

## 3.13 Hazardous Waste

Information provided in this section is based on the Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment for the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore (HCLE) Corridor (LSA, 2002).

### 3.13.1 Existing Setting

Each of the HCLE Corridor alternatives runs through incorporated cities, unincorporated communities, and rural Riverside County in which existing land uses are determined by Specific and General Plans. Site visits conducted for the Community Impact Assessment (LSA, 2002) confirm the ongoing conversion of agricultural and other undeveloped land to residential and commercial uses since aerial photographs taken in June, 2000, although agricultural land still comprises over 50 percent of the total identified existing land use within the corridor (Community Impact Assessment, LSA, 2002).

There is a direct relationship between increased urbanization and the quantity of hazardous materials used and stored, and potential releases of hazardous materials/wastes into the environment. This is because all facets of the urban environment utilize hazardous materials and create hazardous waste, and these items must be transported from the manufacturer to the user to the disposal facility.

Hazardous waste is a combination of hazardous materials or a hazardous material combined with another substance that is no longer usable. The federal hazardous waste laws generally are known as the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976 (40 CFR 240 et seq.). In RCRA, “[t]he term ‘hazardous waste’ means a solid waste or combination of solid wastes, which because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics may:

(A) cause or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible, or incapacitating reversible, illness; or

(B) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, or disposed of, or otherwise managed...” (Section 1004 of RCRA).

Under federal and State law, a hazardous waste is either considered a “listed” hazardous waste based on its chemical composition or it is a “characteristic” hazardous waste because it exhibits one of the following characteristics: corrosivity, ignitability, reactivity, or toxicity (Touchstone Environmental, Inc., 2001).

### 3.13.2 Regulatory Framework

Federal and California laws provide for “cradle to grave” regulation of hazardous wastes that are explained in Hazardous Materials Program Commentary: California (Touchstone Environmental, Inc., 2001) and summarized in the Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment. Hazardous waste regulations most pertinent to the HCLE Corridor are briefly described below. California has merged its RCRA authority into ongoing implementation of the State Hazardous Waste Control Law (HWCL), which was initially adopted in 1972 (22 CCR sec 66260.1 et seq.). The U.S. Environmental