

Summary for Electronic Document Submittal

Form F

SCH #: 2018071021

Lead Agency: Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County

Project Title: San Gabriel River Watershed Project to Reduce River Discharge in Support of Increased Recycled Water Reuse Draft Environmental Impact Report

Location: The five water reclamation plants (WRPs) are located in Los Angeles County. The Pomona WRP and San Jose Creek WRP currently discharge recycled water to San Jose Creek. The San Jose Creek WRP, Whittier Narrows WRP, and Los Coyotes WRP each discharge to the San Gabriel River. The Long Beach WRP discharges to Coyote Creek at the confluence with the San Gabriel River. The project study area includes the San Gabriel River, San Jose Creek, and Coyote Creek.

Please provide a Project Description (Proposed Actions, location, and/or consequences).

In anticipation of increased future recycled water demands, the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Sanitation Districts), as the Lead Agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), are proposing the San Gabriel River Watershed Project to Reduce River Discharge in Support of Increased Recycled Water Reuse (proposed project) to incrementally reduce surface water discharges of recycled water from WRPs, including the San Jose Creek WRP, the Pomona WRP, the Whittier Narrows WRP, the Los Coyotes WRP, and the Long Beach WRP, each of which currently discharges into the San Gabriel River or its tributaries: San Jose Creek and/or Coyote Creek. The diverted water would supply recycled water programs implemented by other agencies. The proposed reduction in surface water discharges would occur over time and would not involve any construction activities or other physical changes to the environment other than the decreased volume of discharge. A brief description of the proposed project's discharge operation modifications is provided below:

- The San Jose Creek WRP surface water discharge is currently rotated between five discharge locations within the San Gabriel River watershed as shown in Figure 2-1, of Chapter 2, *Project Description*, of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The use of the discharge locations is irregular throughout the year and varies year-to-year, depending on the availability of groundwater recharge facilities, channel maintenance activities, and other operational activities. Under the proposed project, discharges from the San Jose Creek WRP at discharge point SJC002 would be reduced from an annual average of approximately 9.48 million gallons per day (MGD) to a minimum monthly average of approximately 5.00 MGD. Although the total annual volume would be reduced, discharges would be timed more efficiently to support sensitive habitats. The new discharge regime could vary from a consistent 5.00 MGD discharge to a pulsing of flows. The larger pulses could be needed to move water further downstream than could be accomplished with consistent flows. The diverted water would be conveyed for beneficial reuse to groundwater recharge basins or other reuse facilities.

- The Pomona WRP discharges into a concrete-lined portion of San Jose Creek that contains no sensitive habitat. As San Jose Creek nears the San Gabriel River, the concrete lining gives way to a soft-bottom reach. Current and historic groundwater upwelling occurs within the lined portion of San Jose Creek upstream of the transition location between lined and unlined. The proposed project would result in zero discharge from the Pomona WRP. As shown in Table 2-2, of Chapter 2, *Project Description*, of the Draft EIR, an average of approximately 3.27 MGD is discharged to the South Fork San Jose Creek.
- The Whittier Narrows WRP has three discharge locations, two tributary to the Rio Hondo in the Los Angeles River watershed, and one tributary to the San Gabriel River. A recently approved modification to discharge from the Whittier Narrows WRP (State Water Resources Control Board Order WW0098) will reduce discharges to the San Gabriel River by approximately 1 percent (0.01 MGD). This modification was covered by a separate environmental document (Sanitation Districts, 2018). As shown in Table 2-2, of Chapter 2, *Project Description*, of the Draft EIR, an average of approximately 1.19 MGD is discharged to the San Gabriel River. No further reduction of flow is proposed as part of this project, however, this WRP and the approved 0.01 MGD reduction is included in the project description for consideration of cumulative impacts.
- The Los Coyotes WRP discharges into a concrete-lined portion of the San Gabriel River. Discharge flow is contained within the low-flow channel of the river under typical dry-weather conditions. The project proposes to maintain a minimum discharge flow of 2.00 MGD to prevent the low-flow channel from going completely dry downstream of the plant. As shown in Table 2-2, of Chapter 2, *Project Description*, of the Draft EIR, an average of approximately 17.00 MGD is discharged to the San Gabriel River.
- The Long Beach WRP discharges into the concrete-lined Coyote Creek approximately 3,000 feet before the start of the San Gabriel River estuary. Urban runoff and natural flows in Coyote Creek upstream of the Long Beach WRP maintain a consistent flow in the creek at the discharge location. The project proposes a minimum discharge flow of zero from the Long Beach WRP. As shown in Table 2-2, of Chapter 2, *Project Description*, of the Draft EIR, an average of approximately 6.72 MGD is discharged to Coyote Creek.

The objectives of the proposed project are as follows:

- Consistent with State law and policy, support increased recycled water use through maximizing the availability of treated effluent that would otherwise be discharged to flood control channels within the San Gabriel River watershed; and

- Sustain or, if feasible, enhance sensitive habitats that have benefitted from historical treated effluent discharges to the San Gabriel River watershed through more efficient discharges from Sanitation Districts' WRPs.

Please identify the project's significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect.

The Draft EIR analyzed potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project, including Biological Resources, Hydrology and Water quality, and Recreation. Hydrology and Water Quality and Recreation were identified with no impacts or less than significant impacts and did not require any mitigation measures.

Below is a list of issues for which potentially significant impacts were identified and mitigation measures were prescribed that reduced impacts to a less than significant level:

Biological Resources: Mitigation Measure BIO-1 requires the Sanitation Districts to implement the Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) to ensure that the quantity and quality of riparian and wetland habitat currently supported by wastewater discharges is maintained at or above baseline levels, recognizing that the habitat in the channel may change naturally in response to long-term changes in surface flows and high flood events. Mitigation Measure BIO-2 requires the Sanitation Districts to conduct brown-headed cowbird trapping adjacent to the San Gabriel River channel in areas that are accessible to Sanitation Districts staff.

No issues were identified to have a significant and unavoidable impact.

If applicable, please describe any of the project's areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public.

The environmental issues listed below were those of key concern that may be controversial. Each of these issues is evaluated in the Draft EIR.

- Impacts to biological resources.
- Impacts to hydrology and water quality.
- Impacts to recreation.

Please provide a list of the responsible or trustee agencies for the project.

The State Water Resources Control Board is the responsible agency for the proposed project. Trustee agencies for the proposed project include, but may not be limited to, the following: State of California, Natural Resources Agency, Department of Fish and Wildlife; and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.