardous and non-hazardous) will be disposed of according to the laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards (LORS) that are in effect at the time of the closure. Additionally, appropriate notification will be made to authorities and the public. Additional details regarding the management and disposition of hazardous and nonhazardous wastes are provided in Section 5.13, Waste Management. Project personnel will receive appropriate training for the type of emergency that is being addressed, and other emergency response actions will be taken, as needed. Project Site security will be retained so that the Project Site will remain secure from trespassers. With the implementation of these measures, impacts related to a temporary plant closure will be less than significant.

3.2 PERMANENT CLOSURE

The design life of the Project is 20 years. However, if the power plant is economically viable at the end of the 20-year operating period, it could continue to operate for a longer period of time. As Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle (IGCC) projects continue to upgrade their generation equipment and maintain the equipment up to industry standards, there is every expectation that the power plant will have value beyond its planned life. However, it is also possible that the Project could become economically non-competitive before 20 years has transpired, forcing early decommissioning. Whether or not the power plant is closed before or after 20 years, procedures set forth in a decommissioning plan will be implemented. The decommissioning plan to be prepared is described below.

To protect public health, safety, and the environment, and to conform with applicable LORS, the decommissioning plan will be submitted to the California Energy Commission (CEC) for review prior to commencement of permanent closure measures. Such measures may range from extensive “mothballing” to removal of all equipment and appurtenances, depending on circumstances at the time. However, future conditions that will affect decommissioning decisions are largely unknown at this time. It is therefore appropriate to present decommissioning details to the CEC and other jurisdictional agencies when more information is available and the time for permanent closure has drawn closer. With the implementation of the closure mitigation measures below, impacts related to permanent facility closure will be less than significant.

Closure Mitigation

At the time of Project closure, decommissioning will be completed in a manner that protects the health and safety of the public and workforce and that will have no significant environmental impacts. One year prior to a planned closure, Hydrogen Energy International (HEI or Applicant) will submit a specific decommissioning plan that will include the following:

- Identification, discussion, and scheduling of the proposed decommissioning activities of the Project with the CEC and other appropriate regulatory agencies.
- Description of the measures to be taken that will ensure the safe shutdown and decommissioning of all equipment, including the draining and cleaning of all tankage, and the removal of any hazardous materials or waste, inactive feedstock storage, etc.
- Identification of all applicable LORS in effect at the time, and how the specific decommissioning will be accomplished in accordance with LORS.
- Required notifications to federal, state, and local agencies, including the CEC.
- Consideration of reuse of the land as opposed to taking additional land for future industrial or commercial purposes. Once land is used for industrial or commercial purposes, it rarely reverts back to its natural state. If the Project Site is to return to its agricultural state, the specific decommissioning plan will include discussion covering the removal of all aboveground and underground objects and material, and an erosion control plan that is consistent with sound land management practices. In general the proposed decommissioning measures will attempt to maximize recycling of all facility components. Unused chemicals and oils will be sold or shipped back to the suppliers where practicable. Those not sold back will be collected and disposed of in accordance with applicable LORS in appropriate landfills or waste collection facilities if they cannot be recycled. Until decommissioning activities have been completed, 24-hour security for the Project Site will be maintained.

In the event of an unplanned closure due to earthquake damage, natural disaster, or other circumstances, the Project owner will meet with the CEC and local agencies and submit a detailed decommissioning closure plan in a timely manner. No decommissioning plan will be submitted for a temporary shutdown.