

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.*

June 21, 2022

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

JUN 21 2022

Danielle LeFer
California Department of Parks and Recreation
1925 Las Virgenes Road
Calabasas, CA 91302

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

RE: Topanga Lagoon Restoration
Project – Notice of Preparation of an
Environmental Impact Report (NOP)
SCH # 2022050478
GTS # 07-LA-2022-03959

Dear Danielle LeFer:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced NOP. The Topanga Lagoon Restoration Project is a multiagency plan that seeks to restore ecological values of the coastal lagoon by expanding the existing footprint from its current condition of less than 1 acre to 7 -10-acres. The project would improve the ecological condition and hydrologic functions of the lagoon to more closely resemble a natural condition. As part of the Project, the existing Pacific Coast Highway bridge over Topanga Creek would be reconstructed with a longer span to accommodate a wider lagoon. The project would also improve coastal access and recreation in a way that supports and enhances biological and cultural values. The California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The project encompasses 59 acres of Topanga State Park and Topanga Beach located on the coastal slope of the Santa Monica Mountains, west of the intersection of Topanga Canyon Boulevard (TCB) and State Route 1/Pacific Coast Highway (SR-1/PCH). The northern portion of the lagoon area is owned by the CDPR as part of Topanga State Park. The PCH bridge owned by Caltrans bisects the lagoon and constrains the size of its mouth and channel. The lifeguard tower, beach, restrooms, and parking areas south of the PCH are managed by Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors (DBH) and are currently experiencing impacts from coastal erosion and storm surges. The project area is located within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) but is owned and managed by three public entities: CDPR, DBH and Caltrans.

The proposed project is anticipated to have a net benefit to the environment as it a restoration project that seeks to protect and enhance existing biological, cultural and visitor services resources, and proactively address the threat of future climate change and sea level rise. However, the project has the potential for short- or long-term environmental effects. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will assess the level of impact to all environmental resources, including Transportation, from the proposed project alternatives and identify measures to avoid,

minimize, and mitigate impacts to the maximum extent feasible. Caltrans looks forward to reviewing these analyses in the EIR.

Additionally, we encourage the Lead Agency to evaluate the potential of additional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) applications to better manage the transportation network, as well as transit service and bicycle or pedestrian connectivity improvements. For more TDM strategies, please refer to the Federal Highway Administration's Integrating Demand Management into the Transportation Planning Process: A Desk Reference (Chapter 8). This reference is available online at: <http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop12035/fhwahop12035.pdf>

Caltrans encourages the Lead Agency to promote alternative transportation. This will increase accessibility and decrease Greenhouse Gas Emissions, which supports Caltrans' mission to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. For supplementary strategies that will promote equity and environmental preservation, please refer to the 2010 Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures report by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA), which is available online at: <http://www.capcoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/CAPCOA-Quantification-Report-9-14-Final.pdf>

As a reminder, any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials which requires use of oversized-transport vehicles on State Highways will need a Caltrans transportation permit. Caltrans recommends that the Project limit construction traffic to off-peak periods to minimize the potential impact on State facilities. If construction traffic is expected to cause issues on any State facilities, including SR-1, please submit a construction traffic control plan detailing these issues for Caltrans' review.

Finally, any work completed on or near Caltrans' right of way may require an encroachment permit. However, the final determination on this will be made by Caltrans' Office of Permits. This work would require additional review and may be subject to additional requirements to ensure current design standards and access management elements are addressed. For more information on encroachment permits, see: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep>.

If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Ronnie Escobar, the project coordinator, at Ronnie.Escobar@dot.ca.gov, and refer to GTS # 07-LA-2022-03959.

Sincerely,



MIYA EDMONSON
LDR/CEQA Branch Chief
cc: State Clearinghouse