

## Mikayla Vaba

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**From:** Stewart, Susan@Waterboards <Susan.Stewart@waterboards.ca.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 17, 2021 3:53 PM  
**To:** Umbertis, Stephen@DOT  
**Cc:** OPR State Clearinghouse  
**Subject:** RE: IS/MND Comments - Elk Creek Bridge Replacement (01-0E110)

## Memorandum

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

September 20 2021

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

**Date:** September 17, 2021  
**To:** Stephen Umbertis  
Associate Environmental Planner  
North Region Environmental  
1656 Union Street  
Eureka, CA 95501  
[Stephen.Umbertis@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Stephen.Umbertis@dot.ca.gov)

**From:** Susan Stewart, Environmental Scientist / Caltrans Liaison  
**Subject: Elk Creek Bridge Replacement (SCH# 2021070412)**

Dear Mr. Umbertis,

On July 22, 2021, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received a draft Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment (draft IS/MND) from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for the Elk Creek Bridge Replacement Project (Project), Mendocino County, California. The draft IS/MND compares and evaluates the potential impacts between the Build Alternative (Alternative 3B) and the No-Build Alternative. The draft IS/MND notes that comments must be submitted no later than August 20, 2021. However, in your email communication received on September 8, 2021, you indicated that you were still receiving comments and hoped to have a response from additional agencies through September 17, 2021. The Regional Water Board hereby submits the following comments.

### Project Description

Caltrans proposes to replace the Elk Creek Bridge, located south of the unincorporated community of Elk on State Route 1 at Post Mile 31.5 in Mendocino County. The existing bridge is a 122-foot long, continuous three-span, cast-in-place reinforced concrete bridge with two 11-foot lanes and two-foot shoulders. The proposed Project consists of replacing the existing structure with a 140-foot long cast-in-place concrete box girder bridge with 12-foot lanes, six-foot shoulders, and a six-foot separated pedestrian and bicycle walkway on the west side of the bridge. The proposed Project also includes construction of a temporary one-lane 22.5-foot wide; 140-foot long bridge and temporary roadway approaches east of the current bridge to accommodate traffic control throughout the two-season construction period. Additionally, the proposed Project includes bio-engineered bank revetment consisting of rock slope protection including installation of 10-12 root wads to enhance habitat and mitigate for impacts to salmonids. The temporary bridge would be removed in the middle of the second construction season once the new permanent bridge is completed, to allow room for the bio-engineered revetment to be constructed on the north bank.

## **Regional Water Board Permitting**

The proposed Project will require a Water Quality Certification under section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1341) for activities related to Project construction within or affecting waters of the U.S. and waters of the State.

RWB Comment 1): On page 38 of the draft IS/MND, please include the Regional Water Board as a jurisdiction agency within Table 20. Temporal and Temporary Impacts on Waters of the U.S., Waters of the State, and Coastal Wetlands in Acres.

### **2.8 Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff – Environmental Consequences**

On page 87, the draft IS/MND states: *“The new impervious surface in the post-project condition, consisting of both new and replaced impervious surface, is anticipated to be greater than one acre.”*

RWB Comment 2): Water Quality 401 Certification will require an approved stormwater mitigation plan for implementation of post-construction stormwater control measures for treatment of new and replaced impervious surfaces. The application package should include, design calculations, proposed site design and structural stormwater control measures to retain and treat stormwater runoff, and Low Impact Development (LID) measures to meet hydromodification requirements per the 401 Application.

### **3.4 CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources**

The draft IS/MND lists impacts to both riparian habitat and state or federally protected wetlands as “less than significant.” Disturbance and tree removal within the red alder riparian forest and Sitka willow thicket are considered temporal impacts because the vegetation on site will take more than one year to grow.

3.4 (b) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

On page 241, the draft IS/MND states: *“Revegetation of the construction zone described in Caltrans’ Standard Measures and Best Management Practices would replant the disturbed construction zone, minimizing impacts to the area.”*

RWB Comment 3): The draft ISMND/EA indicates there will be extensive tree removal and disturbance of riparian and coastal bramble vegetation. Mitigation will be required to address impacts and restore riparian area to ensure no net loss.

3.4 (c) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

On page 242, the draft IS/MND states: *“The loss or disturbance of wetlands, ditches, and perennial stream could be potentially significant, but given the permit conditions anticipated to be required by regulatory agencies and the small area that will be temporarily impacted by construction, the impacts to these habitats would be less than significant.”*

RWB Comment 4): When a watercourse (intermittent and/or perennial) or vegetation within the riparian area will be permanently impacted by the proposed project, mitigation will be necessary to preserve the function and beneficial uses of the site. A draft Compensatory Mitigation Plan must be submitted with a 401 application to address permanent impacts. Temporal loss of functions may also

require mitigation. Temporary impacts will require submittal of a Temporary Impact draft Restoration Plan with the 401 application.

### 3.10. CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality

3.10 (a) Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

RWB Comment 5): Figure 4. Build Alternative Close-Up (page 15) and Layout 1 (L1) include locations for “water quality infiltration features.” Please clarify this description and if these features are proposed for permanent stormwater treatment BMPs. These “water quality infiltration features” located within the riparian zone would not be approved by the Regional Water Board for stormwater treatment BMPs. Please indicate the areas proposed for permanent stormwater treatment and label them accordingly. Provide a summary of the methods proposed to treat and retain stormwater from the project site prior to entering any waters of the State including riparian and wetland areas.

3.10 (c)(iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

On page 190, the draft IS/MND states: “*Bioswales and/or biostrips would be installed at multiple locations to treat stormwater discharges following construction.*”

RWB Comment 6): Please provide a summary of the methods proposed to treat and retain stormwater from the project site prior to entering any waters of the State, including riparian and wetland areas, and map the proposed locations.

Thank you for providing the Regional Water Board the opportunity to comment on this draft IS/MND. If you have any questions or comments or would like to discuss these recommendations, please contact Environmental Scientist, Susan Stewart at (707) 576-2657 or by email at [Susan.Stewart@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Susan.Stewart@waterboards.ca.gov).

Best regards,

Susan Stewart

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**From:** Umbertis, Stephen@DOT <Stephen.Umbertis@dot.ca.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 10:39 AM  
**To:** Stewart, Susan@Waterboards <Susan.Stewart@waterboards.ca.gov>  
**Subject:** Elk Creek DED Comments

EXTERNAL:

Hi Susan –

I was just checking in on the Elk Creek Draft Environmental Document that we sent out last month. Did you have any comments on that? We still have not received any comments from some other agencies so there is some time to submit comments if you have any. I would like to get comments by the end of next week (9/17) if possible.

Feel free to call if you want to discuss the project.

Take care  
Stephen

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Caltrans | North Region Environmental  
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