



Yana Garcia
Secretary for
Environmental Protection



Department of Toxic Substances Control

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Gavin Newsom
Governor

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

March 28, 2025

Jonnie Lan
Principal Planner
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RE: DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR UC VILLAGES DATED
MARCH 25, 2025, STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER [2024031198](#)

Dear Jonnie Lan,

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for UC Villages (Project). The proposed Project would result in the annexation of 37.23 acres into the City of Merced. The site would be pre-zoned as Planned Development, which allows for a variety of development types that carry out the objectives of the City's General Plan. Within the annexed area, 35.6 acres would be developed with up to 700 multi-family and/or student housing residential units with approximately 18,000 square feet of amenity buildings (recreational center), approximately 30,000 square feet of commercial/retail, and an approximately 75,000-square foot hotel with up to 200 guest rooms. DTSC recommends and requests consideration of the following comments:

1. Section 3.9- Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Mitigation Measure 3.9-2b of the DEIR states: "In the event that hazardous materials are encountered during construction, a Soils Management Plan shall be submitted and approved by the Merced County Department of Environmental Health." The

Merced County Department of Environmental Health is not a self-certified local agency therefore DTSC recommends the City of Merced receive oversight from a [self-certified local agency](#), DTSC, or the Regional Water Quality Control Board. If entering into one of DTSC's voluntary agreements, please note that DTSC uses a single standard Request for Lead Agency Oversight Application for all agreement types. Please apply for DTSC oversight using this link: [Request for Agency Oversight Application](#). Submittal of the online application includes an agreement to pay costs incurred during agreement preparation. If you have any questions about the application portal, please contact the relevant [Regional Brownfield Coordinator](#) for your Project.

2. DTSC recommends that all imported soil and fill material should be tested to assess any contaminants of concern meet screening levels as outlined in [DTSC's Preliminary Endangerment Assessment Guidance Manual](#).

Additionally, DTSC advises referencing the [DTSC Information Advisory Clean Imported Fill Material Fact Sheet](#) if importing fill is necessary. To minimize the possibility of introducing contaminated soil and fill material there should be documentation of the origins of the soil or fill material and, if applicable, sampling be conducted to ensure that the imported soil and fill material are suitable for the intended land use. The soil sampling should include analysis based on the source of the fill and knowledge of prior land use. Additional information can be found by visiting [DTSC's Human and Ecological Risk Office \(HERO\) webpage](#).

DTSC would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DEIR for UC Villages. Thank you for your assistance in protecting California's people and environment from the harmful effects of toxic substances. If you have any questions or would like clarification on DTSC's comments, please respond to this letter or via our [CEQA Review email](#) for additional guidance.

Sincerely,

Jonnie Lan
March 28, 2025
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