

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

1416 NINTH STREET, P.O. BOX 942836
SACRAMENTO, CA 94236-0001
(916) 653-5791



Date: May 27, 2020
To: Rebecca Sloan, Chief of Staff, Sacramento County Supervisor Don Nottoli
From: Patricia Clark, Program Analyst, CA Department of Water Resources, Delta Conveyance Office
Re: Summary of May 2020 Delta Conveyance Updates to County Supervisors

Thank you for your request for an email during our phone call the week of May 18th. The points below summarize the updates the Department of Water Resources (DWR) provided to your Board of Supervisors Office in the call.

On January 15, 2020, DWR announced the beginning of the environmental impact report (EIR) preparation process for the proposed Delta Conveyance Project with issuance of a Notice of Preparation. The Scoping Comment Period on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) document closed on April 17, extended by approximately one month in response to public requests, for a total of 93 days. During the NOP comment period, the public and agencies had an opportunity to provide input on the scope and content of the CEQA review, including the potential environmental impacts of a proposed single tunnel conveyance project and range of alternatives that will be analyzed in the EIR.

DWR is in the process of reviewing the over 800 comments submitted during the scoping process and will publish a scoping report this summer that summarizes the information received during scoping, including the 8 public scoping meetings. DWR will utilize the scoping comments in developing the range of alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the Draft EIR and the scope of the environmental impact analysis. Publication of the Draft EIR is expected in early 2021.

DWR previously contacted the Delta Counties in January 2020 with an update concerning traffic count work expected to begin in March 2020, which would provide data for the EIR environmental impact analysis. The traffic counts were planned to be implemented by the Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA) for DWR, with permits obtained in February/March 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the planned traffic counts, as the Governor's Stay-At-Home Order, issued March 19, significantly altered traffic patterns. Any traffic count data obtained would not reflect normal patterns and would not be appropriate for use in the EIR environmental impact analysis. Therefore, the traffic count work did not occur and there are no plans to begin traffic counts at this time, as traffic patterns continue to be irregular. DCA will work with DWR and traffic analysis experts to use other appropriate traffic data for preparation of the EIR.

In the upcoming months, the DCA will be conducting phone interviews with County Health and Safety Service Providers, such as fire districts and hospitals, and county offices of emergency services (OES), to coordinate on health, safety and emergency response in relation to planned construction activities. In addition, because the DCA will be including emergency medical facilities at some construction sites, the phone interviews will include discussion of possible ways to provide emergency services that may also serve local communities.

Similarly, the DCA plans a second round of phone interviews with school districts to inquire about primary school bus routes, general transportation and safety concerns in relation to construction truck traffic. The school districts to be called include:

- River Delta Unified
- New Hope
- Lodi Unified
- Oakley Elementary
- Lincoln Unified
- Byron Union Elementary
- Liberty Union High school
- Tracy Unified
- Mountain House K-8

DWR and the DCA will begin soil survey work in certain areas in the Delta this year, pending DWR completion of the CEQA process and approval for most of these soil survey activities.

As a reminder, soil survey work typically includes investigation of subsurface materials, to determine suitability for possible construction work on the surface or below the surface and to evaluate potential impacts from construction activities. The objective is to support design of the proposed project, alternatives and the environmental analysis in the EIR through determination of the exact composition, location, and geotechnical properties of subsurface materials, which are anticipated to be sand, silt, clay and peat soils that are commonly found in the Delta.

Each site will be investigated with either a bore hole drilling technique, a Cone Penetration Test (CPT), or both. Bore hole testing will involve drilling a 6.5- 8-inch diameter boring and collecting samples at various depth intervals, while the Cone Penetration Test has a 2 ½-inch diameter probe that does not remove the subsurface material. Both tests are anticipated to descend to a depth of up to 200 feet. After each site is investigated, the boring and CPT, holes will be backfilled with cement-bentonite grout in accordance with California regulations and industry standards. Pre-activity surveys will be conducted to confirm location of the soil surveys away from sensitive environmental resources. An environmental monitor will be stationed near the work areas during all drilling and CPT activities. The environmental monitor will observe the immediate area for potentially sensitive environmental resources. Prior to beginning fieldwork, all borehole and CPT locations will be cleared for underground utilities.

For 2020, there are three categories of soil exploration activity that DWR/DCA plans to implement: court ordered, publicly owned land, and privately owned land.

For the Court ordered entry soil exploration work (already approved through a previous CEQA process), the issue of access for DWR was resolved. Work under the court ordered entry consists of 6 borings and 1 CPT for San Joaquin County, as well as 6 borings and 1 CPT for Sacramento County. This work is currently planned to take place this summer, consistent with County and State Stay-At-Home restrictions.

For the second category of publicly owned land soil exploration work, soil survey activity is expected to occur after DWR finalizes the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) environmental document and makes a decision to approve the soil survey work with issuance of a Notice of Determination (NOD). Examples of publicly owned land are parcels owned by Caltrans or the County. This may also include land owned by Non-Governmental Organizations. Generally, DWR plans to move forward on these parcels this year, consistent with County and State Stay-At-Home restrictions.

For the third category of privately owned land, DWR and the DCA acting as DWR's agent expect to initiate new discussions with landowners about Temporary Entry Permits this year and anticipates work activity in 2021, pending DWR completion of the CEQA process and approval for these soil survey activities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these updates, consistent with DWR's commitment to keep local elected officials apprised on the Delta Conveyance Project. Please feel free to contact me at patricia.clark@water.ca.gov if you have any questions.