

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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**Governor's Office of Planning & Research**

**December 15 2023**



*Making Conservation  
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December 11, 2023

**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

Mario Bautista, Senior Engineer  
Water Replenishment District of Southern California  
4040 Paramount Boulevard  
Lakewood, CA 90712

RE: Torrance Groundwater Desalter  
Expansion (MND)  
SCH # 2023110382  
GTS #07-LA-2023-04375  
Vic. LA Multiple

Dear Mario Bautista,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The proposed project aims to treat an additional 3,500 to 10,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) of brackish groundwater over an approximate 30-year period. To do this, the proposed project involves approximately eight extraction wells to extract 5,000 to 7,100 AFY of the saline groundwater plume from the aquifer. The extracted saline water will then be conveyed through pipelines to the existing City of Torrance Public Works Yard where it will be combined with water from the four (4) existing desalter wells and will be used as feedwater supplying the existing Desalter. In addition, two brine pipelines are to be constructed between the proposed Torrance Groundwater Desalter Expansion Project and the LACSD Joint Water Pollution Control Plant (JWPCP) outfall to dispose of the excess brine produced from the treatment process.

Construction of the proposed wells, pipelines, and treatment facility upgrades is expected to occur concurrently between the year 2025 through the end of 2027 and would generate vehicle trips associated with both construction worker commutes, and material and equipment hauling. Depending on facility type, the number of equipment /vehicles required during construction would range from eleven to sixteen types of equipment/vehicles, and anywhere from two to fifteen worker vehicles for each phase of the Project.

After reviewing the MND, Caltrans has the following comments:

Caltrans concurs with the proposed Traffic Control Plan required by Mitigation Measure TRA-1, which would provide traffic control, flagging, and signage, and would provide measures to minimize lane closures. Construction trips could affect roadway capacity and circulation as the slower movements and larger turning radii of construction trucks compared to passenger vehicles could also lessen roadway capacities. According to the initial study, a substantial portion of the proposed pipelines would be installed within right-of-ways and could temporarily require partial road closures or delays. By following a construction Traffic Control Plan during the installation of pipelines, the project can avoid impeding traffic flow, disrupting existing bus routes within the project area, and contributing to bikeway and sidewalk closures. Caltrans recommends the incorporation of channelizing devices preceded by approved warning signs to 1) divert traffic in advance of a temporary traffic control zone and 2) define traffic lanes through the work zone to protect motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians.

Elements in TRA-1 of notable highlight include a proposal to coordinate with cities of Torrance, Los Angeles, Carson, and Los Angeles County at least 30 days prior to tunneling for pipelines on roadways or rights-of way that coincide with public transit routes to determine whether construction would affect bus stop locations or disrupt service routes. Caltrans encourages the Lead Agency to pursue the proposed collaborative effort for developing a plan to relocate bus stops or reroute buses to avoid impacts on transit service. This would constitute discussion with nearby school districts at least one month prior to construction to coordinate bus stop relocations (if necessary), alternative busing routes, and other circulation provisions to reduce potential interruption of student transit services. Utilizing community media platforms to highlight current maps, routes, and schedules for public transit routes within one-half mile of a school can help parents and students to safely plan for alternative commute routes.

Additionally, Mitigation Measure TRA-2 would require the Lead Agency to develop and implement a Parking and Staging plan to further reduce any potential transportation impacts related to the expected increase in vehicular trips to/from the Torrance Groundwater Desalter Expansion Project site. The contractor shall use shuttles to transport workers to and from off-site staging/parking areas and project construction areas. Caltrans recommends establishing an accessible rideshare program that would support first/last mile connections and further incentivize employee use of public transit, carpooling, and vanpooling to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips and fuel emissions.

As a reminder, any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials that requires the 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

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is expected to cause issues on any State facilities, please submit a construction traffic control plan detailing these issues for Caltrans' review.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Anthony Higgins, at [anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov](mailto:anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov) and refer to GTS #07-LA-2023-04375.

Sincerely,

*Frances Duong*

Frances Duong  
Acting LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

email: State Clearinghouse