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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

AUG 30 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

**Subject: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the
Carpinteria Advanced Purification Project (SCH# 2019011016), Santa
Barbara County**

Dear Robert McDonald:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has reviewed the above-referenced Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Carpinteria Advanced Purification Project (Project). The Carpinteria Valley Water District (CVWD) is the lead agency preparing a DEIR pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et. seq.) with the purpose of informing decision-makers and the public regarding potential environmental effects related to the Project.

The Project is located primarily within the central portion of the City of Carpinteria (City), Santa Barbara County (County), with a small portion extending beyond the City limits into the unincorporated County. Conveyance pipelines would extend from the existing Carpinteria Sanitary District wastewater treatment plant (CSD WWTP; located at 5300 6th Street) west to Linden Avenue, then north along Linden Avenue for approximately one mile to just south of the Highway 192/Foothill Road intersection. The WWTP site is bounded by a railroad to the south, a live/work residential development to the west, the Carpinteria State Beach Park maintenance yard and employee housing to the north, and Carpinteria Creek to the east. South of the rail line is Carpinteria State Beach, which includes campgrounds and day use areas across the rail line from the site.

The Carpinteria Advanced Purification Project proposes to implement advanced treatment of local wastewater flows and beneficially reuse the water for groundwater recharge and includes the construction and operation an advanced water purification facility (AWPF), injection and monitoring wells, pump stations, storage tanks, pipelines and other facilities. The proposed Project would produce approximately 1,100 acre-feet per year (AFY) or 1.0 million gallons per day (MGD) of purified water from the CSD WWTP for injection into the local Carpinteria Groundwater Basin, where it ultimately would be used for CVWD potable water supply. To recover treated water from the groundwater basin, six potential groundwater injection well sites have been identified

(with up to three groundwater injection wells to be installed as part of this Project) and use of existing CVWD production wells. The ultimate project assumes an expansion from 1.0 MGD to 1.2 MGD based on projected future increases in WWTP flows. Construction is expected to take approximately 1.5 years for the 1.0 MGD initial project, with construction beginning in January 2021 and completed by late 2022.

The following comments and recommendations have been prepared pursuant to the CDFW's authority as a Responsible Agency (Pub. Resources Code, § 21069; CEQA Guidelines § 15381) over those aspects of the proposed project that come under the purview of the California Endangered Species Act (CESA; Fish and G. Code § 2050 *et seq.*), the Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA; Fish and G. Code, §1900 *et seq.*), lake and streambed alteration (LSA) regulatory authority (Fish and G. Code § 1600 *et seq.*); and other applicable sections of the Fish and Game Code (e.g., 3503, 3503.5, 3511, 4002, 4700, 5050, 5515, 5901, and 5937). Comments are also being provided as a Trustee Agency with jurisdiction over public trust natural resources that may be affected by the Project to assist the Lead Agency in avoiding or minimizing potential impacts to biological resources [Fish & G. Code, §§ 711.7, subd. (a) & 1802; Pub. Resources Code, § 21070; CEQA Guidelines § 15386, subd. (a)].

Specific Comments

- 1) Northern California Legless Lizard: The DEIR indicates that the potential for Northern California legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra*), a California species of special concern (SSC), to occur on-site is low. However, legless lizard is known to occur within the general project area and the Project site appears to contain suitable habitat for this species. Moreover, based on information from other projects located to the southeast of the Project site, the type of habitat and coastal setting on-site have been shown to support legless lizards. Without information based on recent focused surveys, impacts to any SSC, including legless lizard, should be considered a significant direct and cumulative effect under CEQA without implementing appropriate avoid and/or mitigation measures (CEQA Guidelines §§ 15064, 15065, 15125[c] and 15380). CDFW recommends that the DEIR include a mitigation measure to conduct surveys for legless lizard before and during construction and develop/implement a plan to avoid and minimize impacts, which may include directing observed lizards to adjacent suitable habitat.
- 2) Lake and Streambed Alteration (LSA) Agreement Notification. The DEIR states that a LSA may be required for a portion of the Project located adjacent to and crossing Franklin Creek (Table 2-4, Table 4-1 and Section 2.7.2, Pipelines). The DEIR also identifies in Table 2-4 (Permits and Approvals) that NPDES for backflush discharge into Franklin Creek (if sewer discharge not used). CDFW recommends that the Project be conditioned to require LSA notification and written evidence that LSA authorization has been obtained, or that such authorization is not required, due to the proximity of the impact area to stream resources. As a Responsible Agency under CEQA, CDFW has authority over activities in streams and/or lakes that will divert or obstruct the natural flow; or change the bed, channel, or bank (including

vegetation associated with the stream or lake) of a river or stream; or use material from a streambed. For any such activities, the project applicant (or “entity”) must provide written notification to CDFW pursuant to section 1600 et seq. of the Fish and Game Code. Based on this notification and other information, CDFW determines whether a LSA Agreement (Agreement) with the applicant is required prior to conducting the proposed activities. CDFW’s issuance of an Agreement for a project that is subject to CEQA will require related environmental compliance actions by CDFW as a Responsible Agency. As a Responsible Agency, CDFW may consider the CEQA document prepared by the local jurisdiction (Lead Agency) for the Project. To minimize additional requirements by CDFW pursuant to section 1600 et seq. and/or under CEQA, the DEIR should fully identify the potential impacts to the stream or riparian resources and provide adequate avoidance, mitigation, monitoring and reporting commitments for issuance of the LSA. ¹

- a) As noted in Section 3.4.1 of the DEIR, Carpinteria Creek contains breeding populations of listed wildlife species including tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*) within brackish lagoon areas and Southern California steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*) distinct population segment (DPS). Were project-related work could impact Franklin or Carpinteria Creeks, we recommend that measures to address potential impacts to these species, including fish passage, be included as a mitigation measure in the DEIR and included as part of the 1600 notification for the Project.

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the DEIR for the Carpinteria Advanced Purification Project. We also look forward to working with CVWD on ways to contribute purified water for in-stream flow purposes to benefit fish and wildlife resources. Questions regarding this letter and further coordination on these issues should be directed to Dan Blankenship, Senior Environmental Scientist, at (661) 259-3750) or Daniel.Blankenship@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Erinn Wilson
Environmental Program Manager I

cc: Randy Rodriguez, Los Alamitos
Dan Blankenship, Newhall
Sarah Rains, Thousand Oaks

Scott Morgan (State Clearinghouse)

¹ A notification package for a LSA may be obtained by accessing the CDFW’s web site at www.wildlife.ca.gov/habcon/1600.