



South Coast Air Quality Management District

21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765-4178
(909) 396-2000 • www.aqmd.gov

SENT VIA E-MAIL AND USPS:

EMWD_Comments@helixepi.com

Claudia Steiding, Principal Water Resource Specialist

Eastern Municipal Water District

PO Box 8300

Perris, CA 92572

August 1, 2018

Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Proposed Cactus II Feeder Transmission Pipeline Project

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) staff appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above-mentioned document. The following comments are meant as guidance for the Lead Agency and should be incorporated into the final CEQA document.

SCAQMD Staff's Summary of Project Description

The lead agency proposes to construct and operate a water transmission pipeline ranging from 30 to 42 inches in diameter and five miles in length (proposed project). The project is located on the northeast corner of Cactus Avenue and Heacock Street in the City of Moreno Valley and is adjacent to sensitive receptors (e.g., single family residences)¹.

SCAQMD Staff's Summary of Air Quality Analysis

The lead agency qualitatively analyzed the proposed project's construction-related air quality impacts and found that due to the short-term and phased nature of the construction period, the proposed project would not be expected to generate significant adverse air quality impacts during construction². Also, the lead agency qualitatively analyzed the proposed project's operational related air quality impacts and determined that the proposed project's operational air quality impacts would be less than be significant³ given that the proposed project's operation is limited to only maintenance activities.

SCAQMD Staff's Comments

SCAQMD staff recommends that the lead agency quantify the proposed project's construction and operational emissions as substantial evidence to support a fair argument that the proposed project's construction and operational air quality impacts will not result in significant air quality impacts. One of the basic purposes of CEQA is to inform government decision makers and the public about the potential, significant environmental effects of proposed activities⁴. A mitigated negative declaration is appropriate when the lead agency finds that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment after incorporating mitigation measures⁵. Reasons to support this finding shall be documented in the initial study. Evaluation of air quality impacts, unlike some other impact areas, easily lends itself to quantification. Not only does quantification make it easier for the public and decision-makers to understand the project's potential air quality impacts, but it also facilitates the identification of mitigation measures, if required, to reduce any significant adverse air quality impacts. Without quantifying emissions from construction and operational activities, the MND has not provided substantial evidence to support a fair argument that the proposed project would not have any adverse effects on air quality.

¹ MND, Section 3 *Air Quality Analysis*, Page 12.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ CEQA Guidelines Section 15002(a)(1))

⁵ CEQA Guidelines Sections 15070 to 15075

Therefore, SCAQMD staff recommends that the lead agency quantify and disclose the proposed project's air quality impacts in the final CEQA document. See SCAQMD staff's detailed comments below.

Regional and Localized Air Quality Analysis during Construction

SCAQMD staff recommends that the lead agency quantify the air quality impacts from construction activities (including demolition, if any) for the proposed project and compare the results to SCAQMD's CEQA mass daily thresholds for construction⁶ to determine the proposed project's air quality impacts. Construction-related air quality impacts include, but are not limited to, emissions from the use of heavy-duty equipment from grading, earth-loading/unloading, paving, architectural coatings, off-road mobile sources (e.g., heavy-duty construction equipment) and on-road mobile sources (e.g., construction worker vehicle trips, material transport trips).

As mentioned above, construction for the proposed project will occur in close proximity to sensitive receptors (e.g., residential uses). Therefore, SCAQMD staff recommends that the lead agency quantify the proposed project's localized construction emissions and identify the localized air quality impacts in the final CEQA document. SCAQMD guidance for performing a localized air quality analysis is available on SCAQMD website⁷.

Operational Air Quality Analysis

The lead agency should quantify the proposed project's operational emission and compare the results to SCAQMD's CEQA mass daily thresholds for operation⁸. Operational emissions may be caused by a number of sources, including, but not limited to, stationary sources (e.g., boilers), area sources (e.g., solvents and coatings), and vehicular trips (e.g., on- and off-road tailpipe emissions and entrained dust).

Mitigation Measures

In the event that the lead agency concludes, after its analyses, that construction or operational emissions would exceed SCAQMD's air quality CEQA daily significance thresholds, feasible mitigation measures to minimize these impacts are required pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4. Several resources are available to assist the lead agency with identifying potential mitigation measures for the proposed project, including:

- Chapter 11 "Mitigating the Impact of a Project" of SCAQMD's *CEQA Air Quality Handbook*.
- SCAQMD's CEQA web pages available here: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/mitigation-measures-and-control-efficiencies>.
- SCAQMD's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) for the 2016 Air Quality Management Plan (2016 AQMP) available here (starting on page 86): <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/Agendas/Governing-Board/2017/2017-mar3-035.pdf>.

Compliance with SCAQMD Rules 1166 and 1466

Based on a review of the Appendix C *Environmental Site Assessment*, SCAQMD staff found that the proposed project site was historically used for both agriculture and major roadways from the years 1901 through 1996 and 1901 through 2018, respectively⁹. The *Environmental Site Assessment* states that soils at the site are to be considered to potentially contain elevated concentration of pesticides, metals such as

⁶ South Coast Air Quality Management District. SCAQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/scaqmd-air-quality-significance-thresholds.pdf>.

⁷ South Coast Air Quality Management District. Localized Significance Thresholds. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/localized-significance-thresholds>.

⁸ South Coast Air Quality Management District. SCAQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/scaqmd-air-quality-significance-thresholds.pdf>.

⁹ MND. Appendix C *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment*. Page 36-37.

arsenic, and lead¹⁰. If there is potential for any of the above mentioned soil contaminants to become airborne during the phased construction process, the lead agency should include a discussion to demonstrate compliance with SCAQMD Rule 1166 – Volatile Organic Compound Emissions from Decontamination of Soil and Rule 1466 – Control of Particulate Emissions from Soils with Toxic Air Contaminants in the final CEQA document.

SCAQMD Permits

In the event a permit from SCAQMD would be required for the proposed project, SCAQMD should be identified as a responsible agency for this project in the final CEQA document. The assumptions in the air quality analysis in the final CEQA document will be the basis for permit conditions and limits. If there are permitting questions, they can be directed to SCAQMD Engineering and Permitting staff at (909) 396-2551.

Closing

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15074, prior to approving the proposed project, the lead agency shall consider the final CEQA document for adoption together with any comments received during the public review process. Please provide the SCAQMD with written responses to all comments contained herein prior to the adoption of the final CEQA document. When responding to issues raised in the comments, response should provide sufficient details giving reasons why specific comments and suggestions are not accepted. There should be good faith, reasoned analysis in response. Conclusory statements unsupported by factual information do not facilitate the purpose and goal of CEQA on public disclosure and are not meaningful or useful to decision makers and the public who are interested in the proposed project.

SCAQMD staff is available to work with the lead agency to address any air quality questions that may arise from this comment letter. Please contact Alina Mullins, Assistant Air Quality Specialist, at amullins@aqmd.gov, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Daniel Garcia

Daniel Garcia

Program Supervisor

Planning, Rule Development & Area Sources

DG/AM

RVC180628-04

Control Number

¹⁰ *Ibid.*