

February 20, 2023

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Dear Steven Valdez:

Thank you for providing the California Air Resources Board (CARB) with the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Pepper 210 Commerce Center Project (Project) Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), State Clearinghouse No. 2023010089. The Project proposes a Land Use Category Change (General Plan Amendment) from Resource Land Management (RLM) to General Industrial (GI) and a Zoning District Amendment from Resource Conservation (RC) to Regional Industrial (IR), in conjunction with a Tentative Parcel Map and Conditional Use permit to allow for the placement of a 1,232,660 square-foot warehouse/distribution/logistics building. The Project site is located within an unincorporated area of the County of San Bernardino (County), California, which is the lead agency for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) purposes.

Industrial development, such as the Project, can result in high daily volumes of heavy-duty diesel truck, rail traffic and operation of on-site equipment (e.g., forklifts and yard tractors) that emit toxic diesel particulate matter, and contribute to regional air pollution and global climate change.¹ Portions of the Project site are located within the boundaries of the San Bernardino, Muscoy community. This community has been designated as a disadvantaged community under Assembly Bill (AB) 617 (C. Garcia, Chapter 136, Statutes of 2017)² and therefore, CARB is concerned about localized air pollutant exposure at the neighborhood level, as well as the Project's regional air quality impacts.

1. With regard to greenhouse gas emissions from this project, CARB has been clear that local governments and project proponents have a responsibility to properly mitigate these impacts. CARB's guidance, set out in detail in the Scoping Plan issued in 2017, makes clear that in CARB's expert view, local mitigation is critical to achieving climate goals and reducing greenhouse gases below levels of significance.

2. Assembly Bill 617, Garcia, C., Chapter 136, Statutes of 2017, modified the California Health and Safety Code, amending § 40920.6, § 42400, and § 42402, and adding § 39607.1, § 40920.8, § 42411, § 42705.5, and § 44391.2.

The Project Would Increase Exposure to Air Pollution in Disadvantaged Communities

The Project, in conjunction with the operation of the other industrial development within the County, will expose the nearby San Bernardino, Muscoy community to increased levels of air pollution. Addressing the disproportionate impacts that air pollution has on disadvantaged communities is a pressing concern across the State, as evidenced by statutory requirements compelling California's public agencies to target these communities for clean air investment, pollution mitigation, and environmental regulation. The following three pieces of legislation need to be considered and included in the DEIR when developing a project like this near a disadvantaged community:

Senate Bill 535 (De León, 2012)

Senate Bill 535 (De León, Chapter 830, 2012)³ recognizes the potential vulnerability of low-income and disadvantaged communities to poor air quality and requires funds to be spent to benefit disadvantaged communities. The California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) is charged with the duty to identify disadvantaged communities. CalEPA bases its identification of these communities on geographic, socioeconomic, public health, and environmental hazard criteria (Health and Safety Code, section 39711, subsection (a)). In this capacity, CalEPA currently defines a disadvantaged community, from an environmental hazard and socioeconomic standpoint, as a community that scores within the top 25 percent of the census tracts, as analyzed by the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool Version 4.0 (CalEnviroScreen). This Project is located with the boundary of the San Bernardino, Muscoy community. The maximum CalEnviroScreen score for the San Bernardino, Muscoy community is in the top one percent, indicating that the area is home to some of the most vulnerable neighborhoods in the State. The air pollution levels in the San Bernardino, Muscoy community routinely exceed state and federal air quality standards. CARB urges the County to ensure that the Project does not adversely impact neighboring disadvantaged communities.

Senate Bill 1000 (Leyva, 2016)

Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000) (Leyva, Chapter 587, Statutes of 2016)⁴ amended California's Planning and Zoning Law. SB 1000 requires local governments that have identified disadvantaged communities to incorporate the addition of an environmental justice element into their general plans upon the adoption or next revision of two or more elements concurrently on or after January 1, 2018. SB 1000 requires environmental justice elements to

3. Senate Bill 535, De León, K., Chapter 800, Statutes of 2012, modified the California Health and Safety Code, adding § 39711, § 39713, § 39715, § 39721 and § 39723.

4. Senate Bill 1000, Leyva, S., Chapter 587, Statutes of 2016, amended the California Health and Safety Code, § 65302.

identify objectives and policies to reduce unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities. Generally, environmental justice elements will include policies to reduce the community's exposure to pollution through air quality improvement. SB 1000 affirms the need to integrate environmental justice principles into the planning process to prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.

Assembly Bill 617 (Garcia, 2017)

The State of California has emphasized protecting local communities from the harmful effects of air pollution through the passage of AB 617. AB 617 requires CARB to develop the process that creates new community-focused and community-driven action to reduce air pollution and improve public health in communities that experience disproportionate burdens from exposure to air pollutants. In response to AB 617, CARB established the Community Air Protection Program with the goal of reducing exposure in communities heavily impacted by air pollution. As part of its role in implementing AB 617, CARB must annually consider the selection of communities for development and implementation of community air monitoring plans and/or community emission reduction programs for those communities affected by a high cumulative exposure burden. The San Bernardino, Muscoy community is one of 15 communities statewide chosen thus far for inclusion in the Community Air Protection Program.

The San Bernardino, Muscoy community was selected for the development of both a Community Air Monitoring Plan and a Community Emissions Reduction Program (CERP) due to its high cumulative exposure burden, the presence of a significant number of sensitive populations (children, elderly, and individuals with pre-existing conditions), and the socioeconomic challenges experienced by its residents. CARB approved the San Bernardino, Muscoy CERP in September 2019, which describes strategies to achieve emissions and exposure reductions throughout this community, including significantly reducing or eliminating emissions from heavy-duty mobile sources and industrial stationary sources.

Health-harming emissions, including particulate matter (PM), toxic air contaminants, and diesel PM generated from the proposed increase in warehouse development in the Project area will negatively impact the community, which is already disproportionately impacted by air pollution from existing freight operations as well as stationary sources of air pollution. Part of the AB 617 process required CARB and the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) to create a highly resolved inventory of air pollution sources within this community.

The DEIR Should Quantify and Discuss the Potential Cancer Risks from Project Operation

Since the Project is near a community that is already burdened by multiple air pollution sources, CARB urges the County and applicant to prepare a health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. The HRA should account for all potential operational health risks from Project-related diesel particulate matter (diesel PM) emission sources, including, but not limited to, back-up generators, on-site diesel-powered equipment, locomotives, and heavy-duty trucks. The HRA should also determine if the operation of the Project in conjunction with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects or activities would result in a cumulative cancer risk impact on nearby residences. To reduce diesel PM exposure and associated cancer risks, CARB urges the County and applicant to include all the air pollution reduction measures listed in Attachment A.

Since the Project description provided in the NOP does not explicitly state that the proposed industrial land uses would not be used for cold storage, there is a possibility that trucks and trailers visiting the Project-site would be equipped with TRUs.⁵ TRUs on trucks and trailers can emit large quantities of diesel exhaust while operating within the Project-site. Residences and other sensitive receptors (e.g., daycare facilities, senior care facilities, and schools) located near where these TRUs could be operating, would be exposed to diesel exhaust emissions that would result in a significant cancer risk impact to the nearby community. If the Project would be used for cold storage, CARB urges the County to model air pollutant emissions from on-site TRUs in the DEIR, as well as include potential cancer risks from on-site TRUs in the Project's HRA. If the Project will not be used for cold storage, CARB urges the County to include one of the following design measures in the DEIR:

- A Project design measure requiring contractual language in tenant lease agreements that prohibits tenants from operating TRUs within the Project-site; or
- A condition requiring a restrictive covenant over the parcel that prohibits the applicant's use of TRUs on the property unless the applicant seeks and receives an amendment to its conditional use permit allowing such use.

The HRA prepared in support of the Project should be based on the latest Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment's (OEHHA) guidance (2015 Air Toxics Hot Spots Program Guidance Manual for Preparation of Health Risk Assessments),⁶ and CARB's Hot Spots Analysis and Reporting Program (HARP2 model). The Project's mobile PM emissions used to estimate the Project's cancer risk impacts should be based on CARB's latest 2021

5. TRUs are refrigeration systems powered by integral diesel engines that protect perishable goods during transport in an insulated truck and trailer vans, rail cars, and domestic shipping containers.

6. Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). Air Toxics Hot Spots Program Guidance Manual for Preparation of Health Risk Assessments. February 2015. Accessed at: <https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/cnr/2015guidancemanual.pdf>.

Emission Factors model (EMFAC2021). Mobile emission factors can be easily obtained by running the EMFAC2021 Web Database: <https://arb.ca.gov/emfac/>.

The HRA should evaluate and present the existing baseline (current conditions), future baseline (full build-out year, without the Project), and future year with the Project. The health risks modeled under both the existing and the future baselines should reflect all applicable federal, state, and local rules and regulations. By evaluating health risks using both baselines, the public and planners will have a complete understanding of the potential health impacts that would result from the Project.

The DEIR Should Quantify and Discuss the Potential Cancer Risks from Project Construction

In addition to the health risks associated with operational diesel PM emissions, health risks associated with construction diesel PM emissions should also be included in the air quality section of the DEIR and the Project's HRA. Construction of the Project would result in short-term diesel PM emissions from the use of both on-road and off-road diesel equipment. The OEHHA guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months. Since construction would very likely occur over a period lasting longer than two months, the HRA prepared for the Project should include health risks for existing residences near the Project-site during construction.

The HRA should account for all diesel PM emission sources related to Project construction, including, but not limited to, off-road mobile equipment, diesel generators, and on-road heavy-duty trucks. As previously stated in Section I of this letter, the cancer risks evaluated in the construction HRA should be based on the latest OEHHA guidance, and CARB's HARP2 model. The cancer risks reported in the HRA should be calculated using the latest emission factors obtained from CARB's latest EMFAC (currently EMFAC 2021) and off-road models.

Conclusion

To reduce the exposure of toxic diesel PM emissions in disadvantaged communities already impacted by air pollution, the final design of the Project should include all existing and emerging zero-emission technologies to minimize diesel PM and NO_x emissions, as well as the greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. CARB encourages the County and applicant to implement the applicable measures listed in Attachment A of this letter.

Given the breadth and scope of projects subject to CEQA review throughout California that have air quality and greenhouse gas impacts, coupled with CARB's limited staff resources to substantively respond to all issues associated with a project, CARB must prioritize its substantive comments here based on staff time, resources, and its assessment of impacts. CARB's deliberate decision to substantively comment on some issues does not constitute an admission or concession that it substantively agrees with the lead agency's findings and conclusions on any issues on which CARB does not substantively submit comments.

CARB appreciates the opportunity to comment on the NOP for the Project and can provide assistance on zero-emission technologies and emission reduction strategies, as needed. Please include CARB on your State Clearinghouse list of selected State agencies that will receive the DEIR as part of the comment period. If you have questions, please contact Stanley Armstrong, Air Pollution Specialist via email at stanley.armstrong@arb.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Robert Krieger, Branch Chief, Risk Reduction Branch

Attachment

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Attachment A

Recommended Air Pollution Emission Reduction Measures for Warehouses and Distribution Centers

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) recommends developers and government planners use all existing and emerging zero to near-zero emission technologies during project construction and operation to minimize public exposure to air pollution. Below are some measures, currently recommended by CARB, specific to warehouse and distribution center projects. These recommendations are subject to change as new zero-emission technologies become available.

Recommended Construction Measures

1. Ensure the cleanest possible construction practices and equipment are used. This includes eliminating the idling of diesel-powered equipment and providing the necessary infrastructure (e.g., electrical hookups) to support zero and near-zero equipment and tools.
2. Implement, and plan accordingly for, the necessary infrastructure to support the zero and near-zero emission technology vehicles and equipment that will be operating on site. Necessary infrastructure may include the physical (e.g., needed footprint), energy, and fueling infrastructure for construction equipment, on-site vehicles and equipment, and medium-heavy and heavy-heavy duty trucks.
3. In construction contracts, include language that requires all off-road diesel-powered equipment used during construction to be equipped with Tier 4 or cleaner engines, except for specialized construction equipment in which Tier 4 engines are not available. In place of Tier 4 engines, off-road equipment can incorporate retrofits, such that, emission reductions achieved are equal to or exceed that of a Tier 4 engine.
4. In construction contracts, include language that requires all off-road equipment with a power rating below 19 kilowatts (e.g., plate compactors, pressure washers) used during project construction be battery powered.
5. In construction contracts, include language that requires all heavy-duty trucks entering the construction site during the grading and building construction phases be model

year 2014 or later. All heavy-duty haul trucks should also meet CARB's lowest optional low-oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) standard starting in the year 2022.⁷

6. In construction contracts, include language that requires all construction equipment and fleets to be in compliance with all current air quality regulations. CARB is available to assist in implementing this recommendation.

Recommended Operation Measures

1. Include contractual language in tenant lease agreements that requires tenants to use the cleanest technologies available, and to provide the necessary infrastructure to support zero-emission vehicles and equipment that will be operating on site.
2. Include contractual language in tenant lease agreements that requires all loading/unloading docks and trailer spaces be equipped with electrical hookups for trucks with transport refrigeration units (TRUs) or auxiliary power units. This requirement will substantially decrease the amount of time that a TRU powered by a fossil-fueled internal combustion engine can operate at the project site. Use of zero-emission all-electric plug-in TRUs, hydrogen fuel cell transport refrigeration, and cryogenic transport refrigeration are encouraged and can also be included in lease agreements.⁸
3. Include contractual language in tenant lease agreements that requires all TRUs entering the project-site be plug-in capable.
4. Include contractual language in tenant lease agreements that requires future tenants to exclusively use zero-emission light and medium-duty delivery trucks and vans.
5. Include contractual language in tenant lease agreements that requires all service equipment (e.g., yard hostlers, yard equipment, forklifts, and pallet jacks) used within the project site to be zero-emission. This equipment is widely available and can be purchased using incentive funding from CARB's Clean Off-Road Equipment Voucher Incentive Project (CORE).⁹
6. Include contractual language in tenant lease agreements that requires all heavy-duty trucks entering or on the project site to be zero-emission vehicles, and be fully zero-emission. A list of commercially available zero-emission trucks can be obtained

7. In 2013, CARB adopted optional low-NO_x emission standards for on-road heavy-duty engines. CARB encourages engine manufacturers to introduce new technologies to reduce NO_x emissions below the current mandatory on-road heavy-duty diesel engine emission standards for model-year 2010 and later. CARB's optional low-NO_x emission standard is available at: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/optional-reduced-nox-standards>

8. CARB's technology assessment for transport refrigerators provides information on the current and projected development of TRUs, including current and anticipated costs. The assessment is available at: https://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/tech/techreport/tru_07292015.pdf

9. Clean Off-Road Equipment Voucher Incentive Project. Accessible at: <https://californiacore.org/how-to-participate/>

from the Hybrid and Zero-emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project (HVIP).¹⁰ Additional incentive funds can be obtained from the Carl Moyer Program and Voucher Incentive Program.¹¹

7. Include contractual language in tenant lease agreements that requires the tenant to be in, and monitor compliance with, all current air quality regulations for on-road trucks including CARB's Heavy-Duty (Tractor-Trailer) Greenhouse Gas Regulation,¹² Advanced Clean Trucks Regulation,¹³ Periodic Smoke Inspection Program (PSIP),¹⁴ and the Statewide Truck and Bus Regulation.¹⁵
8. Include contractual language in tenant lease agreements restricting trucks and support equipment from idling longer than two minutes while on site.
9. Include rooftop solar panels for each proposed warehouse to the extent feasible, with a capacity that matches the maximum allowed for distributed solar connections to the grid.
10. Include contractual language in tenant lease agreements, requiring the installing of vegetative walls¹⁶ or other effective barriers that separate loading docks and people living or working nearby.
11. Include contractual language in tenant lease agreements, requiring all emergency generators to be powered by a non-diesel fuel.
12. The project should be constructed to meet CalGreen Tier 2 green building standards, including all provisions related to designated parking for clean air vehicles, electric

10. Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project. Accessible at: <https://californiahvip.org/>

11. Carl Moyer Program and Voucher Incentive Program. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/carl-moyer-program-apply>

12. In December 2008, CARB adopted a regulation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by improving the fuel efficiency of heavy-duty tractors that pull 53-foot or longer box-type trailers. The regulation applies primarily to owners of 53-foot or longer box-type trailers, including both dry-van and refrigerated-van trailers, and owners of the heavy-duty tractors that pull them on California highways. CARB's Heavy-Duty (Tractor-Trailer) Greenhouse Gas Regulation is available at: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/ttghg>

13. On June 25, 2020, CARB approved the Advanced Clean Trucks Regulation. The regulation requires manufacturers to start the transition from diesel trucks and vans to zero-emission trucks beginning in 2024. The rule is expected to result in about 100,000 electric trucks in California by the end of 2030 and about 300,000 by 2035. CARB is expected to consider a fleet regulation in 2021 that would be compatible with the Advanced Clean Trucks regulation, requiring fleets to purchase a certain percentage of zero-emission trucks and vans for their fleet operations. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/advanced-clean-trucks>

14. The PSIP program requires that diesel and bus fleet owners conduct annual smoke opacity inspections of their vehicles and repair those with excessive smoke emissions to ensure compliance. CARB's PSIP program is available at: <https://www.arb.ca.gov/enf/hdvp/hdvp.htm>

15. The regulation requires that newer heavier trucks and buses must meet particulate matter filter requirements beginning January 1, 2012. Lighter and older heavier trucks must be replaced starting January 1, 2015. By January 1, 2023, nearly all trucks and buses will need to have 2010 model-year engines or equivalent. CARB's Statewide Truck and Bus Regulation is available at: <https://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/onrdiesel/onrdiesel.htm>

16. Effectiveness of Sound Wall-Vegetation Combination Barriers as Near-Roadway Pollutant Mitigation Strategies (2017) is available at: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/classic/research/apr/past/13-306.pdf>

vehicle charging, and bicycle parking, and achieve a certification of compliance with LEED green building standards.