



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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SENT VIA E-MAIL AND USPS:

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Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed Whittier Narrows Dam Safety Modification Study

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 EIS.

SCAQMD Staff's Summary of Project Description and Air Quality Analysis

The Lead Agency proposes to develop risk management plan (RMPs) to reduce life safety risk to the large population downstream of Whittier Narrows Dam and to address significant safety issues at the Dam (Proposed Project). The Lead Agency proposes seven Environmental Commitments AQ-1 through AQ-7. Environmental Commitment AQ-5 requires that construction equipment of 50 horsepower or more shall meet, at a minimum, the Tier 3 California Emission Standards for Off-road Compression-Ignition Engines as specified in California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Section 2423(b)(1). If a Tier 3 or Tier 3-equivalent engine is not available for a particular item of equipment, Tier 2 compliant engines shall be allowed on a case by case basis¹.

SCAQMD Staff's Comments

Tier 4 Construction Equipment

To further reduce the Proposed Project's construction emissions, SCAQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency require the use of Tier 4 emissions standards or better for off-road diesel-powered construction equipment of 50 horsepower or greater. This is consistent with the California Emission Standards for Off-road Compression-Ignition Engines as specified in California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Section 2423(b)(1)(B). To ensure that Tier 4 construction equipment or better will be used during the Proposed Project's construction, SCAQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency include this requirement in applicable bid documents, purchase orders, and contracts. Successful contractor(s) must demonstrate the ability to supply the compliant construction equipment for use prior to any ground disturbing and construction activities. A copy of each unit's certified tier specification or model year specification and California Air Resources Board or SCAQMD operating permit (if applicable) shall be available upon request at the time of mobilization of each applicable unit of equipment. Additionally, the Lead Agency should require periodic reporting and provision of written construction documents by construction contractor(s) to ensure compliance, and conduct regular inspections to the maximum extent feasible to ensure compliance. In the event that construction equipment cannot meet the Tier 4 engine

¹ Draft EIS. Page 5-36.

certification, the Project representative or contractor must demonstrate through future study with written findings supported by substantial evidence that is approved by the Lead Agency before using Tier 3 engine or other technologies/strategies. Alternative applicable strategies may include, but would not be limited to, reduction in the number and/or horsepower rating of construction equipment, limiting the number of daily construction haul truck trips to and from the Proposed Project, using cleaner vehicle fuel, and/or limiting the number of individual construction project phases occurring simultaneously.

General Conformity Review and Determination

In the Air Quality Analysis, the Lead Agency determined that construction activities for the No Action Risk Management Plan (RMP) and two actionable RMPs (3E and 5) were not expected to exceed General Conformity de minimus and that the air quality impacts would be less than significant².

The conformity determination process is intended to demonstrate that a proposed Federal action will not: (1) cause or contribute to new violations of a national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS); (2) interfere with provisions in the applicable State Implementation Plan (SIP) for maintenance of any NAAQS; (3) increase the frequency or severity of existing violations of any standard; or (4) delay the timely attainment of any standard.

The South Coast Air Basin (Basin) is designated as extreme non-attainment for ozone and serious non-attainment for PM_{2.5}. To streamline the review process and to facilitate conformity determinations for projects in the Basin, two separate VOC and NO_x general conformity budgets were established in the Final 2012 AQMP: 1 tons per day (tpd) of NO_x and 0.2 tpd of VOC were set aside for this purpose every year, starting in 2013 until 2030. SCAQMD has set up a tracking system for projects requiring conformity determinations on a first-come-first-serve basis, whereby the project emissions are debited from the applicable set aside accounts until they are depleted.

In the event that the Lead Agency has any questions related to the SCAQMD General Conformity review process and determination, the questions can be directed to Ms. Sang-Mi Lee, Program Supervisor, at slee@aqmd.gov.

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 me at lsun@aqmd.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lijin Sun

Lijin Sun, J.D.

Program Supervisor, CEQA IGR

Planning, Rule Development & Area Sources

LS
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² Draft EIS. Page xxxvi.