



SEPTEMBER 22, 2021

VIA EMAIL: TRICHARDSON@COUNTYOFGLENN.NET

Talia Richardson
Glenn County Public Works Agency
777 N. Colusa Street
Willows, CA 95988

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

September 24 2021

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Dear Ms. Richardson:

INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE COUNTY ROAD 66B OVER COLUSA DRAIN BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT, SCH# 2021090147

The Department of Conservation's (Department) Division of Land Resource Protection (Division) has reviewed the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the County Road 66B over Colusa Drain Bridge Replacement Project (Project). The Division monitors farmland conversion on a statewide basis, provides technical assistance regarding the Williamson Act, and administers various agricultural land conservation programs. We offer the following comments and recommendations with respect to the proposed project's potential impacts on agricultural land and resources.

Project Description

The Glenn County Public Works Agency, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration and the California Department of Transportation, is proposing to replace Bridge No. 11C-0068 on County Road 66B over Colusa Drain. The proposed project would replace the existing three-span timber structure bridge with a new 32-foot-wide (two 12-foot lanes with two 4-foot unpaved shoulders) single-span, precast bridge structure. The new bridge will be on the same alignment as the existing bridge.

The project site contains Prime Farmland as identified by the Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program¹. Portions of the project site are under Williamson Act contracts.

Department Comments

The conversion of agricultural land represents a permanent reduction and significant impact to California's agricultural land resources. Under CEQA, a lead agency should

¹ California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/>

not approve a project if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available that would lessen the significant effects of the project.

All mitigation measures that are potentially feasible should be included in the project's environmental review. A measure brought to the attention of the lead agency should not be left out unless it is infeasible based on its elements.

As the courts have shown², agricultural conservation easements on land of at least equal quality and size can mitigate project impacts in accordance with CEQA Guideline § 15370. The Department highlights agricultural conservation easements because of their acceptance and use by lead agencies as an appropriate mitigation measure under CEQA. Agricultural conservation easements are an available mitigation tool and should always be considered; however, any other feasible mitigation measures should also be considered.

Conclusion

Prior to approval of the proposed project the Department recommends further discussion and consideration of the following issues:

- Type, amount, and location of farmland conversion resulting directly and indirectly from implementation of the proposed project.
- Proposed mitigation measures for all impacted agricultural lands within the proposed project area.
- Projects compatibility with, and/or, potential contract resolutions for lands within agricultural preserves and/or enrolled in a Williamson Act contract.
- If applicable, notification of Williamson Act contract non-renewal and/or cancellation.
- Compliance with [Government Code Section 51291](#) for any project considering public acquisition.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the County Road 66B over Colusa Drain Bridge Replacement Project. Please provide this Department with notices of any future hearing dates as well as any staff reports pertaining to this project. If you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact Farl Grundy, Associate Environmental Planner at (916) 617-0522 or via email at Farl.Grundy@conservation.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Monique Wilber

Monique Wilber

Conservation Program Support Supervisor

² *Masonite Corp. v. County of Mendocino* (2013) 218 Cal.App.4th 230, 238.