
3. Affected Environment

3.11 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Presidential Executive Orders constitute a form of high level federal regulation. Executive Orders have been utilized to address a number of environmental related problems such as wetlands. Executive Order 12898 requires each Federal agency to achieve environmental justice as part of its mission by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including social or economic effects, of programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations of the United States. EPA's Office of Environmental Justice offers the following definition:

The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies (EPA 1997).

This section provides baseline demographic information used in the subsequent analyses of environmental justice impacts (Section 4.11).

3.11.1 Race and Ethnicity

The minority population in the San Joaquin River project area and vicinity is based on an analysis of race and ethnicity population data from the 1990 Census of Population and Housing for seven counties that approximate the area of potential impact from the proposed action and alternative action. Population data are summarized by five racial categories: White, Black, American Indian/Eskimo/Aleut, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Other (Table 3.11-1). These categories as used in the 1990 Census relied on self-identification by respondents to racial/ethnic categories. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race, so this ethnic category is summarized separately.

In comparison to the California state demographics, the San Joaquin River Area is proportionately higher in Hispanic population (28.1 percent). Racially, the area contains greater percentages of whites (71.1 percent) and other races (15.2 percent) than does the state (69.0 percent and 13.2 percent, respectively). The Hispanic population in the San Joaquin River area is concentrated in Fresno, Madera, and Merced counties (Table 3.11-1). Native Americans (American Indians) represent 1.1 percent of the area's population, and are proportionately higher in Madera, Mariposa, and Tuolumne counties. Both the Black and Asian/Pacific Islander populations are under-represented in the San Joaquin River Area in comparison to the state.

3. Affected Environment

Table 3.11-1: POPULATION BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 1990

County	Total Persons, April 1, 1990	Race (Percent)					Percent Hispanic
		White	Black	Amer. Indian, Eskimo, Aleut	Asian/Pacific Islander	Other	
Fresno	667,490	63.3	5.0	1.1	8.6	22.0	35.0
Madera	88,090	71.9	2.8	1.6	1.4	22.2	34.5
Mariposa	14,302	92.4	0.9	4.5	0.9	1.3	4.9
Merced	178,403	67.4	4.8	0.8	8.5	18.5	32.6
San Joaquin	480,628	73.5	5.6	1.1	12.4	7.4	23.4
Stanislaus	370,522	80.2	1.7	1.1	5.2	11.7	21.8
Tuolumne	48,456	90.4	3.2	2.0	0.8	3.6	7.7
San Joaquin River Area*	1,847,891	71.1	4.3	1.1	8.3	15.2	28.1
State	29,758,213	69.0	7.4	0.8	9.6	13.2	25.8

* Calculated from county percent distributions.

Source: Hall and Gaquin, *1997 County and City Extra*, pp. 52, 66.

3.11.2 Low Income

Low income populations in the San Joaquin River Area are identified by several socioeconomic characteristics of the population residing in the area. As categorized by the 1990 Census (and updated by the U.S. Bureau of Census, 1995), specific characteristics used in this description of the existing environment are: per capita income, persons below the poverty level, families below the poverty level, substandard housing, and unemployment rates (Table 3.11-2).

Income and poverty, based on income in 1989 as reported in the 1990 Census, illustrates that the San Joaquin River area counties' per capita and median household incomes are all lower than the averages for the state (Table 3.11-2). Merced County had the lowest per capita income, only \$10,606; and Mariposa County had the lowest household income, only \$25,272 (1989 dollars). Similar results are found for the percentages of persons and families living below the poverty level. Poverty status is based on the definition prescribed by the Federal Office of Management and Budget. Families and persons are below the poverty level if their total family income or unrelated individual income was less than the poverty threshold specified for the applicable family size, age of householder, and number of related children present under age 18 years. For persons not in families, poverty status is determined by their income in relation to the appropriate poverty threshold. For example, the 1989 poverty threshold for one person under age 65 was \$6,451; for a family of four persons it was \$12,674; and for a family of eight persons it was \$21,328 (Hall and Gaquin 1997).

3. Affected Environment

Table 3.11-2. INCOME AND POVERTY, 1989

County	Money Income 1989 \$		Percent Below Poverty Level	
	Per Capita	Median Household	All Persons	Families
Fresno	11,824	26,377	21.4	16.8
Madera	10,856	27,370	17.5	13.1
Mariposa	13,074	25,272	12.7	10.7
Merced	10,606	25,548	19.9	15.4
San Joaquin	12,705	30,635	15.7	12.0
Stanislaus	12,731	29,793	14.1	11.4
Tuolumne	13,224	27,030	9.1	6.9
San Joaquin River Area	NA	NA	NA	NA
State	16,409	35,798	11.7	8.6

NA=Not Available. Averages and percentages were given and are not additive.

Source: Hall and Gaquin, *1997 County and City Extra*, Table B, pp. 55,69.

Other measures of low income, such as substandard housing and unemployment, also characterize demographic data in relation to environmental justice (Table 3.11-3). Substandard housing units are occupied units which are overcrowded (1.01 persons or more per room) or lack complete plumbing facilities. The San Joaquin River Area counties of Fresno and Merced have higher percentages of substandard housing, 13.7 percent and 15.6 percent, than does the state. The civilian labor force is comprised of civilians 16 years old and older who were either “at work” or “with a job, but not at work” during the reference week. It includes those who worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers in a family farm or business. The San Joaquin River Area’s unemployment rate in 1995 was 14.1 percent, significantly higher than the state unemployment rate of 10.8 percent. The highest unemployment rate was in Merced County (16.9 percent) followed by Stanislaus (15.3 percent) and Madera (15.1 percent) counties.

3. Affected Environment

Table 3.11-3: HOUSING, LABOR FORCE, AND EMPLOYMENT, 1990 AND 1995

County	Housing Units 1990		Civilian Labor Force 1995	
	Total	Percent Substandard	Total	Unemployment Rate (percent)
Fresno	235,563	13.7	371,805	14.1
Madera	30,831	12.0	50,516	15.1
Mariposa	7,700	5.0	7,447	9.4
Merced	58,410	15.6	84,726	16.9
San Joaquin	166,274	12.4	242,880	12.3
Stanislaus	132,027	10.4	193,963	15.3
Tuolumne	25,175	4.5	20,522	10.8
San Joaquin River Area*	655,980	12.3	971,859	14.1
State	11,182,882	12.0	15,415,475	10.8

*Calculated from county percentage distributions.

Source: Hall and Gaquin, *1997 County and City Extra*, pp. 58, 72.

3. Affected Environment

3.11 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE	128
3.11.1 Race and Ethnicity	128
3.11.2 Low Income	129