



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Proposed APN No. 0234-011-14

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above-mentioned document. The SCAQMD also appreciates the additional time allowed to review the Draft MND for the proposed project and provide comments. This additional time was necessary given that the underlying air quality modeling information was not received by the SCAQMD until August 31, 2005. In the initial study for the proposed project, the lead agency disregards the conclusions in the Air Quality Assessment that air quality impacts during construction are significant. As a result, the proposed project does not qualify for a mitigated negative declaration. Instead, an environmental impact report should be prepared for the proposed project and circulated for public review.

Please provide the SCAQMD with written responses to all comments contained herein prior to the adoption of the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration. The SCAQMD staff would be happy to work with the Lead Agency to address these issues and any other questions that may arise. Please contact Gordon Mize, Air Quality Specialist – CEQA Section, at (909) 396-3302, if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

Steve Smith, Ph.D.
Program Supervisor
Planning, Rule Development & Area Sources

Attachment

SS:GM
SBC050812-02
Control Number

Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Proposed APN No. 0234-011-14**Air Quality Analysis**

1. In Section III. Air Quality b), the lead agency begins its discussion about potential project construction air quality impacts by making reference to a screening table in the SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook (Handbook) to initially determine whether construction air quality impacts are significant. The SCAQMD has for several years recommended against using these screening tables because they are based on outdated on-road emission factors and an old version of the ITE Trip Generation Manual.
2. The lead agency states on page 15 in paragraph two that the URBEMIS 2002 output sheets are in Appendix A in the Draft MND. Appendix A was not included in the Draft MND but should be included in the Final MND. For this and future CEQA documents, the lead agency should include all referenced documents with each draft document to allow the SCAQMD the opportunity to evaluate in a timely manner. The URBEMIS 2002 output files were not provided to the SCAQMD until August 31, 2005.
3. In the Air Quality Section, the lead agency has concluded on pages 16 and 17 that although short-term construction emissions of NO_x, ROG and CO exceed the applicable construction significance thresholds during the building construction phases, the impacts would be temporary in nature. The lead agency then concludes that construction impacts with mitigation would reduce emissions “but not below thresholds.” The lead agency further states that construction is considered short-term and once construction is complete, then the impact would cease. Therefore not quantitatively demonstrating in the Draft MND that short-term air quality impacts are less than significant with mitigation that would justify the use of a mitigated negative declaration as the lead agency’s CEQA document.

Because the short-term emissions may be temporary in nature does not mean they are insignificant. For example, the attainment status of an area is based on whether or not there are daily exceedances of the applicable ambient air quality standard.

Additionally, although the proposed construction activities are temporary in nature, sensitive receptors such as residences located near the proposed site may be exposed to emissions from fugitive dust, off- and on-road vehicles and equipment such as bull dozers, cranes, graders, loaders, water trucks, etc., architectural coatings and other emission sources listed in the project description. Consequently, projects that exceed the SCAQMD short-term daily emissions significance thresholds from a project could potentially affect the attainment status of the area in which it is located and, therefore should be considered significant.

Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Proposed APN No. 0234-011-14**Localized Significance Thresholds**

4. Consistent with the SCAQMD's environmental justice enhancement I-4, in October 2003, the SCAQMD Governing Board adopted a methodology for calculating localized air quality impacts and localized significance thresholds (LSTs). LST's can be used in addition to the recommended regional significance thresholds as a second indication of air quality impacts when preparing a CEQA document. Therefore, when preparing the air quality analysis for the proposed project, it is recommended that the lead agency perform a localized significance analysis by either using the LSTs developed by the SCAQMD or performing dispersion modeling as necessary. Guidance for performing a localized air quality analysis can be found at <http://www.aqmd.gov/ceqa/handbook/LST/LST.html>.
5. Table 5 (Site Grading Emissions) and Table 6 (Building Construction Emissions) on page 16, provide only unmitigated emission estimates. The tables, however, are not labeled as unmitigated. It is unclear why the lead agency did not run the URBEMIS 2002 mitigated analysis and include the mitigated results in the Draft MND. In addition, Table 6 under-reports PM10 emissions. Total PM10 emissions should be 83.4 pounds per day.

Health Risk Assessment

6. On page 18 in Section III. Air Quality, there is a general discussion of diesel emissions from project diesel equipment including on-road trucks and mention is made of cancer risk, but cancer risks from the project have not been calculated because on page 20, the lead agency defers demonstrating that significant health risk would not occur stating that "a health risk assessment shall be prepared for any subsequent development that proposes land uses that contain sensitive receptors as defined by the SCAQMD." Deferral of an analysis of impacts to some unspecified future date is inappropriate and inconsistent with CEQA case law (*Sundstrom v. Mendicino (1988) 202 Cal. App. 3d 296*). Diesel particulates have been designated as a carcinogen and it appears that the proposed project will increase diesel particulate emissions at this site from trucks queuing and idling. The SCAQMD therefore recommends that cancer risks be calculated. The SCAQMD has developed a methodology for estimating cancer risks from mobile sources in a document entitled Health Risk Assessment Guidance for Analyzing Cancer Risks from Mobile Source Diesel Emissions. This document can be downloaded from the AQMD's CEQA web pages at the following URL: http://www.aqmd.gov/ceqa/handbook/diesel_analysis.doc.

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7. The traffic discussion in Section XV. Transportation/Traffic on pages 42 through 45 indicates that a traffic study was prepared entitled "County of San Bernardino Calabash Industrial Facility Traffic Impact Analysis (Revised)" by Kunzman Associates in May 2005 (Revised TIA). Although not included in the Draft MND, the lead agency did provide SCAQMD staff with a copy of the Revised TIA. The revised TIA should be included in the Final MND.

Mitigation Measures for Construction Air Quality Impacts

8. Because the construction air quality impacts from the proposed project are estimated to exceed established daily significance thresholds for volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxide (NO_x), and carbon monoxide (CO), the SCAQMD staff recommends that the lead agency consider modifying the following mitigation measures and adding additional mitigation measures to further reduce construction air quality impacts from the project, if applicable and feasible:

VOC

Recommended Addition:

- Use required coatings and solvents with a VOC content lower than required under Rule 1113.
- Construct/build with materials that do not require painting
- Use pre-painted construction materials.

NO_x and CO

Recommended Additions:

- Prohibit all diesel trucks from idling in excess of five minutes, both on-site and off-site.
- Configure construction parking to minimize traffic interference.
- Reroute construction trucks away from congested streets or sensitive receptor areas.
- Provide dedicated turn lanes for movement of construction trucks and equipment on- and off-site.
- Provide temporary traffic controls such as a flag person, during all phases of construction to maintain smooth traffic flow.
- Schedule construction activities that affect traffic flow on the arterial system to off-peak hour to the extent practicable.
- Reroute construction trucks away from congested streets or sensitive receptor areas.

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Recommended Additions, cont.:

- Provide dedicated turn lanes for movement of construction trucks and equipment on- and off-site.
- Give preferential consideration to contractors who use clean fuel construction equipment; emulsified diesel fuels; construction equipment that uses low sulfur diesel and is equipped with oxidation catalysts, particulate traps, or other retrofit technologies, etc.

Mitigation Measures for Operational Air Quality Impacts

9. Although the operational air quality impacts from the proposed project are not currently estimated to exceed established daily significance thresholds for volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxide (NO_x), carbon monoxide (CO), and PM10, the SCAQMD recommends that the lead agency consider adding the following mitigation measures to further reduce operational air quality impacts from the project, if applicable and feasible:

Recommended Additions:

- Design the warehouse/distribution center such that entrances and exits are such that trucks are not traversing past neighbors or other sensitive receptors.
- Prohibit all diesel trucks from idling in excess of five minutes, both on-site and off-site.
- Place signs at the exits of the warehouse/distribution center that indicate which way to turn and the specific truck route to take to get to the freeway.
- Re-route truck traffic by adding direct off-ramps for the truck or by restricting truck traffic on certain sensitive routes;
- Improve traffic flow by signal synchronization;
- Use street sweepers that comply with SCAQMD Rules 1186 and 1186.1;
- Pave road and road shoulders;
- Require or provide incentives to use low sulfur diesel fuel with particulate traps;
- Conduct air quality monitoring at sensitive receptors ;
- Alternative fueled off-road equipment;
- Create a buffer zone of at least 300 meters (roughly 1,000 feet), which can be office space, employee parking, greenbelt, etc. between the warehouse/distribution center and sensitive receptors;