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CalCapture CCS Project

Visual Impact Assessment



Prepared for:
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management subsidiary of California Resources
Corporation

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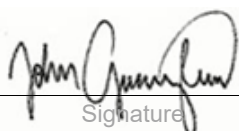
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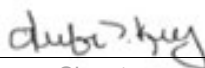
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Acronyms / Abbreviations

Acronym / Abbreviation	Full Name
CA-	California State Highway
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CalGEM	California Geologic Energy Management Division
CCS	Carbon Capture and Sequestration/Storage
CCU	Carbon Capture Unit
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulation
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
CRC	California Resources Corporation
CTV	Carbon TerraVault Holdings, LLC
CTV1	Carbon TerraVault I
CUP	Conditional Use Permit
the CUP	Collectively, CUP No. 13, Map 118; CUP No. 14, Map 118; CUP No. 5, Map 119; CUP No. 3, Map 120; CUP No. 2, Map 138; and CUP No. 6, Map 119
EHOF	Elk Hills Oilfield
EHPP	Elk Hills Power Plant
EFG+	Econamine FG Plus sm
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GIS	geographic information system
GT	gas turbines
HDD	horizontal directional drilling
HRGSs	Heat Recovery Steam Generators
Kern County	Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department
KOP	key observation point
kv	kilovolt
M	magnitude
MDB&M	Mount Diablo Base and Meridian
MM	mitigation measure
MTPD	metric tons per day
MMPY	million metric tons per year
MWe	megawatt equivalent
NOD	Notice of Determination
Project	CalCapture Carbon Capture and Sequestration Project
RO	reverse osmosis
Stantec	Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
ST	steam turbine
UIC	Underground Injection Control
U.S. EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



CalCapture CCS Project – Visual Impact Assessment

Acronyms / Abbreviations

Acronym / Abbreviation	Full Name
VIA	Visual Impact Assessment
VSA	visual study area
3D	three-dimensional



1 Introduction

Stantec Consulting Services Inc. (Stantec) has prepared this Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) on behalf of Carbon TerraVault Holdings, LLC (CTV), a carbon management subsidiary of California Resources Corporation (CRC) for the CalCapture Carbon Capture and Sequestration (CCS) Project (Project) located in the Elk Hills Oilfield (EHOF), in Kern County, California. The Project location and vicinity are shown in Appendix A, Figures A1 and A2. While the Project in its entirety consists of a carbon dioxide (CO₂) capture facility, an approximately 0.5-mile-long CO₂ pipeline route, water supply and wastewater pipelines, and electrical transmission line, this VIA focuses on the visibility and effects to views from the CO₂ capture facility, adjacent to the south of the existing Elk Hills Power Plant (EHPP) and in the vicinity of CRC's Cryo-Genic Plant. Other above-ground Project components (e.g., field office) will likely be obscured by the existing topography or facilities or appear to blend into the broader landscape in typical views from publicly accessible areas.

1.1 Project Summary

The proposed Project would capture carbon dioxide (CO₂) generated as a by-product by CRC's 550-megawatt-equivalent (MWe) Elk Hills Power Plant (EHPP), located in the EHOF near Tupman, Kern County, California. The EHPP was commissioned in 2003 and is powered by two General Electric 7FA gas turbines (GTs), with two heat recovery steam generators (HRSGs) providing steam to a General Electric D11 steam turbine (ST). The Carbon Capture Unit (CCU), not including pipelines or temporary staging and parking areas, would be located immediately south of the EHPP in a 7.64-acre existing disturbed area.

Implementation of the Project will require approval of a Petition for Modification Application from the California Energy Commission (CEC), who has the exclusive authority for licensing thermal power plants of 50 MW or larger, as well as related transmission lines, fuel supply lines, and other facilities.

The CCU would utilize Fluor's Econamine FG PlusSM (EFG+) process to capture and concentrate the CO₂. The EFG+ process is designed to capture 95 percent of the CO₂ from the total flue gas feed to the unit. The EFG+ CCU can be divided into seven primary subsystems or sections: Flue Gas Cooling, CO₂ Absorption, Solvent Regeneration, Solvent Maintenance, Chemical Storage and Supply, CO₂ Compression, and Utility Support Systems. The treated flue gas is vented to the atmosphere directly from the EFG+ CCU plant absorber. The concentrated CO₂ would then be compressed, dehydrated, and stripped of oxygen prior to conveyance to the permitted manifold pad, permitted as part of the approved Carbon TerraVault I (CTV I) project (State Clearinghouse No. 2022030180), which will direct the CO₂ to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) approved Class VI Underground Injection Control (UIC) wells to be injected into a depleted oil and gas reservoir located on the CRC property and approved as part of the CTV I project. The previously approved CTV I manifold pad, injection wells, depleted oil and gas reservoir and related facilities further discussed in Section 1.2 below are not part of the CalCapture CCS Project analyzed in this report.



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A new, approximately 0.5-mile, 8- to 10-inch pipeline, installed primarily below ground utilizing either trenching or horizontal directional drilling (HDD) techniques, would transport the CO₂ from the CCU to the tie-in with the Carbon TerraVault I (CTV I) permitted 35R manifold facility (pad). It is anticipated that the proposed Project would capture approximately 4,400 metric tons of CO₂ per day (MTPD) (1.6 million metric tons of CO₂ per year [MMTPY]). The proposed Project is estimated to be in operation for up to 26 years.¹

Water use during operation of the CalCapture CCU would be minimized by the inclusion of a hybrid cooling system (Wet Surface Air Coolers [WSAC], air coolers, secondary glycol cooling, and water cooling). Additionally, the CCU would be equipped with a water treatment system, consisting of a reverse osmosis (RO) Unit that is designed to recover and reuse water from the Cooling Tower blowdown. The recovered water is utilized as make-up to the CO₂ absorption system and the Wash Water WSAC Basin. A wastewater stream (less than 10 gallons per minute) would be collected at the CalCapture CCU and transferred by a new surface pipeline to the EHPP for disposal via an existing UIC Class I injection well.

The proposed Project includes a single connection to the CRC Power System and would include a connection of a new 115-kilovolt (kV) transmission line to a new CRC electrical substation. The proposed Project would require a new transmission tie line to connect the Project switching station to the existing CRC substation. Electrical power would be supplied to the CalCapture Substation with a new dedicated electrical transformer. The new 115-kV transmission tie line is expected to be built using pre-engineered steel poles with anchor bolt foundation designs.

During construction, temporary offices and existing parking areas would be used by construction personnel. Temporary office and parking areas have been designated on previously disturbed areas to the south and northeast of the Project site. Two additional areas are located approximately 5.5 miles southeast of the Project site. There are no permanent new buildings proposed for the Project, and no grading would occur within the temporary office and parking areas. Total temporary staging and parking area would be approximately 30.74 acres.

1.2 CTV I Background Information

On December 31, 2024, the U.S. EPA issued four UIC Class VI well permits to CTV, a carbon management subsidiary of CRC.

The specific U.S. EPA permits issued for the four wells are as follows:

- R9UIC-CA6-FY22 1.1 for well 373-35R
- R9UIC-CA6-FY22 1.2 for well 345C-36R
- R9UIC-CA6-FY22 1.3 for well 353XC-35R

¹The life of the project is dependent on the sources permitted for injection into the CTV I approved storage reservoir, the ability of the project year by year to obtain CO₂ and inject at the maximum 2,210,000 million tons per year, and the total estimated storage capacity of up to 48 million tons of CO₂.



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1 Introduction

- R9UIC-CA6-FY22 1.4 for well 363C-27R

These four wells would be utilized to inject the CO₂ captured from the proposed Project into the Monterey Formation 26R storage reservoir located approximately 6,000 feet below the ground surface. The CTV I project area is located within the EHOF, which is a suitable area for long-term CO₂ storage and sequestration. The CTV I project was designed to implement sustainable CCS in support of California's initiative to combat climate change by reducing CO₂ levels in the atmosphere.

In addition to the Class VI Permit, CTV obtained a land use permit from the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department (Kern County) in 2024. Specifically, the CTV I project was approved by the Kern County Board of Supervisors on October 21, 2024, based on a final Environmental Impact Report (EIR, State Clearinghouse #2022030180) prepared by Kern County and certified by it on the same date. A Notice of Determination was filed with the Kern County Clerk on October 22, 2024. The CTV I project is subject to the terms, conditions and restrictions set forth in the Conditional Use Permits (CUP) issued by Kern County and identified as CUP No. 13, Map 118; CUP No. 14, Map 118; CUP No. 5, Map 119; CUP No. 3, Map 120; CUP No. 2, Map 138; and CUP No. 6, Map 119 (collectively, "the CUP"). Implementation of the CUP authorizes the construction and operation of underground CO₂ facility pipelines to support the CTV I CCS facility and related infrastructure (e.g., injection/monitoring wells, CO₂ manifold piping and metering facilities) within the 9,104-acre project site, located within the EHOF.

Four monitoring wells permitted by the California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM), as part of the CUP issued by Kern County for the CTV I project would be used for CO₂ monitoring. In addition, six CTV I permitted wells would be used to monitor for seismic activity. The seismic monitoring wells will be used to detect seismic events at or above magnitude (M) 1.0 in real time as required by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) CCS Protocol under the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) (C.4.3.2.3). Additionally, the California Integrated Seismic Network will be monitored continuously for indication of a 2.7 M or greater earthquake or greater occurring within a 1-mile radius of injection operations from commencement of injection activity to its completion.

Monitoring activities would extend beyond the injection phase of the Project pursuant to Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Title 40 Section 146.93 until site closure is granted. Monitoring requirements during post-injection are similar to those during injection, with activities such as sampling occurring quarterly and monitoring well integrity testing at frequency per U.S. EPA requirement.

As noted above, the facilities approved as part of the CTV I project, including but not limited to the manifold, pad, injection wells, monitoring wells and related transmission lines, pipelines and other related facilities that have already been approved by applicable agencies with jurisdiction over those facilities, including the U.S. EPA, CalGEM and Kern County, are not included as part of the proposed Project. Accordingly, such facilities are not analyzed in this report.



1.3 Project Location

The Project is located within the EHO in the southwestern edge of the San Joaquin Valley near Tupman in Kern County, California.

The Project comprises portions of six parcels owned by CRC. The Project is contained within the following sections of EHO: sections 26, 34, and 35 of Township 30 South Range 23 East and sections 10 and 11 of Township 31 South Range 24 East, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian (MDB&M), Kern County, State of California (Table 1). The proposed Project would be located on approximately 52 acres within the identified parcels.

Table 1 Project Parcel Data

Assessor's Parcel Number	Section/ Township/ Range	Acreage*
158-090-19	Section 35/ Township 30S/ Range 23E	590.61
158-090-16	Section 35/ Township 30S/ Range 23E	14.78
158-090-02	Section 26/ Township 30S/ Range 23E	640
158-090-04	Section 34/ Township 30S/ Range 23E	682.86
298-070-05	Section 11/Township 31S/Range 24E	640
298-070-06	Section 10/Township 31S/Range 24E	640

Notes:

Assessor's parcel acreages from Kern County Web Map ([Kern County GIS](#), 2025).



2 Existing Conditions / Environmental Setting

The Project is located centrally within the EHO, which is roughly bound by California State Highway (CA-) 33, located approximately 6.5 miles to the southwest; CA-119, located approximately 6 miles to the southeast; U.S. Interstate 5, located approximately 9 miles to the northeast; and CA-58, located approximately 8 miles to the northwest. The Project is located at the intersection of the north-south oriented Elk Hills Road and east-west oriented Skyline Road, both of which bisect the EHO. The rolling to hilly landscape in the vicinity of the Project appears relatively barren and is dominated by oil and gas extraction operations and associated activities; more rugged terrain may be found to the southeast along the Temblor Range, starting at approximately 9 miles from the Project. The landscape transitions to agriculture approximately 4.5 to 5 miles northeast and 7.5 miles southeast of the Project. Other land uses within a 10-mile radius include recreational areas (e.g., Tule Elk Reserve and Buena Vista Golf Course), airstrips, light-industry, and communities of various sizes.

Communities within the vicinity of the Project are most common along the aforementioned state and federal highways that surround the EHO. The largest community, the City of Taft (and adjoined census-designated places), is located approximately 8 miles south of the Project at the junction of CA-33 and CA-119. The City of Taft includes residential development and a variety of other services, such as commerce (e.g., restaurants, stores, hotels), recreation (e.g., local parks and recreational fields), education (e.g., Taft City Schools and Taft College), places of worship, and an airport. Several other small communities are found along major roadways; these unincorporated communities, such as Tupman, Dustin Acres, Valley Acres, Derby Acres, and Buttonwillow, are primarily residential and offer a limited variety of other services. The closest of these communities, Dustin Acres, is approximately 5 miles from the Project. The communities and designated lands with public access are shown in Appendix B, Figure B1.

Outside the communities, there are few potential visual sensitive resources within the defined visual study area (VSA) (refer to Section 3 for discussion of the VSA). These resources (local, State or Federally protected areas) and other publicly owned lands are mapped on Figure B1 and include: Franklin Field (Ford City), A.W. Noon Park, (portion of) Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area, Tule Elk State Preserve, Lokern Ecological Reserve, Buttonwillow Park (Buttonwillow), Interstate 5, and State Routes 119, 33, and 58. These resources have been identified as they are public property (e.g., recreational uses) that have the ability to draw a higher number of users.

Potential viewers of the Project include workers, residents, motorists/commuters, and recreationists. Views range from focused to expansive, and viewers are likely habituated to the visual presence of the oil field and its many pumping units, pipelines, and other structures.



2.1 Regulatory Setting

Visual resources identified in plans, policies, or other applicable regulations that could be affected by the Project are discussed below. This is not a complete list of every law, ordinance, regulation, or other standard related to the Project or Project site.

2.1.1 California Environmental Quality Act

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that the state take all action necessary to provide the people of the state “with...enjoyment of aesthetic, natural, scenic and historic environmental qualities” (California Public Resources Code, Section 21001[b]). Section 5, Environmental Analysis, includes a preliminary analysis of potential visual impacts in accordance with the CEQA Appendix G checklist.

2.1.2 California State Scenic Highway Program

The California Scenic Highway Program was created by the Legislature in 1963 and is managed by the Landscape Architecture Division of the California Department of Transportation. Its purpose is to protect and enhance the natural scenic beauty of California highways and adjacent corridors through special conservation treatment. A highway may be designated scenic depending on how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon travelers’ enjoyment of the view.

There are no segments of any designated California State Scenic Highway in Kern County; CA-14 and CA-58, both in eastern Kern County and outside the VSA, are eligible for designation (Caltrans, 2023). The nearest designated California State Scenic Highway is in Ventura County, approximately 34 miles south of the Project.

2.1.3 Kern County General Plan

The Project site is located within the Taft Priority Area (the area from Buena Vista Lake, west to Fellows, and from Maricopa north to the former Elk Hills Petroleum Reserve) as identified in the Kern County General Plan Area (Kern County, 2011). Scenic and aesthetic resources identified in this document include oak woodlands, Scenic Highway Corridors, and, in general, natural resources. As part of the General Plan, the following is noted:

1. “Evaluation of applications for any General or Specific Plan Amendment to an industrial designation will include sufficient data for review to facilitate desirable new industrial development proposals consistent with General Plan policies, using the following criteria and guidelines:”

Implementation Measure 4: “Design, layout, and visual appearance coordinated with existing adjacent industrial uses.” (p. 49).



2. Scenic Route Corridors Implementation Measure 4: “Suggested preservation of the scenic and aesthetic elements of the visual environment.” (p. 105). Of note, as described in this General Plan, no designated scenic corridors are in proximity.

2.1.3.1 Land Use, Conservation, and Open Space Element

The Project site is located within the Kern County General Plan area and is therefore subject to the goals, policies and implementation measures of the Land Use, Conservation, and Open Space Element.

2.1.3.1.1 *Light and Glare*

Policies

Policy 47. Ensure that light and glare from discretionary new development projects are minimized in rural as well as urban areas.

Policy 48. Encourage the use of low-glare lighting to minimize nighttime glare effects on neighboring properties.

Implementation Measure

Implementation Measure AA. The County shall utilize the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines and the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance to minimize the impacts of light and glare on adjacent properties and in rural undeveloped areas.

2.1.3.2 Kern County Zoning Ordinance

2.1.3.2.1 *Outdoor Lighting “Dark Skies Ordinance”*

Chapter 19.81 of the Kern County Zoning Ordinance identifies requirements for outdoor lighting in unincorporated areas of Kern County to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Encourage a safe, secure, and less light-oriented nighttime environment for residents, businesses, and visitors.
2. Promote a reduction in unnecessary light intensity and glare, and to reduce light spillover onto adjacent properties.
3. Protect the ability to view the night sky by restricting unnecessary upward projections of light.
4. Promote energy conservation and a reduction in the generation of greenhouse gases by reducing wasted electricity that can result from excessive or unwanted outdoor lighting.

2.1.3.3 Kern County Development Standards

The Kern County Development Standards have specific regulations pertaining to lighting standards, including the requirement that lighting must be designed so that light is reflected away from surrounding land uses so as not to affect or interfere with vehicular traffic, pedestrians, or adjacent properties.



3 Methods

A comparison of the Project site existing conditions and the change to the landscape that would result from implementation of the Project is based on visual simulations. As a part of this process, Stantec visual resources specialists reviewed aerial imagery to identify where the Project could be visible from visually sensitive areas and selected preliminary viewpoints for site photography.

In addition to reviewing aerial imagery, Stantec developed a viewshed analysis, which is a geographic information system (GIS)-based line-of-sight exercise based on project feature heights and surrounding terrain. The viewshed analysis was based on the Project's tallest feature, the absorber, and included the 10-mile area around the Project, which is referred to as the VSA (see Appendix B, Figure B1). The output is a two-dimensional map indicating areas likely to have some visibility of the Project feature. The Project's viewshed analysis is based on the following four points:

- Direct Contact Cooler at 93 feet in height,
- Absorber at 271 feet in height,
- Stripper at 131 feet in height, and
- CO₂ Vent Stack at 100 feet in height.

The output of the viewshed analysis is based solely on topography and does not account for vegetation or structures that may obstruct views. As such, the output of the viewshed analysis is considered to be conservative.

Stantec conducted field surveys on April 4, 2025, to photo-document current visual conditions and views toward the Project site from various locations within the VSA. A representative subset of photographed viewpoints was selected for use as Key Observation Points (KOPs), which collectively serve as the basis for this assessment. The KOP locations are shown in Appendix C, Figure C1. Assessments of existing visual conditions were made based on professional judgment and considered sensitive receptors and sensitive viewing areas in the lands surrounding the Project site.

The view from each KOP was photographed using a 35-millimeter, 53-megapixel, full-frame, single lens reflex camera equipped with a 50-millimeter fixed focal length lens. This configuration is the industry-accepted standard for approximating the field of vision in a static view of the human eye. The camera positioning was determined with a sub-meter global positioning system. The camera was positioned at eye-level for each photograph.

The site photos were used to generate a rendering of the existing conditions with proposed representation of the implemented Project. The visual simulations provide clear before and after images of the location, scale, and visual appearance of the features affected by and associated with the Project. The simulations were developed through an objective analytical and computer-modeling process (i.e., a three-dimensional [3D] computer model was created using a combination of AutoCAD files and GIS layers and exported to Autodesk's 3DI Studio Max for production). A Project model was developed using engineering data



provided by CRC and is representative of the Project based on the available information. Existing and simulated views for each of the five KOPs are provided in Appendix C

Rating sheets identifying contrast between existing and proposed conditions as seen from each KOP are included in Appendix D. Landscape components related to visual character and quality are based on selected concepts from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) VIA for Highway Projects (FHWA, 2015). The FHWA method is an established, defensible approach, appropriate for use in assessments in which most or all of the assessed views are from roadways.

Relying on observations during site photography and the resulting images of views toward the Project, visual resources specialists evaluated the existing visual character related to the natural and cultural (or man-made/influenced) environments. The visual quality of existing conditions for each KOP was assigned a rating based on a scale ranging from “very low” to “very high” for the natural harmony, cultural order, overall coherence, and landscape composition and vividness evident in each view. This assessment was replicated for the simulated images showing the Project as it would be seen from each KOP. Stantec established a visual quality rating for each view showing proposed conditions. The difference in visual quality rating for each view between existing and proposed conditions established the degree of contrast in visual quality from the Project. Potential sources of contrast related to visual character typically described in terms of form, line, color, and texture were also identified and discussed as appropriate.



4 Description of Potential Visual Effects

This section identifies the selected KOP locations and why they were chosen. It also describes views from each KOP, first under existing conditions, and then with the Project simulated. Descriptions here summarize the more detailed content included in the worksheets attached as Appendix D.

4.1 Selection of KOPs

Based on the identification of visually sensitive resources, viewshed mapping, field verification, and set of KOPs photographed, Stantec identified five locations that represent the general ranges of viewer sensitivities, landscapes, and land uses. These are locations/viewpoints that:

- Provide open, representative views toward the Project from publicly accessible observation points located in different directions and distances within the VSA;
- Represent representative resources within the VSA; and
- Illustrate open views of the Project that may be available to representative viewers/users (e.g., residents, commuters and visitors) from publicly accessible locations.

The simulated KOP locations are identified in Table 2.

Table 2 Viewpoints Selected for Visual Simulations

KOP ¹	Location	Approximate Distance Between KOP and Project
1	Elk Hills Road	0.45 miles
2	Elk Hills Road	4.92 miles
3	California State Highway 58	9.0 miles
4	Tule Elk State Natural Reserve	7.0 miles
5	California State Highway 119	6.0 miles

Notes: See Appendix C, Figure C1.

In selecting the KOPs identified in Table 2, it should be recognized that the water supply and wastewater lines will be either underground or on the ground, and for the most part be located within the 74 square mile boundaries of the Elk Hills Oil and Gas Field. Public access in this area is restricted, thus KOPs are not identified or defined for these features.



4.2 Description of KOPs – Existing and Proposed

4.2.1 KOP 1: Elk Hills Road

4.2.1.1 Existing View

KOP 1 is located on Elk Hills Road, approximately 0.45 miles south-southeast of the Project (see Appendix C, Figure C2a). This relatively short-distanced view was selected to represent commuters and to a lesser extent other travelers within the EHOF. The visual quality of the view from KOP 1 is moderately low. The foreground features a sparse sagebrush landscape, which contains scattered man-made vertical elements (e.g., fence posts, utility poles, markers), and is bisected by Elk Hills Road and an adjacent gravel road. This view is from a lower elevation, and the hill's crest in the middleground prevents longer-distanced views. However, the uphill angle of the view calls attention to oil field components that are visible against the sky, including the EHPP, portions of the oil treatment plant, an angular pumping unit, streetlights, and utility poles. The density of visible man-made structures in the middleground suggests it is an area of greater development. No other land use is evident.

4.2.1.2 View of the Project

With the Project in place (see Appendix C, Figure C2b), the visual quality of the view from KOP 1 would be low with implementation of the development. The upper portions of the proposed structures (e.g., absorber, direct contact cooler, stripper, CO₂ vent stack) are visible from this location. While the structures would be consistent in character with their immediate surroundings, they would be comparatively larger, appearing at a scale to which no other structures compare. The adjacent visible EHPP appears smaller than the Project; the tallest EHPP structure is the HRSG stack, which is 120 feet tall.

The absorber and direct contact cooler would particularly stand out as they are unique structures that are not similar to others in view. Similarly to the EHPP and other visible structures (e.g., utility poles), they extend above the landform, so they are seen against the background blue sky. The color of the Project will be similar to that of the EHPP,² other visible man-made elements, and the undeveloped landscape. The additional vertical, horizontal, and diagonal lines introduced by the Project will be similar to those seen at the EHPP; the numerous utility poles, fence poles, and markers throughout the view; and the roads edge and markings receding from the observer.

² The proposed absorber, due to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, may need to be painted with alternating bands of aviation orange and white to enhance daytime visibility; this is a requirement for permanent structures exceeding 200 feet above ground level. A final determination on whether this will be required is based on final FAA approval.



Observers at this vantage point would be traveling along Elk Hills Road, so the Project will be seen at an increased speed, appear at varying sizes (smaller with increased distance), and may be screened due to topographic relief. The duration of this view will be dependent on the vehicle rate of speed.

4.2.2 KOP 2: Elk Hills Road

4.2.2.1 Existing View

KOP 2 is located on Elk Hills Road, approximately 4.92 miles south-southeast of the Project (see Appendix C, Figure C3a). This viewpoint was selected to represent longer-distanced views experienced by commuters and to a lesser extent other travelers along Elk Hills Road. The location overlooks Elk Hills Road, receding into a shallow valley, and affords an unobstructed view towards the southern portion of the EHO and the Project site. The visual quality of the view from KOP 2 is moderately low. It is characterized by a hilly sagebrush landscape with man-made elements, such as utility poles, street signs, and utility markers scattered throughout the foreground. Patches of denser development are visible in the middleground, along Elk Hills Road, and in the background, where development associated with the EHO (e.g., transmission towers and the EHPP) and oil treatment plant is visible against the sky.

4.2.2.2 View of the Project

With the Project in place (see Appendix C, Figure C3b), the visual quality of the view from KOP 2 will remain moderately low. The upper extent of the absorber, stripper and direct contact cooler is visible atop the hilltop skyline and seen against the background sky. The Project is mostly obscured by topography, and its scale is significantly reduced due to its distance from the observer. In addition, the presence of other structures/facilities are seen along the ridgeline, appearing similar in scale.

The color of the Project will be similar to that of the surrounding landscape setting, and other visible man-made elements. The additional vertical and horizontal lines introduced by the Project will be similar to those seen at the existing facility to the left of the proposed facility, the numerous utility poles, fence poles and markers throughout the view, and the roads edge and markings receding from the observer.

Observers at this vantage point would be traveling along Elk Hills Road, so the Project will be seen at an increased speed, appear at varying sizes (smaller with increased distance) and may be screened due to topographic relief. The duration of this view will be dependent on the vehicle rate of speed.

4.2.3 KOP 3: California State Highway 58

4.2.3.1 Existing View

KOP 3 is located on CA-58, approximately 9 miles north-northwest of the Project (see Appendix C, Figure C4a). This viewpoint was selected to represent views experienced by travelers along the roadway. KOP 3 overlooks a dirt road that enters a landscape that is relatively flat in the foreground and middleground but becomes hilly to mountainous in the background. This unobstructed view affords visibility in the direction of the Project. The visual quality of KOP 3 is moderately low. The landscape has a primarily natural



appearance; however, large lattice transmission structures and smaller monopole structures are visible throughout and dominate the view. Varied geometric shapes are faintly visible in the elevated background and along the ridgeline, indicative of additional man-made elements. Taken as a whole, this scene has little variability; the natural landscape is fairly homogenous, and distinguishable man-made elements are limited to utility infrastructure.

4.2.3.2 View of the Project

With the Project in place (see Appendix C, Figure C4b), the visual quality of the view from KOP 3 would remain moderately low. Generally, the upper extent of the absorber is visible, but minimally, atop the distant ridgeline and seen against the background sky. The Project is mostly obscured by topography, and the scale of the absorber is significantly reduced due to its distance from the observer. In addition, the presence of the numerous transmission structures seen closest to the observer clutters and interrupts the longer-distanced view toward the Project.

The color of the Project will be similar to that of the surrounding landscape setting and, to a lesser extent, to that of the blue-white sky. The additional vertical line introduced by the Project, when noticeable, will be similar to those seen in the near transmission structures. The industrial nature of the Project is consistent with the uses seen within view.

Observers at this vantage point would be traveling along CA-58, so the Project will be seen at an increased speed. While the duration may be long due to the road orientation and length, it will not be a static view and its visibility will be dependent on the vehicle rate of speed and not likely in a driver's normal field of view required to drive along a state highway.

4.2.4 KOP 4: Tule Elk State Natural Reserve

4.2.4.1 Existing View

KOP 4 is located within Tule Elk State Natural Reserve, approximately 7 miles northeast of the Project off Station Road (see Appendix C, Figure C5a). The view from KOP 4 is representative of visitors or workers at the natural reserve. KOP 4 overlooks a relatively flat grassland in the foreground and middleground, which transitions into a hilly landscape in the background. This unobstructed view affords visibility to the southwest, in the direction of the Project. The visual quality of KOP 4 is moderate. Although the foreground and middleground primarily contain natural elements, the grassland is fairly uniform and lacks distinguishing features. The view is also largely devoid of discernable man-made elements, except for utility poles that can be seen scattered along the distant middleground. Man-made elements are also faintly visible among the hills in the background. Thus, this view is characterized by its relatively homogenous natural landscape.

4.2.4.2 View of the Project

With the Project in place (see Appendix C, Figure C5b), the visual quality of the view from KOP 4 would remain moderate. The upper extent of the absorber, stripper, direct contact cooler and CO₂ vent stack are barely visible atop the distant ridgeline and seen against the background sky. The Project is mostly



obscured by topography, and the scale of the absorber is significantly reduced due to its distance from the observer.

The color of the Project will be similar to that of the surrounding landscape setting and, to a lesser extent, to that of the blue-white sky. The additional vertical lines introduced by the Project, when noticeable, will be similar to those seen within the landscape (i.e., fence posts). This is an open rural view, and the industrial nature of the Project is only a minor part of the overall setting.

Observers at this vantage point would have a more static view of the Project from the nature reserve. Therefore, the duration of view may be longer, as compared to a moving view found travelling along a roadway.

4.2.5 KOP 5: California Highway 119

4.2.5.1 Existing View

KOP 5 is located along CA-119, approximately 6 miles southeast of the Project near the Valley Acres community (see Appendix C, Figure C6a). The view from KOP 5 is representative of travelers, commuters, or residents of Valley Acres. The visual quality from KOP 5 is low. This location overlooks CA-119 and a commercial property, which is used for heavy equipment storage and a series of office trailers. The landscape's elevation increases beyond the commercial property, allowing longer-distanced views towards the Project. The uphill angle of the view towards the background allows large, distant structures to be visible against the sky, including some of those associated with the EHOFF and oil treatment plant. Although the EHOFF is visible in the background, the commercial property dominates the view.

4.2.5.2 View of the Project

With the Project in place (see Appendix C, Figure C6b), the visual quality of the view from KOP 5 would remain low. The upper extent of the absorber, stripper, direct contact cooler and CO₂ vent stack are seen against the background sky. The Project is mostly obscured by topography, and the scale of the absorber is significantly reduced due to its distance from the observer. The presence of the agricultural equipment and structures, seen closest to the observer, clutters and interrupts the longer-distanced view toward the Project. In addition, the presence of other structures/facilities are seen along the ridgeline, appearing similar in scale.

The color of the Project will be similar to that of the surrounding landscape setting and, to a lesser extent, to that of the blue-white sky. The additional vertical lines introduced by the Project, when noticeable, will be similar to those seen in the near transmission structures. The industrial nature of the Project is consistent with the uses seen within view.

Observers from this vantage point would be traveling along CA-119, so the Project will be seen at an increased speed. Although the duration of the view may be long due to the road orientation and length, it will not be static. Its visibility will be dependent on the vehicle's rate of speed and may not be consistently in a driver's normal field of view that is required to drive along a state highway. Valley Acres is adjacent to this



CalCapture CCS Project – Visual Impact Assessment

4 Description of Potential Visual Effects

location; it is anticipated that, in contrast to those traveling along the highway, residents would encounter static, long-duration views. However, those residents with the greatest potential for Project exposure would be found on the west and northwest side of Valley Acres where the EHOFF and oil treatment plant would also be visible.



5 Environmental Analysis

This VIA will inform the Project's eventual evaluation of potential environmental impacts under CEQA. There are four CEQA criteria for Aesthetics. Each is presented here as a question, with preliminary assessments of impact to visual resources provided.

5.1 Significance Criteria

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Environmental Checklist,³ the following questions are to be analyzed and evaluated to determine whether aesthetics impacts are significant. Would the proposed project:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?
- b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?
- c) In nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?
- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

5.2 Impact Analysis

5.2.1 VIS-1 Impact Analysis

Impact VIS-1 Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

No impact. Scenic vistas are typically expansive views from elevated areas. They may or may not be part of a designated scenic overlook or other area providing a static panoramic view of a landscape.

No known designated scenic vistas or overlooks are found within the VSA. Consequently, the Project cannot and would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista during construction, operation, or decommissioning. Available broad views, which are not designated vistas, would also include other

³Appendix G Environmental Checklist Form, Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, 2023



portions of the EHO, an industrial landscape within which the Project would appear consistent in visual character. The Project would not substantially alter the view towards the Project.

5.2.2 VIS-2 Impact Analysis

Impact VIS-2 Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

No Impact. There are no officially designated or eligible state scenic highways in the study area (Caltrans, 2023). Therefore, the Project would not substantially damage any scenic resources within a state scenic highway. There would be no impact.

5.2.3 VIS-3 Impact Analysis

Impact VIS-3 Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Less than significant with mitigation. The Project is located in a rural area of unincorporated Kern County, surrounded by the EHO, and is therefore not located in an urbanized area. This area is a highly modified energy landscape characterized entirely by the equipment and activities associated with oil extraction, power generation, and electricity transmission. This visual character is observable in publicly accessible views from surrounding areas. Panoramic or broad views show the extent to which the rural lands surrounding the Project site are developed with a variety of infrastructure, including power facilities, pumpjacks, pipelines, roads, structures, and transmission lines.

Construction Impacts

Short-term impacts on the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings may occur during construction. Construction-related activities would occur in areas with existing oil and gas operations. All equipment would be assembled off site to the extent practical and transported to the proposed location for installation, thus minimizing the duration of a visual impact during construction. Some major facilities could require longer-duration onsite erection or final assembly and interconnection. The use of heavy equipment, possibly including cranes, is expected for the duration of construction of the Project facilities.

Vehicle and equipment operations may produce visible dust during land-clearing operations and from traveling on unpaved roadways. Pile rigs, and possibly cranes, are likely to be visible from long distances silhouetted against the sky. Ground-level activities, such as land clearing and site preparation, require equipment, such as bulldozers, excavators, loaders, and dump trucks. Foundation and facility construction activities would require large delivery vehicles and concrete trucks. The local increase in general vehicular traffic could be a source of visual impact, depending upon the number of trips to and from a specific area. On-site parking could be noticeable during construction if certain sites require a larger number of workers. However, adverse visual impacts of construction activity would be temporary and limited to the duration of



construction only, which is 24 to 30 months (2.5 years). Because the construction activities would not result in a permanent alteration of visual resources, and given their temporary nature, the project's construction-related aesthetic impacts would be considered less than significant.

Operational Impacts

The Project would consist of a carbon dioxide (CO₂) capture facility, an approximately 0.5-mile-long CO₂ pipeline route, water supply and wastewater pipelines, and electrical transmission line, in an area that is a highly modified energy landscape characterized entirely by the equipment and activities associated with oil extraction, power generation, and electricity transmission

Long-term operational impacts on the existing visual character or quality of the site would be minimal, given the presence of similar looking structures in the existing area and its surroundings. Any increases in the number of facilities would be marginal in comparison to existing facilities and infrastructure and would closely resemble facilities and infrastructure already on site.

Given all of this, the presence of the Project in the simulated representative views—summarized in Section 4, Description of Potential Visual Effects, and detailed in the worksheets attached as Appendix D—would not substantially degrade existing visual character or visual quality. While the scale of the Project would, in some views, slightly alter the pattern of development and overall coherence of the view, it would not do so to any extent that existing visual quality, as assessed, would be reduced. The Project would appear consistent with the existing visual character of the EHO. Rather, it would appear in broad views as a minor addition to an already developed/altered landscape, and to those who may be on Elk Hills Road, in relative proximity, may witness an acute intensification of the Project with many of the same components visible in the wider landscape. It is anticipated that most people traveling on this roadway may be on their way to work at the EHO, EHPP, or adjacent power generating facilities. These individuals are currently exposed to the type of infrastructure being proposed as part of the Project.

Implementation of MM VIS-1 and MM VIS-2 will further reduce the Project's impact to a less than significant level.

5.2.4 VIS-4 Impact Analysis

Impact VIS-4 Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Less than significant with mitigation. The absorber column would be illuminated for aircraft safety, in accordance with FAA Obstruction Marking and Lighting standards (FAA, 2024). Nighttime lighting is currently present within the EHO, EHPP and other nearby facilities, and the additional lighting would be consistent with the existing nighttime views toward the Project.

Construction Impacts

Most construction activities are likely to occur during daylight hours. While lighting may not be required during this time, there is a chance of glare reflecting off of temporary facilities that support construction and



other activities such as storage of materials/equipment, and staging and parking areas. Any construction activities that are to be undertaken at night will require artificial lighting, which will be short-term and temporary. This type of lighting will be needed for drilling activities, vehicle and equipment activities, and for various activities such as providing safety, security, construction, or any other similar temporary activity.

The potential for glare is not significant but may occur. Glare would primarily result from reflectance of sunlight off light-colored surfaces and be dependent upon the location of the sun and orientation of the operation elements relative to viewers. Glare may also be temporarily associated with construction material and for longer-term during operations of the facility. Overall, glare may be subject to construction material and environmental considerations (e.g. atmospheric conditions). Any adverse visual impacts due to construction glare and lighting will be temporary and limited to the duration of construction only, which is 2.5 years.

Operational Impacts

Activities associated with the operation of the Project, once constructed, are likely to create new sources of light including those light sources relevant to the safety and security of the facility and its workers. These light sources may reflect off the surface of individual facility components and may cast a wider angle of light across a more visible area. In addition, individual structural components of the facility would require additional lighting that would affect nighttime views. However, these lights will appear similar to that seen at adjacent, or nearby facilities, reducing the potential impact.

Project components are likely to create glare during daytime hours; if there is substantial glare, this could adversely affect views towards the Project. Components that have a polished or light-colored finish, such as pumping units, tanks, and pipes, can reflect light when the right environmental conditions (e.g. time of day, sunny, lack of haze, etc.) are present. However, given the limited number of receptors (e.g., commuters) that would be traveling on Elk Hills Road and given that the potential for glare would only occur at specific times of day from specific angles, the potential for operation-related glare is less than significant.

Implementation of MM VIS-2 requires compliance with Kern County Zoning Chapter 19.81 – Outdoor lighting “Dark Sky Ordinance,” which is designed to reduce unnecessary night lighting and minimize impacts on surrounding properties and protect Kern County’s rural character. To that end, the Ordinance includes several requirements for the reduction of impacts associated with nighttime lighting, such as lighting height restrictions, a prohibition on most upward facing lighting, preparation of an Outdoor Lighting plan, as necessary, and limitations on wattages and lumens near residences. These requirements would reduce any potential impacts associated with Project construction lighting, which would be temporary, and operational lighting to a less than significant level.



6 Mitigation Measures

Although this Project is sited within a landscape setting that already contains various energy related infrastructure, implementation of the following MMs will minimize perceived or potential visual impacts:

MM VIS-1: Any Project signage is limited to directional, warning, safety, security and identification signs in connection with oil, gas, or other hydrocarbon drilling and development operations in accordance with applicable Kern County Zoning Ordinance.

MM VIS-2: Any new lighting, including permanent nighttime lighting, safety, security, and operational lighting shall comply with the standards in Kern County Zoning Chapter 19.81 – Outdoor Lighting “Dark Sky Ordinance.” Appropriate lighting shall also address FAA lighting standards/requirements.



7 Cumulative Analysis

Due to the Project's location within an existing oil and gas field, the impacts of the Project together with the impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future oil and gas development, including wells and abandonment activity to implement CCS projects, constitute cumulative impacts. The geographic scope for cumulative impacts to aesthetic and visual resources is considered the EHO and surrounding viewshed. Analysis of cumulative impacts takes into consideration the entirety of impacts regarding cumulative projects would have on aesthetics and visual resources. This geographic scope of analysis is appropriate because the visual quality within this area is expected to be similar to that of the Project site because of its proximity, similar environment and landform, and would result in similar land use. The CTV I project, currently under construction within the EHO, would also comply with County requirements to address visual resources impacts. Finally, Kern County has prepared an EIR evaluating the potential impacts (including contributions to cumulative impacts) of oil and gas development in connection with previously proposed amendments to the Kern County Zoning Ordinance: Final Environmental Impact Report - Revisions to the Kern County Zoning Ordinance - 2015(C) Focused on Oil and Gas Local Permitting, certified on November 9, 2015, supplemented by a Supplemental EIR certified on December 11, 2018; an SREIR certified on March 8, 2021; and an Addendum adopted on August 23, 2022. The Oil and Gas EIR is referenced herein as a source of information regarding cumulative impacts from oil and gas development (Kern County 2024).

Cumulative impacts to aesthetic and visual resources, overall are likely to be minimal. The Project would be consistent with the existing industrial character (temporary and/or long term⁴) already existing within the EHO. To experience a cumulative impact, visibility of the Project and other facilities must be within the view being experienced by the observer. Since visibility of the Project would be consistent with the industrial character of the area, the proposed Project along with cumulative development would not result in a significant visual impact from public viewpoints. Additional MMs to reduce cumulative impacts to a less than significant level are not required.

⁴ Long term impacts are generally thought to lessen over time due to repeated exposure.



8 Conclusions

The Project will consist of the construction of a CCS facility adjacent to the existing EHPP and within the existing EHOF. Portions of the Project will be visible within the surrounding landscape; however, this visibility will be at a greater distance to the general public. At increased distances between the Project and observer, the Project would be identifiable if the observer knew where to look and had comprehension of the facility and changes to the landscape. Along the California State Routes, a portion of the Project will be seen protruding atop the ridgeline and in most instances seen as part of the overall industrial landscape. Closer views may be found along Elk Hills Road, but it is anticipated that this is not a well-traveled commuter route for the surrounding communities. Those traveling on Elk Hills Road are likely workers traveling to the EHOF, EHPP or adjacent power generating facilities, and they are already exposed to the type of infrastructure being proposed by the Project. Based on this analysis, the Project would not be visible to any degree that visual character or quality would be substantially altered.



9 References

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Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). 2015. Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects. (FHWA-HEP-15-029.)

Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department (Kern County). 2011. Land Use, Open Space & Conservation Element – Kern County General Plan. Taft Priority Area. Available at: https://psbweb.kerncounty.com/planning/pdfs/kcgp/kc_gp_pa_taft.pdf Accessed April 2025.

———. 2004. Revised Update of the Kern County General Plan. Available at: [Kern County General Plan Revised Program EIR - Volume 1, Chapters 1-8/](#) Accessed April 2025.

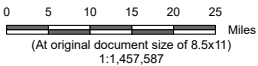
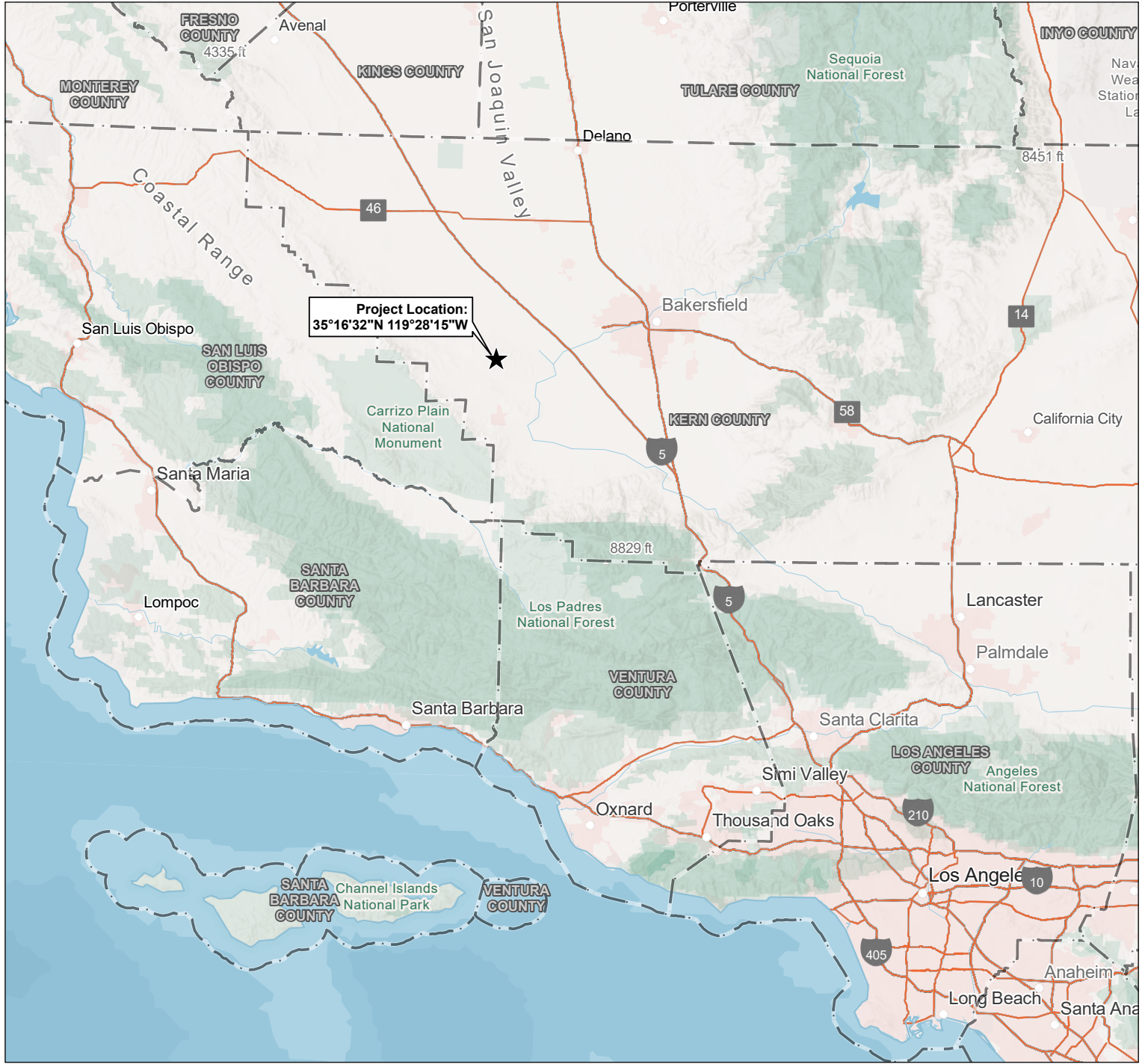


APPENDICES



Appendix A Site Location





- Notes**
1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N
 2. Data Sources: USGS National Map; Esri Living Atlas of the World; Client: Stantec
 3. Background: Stantec World Topographic Map; National Geographic Style Base: Sources: Esri, USGS National Geographic Style: Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community World Hillshade: Esri, USGS



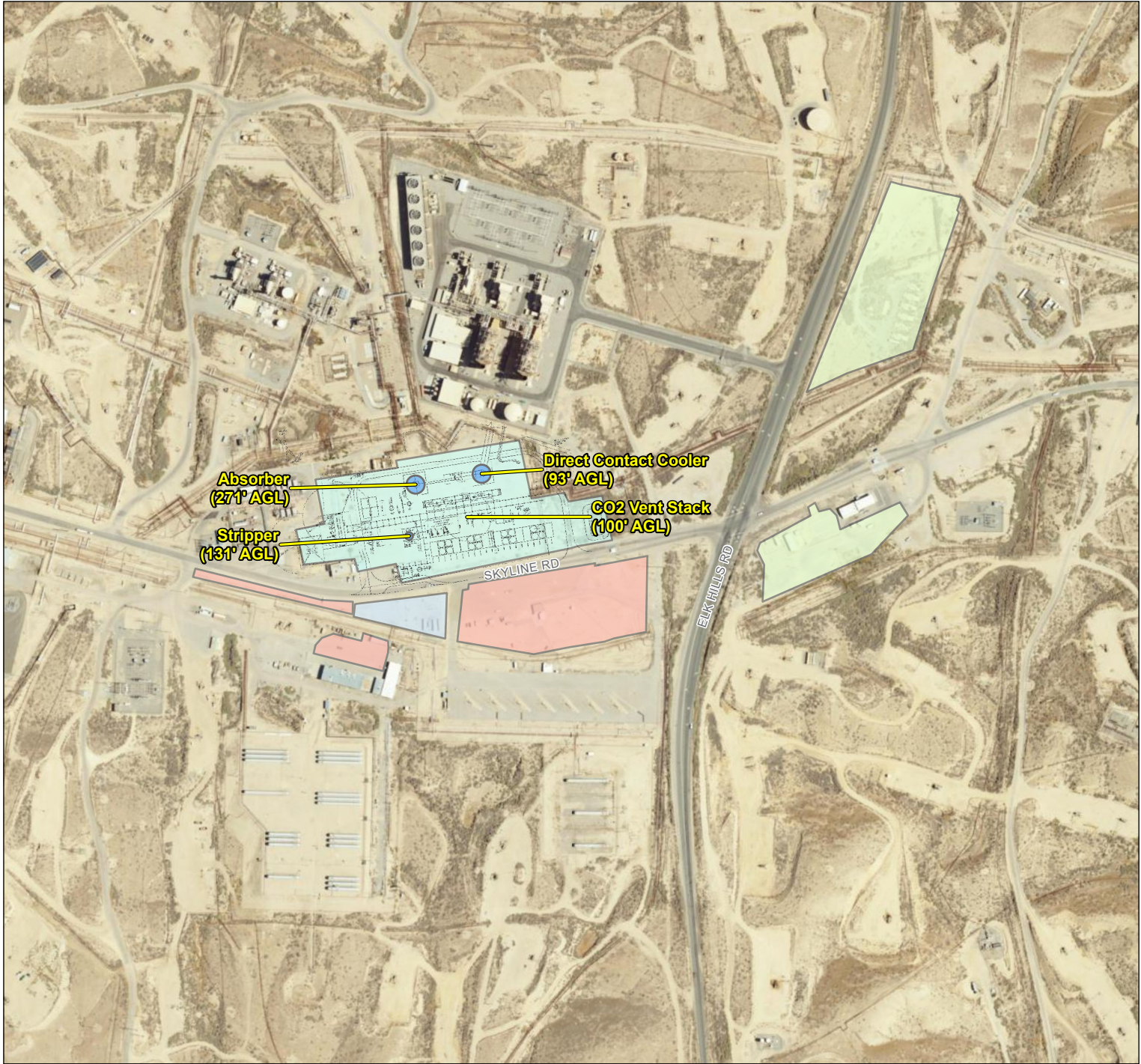
Project Location
Kern County,
California

Prepared by JZ on 2025-06-04
TR by JG on 2025-06-04
IR by JG on 2025-06-04

Client/Project
California Resources Corporation
CalCapture Carbon Capture Sequestration Project

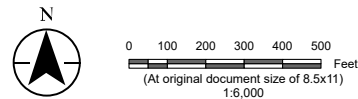
Figure No.
A1

Title
Project Location

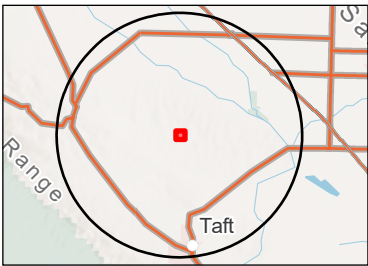


Legend

- Carbon Capture & Sequestration Site
- Site Offices
- Primary Parking Area
- Overflow Parking Area



Notes
1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 2011 UTM Zone 11N
2. Data Sources: USGS National Map; Esri Living Atlas of the World; Client
3. Background: Stantec World Topographic Map:
NAP Imagery: Source: Esri, USDA FSA
World Imagery (Firefly): Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community
Dark Gray Base: Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
World Hillshade: Esri, CGIAR, USGS



Project Location
Kern County,
California

Prepared by JZ on 2025-07-02
TR by JG on 2025-07-02
IR by JG on 2025-07-02

Client/Project
California Resources Corporation
CalCapture Carbon Capture Sequestration Project

185806775

Figure No.
A2

Title
Project Layout

Appendix B Viewshed Map



Appendix C Photographic Simulations



Legend

-  Key Observation Point (KOP) with Direction of View
-  Interstate Highway
-  State Route
-  Tule Elk State Reserve
-  County Boundary
-  Division Boundary
-  City Boundary
-  Topographic Viewshed



0 1 2 3 Miles
(At original document size of 8.5x11)
1:200,000

Notes
 1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 2011 UTM Zone 11N
 2. Data Sources: USGS National Map; Esri Living Atlas of the World; Client
 3. Background: USGS Topo; USGS The National Map; National Boundaries Dataset, 3DEP Elevation Program, Geographic Names Information System, National Hydrography Dataset, National Land Cover Database, National Structures Dataset, and National Transportation Dataset; USGS Global Ecosystems; U.S. Census Bureau TIGER/Line data; USFS Road data; Natural Earth Data; U.S. Department of State HII; NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information. Data refreshed February, 2025.
 National Geographic Style Base: Sources: Esri, USGS
 National Geographic Style: Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
 World Hillshade: Esri, USGS

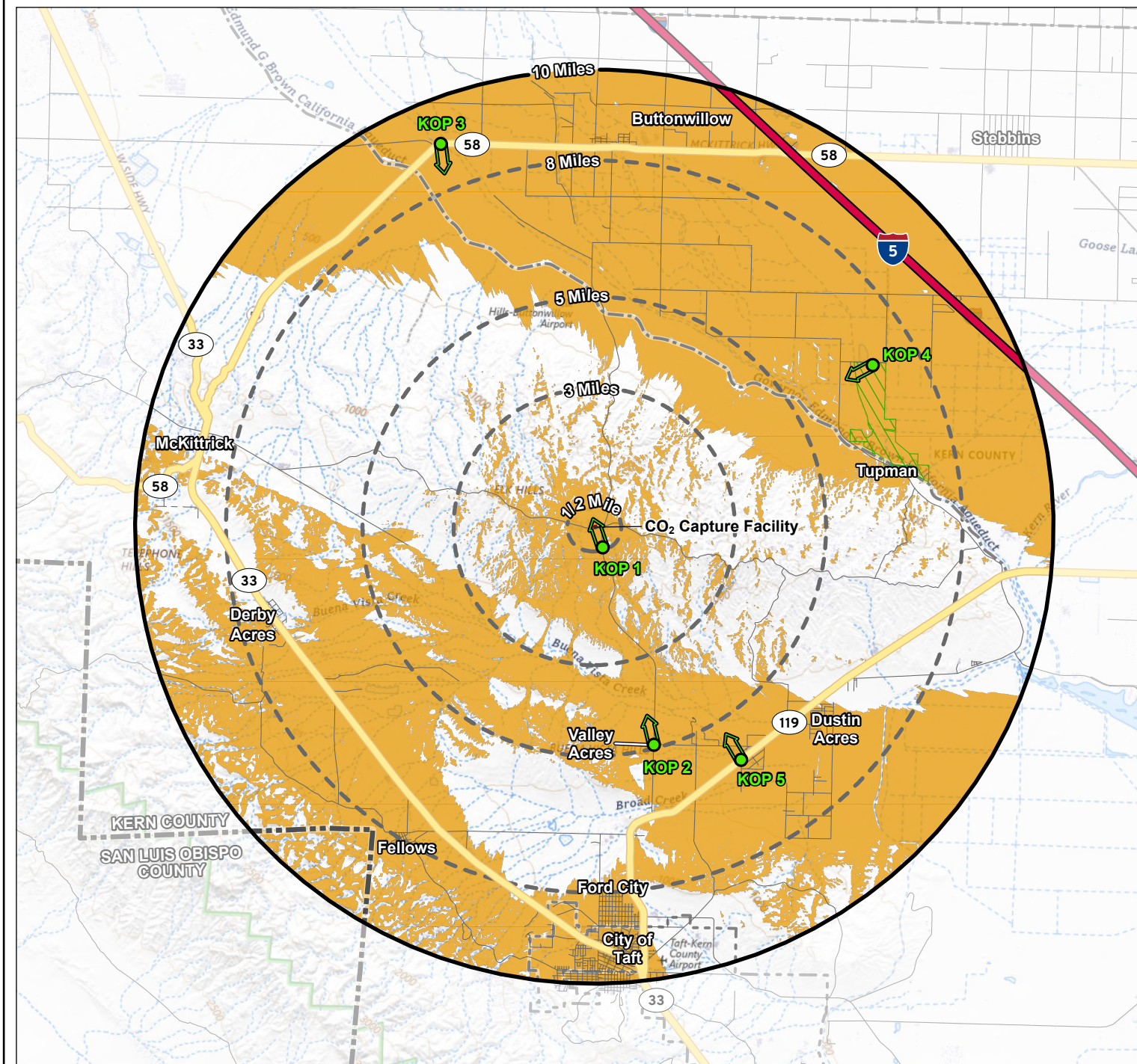


Project Location: Kern County, California
 Prepared by: JZ on 2025-06-04
 TR by JG on 2025-06-04
 IR by JG on 2025-06-04

Client/Project: California Resources Corporation
 CalCapture Carbon Capture Sequestration Project
 185806775

Figure No.: C1

Title: **Simulation Locations with Topographic Viewshed**





Existing View.



Proposed View.

Photograph Data:

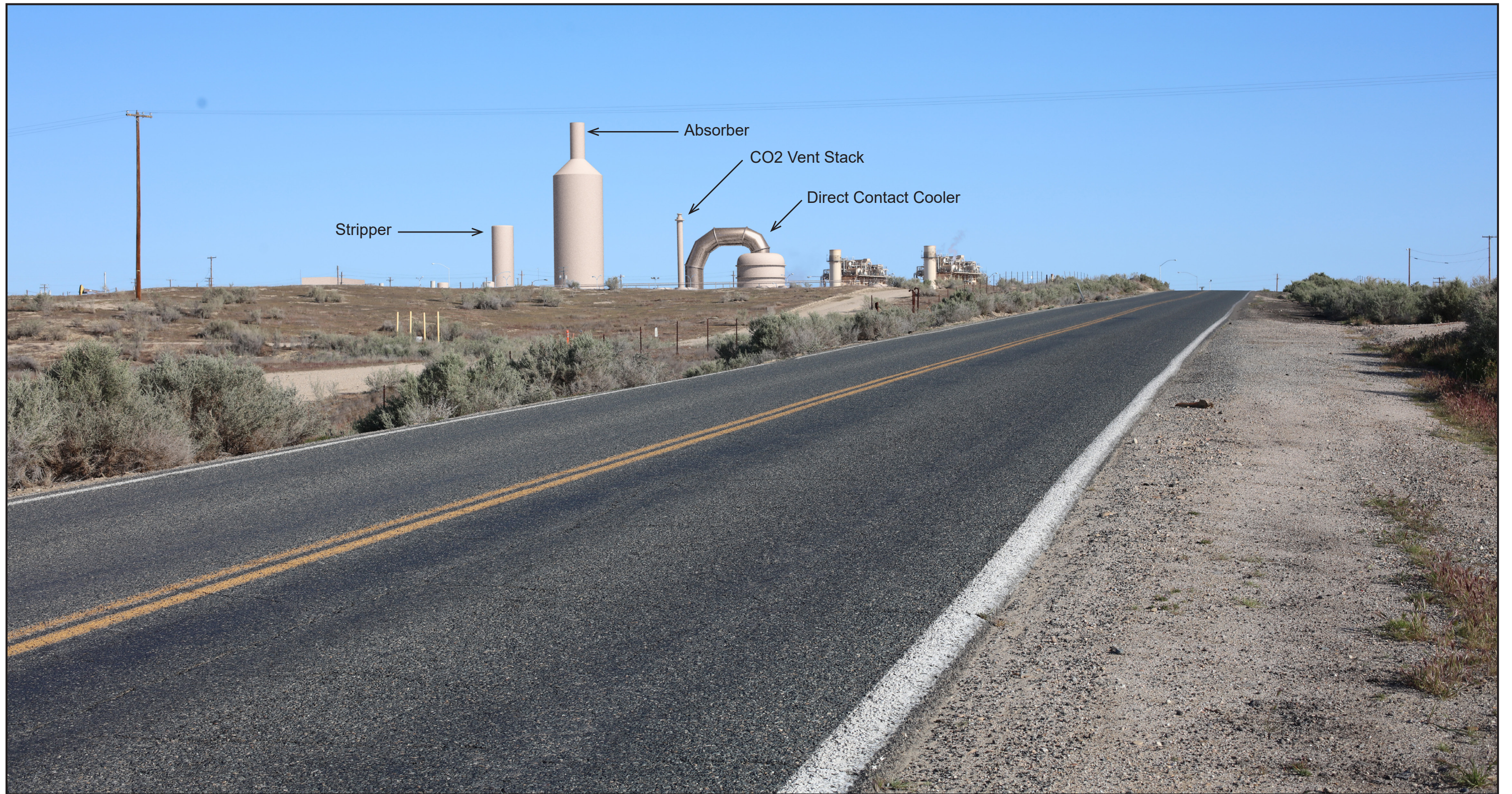
Latitude / Longitude:	35° 16' 19.17"N, 119° 28' 2.32"W
Photography Date / Time:	April 4, 2025, 8:42 a.m.
Camera Make / Model:	Canon EOS 5DS R
Focal Length:	50mm
Photographer:	Stantec



Existing Northwest View from Elk Hills Road.



Proposed View.



Proposed View - Annotated.



Existing View.



Proposed View.

Photograph Data:

Latitude / Longitude:	35° 12' 34.07"N, 119° 26' 43.85"W
Photography Date / Time:	April 4, 2025, 12:32 p.m.
Camera Make / Model:	Canon EOS 5DS R
Focal Length:	50mm
Photographer:	Stantec



Existing Northwest View from Elk Hills Road.



Proposed View.



Client/Project
California Resources Corporation
CalCapture Carbon Capture Sequestration Project
Kern County, California

Figure No.
C3b

Title
KOP 2 - Elk Hills Road



Proposed View - Annotated.



Existing View.



Proposed View.

Photograph Data:

Latitude / Longitude:	35° 23' 57.47"N, 119° 32' 3.22"W
Photography Date / Time:	April 4, 2025, 3:41 p.m.
Camera Make / Model:	Canon EOS 5DS R
Focal Length:	50mm
Photographer:	Stantec



Existing Southeast View from California State Route 58.



Proposed View.



Absorber

Proposed View - Annotated.