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Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the Motte Business Center Project (Proposed Project) (SCH No.: 2022120083)

South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) staff appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above-mentioned document. The City of Menifee is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency for the Proposed Project. To provide context, South Coast AQMD staff has provided a brief summary of the project information and prepared the following comments organized by topic of concern.

South Coast AQMD Staff's Summary of Project Information in the Draft EIR

Based on the Draft EIR, the Lead Agency proposes to develop one warehouse building, approximately 1,138,638 square feet, on an approximately 44-acre site.[1] The Proposed Project would have 128 dock doors[2] associated with 165 daily truck trips.[3] Truck access to the Proposed Project site via Interstate 215 to Ethanac Road for regional access and via Dawson Road and Antelope Road for local access.[4] Based on a review of aerial photographs, South Coast AQMD staff found that the nearest sensitive receptor (e.g., residential uses) is less than 50 feet north of the Proposed Project. Construction of the Proposed Project is anticipated to occur in approximately 11 months, beginning in November 2025 and lasting through September 2026.[5]

South Coast AQMD Staff's Comments on the Draft EIR

Inconsistency in the Number of Daily Truck Trips that Potentially Underestimate Proposed Project's Air Quality Impacts from Mobile Sources

Table 4.13-1: Project Trip Generation[6] in the Draft EIR and Table 3[7] in Appendix K - Transportation Reports show that the Proposed Project would generate 165 daily truck trips, about 8% of the total daily vehicle trips, during the warehouse's operation. However, Appendix B1 - Air Quality Assessment and the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) output files show

[1] Draft EIR. Page 2-4.
[2] *Ibid*.
[3] *Ibid*. Table 4.13-1. Page 4.13-13.
[4] *Ibid*. Page 2-5.
[5] *Ibid*. Page 2-6.
[6] *Ibid*. Table 4.13-1. Page 4.13-13.
[7] *Ibid*. Appendix K – Transportation Reports. Page 18.

that the Proposed Project would generate 562[8] and 526 daily truck trips,[9] respectively. Table A below summarizes the inconsistency in daily truck trips between documents.

Table A – Inconsistency in Proposed Project's Daily Truck Trips

Draft EIR and Appendix K	Appendix B1	CalEEMod Output Files
165	562	526

The information regarding the number of daily truck trips associated with the Proposed Project's operation should be consistent throughout the Draft EIR and its appendices. It does not only serve compatible purposes but also accuracy in terms of emissions from mobile sources (trucks). In the event that both Draft EIR and CalEEMod analysis utilize a smaller number of daily trucks compared to Appendix B1 (refer to Table A), the emissions from these daily trucks are likely underestimated during operation. The correct daily truck trips should be defined clearly in the final CEQA documents, and their associated emissions need to be revised to reflect the correct truck trips per day while quantifying the operation emissions.

Potential of Inappropriate Vehicle Fleet Mixes to Evaluate Proposed Project's Air Quality Impacts from Mobile Sources

The Proposed Project's operational emissions from mobile sources may have been underestimated using inappropriate vehicle fleet mixes in the Draft EIR. The Proposed Project generates 165 daily truck trips, 8% of the Proposed Project's 2,061 daily vehicle trips consisting of heavy-duty trucks.[10] According to Appendix K - Transportation Reports of the Draft EIR, this assumption was based on the Trip Generation Manual, 11th Edition.[11] South Coast AQMD staff believes that the number of trucks assumed in the Draft EIR to serve the proposed industrial uses is too low for a warehouse facility of over a million square feet. For instance, according to the Fontana Truck Trip Generation Study, 20.4% of the total daily vehicle trips from a warehouse greater than 100,000 square feet would consist of trucks.[12] This example study is based on traffic counts from warehouses. Thus, re-evaluating the Proposed Project's air quality impacts, assuming a conservative fleet mix supported by substantial evidence, is recommended.

Potential Underestimation of Emissions Due to Imprecise Assumptions for Truck Trip Lengths in Emissions Analysis

It is unclear about the truck trip length used to estimate the truck emissions for the Proposed Project as the information is not mentioned in the Draft EIR and its appendices. It is important to note that the Proposed Project site is approximately 80 to 90 miles from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, which indicates that the air quality analysis might have underestimated the emissions from trucks traveling from the Ports to the Proposed Project site. Hence, the truck emissions potentially have been underestimated. It is essential to revise the analysis in the Draft EIR to rely on more conservative trip lengths between 40 and 80 miles, designating 40 miles for local trips and 80 miles for Port trips. Customizing these parameters and assumptions based on project-specific data will

[8] *Ibid*. Appendix B1 – Air Quality Assessment. Page 19.
[9] *Ibid*. Appendix B1 – Air Quality Assessment. CalEEMod Output files.
[10] *Ibid*. Table 4.13-1. Page 4.13-13.
[11] *Ibid*. Appendix K - Transportation Reports. Page 17.
[12] City of Fontana. Truck Trip Generation Study/ Access at: https://tampabayfreight.com/pdfs/Freight%20Library/Fontana%20Truck%20Generation%20Study.pdf

ensure a more accurate assessment of emissions, accounting for the unique circumstances and logistical realities of the Proposed Project.

Additional Mitigation Measures to Further Reduced Construction Emissions

Table 4.2-8: Construction-Related Emissions in the Draft EIR reveals that the Proposed Project's construction emissions would result in less than significant impacts with mitigation measures MM AQ-1 and MM AQ-2. [13] However, the construction mitigated NOx emissions in 2025, which are 95.78 lbs./day, are considerably close to the South Coast AQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds. Due to the high NOx emissions, including all feasible mitigation measures to further reduce the impacts is essential. In addition, the CalEEMod output files show that the mitigated off-road equipment utilized during construction is classified as "average tier."[14] Thus, it is recommended that, at a minimum, the final CEQA documents should include language that requires all off-road diesel-powered equipment used during construction to be Tier 4 or cleaner engines, if and where feasible, revise the construction analysis and disclose the results in the final CEQA documents.

Additional Recommended Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases Mitigation Measures

CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures that go beyond what is required by law be utilized to minimize or eliminate any significant adverse air quality impacts. To further reduce the Proposed Project's air quality impacts and in addition to Mitigation Measures MM AQ-1 to MM AQ-4, and MM GHG-1 to MM GHG-8. Although with the mitigation measures discussed in the Draft EIR, the mitigated operational emissions are still significantly close to the South Coast AQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds for NOx, which is 54.88 lbs./day compared to 55 lbs./day.[15] Hence, South Coast AQMD staff recommends incorporating additional mitigation measures into the Final EIR, such as mitigation measures for operational air quality impacts from mobile sources, as follows:

- Require zero-emissions (ZE) or near-zero emission (NZE) on-road haul trucks, such as heavy-duty trucks with natural gas engines that meet the CARB's adopted optional NOx emissions standard at 0.02 grams per brake horsepower-hour (g/bhp-hr), if and when feasible. Given the state's clean truck rules and regulations aiming to accelerate the utilization and market penetration of ZE and NZE trucks, such as the Advanced Clean Trucks Rule[16] and the Heavy-duty Low NOx Omnibus Regulation,[17] ZE and NZE trucks will become increasingly more available to use. The Lead Agency should require a phase-in schedule to incentivize the use of these cleaner operating trucks to reduce any significant adverse air quality impacts. South Coast AQMD staff is available to discuss the availability of current and upcoming truck technologies and incentive programs with the Lead Agency.

[13] *Ibid*. Page 4.2-20.
[14] *Ibid*. Appendix B1 – Air Quality Assessment. CalEEMod Output files.
[15] *Ibid*. Table 4.2-10. Page 4.2-22.
[16] CARB. June 25, 2020. Advanced Clean Trucks Rule. Accessed at: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/advanced-cleantrucks.
[17] CARB has recently passed a variety of new regulations that require new, cleaner heavy-duty truck technology to be sold and used in the state. For example, on August 27, 2020, CARB approved the Heavy-Duty Low NOx Omnibus Regulation, which will require all trucks to meet the adopted emission standard of 0.05 g/hp-hr starting with engine model year 2024. Accessed at: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/rulemaking/2020/hdomnibuslownox.

At a minimum, require the use of a 2010 model year[18] that meets CARB's 2010 engine emissions standards at 0.01 g/bhp-hr of particulate matter (PM) and 0.20 g/bhp-hr of NOx emissions or newer, cleaner trucks. All heavy-duty haul trucks should meet CARB's lowest optional low-NOx standard starting in 2022.[19] Where appropriate, include environmental analyses to evaluate and identify sufficient electricity and supportive infrastructures in the Energy and Utilities and Service Systems Sections in the CEQA document. Include the requirement in applicable bid documents, purchase orders, and contracts. Operators shall maintain records of all trucks associated with project construction to document that each truck used meets these emission standards and make the records available for inspection. The Lead Agency should conduct regular inspections to the maximum extent feasible to ensure compliance.

- Limit the daily number of trucks allowed at the Proposed Project to levels analyzed in the Final CEQA document. If higher daily truck volumes are anticipated to visit the site, the Lead Agency should commit to re-evaluating the Proposed Project through CEQA prior to allowing this higher activity level.
- Provide electric vehicle (EV) charging stations or, at a minimum, provide electrical infrastructure, and electrical panels should be appropriately sized. Electrical hookups should be provided for truckers to plug in any onboard auxiliary equipment.

In addition, the following mitigation measures for operational air quality impacts from other area sources are also recommended to be included in the Final EIR:

- Maximize the use of solar energy by installing solar energy arrays.
- Use light-colored paving and roofing materials.
- Utilize only Energy Star heating, cooling, and lighting devices and appliances.

To further reduce air quality and health risk impacts, the Lead Agency is recommended to include the following traffic design parameters:

- Clearly mark truck routes with trailblazer signs so that trucks will not travel next to or near sensitive land uses (e.g., residences, schools, daycare centers, etc.).
- Design the Proposed Project such that truck entrances and exits are not facing sensitive receptors and trucks will not travel past sensitive land uses to enter or leave the Proposed Project site.
- Design the Proposed Project such that any truck check-in point is inside the Proposed Project site to ensure no trucks are queuing outside.
- Design the Proposed Project to ensure that truck traffic inside the Proposed Project site is as far away as feasible from sensitive receptors.
- Restrict overnight truck parking in sensitive land uses by providing overnight truck parking inside the Proposed Project site.

[18] CARB adopted the statewide Truck and Bus Regulation in 2010. The Regulation requires diesel trucks and buses that operate in California to be upgraded to reduce emissions. Newer heavier trucks and buses must meet particulate matter filter requirements beginning January 1, 2012. Lighter and older heavier trucks must be replaced starting January 1, 2015. By January 1, 2023, nearly all trucks and buses will need to have 2010 model year engines or equivalent. More information on the CARB's Truck and Bus Regulation is available at: https://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/onrdiesel/onrdiesel.htm.

[19] CARB's optional low-NOx emission standard is available at: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/optional-reduced-nox-standards.

Lastly, the Lead Agency is also recommended to review the following references when considering the inclusion of additional mitigation measures in the Final EIR:

- State of California – Department of Justice: Warehouse Projects: Best Practices and Mitigation Measures to Comply with the California Environmental Quality Act[20]
- South Coast AQMD 2022 South Coast Air Quality Management Plan,[21] specifically:
    - Appendix IV-A – South Coast AQMD's Stationary and Mobile Source Control Measures
    - Appendix IV-B – CARB's Strategy for South Coast
    - Appendix IV-C – SCAG's Regional Transportation Strategy and Control Measures
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA): Mobile Source Pollution - Environmental Justice and Transportation[22]

South Coast AQMD Air Permits and Role as a Responsible Agency

If implementation of the Proposed Project would also require the use of stationary equipment, including but not limited to emergency generators, emergency fire pump(s), boilers, etc., air permits from South Coast AQMD will be required, and the role of South Coast AQMD would change from a Commenting Agency to a Responsible Agency under CEQA. In addition, if South Coast AQMD is identified as a Responsible Agency, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15086, the Lead Agency is required to consult with South Coast AQMD. In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15096 sets forth specific procedures for a Responsible Agency, including making a decision on the adequacy of the CEQA document for use as part of evaluating the applications for air permits. For these reasons, the Final EIR should include a discussion about any new stationary and portable equipment requiring South Coast AQMD air permits and identify South Coast AQMD as a Responsible Agency for the Proposed Project.

The Final EIR should also include calculations and analyses for construction and operation emissions for the new stationary and portable sources, as this information will also be relied upon as the basis for the permit conditions and emission limits for the air permit(s). Please contact South Coast AQMD's Engineering and Permitting staff at (909) 396-3385 for questions regarding what types of equipment would require air permits. For more general information on permits, please visit South Coast AQMD's webpage at http://www.aqmd.gov/home/permits.

Conclusion

The Lead Agency is recommended to revise the CEQA analysis to address the aforementioned comments and provide the necessary evidence to support the conclusions reached sufficiently. If the requested information and analysis are not included in the Final EIR, the Lead Agency should provide reasons for not doing so.

[20] State of California – Department of Justice. Warehouse Projects: Best Practices and Mitigation Measures to Comply with the California Environmental Quality Act. Access at: https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/warehouse-best-practices.pdf
[21] 2022 South Coast AQMP. Access at: http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/clean-air-plans/air-quality-mgt-plan
[22] United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA): Mobile Source Pollution - Environmental Justice and Transportation. Access at: https://www.epa.gov/mobile-source-pollution/environmental-justice-and-transportation

As set forth in California Public Resources Code Section 21092.5(a) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(a-b), the Lead Agency shall evaluate comments from public agencies on the environmental issues and prepare a written response at least 10 days prior to certifying the Final EIR. As such, please provide South Coast AQMD written responses to all comments contained herein at least 10 days prior to the certification of the Final EIR. In addition, as provided by CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(c), if the Lead Agency's position is at variance with recommendations provided in this comment letter, detailed reasons supported by substantial evidence in the record to explain why specific comments and suggestions are not accepted must be provided.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. South Coast AQMD staff is available to work with the Lead Agency to address any air quality questions that may arise from this comment letter. Please contact Danica Nguyen, Air Quality Specialist, at dnguyen1@aqmd.gov should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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