

Summary Form for Electronic Document Submittal

Form F

Lead agencies may include 15 hardcopies of this document when submitting electronic copies of Environmental Impact Reports, Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, or Notices of Preparation to the State Clearinghouse (SCH). The SCH also accepts other summaries, such as EIR Executive Summaries prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15123. Please include one copy of the Notice of Completion Form (NOC) with your submission and attach the summary to each electronic copy of the document.

SCH #: 2022110466

Project Title: Golden State Natural Resources Forest Resiliency Demonstration Project

Lead Agency: Golden State Finance Authority

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Project Location: Jamestown, Nubieber, Stockton Tuolumne, Lassen, San Joaquin
City *County*

Project Description (Proposed actions, location, and/or consequences).

The proposed project is a response to the growing rate of wildfires in California, which has been exacerbated by hazardous excess fuel loads in forests, and the need to promote economic activity within California's rural counties. The proposed project would improve the resiliency of California's forestlands by sustainably procuring and processing excess biomass into a pelletized fuel source for use in renewable energy generation overseas. The proposed project components include the vegetation treatment activities (feedstock source); the transportation and storage of feedstock, and subsequent processing at two pellet processing facilities (one in the foothills of the Central Sierra Nevada Mountain range (Tuolumne facility) and one in the Modoc Plateau of Northern California (Lassen facility); and the transportation of the finished product to a storage and shipping facility at the Port of Stockton, California, for export to international markets.

Identify the project's significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect.

The Draft EIR identifies potentially significant impacts related to aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural and tribal cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, transportation, utilities and service systems, and wildfire. Impacts related to aesthetics, biological resources, cultural and tribal cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, utilities and service systems, and wildfire would be substantially reduced or avoided with implementation of mitigation measures. The Draft EIR identifies significant and unavoidable environmental impacts related to air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and transportation.

The project proposes several mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts. Please see the Draft EIR for a full list of proposed mitigation measures.

If applicable, describe any of the project's areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public.

Please see the Executive Summary in the DEIR for a complete description. Based on public scoping meetings and comments received during the NOP comment periods, concerns are centered on the following areas of controversy:
Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change

Many commenters identified greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the project as an area concern and potentially significant impact. Potential GHG sources of emission include construction of facilities, off-road equipment for in-forest operations, transportation to and from the pellet facilities, pellet production, port operations, and combustion of wood pellets. This also was raised in the context of carbon sequestration – the potential loss of existing stored forest carbon and loss of future carbon uptake. Some commenters have stated that wood pellets, or bioenergy more broadly, should therefore not be considered a “renewable” energy source. For example, statements have been made whether or not the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identifies biomass, or bioenergy, as a renewable energy source. While this is controversial, both the IPCC and the European Union (EU) identify bioenergy as a category of renewable energy. This is not to say that bioenergy is carbon neutral. The carbon impact of a particular bioenergy product or process will vary.

Air Quality

If, and how, California's forests should be managed to minimize the risk of catastrophic wildfire is an area of controversy. Adverse effects identified by commenters include impacts to special status wildlife and plants, destabilization of soils and subsequent erosion, impacts to water quality, and loss of recreational opportunities. Some commenters expressed concern that the proposed project was a means to reinstate large scale logging in California.

Forest Treatment

If, and how, California's forests should be managed to minimize the risk of catastrophic wildfire is an area of controversy. Adverse effects identified by commenters include impacts to special status wildlife and plants, destabilization of soils and subsequent erosion, impacts to water quality, and loss of recreational opportunities. Some commenters expressed concern that the proposed project was a means to reinstate large scale logging in California.

Provide a list of the responsible or trustee agencies for the project.

Lassen County
Tuolumne County
Port of Stockton