

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4
OFFICE OF REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
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April 7, 2023

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Steve Rotherth, Project Manager
California Department of Water Resources
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Searsville Watershed Restoration Project – Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Steve Rotherth:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Searsville Watershed Restoration Project. We are committed to ensuring that impacts to the State's multimodal transportation system and to our natural environment are identified and mitigated to support a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system. The following comments are based on our review of the February 2023 NOP.

Project Understanding

The proposed project would modify Searsville Dam to reestablish sediment transport processes and fish passage conditions past Searsville Dam, restore stream and riparian habitats above the dam, remove a substantial amount of sediment trapped behind the dam, relocate the Searsville Reservoir water diversion downstream to the San Francisquito Creek Pump Station, expand the Pump Stations' capacity, and relocate historic non-potable water supply and storage from Seasville Reservoir.

Sediment Management

The projected sediment removal, as presently proposed in the NOP, may involve addressing the deposition downstream in areas of sensitive habitat near the tidally influenced area around US-101 in San Mateo County. The US-101 bridge crossing over San Francisquito Creek is listed as a high-priority Caltrans asset vulnerable to sea level rise, storm surge, and climate change impacts including increased precipitation in the Caltrans District 4 Adaptation Priorities Report.

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Please keep Caltrans informed as the DEIR is released and sediment management is developed and implemented for this project. Caltrans looks forward to engaging in multi-agency collaboration early and often, to find multi-benefit solutions that protect vulnerable shorelines, communities, infrastructure, and the environment. Please contact Caltrans Bay Area Climate Change Planning Coordinator with any questions at vishal.ream-rao@dot.ca.gov.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, California Department of Water Resources is responsible for all project mitigation, including any needed improvements to the State Transportation Network (STN). The project's fair share contribution, financing, scheduling, implementation responsibilities and lead agency monitoring should be fully discussed for all proposed mitigation measures.

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, or for future notifications and requests for review of new projects, please email LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



YUNSHENG LUO
Acting District Branch Chief
Local Development Review

c: State Clearinghouse