

# Chapter 4. Irreversible or Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

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## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This discussion identifies the irreversible commitment of natural resources over the long term which would be consumed or committed without potential for future recovery. The concept of irreversible or irretrievable applies to resources which remain unavailable long after the project is terminated and restored and long after it has ceased providing benefits.

Irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources involves the commitment of resources which are not recyclable or making other resources unavailable for future use. This includes resources which are no longer retrievable, beyond the life of the project. For example, building a large shopping center over a coal or oil deposit may make these resources inaccessible. Cutting old-growth forest for various uses may commit this resource for hundreds of years before it is ~~retrievable~~ from regrowth. Use of any nonrenewable energy is a resource commitment.

The following sections discuss resources for which irreversible or irretrievable commitments might occur from the proposed project. Such commitments are not expected for threatened and endangered species, water, air quality, transportation, agriculture, recreation, or public services and utilities.

While construction of the pipeline would result in minor to moderate short-term impacts on habitats, an irreversible commitment of these resources is not anticipated. Protection of habitat during the construction and operation of this proposal would be conditioned by state and federal permits.

The cultural resource programmatic agreement would address mitigation so that no such irreversible commitment of cultural resources would occur.

## 4.2 PROJECT IMPACTS

Construction impacts could result in the loss of five populations of state sensitive and threatened plants as discussed in Section 3.4. This loss would be irretrievable unless the pipeline is routed to avoid these species.

Steel, concrete, and similar materials can be recycled at the end of the project's useful life if economically feasible and/or if this is made a condition of approval. That portion of the energy consumed by the pump stations which is not renewable (hydro, solar) would be irretrievable. Overall energy consumption of non-renewable energy would be less for the proposal than for No Action.

### **4.3 NO ACTION**

Accidents affecting the health or loss of life of people, whether from the project or from No Action, would be an irretrievable loss.

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