

Notice of Intent to Adopt and Notice of Availability of a Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the California Aqueduct Milepost 230.6 to 231.4 Investigation, Design, And Repair

Notice is hereby given that the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Division of Operations and Maintenance, Environmental Assessment Branch intends to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the California Aqueduct Milepost 230.6 to 231.4 Investigation, Design, And Repair Project.

Notice is also hereby given that the Draft Initial Study (IS) and Proposed MND prepared by DWR have been released for a 30-day public review.

Project: California Aqueduct Milepost 230.6 to 231.4 Investigation, Design, And Repair Project

Project Summary, Background, and Impacts: The proposed project is investigation and maintenance of the State Water Project. DWR proposes to investigate, design, permit, and implement the following repairs to restore the California Aqueduct. The Project would include the following:

- Conduct geotechnical exploration to determine soil behavior types, weak areas, and soil moisture contents.
- Reinforce approximately 1.18 miles of Aqueduct embankment to improve soil structure and reduce seepage.
- Restore the embankment to the design elevation to reduce risk of overtopping.
- Repair any damage to the Aqueduct liner to prevent seepage.
- Raise approximately 1.44 miles of Aqueduct liner to design elevation to prevent seepage and erosion.
- Reconstruct the road on top of the restored embankment to restore access.

Geotechnical investigations will take place over a six-week period and are proposed to begin in 2023. Results and analysis from the investigations will determine the best repair option for the Project. Potential options have been identified as appropriate remediation and include ground compaction, permeation grouting, cut-off walls, and combinations thereof. Project construction is proposed to begin in the spring of 2025. All Project construction activities will take place within DWR's right-of-way and will occur over a seven-month period.

DWR has directed the preparation of an IS/MND on the proposed project in accordance with the requirements of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. The IS/MND describes the proposed project and provides an assessment of the proposed project's potential significant adverse impacts on the physical environment. It concludes that the proposed project would have no impact on aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, energy, hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise,

population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, utilities and service systems, and wildfire.

The IS did not identify any significant and unavoidable impacts. The IS analysis determined that the Project would result in potential adverse impacts associated with air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hydrology and water quality, and tribal cultural resources, but that these impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels with implementation of mitigation measures.

Location: The project area is located on the California Aqueduct, approximately four miles south of the town of Buttonwillow; Kern County, California. DWR currently plans to repair the embankment on both sides of the Aqueduct, in Pool 27, from MP 230.7 to 231.05 and MP 231.2 to 231.44. DWR would also conduct geotechnical investigations and liner raises on both sides of the Aqueduct.

Review: The 30-day public review period for this Draft IS and Proposed MND begins March 30, 2022 and ends April 28, 2022. Copies of the IS/MND may be reviewed at the following locations:

1. DWR's website: <http://water.ca.gov/>
2. CEQAnet

Submit Comments

Comments regarding the Draft IS and Proposed MND should be submitted in writing to:

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Division of Operations and Maintenance
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Comments are due no later than 5 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time on Tuesday, April 28, 2022.

If comments are provided via email, please include the project title in the subject line, attach comments in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat format, and include the commenter's U.S. Postal Service mailing address.

PRIVACY NOTE: All comments received will be made available for public review in their entirety, including the names and addresses of the respondents. Individual respondents may request that their name and/or address be withheld from public disclosure. DWR will honor such requests to the extent allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment.