



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Northern Region
601 Locust Street
Redding, CA 96001
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



December 4, 2023

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Danny Castro, Assistant Planner
City of Redding
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Redding, CA 96001
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Dec 05 2023

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF PACE SUPPLY CORPORATION EXPANSION PROJECT, STATE CLEARING HOUSE NUMBER 2023100840, SHASTA COUNTY

Dear Danny Castro:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has reviewed the Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (ISMND) dated October 2023, for the above-referenced project (Project). CDFW appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Project, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines¹.

CDFW's Role

CDFW is California's Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute for all the people of the State (Fish and Game Code, §§ 711.7, subd. (a) & 1802; Public Resources Code, § 21070; CEQA Guidelines § 15386, subd. (a)). CDFW, in its trustee capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (Id., § 1802). Similarly, for purposes of CEQA, CDFW is charged by law to provide, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental review efforts, focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW is also submitting comments as a Responsible Agency under CEQA (Public Resources Code, § 21069; CEQA Guidelines, § 15381). CDFW expects that it may need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code. Likewise, to the extent implementation of the Project as proposed may result in "take", as defined by state law, of any species

¹CEQA is codified in the California Public Resources Code in section 21000 et seq. The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

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protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish and Game Code, § 2050 et seq.), or state-listed rare plant pursuant to the Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA; Fish and Game Code § 1900 et seq.) authorization as provided by the applicable Fish and Game Code will be required.

Project Description

The Project, as described in the ISMND, is as follows:

“The project applicant, PACE Supply Corporation, is requesting approval of Use Permit Application UP-2023-00550, to construct an additional 20,000 square feet of enclosed warehouse space and to improve approximately two acres of undeveloped area for circulation and outdoor storage on a seven-acre property located at 3676 Old 44 Drive.”

Comments and Recommendations

CDFW was pleased to have responded to an early consultation request from the City of Redding (City) in September 2023. CDFW recognizes that some comments were addressed and incorporated into the draft ISMND, however, CDFW provides the following comments to further assist the City, as Lead Agency, in adequately identifying, avoiding and/or minimizing potentially significant impacts to biological resources.

Western Spadefoot and MM-Bio-1

Western spadefoot is a California Species of Special Concern (SSC) and a candidate species under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). CEQA provides protection not only for ESA or CESA listed species, but for any species including, but not limited to, SSC that can be shown to meet the criteria for state listing. CDFW believes western spadefoot meets the CEQA definition of rare, threatened, or endangered species (CEQA Guidelines, § 15380).

As stated in our September communication, the western spadefoot is a burrowing toad that breeds in ephemeral pools but spends most of its life in underground burrows in adjacent terrestrial habitat. In a recent study, inland populations of western spadefoot showed dispersal just over 600 feet from a breeding pool². The ISMND indicates potentially suitable breeding habitat is present onsite and that potential breeding habitat will be permanently impacted. Likewise, potentially suitable terrestrial habitat within the Project

² Halstead, B.J. et al. 2021. Conservation Implications of Spatiotemporal Variation in the Terrestrial Ecology of Western Spadefoots. The Journal of Wildlife Management 85(7):1377-1393;2021. DOI: 10.1002/jwmg.22095.

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area will also be permanently impacted with Project implementation. If western spadefoot is present, Project activities may result in trampling or crushing of individuals or egg masses. Demolition and paving after false negative conclusions may trap wildlife hiding under refugia and in burrows.

The ISMND indicates that water was not ponded during the March 2022 species-specific survey for western spadefoot. Since breeding can only occur if there is enough rainfall to fill and hold water in aquatic breeding habitat, this survey effort was not conducted at an appropriate time. Therefore, CDFW supports the Lead Agency's incorporation of MM-Bio-1, to perform two additional pre-construction surveys for western spadefoot, when conditions are optimal during the breeding season.

CDFW recommends the Lead Agency revise MM-Bio-1, to ensure surveys are conducted when conditions are optimal during the breeding season in an effort to avoid potential impacts to western spadefoot:

"Prior to initiating **any** construction **activities** ~~in aquatic environments~~, a qualified biologist shall conduct two (2) nighttime preconstruction surveys between January and March to detect western spadefoot toad adults, egg masses, and/or tadpoles. Preconstruction surveys shall occur immediately following separate precipitation events, ~~that produce enough volume of rain to develop ponding events~~ **when breeding pools are retaining sufficient water to support breeding efforts and when water temperatures are between 9 and 30 degree Celsius (48-86 degrees Fahrenheit)**. California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) shall be consulted prior to the initiation of project activities if any western spadefoots are observed."

Additional information may be referenced in the [May 2023 Species Status Assessment Report for Western Spadefoot](#).

Special Status Bumble Bees

As stated in our September communication, this Project bisects the range of *Bombus crotchii*, a CESA-candidate species as of September 2022.

Attachment E, "Response to CDFW" states "*There nearest CNDDDB occurrence (#4) is approximately 27 miles from the BSA in Tehama County and is from 1956. According to the IUCN Red List, Crotch bumble bee is thought to be possibly extinct from this region. Suitable bee habitat requires the availability of nectar and pollen from floral resources throughout the duration of the colony period (spring, summer, and fall) (Xerces Society 2018). No known food sources forces were observed within the BSA. Some floral resources are in bloom from February to October within the BSA; however, they are not sufficient to support*

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Crotch bumble bee populations. There is no suitable habitat for Crotch's bumble bee within the BSA. The inclusion of additional analysis and focused surveys are not warranted in the BRA document."

The CNDDDB is not an exhaustive or comprehensive inventory of all special status species or natural communities and therefore, species that have not been reported to CNDDDB does not negate their potential to occur. Occurrence data may not always be available for a variety of reasons including the lack of systematic surveys across all potential habitat and recent species declines. Absence of occurrence records should not be interpreted as absence of the species at or near a given site and all species with potential to occur should be analyzed. Specific to bumble bees, floral resource presence and records should be evaluated by consulting a combination of reliable data sources including the occurrence database for the Bumble bees of North America (which can be requested from its curator Dr. Leif Richardson), citizen science data platforms such as iNaturalist, and Bumble Bee Watch.

Floral resources in bloom from February to October potentially support Crotch's bumble bee queens, with a known flight season between February and March³. Because floral resources occur on the Project site, CDFW maintains its recommendation to include a thorough habitat assessment for Crotch's bumble bee in the final ISMND and if warranted, have a qualified biologist perform bumble bee surveys throughout the Project area to avoid potential impacts to a CESA-candidate species. The [June 2023 Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act \(CESA\) Candidate Bumble Bee Species](#) is a useful resource for performing adequate habitat assessments and ensuring appropriate survey guidelines.

California Endangered Species Act

Please be advised that a CESA permit must be obtained if the Project has the potential to result in "take" (hunt, pursue, catch, capture, kill, or attempt thereof) of plants or animals listed under CESA, either during construction or over the life of the project. Issuance of a CESA permit is subject to CEQA documentation; the CEQA document must specify impacts, mitigation measures, and a mitigation monitoring and reporting program. If the Project will result in the take of a CESA-listed species, early consultation is encouraged, as significant modification to the Project may be necessary to minimize and fully mitigate impacts as required by Fish and Game Code Section 2081 (b) (2). Information on how to attain a CESA permit is available here: [CESA Permit Information](#).

³ California Department of Fish and Wildlife. June 6, 2023. Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act (CESA) Candidate Bumble Bee Species. Available here: <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=213150&inline>

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Aquatic Resources

As previously stated in our September communication, CDFW discourages disturbance, staging and/or development in wetlands. Avoidance of Project activities within or adjacent to wetlands, should be avoided to the maximum extent possible. Due to the severe declines of wetlands throughout California, CDFW considers impacts to wetlands to be potentially significant.

The ISMND indicates a portion of seasonal wetland WF02 will be permanently impacted with Project implementation. According to mapping included in the Draft Delineation of Aquatic Resources (DDAR), WF02 extends beyond the Project area, into an adjacent parcel to the west. Attachment E, "Response to CDFW" states *"There is no apparent topography that allows flow from the site to the adjacent parcel; therefore, there will be no direct or indirect hydrological interruption as a result of the proposed project."* Despite a lack in topography, filling part of a wetland may lead to changes in the remaining unfilled portion, indirectly impacting any remaining wetland habitat. Such changes may include shifts in hydrologic distribution, nutrient distribution, and degradation in the remaining habitat. Additionally, a permanent decrease in overall habitat availability may lead to indirect impacts on the flora and fauna within the unfilled portion of the wetland.

Attachment E also states that indirect impacts to wetlands due to habitat configuration is a CDFW opinion. CDFW's comments regarding habitat configuration impacts are based on scientific peer-reviewed journals, as detailed in CDFW's Wetland Technical Memorandum⁴. CDFW recommends the Lead Agency include an analysis of potential indirect impacts to wetlands in the final ISMND and encourages the Lead Agency to avoid those impacts, or minimize or mitigate those impacts if needed.

CDFW recommends the Lead Agency mitigate permanent impacts to wetlands at a 3:1 ratio, or greater, to reduce such impacts to less than significant. If onsite habitat restoration and/or enhancement is not feasible, CDFW recommends contributing funds, at a 3:1 ratio, to a conservation easement for the protection of these habitats in perpetuity or contributing funds to a conservation fund aimed to restore and/or enhance wetland habitats in Shasta County. A 3:1 ratio would adequately mitigate the loss of ecological function, value, and temporal elements of these complex habitats.

⁴ California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2014. Technical Memorandum. Development, Land Use, and Climate Change Impacts on Wetland and Riparian Habitats – A Summary of Scientifically Supported Conservation Strategies, Mitigation Measures, and Best Management Practices.

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Conclusion

CDFW commends the City's continued efforts in consulting CDFW early in the project development process and appreciates the opportunity to assist the City in adequately avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating potentially significant impacts to biological resources. If you have any questions, please contact Erika Iacona, Senior Environmental Scientist, Specialist by email at R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Tina Bartlett

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Tina Bartlett, Regional Manager

Northern Region

cc: State Clearinghouse

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