

26 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

This chapter considers irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources associated with the Proposed Actions. An irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources refers to impacts on or losses to resources that cannot be recovered or reversed. Examples include permanent conversion of wetlands and loss of cultural resources, soils, wildlife, agricultural production, or socioeconomic conditions. Irreversible is a term that describes the loss of future options. It applies primarily to the impacts of use of nonrenewable resources, such as minerals or cultural resources, or to those factors, such as soil productivity, that are renewable only over long periods of time. Irretrievable is a term that applies to the loss of production, harvest, or use of natural resources. For example, if farm land is used for a non-agricultural event, some or all the agricultural production from an area of farm land is lost irretrievably while the area is temporarily used for another purpose. The production lost is irretrievable, but the action is not irreversible.

Several resources, both natural and built, would be expended in the construction and operation of any development that may result from the Proposed Actions. These resources include building materials used in construction of the project; energy in the form of natural gas, petroleum products, and electricity consumed during construction and operation of the building; and the human effort required to develop, construct, and operate various components of any potential development. These resources are considered irretrievably committed because their reuse for some other purpose would be impossible or highly unlikely.

As discussed in **Chapter 1, *Project Description***, the Proposed Actions are a generic action with no defined development sites. The Proposed Actions are not expected to change the rate of growth, which is controlled primarily by the supply of developable land and by the local supply of skilled professionals in the construction industry. Any development pursuant to that consistent rate of growth would require consumption of resources.

The Proposed Actions constitute an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of potential development sites as a land resource, thereby rendering land use for other purposes infeasible.