

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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Via Email: tsouza@cityofhesperia.us

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

October 11, 2019

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STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Tina Souza
Land Use Planning
City of Hesperia
9700 7th Avenue
Hesperia, California 92345

SCH# 2019099031 Rancho Road Aqueduct Crossing Project Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)

Dear Ms. Souza,

The California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) State Water Project's (SWP) Division of Operations and Maintenance (O&M) has reviewed the proposed Rancho Road Aqueduct Crossing Project MND. DWR staff is providing these comments pursuant to our regulatory responsibilities under Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 23, § 600 et seq. and Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 14, § 15096.

Project Description

The project proposes to replace the existing two-lane, two-span structure over the California Aqueduct with a new six-lane, single-span structure. The project would also construct bridge approach roadway improvements, including drainage and utilities, to accommodate the raised profile for the proposed bridge. The proposed alignment provides optimized geometrics and maximizes the constructability of a single-span precast girder bridge to comply with DWR's Encroachment Permit Guidelines.

The proposed Rancho Road profile starts ascending from the west side at 2.3 percent grade over the aqueduct and descends at 5 percent with an 830-foot crest vertical curve and touchdown west of the Via Antiqua intersection. The raised profile is necessary in order to meet the latest requirements imposed by the State of California and DWR, which include:

- New bridge crossings shall be single-span design.
- The minimum vertical clearance between the bottom of the girders and the top of the canal lining shall be 3 feet.
- The minimum horizontal clearance from the face of the abutment to the top of the canal lining shall be 5 feet.

The project would also construct four utility driveways, two on the south side of Ranchero Road, one on the north side of Ranchero Road, and one off of the realigned 11th Avenue roadway, to facilitate DWR access to both sides of the California Aqueduct.

The existing 14-inch water line in the bridge will be removed prior to demolition. An 8-inch temporary water line will be required during construction to serve the City's needs. The proposed temporary water line would cross the aqueduct at an angle of 90 degrees, just north of the existing bridge. To allow for the continuation of utilities during bridge demolition and construction, the project includes the installation of a temporary 102-foot by 5.5-foot galvanized truss structure that will support the temporary water line. A temporary easement from DWR will accommodate the water line crossing.

Specific Comments

We request the following be addressed in the final MND prepared for the proposed project.

3.4 Biological Resources

Bats are known to utilize bridges as a roosting site. The IS does not include a bat survey or information that an attempt was made at identifying the baseline for these species. Please undertake a bat surveys during the time when bats would be expected to be present and active to determine the presence of roosting bats. If evidence exists that bats are roosting at the proposed project site, include an impact analysis and applicable avoidance and mitigation measures

3.15 Public Services – Other Public Facilities

Existing conditions include access to the Aqueduct for operation and maintenance of the SWP. DWR staff must be able to continue to safely enter and exit DWR right-of-way at all points from Ranchero Road during the construction phase of the proposed project and throughout the lifespan of the bridge. The IS states the proposed project would construct four utility driveways, two on the south side of Ranchero Road, one on the north side of Ranchero Road, and one off of the realigned 11th Avenue roadway to facilitate DWR access to both sides of the California Aqueduct. It is unclear whether these utilities driveways would be the designated access roads both during construction and after completion of the bridge.

Please explain thoroughly DWR's access to the California Aqueduct right-of-way both during the construction of the proposed project and after construction is complete.

DWR's Encroachment Permit Requirements

DWR appreciates the design features included in the proposed project to comply with DWR's Encroachment Permit Guidelines. The following is a partial list of additional information that is required for the encroachment permit request.

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- Demolition Plan – DWR will need a copy of the demolition plan for the existing bridge
- Drainage Plan – the drainage plan must include a specific plan regarding how water will be collected and directed away from DWR right-of-way
- The City of Hesperia's plans to take ownership of the proposed bridge.

More information about DWR Encroachment Permits can be found at:
<https://water.ca.gov/Work-With-Us/Real-Estate/Encroachment-Permits>

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at (916) 653-6840 or nancy.finch@water.ca.gov. Please send future correspondence regarding this project to me as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy FL". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy Finch
Attorney III