

8.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Analyzing the potential constraints and issues associated with future development of offshore oil and gas leases involves several inherent limitations. The primary limitations of the study are identified herein.

1. The potential production and development scenarios set forth in the study are based on current information regarding the economics and technical capabilities associated with the extraction, transportation, and processing of the estimated offshore reserves of oil and gas. The economics of oil and gas development change over time. Production lifetime estimates could therefore change based upon the future value of the resources and the future costs to extract them. In turn, project impacts and the identification of environmentally preferred alternatives can be highly dependant on how long a future project may be in operation. This study extrapolates future conditions from present information and conditions.
2. This analysis was not intended as, and does not provide, a CEQA level review of any potential project. No project descriptions were available to support any specific and detailed project review. Instead, the study incorporates basic assumptions about the projected kinds and level of potential onshore development that could be proposed to support new offshore production. The analysis that led to the selection of potential processing sites did not incorporate any formal risk analysis to determine potential hazards to public safety. The analysis does not attempt any formal air quality modeling. Risk analysis and air quality modeling would be required as part of CEQA review of any application for a new processing facility.
3. Detailed site surveys were not conducted at any of the potential sites, and one of the potential sites has not yet been accessible. In depth analysis of the potential sites may provide additional information that would change the order in which the sites identified in this study have been ranked. A full CEQA alternatives analysis may reveal additional sites that would be environmentally preferable to those identified herein.
4. The information in the study addressing potential processing sites is more thorough and reflects a higher level of certainty than the information regarding potential transportation corridors to and from those sites. The information on potential pipeline corridors has been provided in the study to allow a comparison of the transportation issues that play a large role in determining feasible and environmentally preferable processing sites. The pipeline corridor information provides as much guidance as possible about what appear, preliminarily, to be feasible and preferable routes. A full CEQA alternatives analysis may reveal additional pipeline corridors that would be environmentally preferable to those identified herein.
5. The final destination of sales products from future oil and gas development is unknown. The study assumes that the Santa Maria Refinery in San Luis Obispo County or the All-American Pipeline may be destinations for pipelined crude oil from the existing undeveloped leases. The study also assumes that the heavy crude that cannot be transported by pipeline may require transportation by truck or rail to other destinations north, south, or east of the County.

North County Siting Study

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