



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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

SENT VIA E-MAIL:

mevans@cityofperris.org

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Mathew Evans, Project Planner
City of Perris
101 N. D Street
Perris, CA 92570

**Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the
First Industrial Logistics at Harley Knox and Indian (Proposed Project)
(SCH No: 2025051368)**

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

Summary of Proposed Project Information in the DEIR

Based on the DEIR, the Proposed Project consists of merging seven parcels for the construction and operation of an approximately 549,788 square feet of non-refrigerated warehouse building including infrastructure, appurtenances, associated parking areas, and associated offsite supporting improvements. The proposed warehouse building would accommodate high-cube warehouse distribution uses, anticipating that approximately 10,000 square-feet could be utilized for supporting office and mezzanine uses. The building would include solar-ready rooftop panels, and a total of 94 dock doors on the north side of the building. The Proposed Project would be constructed as a speculative or “spec” building; that is, there is not a specific tenant identified at this time. It is anticipated that the building could operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The warehouse is not anticipated to include e-commerce.¹

Project site construction would involve grading and earthwork within the project site boundaries to accommodate the proposed warehouse structure, infrastructure, appurtenances, and associated parking areas. The proposed warehouse building includes concrete tilt-up wall construction. Nighttime pouring of concrete is anticipated during summer months. The Project site grading is expected to balance onsite so no soil import or export is anticipated.² The Project would be constructed in a single phase for a duration of approximately 11.5 months. For the purposes of the Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Analysis, construction of the Project was modeled starting in June 2025 which represents a worst-case analysis.³

¹ DEIR, pp 1-6 and 1-7.

² DEIR, p 1-10.

³ *Ibid.*

South Coast AQMD Comments

Truck Idling Duration and Emissions Modeling

The Operational Health Risk Assessment assumes an average idling duration of approximately 15 minutes per heavy-duty truck per day to estimate diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions, despite the Project's 24-hour operation and generation of over 120 daily truck trips.⁴ Given the nature of warehouse operations, it is reasonable to expect that trucks may experience longer idling durations due to on-site queuing, security checks, staging, loading, and unloading activities, particularly during peak operating periods.

While the California Air Resources Board (CARB) limits diesel truck idling to five minutes as set forth in the Airborne Toxic Control Measure (ATCM), an exemption from this requirement is allowed for trucks equipped with engines that meet the optional low-NOx idle emission standard, which is typically applicable to model year 2008 and newer trucks. These vehicles, often referred to as "clean idle" certified, are permitted to idle longer than five minutes when situated more than 100 feet from sensitive land uses such as homes and schools.⁵ Furthermore, CARB's EMFAC2021 Volume III Technical Document (Table 4.4.2-5) indicates that heavy-duty trucks may idle for up to five hours at a single location under certain conditions.⁶ For these aforementioned reasons, as a practical matter, the idling duration for onsite heavy-duty trucks visiting the Proposed Project site could idle for a much longer duration than what was analyzed in the DEIR. Thus, the HRA may have substantially underestimated the full extent of operational health risks associated with the DPM emissions from the anticipated onsite heavy-duty truck activities.

Accurate characterization of idling activity is essential to fully assess the potential health risk impacts, particularly for nearby sensitive receptors. Therefore, to ensure the HRA provides an accurate and health-protective estimate of potential exposure, the Lead Agency is recommended to either: 1) revise the operational emissions modeling in the Final EIR to assume a minimum of 30 minutes of idling per truck per day, unless site-specific data or operational constraints justify a shorter duration; or 2) provide empirical evidence, such as facility-specific queuing and processing time studies, vehicle circulation modeling, or comparable industry data, to substantiate the 15-minute assumption as representative of expected operations of the Proposed Project.

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

Appendix B of the DEIR explains that air quality impact analysis was based on the assumption that the average truck trip length is 40 miles. However, the project site is located 75 to 80 miles away from the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles which means that the air quality analysis underestimated the emissions from trucks traveling from the Ports to the project site. For this reason, the Lead Agency is recommended to revise the calculations in the Final EIR by taking a

⁴ DEIR, Appendix C.

⁵ CARB, Airborne Toxic Control Measure to Limit Diesel-Fueled Commercial Motor Vehicle Idling was promulgated in Chapter 13 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 2485: Airborne Toxic Control Measure to Limit Diesel-Fueled Commercial Motor Vehicle Idling, available at https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/13_CCR_2485_OAL_06222022-2_ADA_06272022_0.pdf

⁶ CARB, EMFAC2021 Volume III Technical Document, Table 4.4.2-5, p. 161., available at https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/emfac2021_volume_3_technical_document.pdf

project-specific approach to the vehicle trip length and trip rates by applying more conservative trip lengths such as designating 40 miles for local trips and 80 miles for Port-related trips. Tailoring these parameters and assumptions to be based on project-specific data will ensure a more accurate assessment of emissions, accounting for the unique circumstances and logistical realities of the Proposed Project.

Warehouse Cold Storage Land Use and the Associated Emissions from Transport Refrigeration Units (TRU)

The DEIR states that the Proposed Project would consist of a non-refrigerated warehouse and would not allocate warehouse land for cold storage uses.⁷ However, Mitigation Measures MM Air-12 and MM Air-15 reference the potential use of TRUs, which are typically associated with cold storage or refrigerated warehouse operations.⁸ The inclusion of mitigation measures addressing TRUs creates ambiguity regarding the operational characteristics of the Proposed Project.

Cold storage and refrigerated warehouse operations generally involve a higher proportion of trucks and trailers equipped with TRUs and may result in additional criteria pollutant and toxic air contaminant emissions beyond those associated with truck tractors alone. Therefore, the Lead Agency should revise the Project Description in the Final EIR to clearly state whether cold storage or refrigerated operations would be permitted as part of the Proposed Project.

If the use of TRUs is reasonably foreseeable or would be allowed under the Proposed Project, the Final EIR should disclose and quantify the associated emissions, including emissions from TRU operation, and evaluate their potential air quality and health impacts. Alternatively, if cold storage and TRU use are not proposed, the Final EIR should clarify this restriction and revise the mitigation measures accordingly to ensure internal consistency and enforceability.

Proximity of the Project Site to Railroad Facilities

Based on a review of aerial maps, South Coast AQMD staff identified an active BNSF railway freight rail corridor located approximately 0.4 mile west of the project site. The DEIR does not describe whether rail transportation would be utilized as part of project operations, nor does it clarify whether the Project would function exclusively as a truck-served warehouse facility.

Therefore, the Final EIR should clarify whether the Proposed Project would involve the use of rail transportation, either directly or indirectly. If rail service is reasonably foreseeable as part of Project operations, the air quality analysis and Health Risk Assessment (HRA) should be revised to disclose and evaluate emissions associated with locomotive activity, including criteria pollutants and toxic air contaminants. Alternatively, if the Project would not utilize rail transportation, the Final EIR should clearly state this assumption to ensure consistency and transparency in the Project description and environmental analyses.

⁷ DEIR, pp 1-6.

⁸ DEIR, pp 5.2-31 and 5.2-33.

Inappropriate Use of South Coast AQMD's Mass Rate Localized Significance Threshold Look-Up Table to Analyze the Proposed Project's Localized Air Quality Impact

The localized significance threshold (LST) analysis in the DEIR appears to incorrectly rely on the LST screening tables to determine the significance of localized air quality impacts. As indicated in Table 3-2 of the LST methodology,⁹ these screening tables are not applicable for projects larger than five acres. Since the Proposed Project site size is approximately 22 acres and is located in close proximity to sensitive receptors, including residential uses as noted earlier in this letter, reliance on the LST screening tables may underestimate localized air quality impacts. Therefore, it is recommended that the Lead Agency conduct project-specific dispersion modeling to accurately assess the localized air quality impacts from both construction and operational phases of the Proposed Project and include the results in the Final EIR.

Rule 2305 – Warehouse Indirect Source Rule – Warehouse Actions and Investments to Reduce Emissions (WAIRE) Program

On May 7, 2021, South Coast AQMD's Governing Board adopted Rule 2305 – Warehouse Indirect Source Rule – Warehouse Actions and Investments to Reduce Emissions (WAIRE) Program, and Rule 316 – Fees for Rule 2305. Rules 2305 and 316 are new rules that will reduce regional and local emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter (PM), including diesel PM. These emission reductions will reduce public health impacts for communities located near warehouses from mobile sources that are associated with warehouse activities. Also, the emission reductions will help the region attain federal and state ambient air quality standards. Rule 2305 applies to owners and operators of warehouses greater than or equal to 100,000 square feet. Under Rule 2305, operators are subject to an annual WAIRE Points Compliance Obligation that is calculated based on the annual number of truck trips to the warehouse. WAIRE Points can be earned by implementing actions in a prescribed menu in Rule 2305, implementing a site-specific custom plan, or paying a mitigation fee. Warehouse owners are only required to submit limited information reports, but they can opt to earn Points on behalf of their tenants if they so choose because certain actions to reduce emissions may be better achieved at the warehouse development phase, for instance the installation of solar and charging infrastructure. Rule 316 is a companion fee rule for Rule 2305 to allow South Coast AQMD to recover costs associated with Rule 2305 compliance activities. Since the Proposed Project consists of the development of a 549,788 square foot warehouse, the Proposed Project's warehouse owners and operators will be required to comply with Rule 2305 once the warehouse is occupied. Therefore, South Coast AQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency review South Coast AQMD Rule 2305 to determine the potential WAIRE Points Compliance Obligation for future operators and explore whether additional project requirements and CEQA mitigation measures can be identified and implemented at the Proposed Project that may help future warehouse operators meet their compliance obligation¹⁰. South Coast AQMD staff is available to answer questions concerning Rule 2305 implementation and compliance by phone or email at (909) 396-3140 or waire-program@aqmd.gov. For implementation guidance documents and compliance and reporting tools, please visit South Coast AQMD's WAIRE Program webpage.¹¹

⁹ South Coast AQMD Final Localized Significance Threshold Methodology available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/localized-significance-thresholds/final-lst-methodology-document.pdf>

¹⁰ South Coast AQMD Rule 2305 – Warehouse Indirect Source Rule – Warehouse Actions and Investments to Reduce Emissions (WAIRE) Program. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xxiii/r2305.pdf>.

¹¹ South Coast AQMD WAIRE Program. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/waire>.

Assessment of GHG Emissions and Operational Hours for Emergency Standby Engine

The DEIR assumes installation of a diesel-powered fire water pump rated at 100 horsepower that would operate up to one hour per day, one day per week, with a maximum annual operation of 50 hours for routine maintenance and testing. The DEIR reports stationary-source greenhouse gas emissions of 1.91 MTCO₂e per year.¹² However, the DEIR does not disclose the calculations, emission factors, fuel consumption assumptions, or other inputs used to derive the stationary-source CO₂e estimate.

To provide a more accurate assessment of the potential CO₂e emissions for the emergency standby engine, the DEIR should update the greenhouse gas calculations to reflect a higher annual operating hour scenario (e.g., up to 200 hours per year), which would represent a conservative, worst-case estimate of potential emissions. A South Coast AQMD permit would be required for the emergency standby engine and may include permit conditions based on the engine's potential to emit (PTE), which could allow operation of up to 200 hours per year, while also specifying a lower limit (e.g., 50 hours per year) for routine maintenance and testing. If the DEIR does not evaluate emissions associated with a higher operating-hour scenario, the Final EIR should clarify that the Project would be limited to the number of operating hours analyzed (e.g., 50 hours per year) through enforceable permit conditions or other binding mechanisms to ensure consistency between the CEQA analysis and Project operation.

South Coast AQMD Air Permits and Role as a Responsible Agency

If implementation of the Proposed Project would require the use of new stationary and portable sources, including but not limited to emergency generators, fire water pumps, boilers, etc., one or more air permits from South Coast AQMD will be required. The Final EIR should include a discussion about the potentially applicable South Coast AQMD rules that may be applicable to the Proposed Project. Those rules may include, for example, Rule 201 – Permit to Construct,¹³ Rule 203 – Permit to Operate,¹⁴ Rule 401 – Visible Emissions,¹⁵ Rule 402 – Nuisance,¹⁶ Rule 403 – Fugitive Dust,¹⁷ Rule 1110.2 – Emissions from Gaseous and Liquid Fueled Engines,¹⁸ Rule 1113 – Architectural Coatings,¹⁹ Rule 1166 – Volatile Organic Compound Emissions from Decontamination of Soil,²⁰ Rule 1179 – Publicly Owned Treatment Works Operations,²¹ Regulation XIII – New Source Review,²² Rule 1401 – New Source Review of Toxic Air Contaminants,²³ Rule 1466 – Control of Particulate Emissions from Soils with Toxic Air Contaminants,²⁴ Rule 1470 – Requirements for Stationary Diesel-Fueled Internal Combustion and

¹² DEIR, Table 5.4-F.

¹³ South Coast AQMD, Rule 201 is available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-ii/rule-201.pdf>

¹⁴ South Coast AQMD, Rule 203 is available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-ii/rule-203.pdf>

¹⁵ South Coast AQMD, Rule 401 is available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/rule-iv/rule-401.pdf>

¹⁶ South Coast AQMD, Rule 402 is available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/rule-iv/rule-402.pdf>

¹⁷ South Coast AQMD, Rule 403 is available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/rule-iv/rule-403.pdf>

¹⁸ South Coast AQMD, Rule 1110.2 is available at: https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xi/r1110_2.pdf

¹⁹ South Coast AQMD, Rule 1113 is available at <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xi/r1113.pdf>

²⁰ South Coast AQMD, Rule 1166 is available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xi/rule-1166.pdf>

²¹ South Coast AQMD, Rule 1179 is available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xi/rule-1179.pdf>

²² South Coast AQMD, Regulation XIII is available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/home/rules-compliance/rules/scaqmd-rule-book/regulation-xiii>

²³ South Coast AQMD, Rule 1401 is available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xiv/rule-1401.pdf>

²⁴ South Coast AQMD, Rule 1466 is available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xiv/rule-1466.pdf>

Other Compression Ignition Engines,²⁵ etc. It is important to note if air permits from South Coast AQMD are required, 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 Sections 15086, the Lead Agency is required to consult with South Coast AQMD.

It is important to note that if air permits from the South Coast AQMD are required, South Coast AQMD's role under CEQA will become the Responsible Agency of the Proposed Project. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15086, the Lead Agency is required to consult with South Coast AQMD. 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 the process for conducting a review of the Proposed Project and issuing discretionary approvals. Also, as set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15096(h), the Responsible Agency is required to make Findings in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 for each significant effect of the project and issue a Statement of Overriding Considerations in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15093, if necessary. Lastly, as set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15096(i), the Responsible Agency may file a Notice of Determination.

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 the process for conducting a review of the Proposed Project and issuing discretionary approvals. Moreover, it is important to note that if a Responsible Agency determines that a CEQA document is not adequate to rely upon for its discretionary approvals, the Responsible Agency must take further actions listed in CEQA Guideline Section 15096(e), which could have the effect of delaying the implementation of the Proposed Project. In its role as CEQA Responsible Agency, the South Coast AQMD is obligated to ensure that the CEQA document prepared for this Proposed Project contains a sufficient project description and analysis to be relied upon in order to issue any discretionary approvals that may be needed for air permits.

For these reasons, the final CEQA document should be revised to include a discussion about any and all new stationary and portable equipment requiring South Coast AQMD air permits, provide the evaluation of their air quality and greenhouse gas impacts, and identify South Coast AQMD as a Responsible Agency for the Proposed Project as this information will 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 <https://www.aqmd.gov/home/permits>.

Conclusion

As set forth in 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 provide 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, including the referenced comment letters attached, 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

²⁵ South Coast AQMD, Rule 1470 is available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xiv/rule-1470.pdf>

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 Jivar Afshar, Air Quality Specialist, at jafshar@aqmd.gov should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sam Wang

Sam Wang
Program Supervisor, CEQA IGR
Planning, Rule Development & Implementation

SW:JA

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