

# **Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Jess Ranch Compost Facility Project– PLN2015-00087**

## **SUMMARY:**

Notice is hereby given by the County of Alameda, Community Development Agency, Planning Department, as the lead agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), that the above-named draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) is available for public review and comment. Comments on the DEIR will be received for a 45-day period, commencing on November 25, 2019 and **ending at 5:00 p.m. on January 13, 2019**, to account for four holidays during the time period. After close of the comment period, a final EIR will be prepared containing comments and responses to comments that, together with the DEIR, will form the final EIR (FEIR). The FEIR will be used by the Alameda County Planning Commission in its consideration of approval of the proposed Compost Facility Project, described below. The Applicant is Joe and Connie Jess.

## **PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION:**

The Proposed Project facility would receive and process organic materials, primarily greenwaste, foodwaste, and biosolids, but would also receive untreated scrap wood, natural fiber products, non-recyclable paper waste, and inert material, such as sediment, gypsum, wood ash, and clean construction debris. Non-hazardous liquid wastes may also be accepted as a substitute for the water that is added for efficient composting. The Project would process organic material utilizing a covered windrow system that would be a combination of aerated static pile (ASP) with either positive or negative aeration, and covered windrow composting technology. Initially, the Project would realize a daily throughput of up to 500 tons per day (TPD), increasing up to a maximum of 1,000 TPD, producing compost-based soil amendments for agricultural, horticultural, erosion control and land reclamation uses. Alameda County is the approving agency for the Conditional Use Permit, which constitutes the Project action or Proposed Project under CEQA.

The Proposed Project could process up to 1,000 TPD of organic material utilizing a windrow system incorporating either negative air or positive air ASP technology. For the unimproved property, construction of the Project would necessitate grading, excavation and soil removal, deposition and compaction of fill material, reuse of excavated soil as fill, transporting and installing materials and equipment, disposal of soil and construction waste, and construction of retention ponds and project access roads. The active composting area would occupy approximately 15 acres, within which curing and screening zones would occupy approximately 8 acres and other operating areas (including access roads) would occupy approximately 7 acres. Active composting windrow piles would vary in height, up to a maximum of 12 feet. A drainage system incorporated into the windrow area would deliver storm runoff from the compost site to a stormwater detention pond. Construction would be completed in two phases: construction of the initial facility with a capacity of 500 TPD (Phase I) followed with expansion of the facility up to 1,000 TPD (Phase II).

The Proposed Project would also involve the use of office space for administrative tasks. An office building located just outside of the Project Area parcel boundary at 15850 Jess Ranch Road in Tracy (APN 99B-7800-007-07) would be one of two possible locations for the Jess Ranch office facility (see Figure 2.2-3). This property is owned by Contra Costa Water District from which it would be leased under the Proposed Project. No changes or modifications to the existing buildings or outside areas would be proposed under this option. The second option for office space would be to employ

portable buildings within the existing Project Area. Figure 1 shows the overview of the proposed site plan.

**ANTICIPATED SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:**

The DEIR's analysis of project impacts identified significant and unavoidable impacts on the following topic areas:

- Air quality and Greenhouse Gases (Conflict with an applicable air quality plan; result in a cumulative net increase of any nonattainment pollutant)

Impacts on the following topic areas can be reduced to less than significant levels with mitigation implemented:

- Aesthetics (scenic views; light pollution)
- Biological resources (impacts on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species)
- Cultural resources (unknown archaeological and/or paleontological resources or human remains)
- Hazards and Human Health (Exposure of workers and end users to contaminants or pathogens, compost operations may attract vectors)
- Hydrology and Water Quality (Degradation of water quality during construction and operation)
- Geology and Seismicity (Damage to structures, pavements, and/or utilities from shrink/swell potential, soil settlement, and landsliding)
- Land use (conflict with policies to protect existing topography)
- Noise and vibration (during construction)
- Tribal Cultural Resources (Cause a substantial change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource)

In addition to consideration of the No-Project Alternative as required by the CEQA Guidelines, an In-Building Project Alternative, with operations taking place within an enclosed building, was evaluated. The No-Project Alternative is identified in the DEIR as the Environmentally Superior Alternative to the Project.

**PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS:**

One of the purposes of CEQA is to inform the public of the likely environmental consequences of public and private projects such as the proposed Compost Facility project. The purpose of this Notice, consistent with Sections 15086 and 15087 of the State CEQA Guidelines is to consult with and request comments on the DEIR's environmental analyses from responsible agencies, organizations, and interested parties.

The DEIR is available for review during normal business hours (8:30 - 5:00pm) Monday through Friday, at the Alameda County Community Development Agency, Planning Department, at 224 West Winton Avenue, Room 111, Hayward, and at the Martinelli Center, 3585 Greenville Road, Livermore, Thursdays (9:30 - 12, 1 - 3:30 or call 925-960-9486). DEIR also available at <http://www.acgov.org/cda/planning/landuseprojects/currentprojects.htm>

Submit comments to:

Damien Curry  
ATTN: Jess Ranch Compost Facility / PLN2015-00087  
Alameda County Community Development Agency  
224 W. Winton Avenue, Suite 111  
Hayward, CA 94544

Please include a return address and contact name with your written comments. Comments can also be sent via email to [damien.curry@acgov.org](mailto:damien.curry@acgov.org) with subject line "Jess Ranch Compost Facility / PLN2015-00087".

Although CEQA does not require formal hearings at any stage of the environmental review process (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15202[a]), it does encourage "wide public involvement, formal and informal...in order to receive and evaluate public reactions to environmental issues" (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15201) and requires the lead agency to provide the public with the opportunity to provide comments. The County, as lead agency, circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR (SCH # 2018052056) for the proposed project on April 26, 2018. The NOP was distributed for a 30-day comment period that ended on May 26, 2018. In addition, the County held a public scoping meeting on May 21, 2018, to solicit input on the scope and focus of the EIR. Comments received on the NOP and during the public scoping meeting were considered in the preparation of the EIR. Appendix A of the DEIR contains the NOP, and written comments received on the NOP.

The DEIR incorporates public and agency responses to the NOP. Like the NOP, the DEIR is being circulated for review and comment by appropriate agencies, as well as organizations and individuals who have requested notification. In accordance with Section 15205(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the County has scheduled a 45-day public review period for the DEIR, ending on January 10, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. Within that 45-day period, the County will hold one public hearing to request comments on the DEIR, at the following time and place.

**Monday, December 16, 2019, 1:30 p.m.**  
**224 West Winton Avenue, Public Hearing Room**  
**Hayward, California**

The meeting facilities will be accessible to persons with disabilities. If special translation or signing services or other special accommodations are needed, please contact Maria Palmeri at 510-670-5400 or [maria.palmeri@acgov.org](mailto:maria.palmeri@acgov.org) at least 48 hours before the meeting.

Following the close of the public review period for the DEIR, the County will prepare a final EIR, incorporating all comments received during the public comment period, for consideration by the Planning Commission, at a date for which notice shall be provided. As required by CEQA (Section 21092.5), the final EIR, including written responses to the comments submitted by public agencies, will be available at least 10 days prior to certification.

**Exhibit A: Project Aerial View and Location**



