

NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE UC ANR DESERT REC ENGAGEMENT CENTER PROJECT

(Pursuant to CEQA Public Resources Code Section 21092 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15072)

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, the University of California (University), Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) has prepared an Initial Study and proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Desert Research and Engagement Center (REC) Project (the proposed project). Based on the results of the Initial Study, UC ANR determined that construction and operation of the proposed project would not have significant impacts on the environment. All potentially significant impacts identified in the Initial Study would be reduced to less than significant levels with implementation of the identified appropriate mitigation measures.

Project Description: The Proposed Project will occur entirely within the developed area of the Desert REC site at the northeast corner of the intersection Holton Road and Meloland Road, which is referred to as the Project Site. The Proposed Project would redevelop the southwest corner of the Desert REC site to create an Engagement Center, incorporating a combination of indoor event and classroom space, outdoor demonstration gardens and landscapes, as well as other associated uses. This redevelopment includes the demolition of Building 302 (a former residence) and Garage 302; the construction of an approximately 6,975 square foot engagement center and a 600 square foot greenhouse, and the remodel of Building 301 (also a former residence). The Proposed Project will also create an outdoor space with an arrival plaza, an approximately 3,475 square foot covered plaza, and demonstration gardens. The central driveway will be widened and improved to provide a bus pickup/drop off area and 15 new parking spaces.

Public Comment Period: February 24, 2025, to March 26, 2025.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that UC ANR intends to adopt a CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration for the proposed project in April 2025, in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines.

The public, all interested agencies, and stakeholders are invited to review the IS/MND and submit written comments, pursuant to CEQA. There will be public hearing meetings during the review period. The IS/MND may be accessed at the following locations:

Online: <https://environmentalplanning.ucdavis.edu/uc-anr-desert-rec-engagement-center-project>

UC ANR Headquarters: 2801 2nd St, Davis, CA 95618

UC ANR Desert REC: 1004 Holton Road, Holtville, CA 92250

Imperial County Library: 101 E. 6th Street, Holtville, CA 92250

Written comments are due by 5 PM on March 26, 2025, and may be sent via USPS mail to:

UC Agriculture & Natural Resources

ATTN: Brian Oatman

2801 Second Street,

Davis, CA 95618

Or via email to: environreview@ucdavis.edu

Please reference Desert REC Engagement Center in the subject line.

Agency Distribution List

City of Holtville
Planning Department
121 W 5th Street
Holtville, CA 92250

County of Imperial
Planning & Development Services
801 Main Street

El Centro, CA 92243"
Imperial County Transportation Commission
1503 N. Imperial Ave. Ste 104
El Centro, CA 92243

California Department of Fish & Wildlife
3883 Ruffin Road
San Diego, CA 92123

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Inland Desert Region
3602 Inland Empire Boulevard, Suite C-220
Ontario, CA 91764

Regional Water Quality Control Board - Colorado
River Basin Region
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90017

CA Department of Toxic Substances Control
627 Wake Avenue
El Centro, CA 92243

Imperial County Air Pollution Control District
150 S. 9th Street
El Centro, CA 92243-2839

Southern California Association of Governments
900 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 1700
Los Angeles, CA 90017

California Department of Transportation
District 11
4050 Taylor Street
San Diego, CA 92110

Imperial County Fire Department
1078 Dogwood, Suite 101
Heber, CA 92249

Imperial Irrigation District
567 Pine Ave.
Holtville, CA 92250

Public Utilities Commission
320 W. 4th Street, Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Holtville School District
621 East 6th Street
Holtville, CA 92250

Department of Water Resources
1416 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Agricultural Commissioner
852 Broadway Street
El Centro, CA 92227

Imperial County Department of Public Works
155 South 11th Street
El Centro, CA 92243

Imperial County Office of Education
1398 Sperber Road
El Centro, CA 92243