

**Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the  
Proposed Colorado River Aqueduct Conduit Structural Protection Project**

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Colorado River Aqueduct Conduit Structural Protection Project (proposed Project), which consists of 24 locations in unincorporated Riverside County, California. This Notice of Intent is to inform you that the MND is currently available for a 30-day public review period. In addition to making the MND available for public review, the document is being sent to responsible, trustee, and interested agencies as part of the review process required under CEQA (Section 21092 of the Public Resources Code) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15072 of the California Code of Regulations). The proposed Project site is not included on any of the lists enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the Government Code (hazardous waste facilities).

Metropolitan owns, operates, and maintains the Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA), which is a regional water conveyance system that consists of five pumping plants, 450 miles of high voltage power lines, one electric substation, four reservoirs, and 242 miles of aqueducts, siphons, canals, conduits, and pipelines, terminating at Lake Mathews in Riverside County, California. Construction of the CRA began in 1933. In 1939, the first Colorado River water flowed into the CRA and in 1940, Lake Mathews received its first water delivery. By 1952, the demand exceeded the aqueduct capacity and the CRA was expanded to accommodate increased water demands. The expansion consisted of the addition of four additional pumps at each of the five pumping plants and a second barrel at several siphon locations along the CRA to accommodate increased flows. Metropolitan is responsible for operating, maintaining, rehabilitating, and repairing the CRA and its various components.

The original construction of the CRA was not designed to accommodate loads from the heavy equipment used to conduct current operations and maintenance activities. The access roads used to conduct operations and maintenance activities often cross over or run adjacent to the siphons. Metropolitan has identified several locations where the access road crosses or is located too close to the siphon and there is insufficient ground cover over the siphon to safely support heavy equipment loads. In addition, Metropolitan has identified several transition structures that require new designated crane operating pads in order to ensure heavy equipment is set back at least 12 feet from any structures. Currently, many of the transition structures do not have designated crane operating areas, are located on uneven natural ground surface, are inadequately sized, are excessively sloped, or are too close to transition structures.

The proposed Project would include (1) realigning segments of the existing unpaved access roads that cross over or are located too close to the buried siphon, (2) constructing concrete protective slabs at points where access roads cross the buried siphon and cannot be realigned, and (3) constructing crushed aggregate crane operating pads adjacent to the transition structures to support heavy equipment and ensure safe crane operations. No work is being performed on the siphons themselves. Twenty four locations along the CRA that are vulnerable to heavy equipment loading have been identified.

The environmental review conducted for this project was completed in accordance with CEQA guidelines and concludes that, with the implementation of mitigation measures for biological resources and tribal cultural resources, the proposed Project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Due to the time limits mandated by state law, written comments must be received by Metropolitan not later than 30 days after the start of the review period, which begins October 26, 2020 and ends November 25, 2020.

Hard copies of the MND will be available for review at the following locations:

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California  
700 N. Alameda Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Desert Hot Springs Library  
11691 West Drive  
Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240

Thousand Palms Public Library  
31189 Robert Road  
Thousand Palms, CA 92276

A copy of the MND will also be posted on Metropolitan's website at: [www.mwdh2o.com/CEQA](http://www.mwdh2o.com/CEQA)

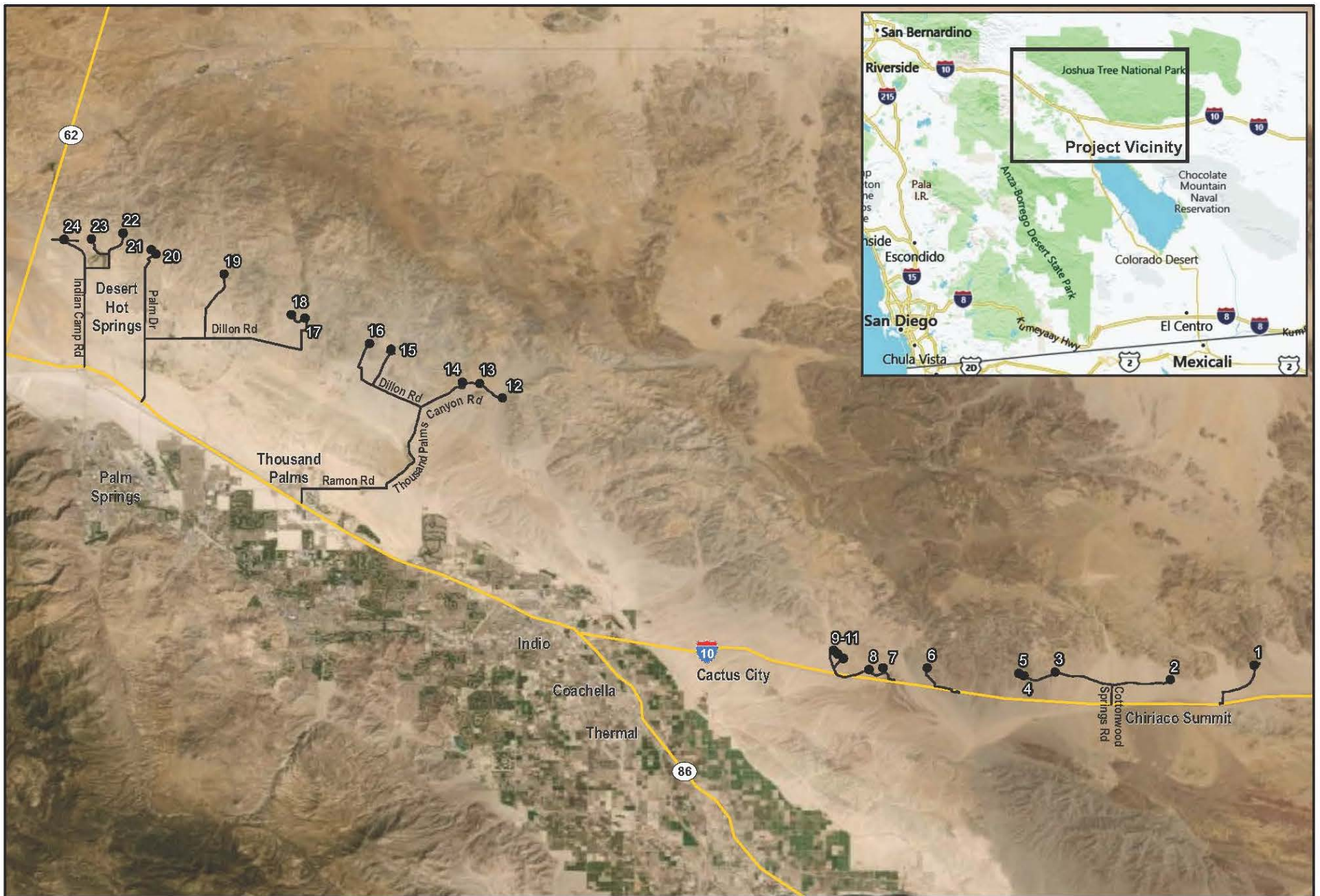
Please contact Daniel Cardoza via telephone or email at [EP@mwdh2o.com](mailto:EP@mwdh2o.com) to make arrangements for viewing the document at Metropolitan or to request a hard copy of the MND if you are not able to access the document online or at any the locations listed above.

When submitting written comments to Metropolitan, please provide the name and email address of a contact person. All comments and questions regarding the project should be directed to:

Mr. Daniel Cardoza  
Environmental Planning Section  
The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California  
P.O. Box 54153  
Los Angeles, California 90054  
(213) 217-5602

Comments may also be submitted via e-mail to: [EP@mwdh2o.com](mailto:EP@mwdh2o.com)  
Reference: "CRA Conduit Structural Protection Project MND" in the subject line.

Metropolitan will notify commentators of the date, time and place of the public meeting at which Metropolitan's Board of Directors will consider the proposed project and Mitigated Negative Declaration, including comments received during the public review period. This information will also be posted on the website referenced above.



- Proposed Project Siphon Locations (refer to Table 1-1)
- Access Roads

**Project Overview**