

NOTICE OF PREPARATION FOR A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

LEAD AGENCY: City of National City

PROJECT NAME: San Diego Clean Fuels Facility, LLC Project

LOCATION: The Project is located in San Diego County in the City of National City (Figure 1) between the existing buildings along Cleveland Avenue and the existing Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway tracks and between Civic Center Drive and West 19th Street (Figure 2). The site address is 830 West 18th Street.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: USD Clean Fuels (USD-CF) proposes to construct a transloading facility on the BNSF Railway railroad right-of-way (ROW). The Project Area is approximately 6.5 acres and is primarily unimproved and undeveloped. The area was formerly used for railroad and industrial purposes. A portion of the Project Area contains four hazardous materials closed release cases, and one open release case is located on the adjoining/adjacent properties. The open remediation case is the Pacific Steel, Inc. (PSI) property located adjacent and east of the Project Area at 1700 Cleveland Avenue. Site remediation has been completed by DTSC for the PSI property.

The new San Diego Clean Fuels Facility will reconfigure one existing rail spur and add truck loading spots to transload clean renewable and bio-fuels (renewable diesel, ethanol, and potentially sustainable aviation fuels at a later date) directly from rail cars into trucks for more efficient delivery to local retailers than the current supply chain. Each truck loading location will consist of a pump skid, controls, and above ground manifold system. Small amounts of lubricity, conductivity, and red dye will be added in-line to renewable diesel fuels during the transload process depending on the customer specifications. The rail car unloading and truck loading areas will be equipped with a containment system capable of containing the contents of 110 percent of an entire rail car volume.

Rail cars will be delivered to the facility by BNSF Railway and placed directly on designated receiving tracks. After completing the quality and quantity assurance requirements for the product in each rail car, facility operators will unload the fuel commodities directly from the rail cars into trucks via a short manifold system. Emissions from loading will be managed in compliance with the San Diego Air Pollution Control District's Air Permit requirements. Once emptied, the railroad will remove cars and replace them with full ones as needed.

Operating Hours and Personnel

Crews of 4 liquid fuel certified operators and a supervisor will work at the facility 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Up to 10 crew members would be onsite at any given time (shift change). A total of 21 full-time operators with one supervisor per shift and one facility manager will be employed at the facility. An office trailer will be provided on site and will incorporate the control center for the equipment, restrooms, and an area for driver check-in and receipt of Bills of Lading.

Vehicular Traffic

Truck traffic will enter the site from 18th Street and exit on W 19th Street and on to their retail client deliveries. A second rail line will be added at the existing grade crossing on Civic Center Drive to facilitate rail car movements. These trucks trips will replace existing trips of conventional fuels, delivering the benefits of the lower carbon, renewable fuels to the area.

Other Information

The category of these non-petroleum-based fuels (“biofuels”) includes renewable diesel, biodiesel, ethanol and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

Renewable Diesel and **SAF** can be produced with new or recycled vegetable oils, animal fats, greases, algae, crop residues or woody biomass. Renewable diesel and SAF are also designated as a “drop-in” biofuels allowing them to fully replace petroleum-based fuels on a 1-to-1 basis with zero modification to storage facilities or combustion engine systems. California’s Low Carbon Fuel Standard Certified Carbon Intensities shows renewable diesel reduces carbon intensity on average by 65% when compared with petroleum diesel.

Biodiesel is a renewable, biodegradable fuel manufactured domestically from vegetable oils, animal fats, or recycled restaurant grease. Biodiesel is often used as a blend with Renewable Diesel, as encouraged in the LCFS. Both renewable diesel and a blend of renewable diesel and up to 20% biodiesel can also be used to replace petroleum diesel with no changes or adverse effects to the engine, also with a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Ethanol is a renewable fuel manufactured from plant bio-mass which when burned has very low emissions. Ethanol was mandated in California in 2003 to replace the cancer-causing MTBE as oxygenator for gasoline. It is the only oxygenator currently allowed for gasoline in California. Nearly all gasoline today is blended with 10% ethanol which acts as an oxygenator and serves to reduce tailpipe emissions. E-85 is a blend of up to 85% ethanol and petroleum gasoline but requires engine modifications.

With the ability to utilize a wide variety of resources to produce renewable diesel, biodiesel, ethanol and SAF, these biofuels are considered 100% sustainable. All of this makes these fuels environmentally, socially, and in long-term respects economically preferable to petroleum-based fuels, helping achieve the LCFS and move toward the State goal of carbon neutrality. The benefits of the improved supply chain add to the community and state-wide benefits.

Project Characteristics

The Proposed Project consists of the following improvements:

1. Replace one existing rail turnout.
2. Install new receiving and departure track for the facility.
3. Install concrete slab pump pads at each transload pump system.
4. Install truck load slabs sloped to a drain in the center at each truck transload spot.
5. Provide a concrete lined containment basin and connect each truck transload slab drain to the basin.
6. Install pumps and piping to move fuels from rail cars to truck loading spots.
7. Provide containment enclosures for renewable diesel additive totes.
8. Provide track pans below railcars at the transloading rail for conveyance of potential spills to the remote containment basin.
9. Provide an office trailer with control center, restrooms, and driver check-out area.
10. Provide all weather paving for the facility and circulation as needed to supplement existing yard drives.
11. Provide lighting and security for the site as required.
12. Provide an on-site A-FFF Florida Free Firefighting platform with additional fire hydrants, as per the National City Fire Department (NCFD) requirements.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: All environmental issues analyzed in the attached Initial Study were considered during initial review of the project. Issue areas anticipated to be further evaluated in the EIR include Air Quality, Biological Resources, Energy, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Land Use and Planning, Transportation, and Mandatory Findings of Significance.

SCOPING MEETING: Pursuant to PRC Section 21080.4(b), the lead agency is hosting a scoping meeting on Thursday, May 23, 2024, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. to present the project and solicit comments. The public scoping meeting will be held at the National City Public Library community room located at 1401 National City Blvd. Please note that depending on the number of attendees, the meeting could end earlier than 8 p.m.

REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD: The City of National City invites you to comment on the scoping for the Draft EIR. The NOP is available for a 30-day public review period from May 9, 2024, to June 10, 2024. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, responsible and trustee agencies and other interested parties, including members of the public, must submit any comments in response to this notice no later than 6 p.m. on June 10, 2024, to the following:

David Welch, Associate Planner
City of National City, Planning Division, 1st Floor
1243 National City Boulevard
National City, CA 91950

Or

Martin Reeder, Assistant Community Development Director
City of National City, Planning Division, 1st Floor
1243 National City Boulevard
National City, CA 91950

During this period, the NOP will be available for review or for purchase at the cost of reproduction at the City of National City Planning Division (1243 National City Boulevard, 1st Floor, National City, CA 91950) by appointment between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, or at the City's website: <https://www.nationalcityca.gov/government/community-development/planning/current-projects>

FURTHER INFORMATION/LEAD AGENCY CONTACT: For environmental review information, please contact Associate Planner David Welch at the City of National City at (619) 336-4224 or dwelch@nationalcityca.gov or Assistant Community Development Director Martin Reeder at (619)-336-4313 or mreeder@nationalcityca.gov.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Figure 1. Project Vicinity Map
- Figure 2. Project Location Map
- Initial Study