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## State Water Resources Control Board

Jason Morse  
Superintendent  
Mendocino Unified School District  
44141 Little Lake Road  
Mendocino, CA 95460

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Mar 18 2022

### STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Dear Mr. Morse,

INITIAL STUDY AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (IS/MND) FOR MENDOCINIO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT; RECYCLED WATER SYSTEM PROJECT (PROJECT); MENDOCINO COUNTY; STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2022020568

We understand that the District is pursuing Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) financing for this Project (CWSRF No. C-06-8429-110). As a funding agency and a state agency with jurisdiction by law to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is providing the following information on the IS/MND to be prepared for the Project.

The State Water Board, Division of Financial Assistance, is responsible for administering the CWSRF Program (Program). The primary purpose for the Program is to implement the Clean Water Act and various state laws by providing financial assistance for wastewater treatment facilities necessary to prevent water pollution, recycle water, correct nonpoint source and storm drainage pollution problems, provide for estuary enhancement, and thereby protect and promote health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the state.

The Program is partially funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and requires additional "California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)-Plus" environmental documentation and review. Two enclosures are included that illustrate the Program environmental review process including the additional CEQA-Plus federal requirements. For the complete environmental application package and instructions please visit:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/grants\\_loans/srf/srf\\_forms.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/srf/srf_forms.shtml)

The State Water Board is required to consult directly with agencies responsible for implementing federal environmental laws and regulations. Any environmental issues raised by federal agencies or their representatives will need to be resolved prior to the State Water Board's approval of a CWSRF financing commitment for your proposed

E. JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL, CHAIR | EILEEN SOBECK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Project. For further information on the Program, please contact Mr. Brian Cary, at (916) 449-5624.

It is important to note that prior to a CWSRF financing commitment, projects subject to provisions of the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), must obtain ESA, Section 7 clearance from the United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and/or the United States Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) specific to any potential effects to special-status species.

Please be advised that the State Water Board will coordinate with the USEPA to consult with the USFWS, and/or the NMFS regarding all federal special-status species that the Project has the potential to affect if the Project is to be financed by the Program. The District will need to identify whether the Project will involve any direct effects from construction activities, or indirect effects such as growth inducement, that may affect federally listed threatened, endangered, or candidate species that are known, or have a potential to occur in the Project site, in the surrounding areas, or in the service area, and to identify applicable conservation measures to reduce such effects.

In addition, CWSRF projects must comply with federal laws pertaining to cultural resources, specifically Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106). The State Water Board is responsible for ensuring compliance with Section 106 and is required to consult directly with the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The SHPO consultation is initiated once sufficient information is provided by the CWSRF applicant. If the District decides to pursue CWSRF financing, please retain a consultant that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards ([http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch\\_stnds\\_9.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_9.htm)) to prepare a Section 106 compliance report.

Note that the District will need to identify the Area of Potential Effects (APE), including construction and staging areas, and the depth of any excavation. The APE is three-dimensional and includes all areas that may be affected by the Project. The APE includes the surface area and extends below ground to the depth of any Project excavations. The records search request should extend to a ½-mile beyond project APE. The appropriate area varies for different projects but should be drawn large enough to provide information on what types of sites may exist in the vicinity.

Other federal environmental requirements pertinent to the Project under the Program include the following (for a complete list of all federal requirements and instructions please visit

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/grants\\_loans/srf/srf\\_forms.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/srf/srf_forms.shtml)

- A. An alternative analysis discussing environmental impacts of the Project in either the CEQA document (i.e. Environmental Impact Report) or in a separate report

(i.e. for projects utilizing a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration).

- B. A public hearing or meeting for adoption/certification of all CEQA documents except for those with little or no environmental impacts.
- C. Compliance with the Federal Clean Air Act: (a) Provide air quality studies that may have been done for the Project; and (b) if the Project is in a nonattainment area or attainment area subject to a maintenance plan; (i) provide a summary of the estimated emissions (in tons per year) that are expected from both the construction and operation of the Project for each federal criteria pollutant in a nonattainment or maintenance area, and indicate if the nonattainment designation is moderate, serious, or severe (if applicable); (ii) if emissions are above the federal de minimis levels, but the Project is sized to meet only the needs of current population projections that are used in the approved State Implementation Plan for air quality, quantitatively indicate how the proposed capacity increase was calculated using population projections.
- D. Compliance with the Coastal Zone Management Act: Identify whether or not the Project is within a coastal zone and the status of any coordination with the California Coastal Commission.
- E. Protection of Wetlands: Identify any portion of the proposed Project area that should be evaluated for wetlands or United States waters delineation by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), or requires a permit from the USACE, and identify the status of coordination with the USACE.
- F. Compliance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act: Identify whether or not the Project will result in the conversion of farmland. Identify the status of farmland (prime, unique, local or statewide Importance) in the Project area and determine if this area is under a Williamson Act Contract.
- G. Compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act: List any birds protected under this act that may be impacted by the Project and identify conservation measures to minimize impacts.
- H. Compliance with the Flood Plain Management Act: Identify whether or not the Project is in a Flood Management Zone and include a copy of the Federal Emergency Management Agency flood zone maps for the area.
- I. Compliance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act: Identify whether or not any Wild and Scenic Rivers would be potentially impacted by the Project and include conservation measures to minimize such impacts.

Following are specific comments on the District's draft IS/MND:

1. Projects involving construction activities in the coastal zone will require consultation with either the California Coastal Commission (or the designated local agency with a Local Coastal Program).

2. Mitigation Measure BIO-2, under section 3.4 Biological Resources states, "In the event that a Northern red-legged frog is observed in an active construction zone, the contractor shall halt construction activities in the immediate area where observed and the frog shall be moved to a safe location in a similar habitat outside of the construction zone." Please consider adding language that clarifies that any observed frogs shall be handled and moved, if appropriate, by a CDFW approved, qualified biologist.
3. Please consider coordinating with USFWS and or NMFS when developing mitigation measures as appropriate for any potential impacts to federally listed species.

Please upload to FFAST the following documents applicable to the proposed Project following the District's CEQA process: (1) one copy of the draft and final IS/MND, (2) the resolution adopting the IS/MND and making CEQA findings, (3) all comments received during the review period and the District's response to those comments, (4) the adopted Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and (5) the Notice of Determination filed with the Mendocino County Clerk and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse. In addition, we would appreciate notices of any hearings or meetings held regarding environmental review of any projects to be funded by the State Water Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the District's draft IS/MND. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (916) 322-0355, or by email at [Matthew.Metelitz@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Matthew.Metelitz@waterboards.ca.gov) or contact Brian Cary at (916) 449-5624, or by email at [Brian.Cary@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Brian.Cary@waterboards.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

Matthew Metelitz  
Environmental Scientist

Enclosures (1):

1. Clean Water State Revolving Fund Environmental Review Requirements

cc: State Clearinghouse  
(Re: SCH# 2019079100)  
P.O. Box 3044  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044