
Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

November 15, 2019

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Mono County

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STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Comments on the Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Mammoth Yosemite Airport Terminal Area Development Plan Project, Mono County, State Clearinghouse Number 2019100384

Lahontan Region Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) staff received a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the above-referenced project (Project) on October 25, 2019. The NOP was prepared by Town of Mammoth Lakes Planning Department and submitted in compliance with provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Water Board staff, acting as a responsible agency, is providing these comments to specify the scope and content of the environmental information germane to our statutory responsibilities pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15096. Based on our review of the NOP, we recommend the following: 1) the most recent and current documents/publications be utilized in to the EIR to establish baseline environmental conditions; 2) cumulative effects of sewage treatment and disposal systems be considered in the environmental analysis; and 3) a mitigation measure be included that requires the preparation and implementation of site-specific Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to effectively treat storm water runoff during the life of the Project. Our comments on the Project are outlined below.

WATER BOARD'S AUTHORITY

All groundwater and surface waters are considered waters of the State. All waters of the State are protected under California law. State law assigns responsibility for protection of water quality in the Lahontan Region to the Lahontan Water Board. Some waters of the State are also waters of the United States. The Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) provides additional protection for those waters of the State that are also waters of the United States.

PETER C. PUMPHREY, CHAIR | PATTY Z. KOUYOUMDJIAN, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Water Quality Control Plan for the Lahontan Region (Basin Plan) contains policies that the Water Board uses with other laws and regulations to protect the quality of waters of the State within the Lahontan Region. The Basin Plan sets forth water quality standards for surface water and groundwater of the Region, which include designated beneficial uses as well as narrative and numerical objectives which must be maintained or attained to protect those uses. The Basin Plan can be accessed via the Water Board's web site at [Basin Plan - References](#).

GENERAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The NOP states, "The EIR will describe the seismicity, geologic hazards and soils conditions of the area from the *Town of Mammoth Lakes 2005 General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report* (General Plan EIR) and potential exposure of proposed improvements and airport users to these conditions." The General Plan EIR alone is inadequate. The EIR must consider the most recent and up to date documents/publications from all sources, including federal, state, county, and local agencies, when establishing baseline conditions and in evaluating the Project's potential impacts on environmental resources, particularly on water quality and hydrology.
2. The EIR should identify and consider all existing sewage treatment and disposal systems and associated infrastructure (i.e. sewer lines) in addition to any new or modifications to existing systems and associated infrastructure.
3. The EIR should consider the long-term cumulative effects of all existing and proposed sewage treatment and disposal systems on water quality and hydrology.
4. A Project-specific SWPPP and implementation of site-specific erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) is an effective way to reduce potentially significant water quality impacts to a less than significant level. To that end, we recommend the development and implementation of a Project-specific SWPPP during both the construction and post-construction (industrial) phases of the Project. The SWPPP should be applicable to all areas of the Project site throughout the life of the Project.
5. Equipment staging areas, excavated soil stockpiles, and hazardous materials (i.e. oils and fuels) should be sited in upland areas outside surface waters and adjacent flood plain areas. The EIR should include a mitigation measure for the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive Spill Prevention and Response Plan that outlines the site-specific monitoring requirements and lists the BMPs necessary to prevent hazardous material spills or to contain and cleanup a hazardous material spill, should one occur.

6. All surface waters are waters of the State. The EIR will need to fully delineate the extent of waters of the State and evaluate potential impacts to these resources with respect to hydrology and water quality as a result of Project implementation
7. The Project site is located within the Long Hydrologic Area of the Owens Hydrologic Unit (626.40), and groundwater beneath the Project site is contained within the Long Valley Groundwater Basin (6-11). The beneficial uses of these water resources are listed either by watershed (for surface waters) or by groundwater basin (for groundwater) in Chapter 2 of the Basin Plan. We request that the EIR identify and list the beneficial uses of the water resources within the Project area and include an analysis of the Project's potential impacts to water quality and hydrology with respect to those beneficial uses.
8. The EIR should identify the water quality standards that could potentially be violated by the Project and consider these standards when evaluating thresholds of significance for impacts. Water quality objectives and standards, both numerical and narrative, for all waters of the State within the Lahontan Region, including surface waters and groundwater, are outlined in Chapter 3 of the Basin Plan. Implementation of the proposed Project must comply with all applicable water quality standards and prohibitions, including provisions of the Basin Plan.
9. Buffer areas should be identified, and exclusion fencing used to protect water resources and to prevent unauthorized vehicles or equipment from entering or otherwise disturbing the surface waters. Equipment should use existing roadways to the extent feasible.

PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

10. A number of activities implemented by individual projects in accordance with the General Plan amendment have the potential to impact waters of the State and, therefore, may require permits issued by either the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) or Lahontan Water Board. The required permits may include the following.
11. Streambed alteration and/or discharge of fill material to a surface water may require a CWA, section 401 water quality certification for impacts to federal waters (waters of the U.S.), or dredge and fill waste discharge requirements for impacts to non-federal waters, both issued by the Lahontan Water Board.
12. Land disturbance of more than 1 acre may require a CWA, section 402(p) storm water permit, including a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Storm Water Permit, Water Quality Order (WQO) 2009-0009-DWQ, obtained from the State Water Board, or individual storm water permit obtained from the Lahontan Water Board.

13. Depending on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code for industrial-type activities at a specific site, individual projects may require an NPDES General Industrial Storm Water Permit, WQO-2014-0057-DWQ, obtained from the State Water Board, or individual storm water permit obtained from the Lahontan Water Board.
14. Discharge of waste to land (i.e. evaporation ponds) may require waste discharge requirements (WDRs) issued by the Lahontan Water Board in compliance with the CCR, title 27, section 20005 et seq. If the Project includes wastes that can be characterized as either designated and/or non-hazardous, and a planned discharge to land would occur, the discharger will be required to submit the Report of Waste Discharge application, Form 200, to the Water Board.

We request that the EIR recognize the potential permits that may be required for the Project, as outlined above, and identify the specific activities that may trigger these permitting actions in the appropriate sections of the environmental document. Information regarding these permits, including application forms, can be downloaded from our web site at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/>. Early consultation with Water Board staff regarding potential permitting is recommended.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the NOP. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at (760) 241-4942 jeffrey.fitzsimmons@waterboards.ca.gov or Jan Zimmerman, Senior Engineering Geologist, at (760) 241-7404 or jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov. Please send all future correspondence regarding this Project to the Water Board's email address at Lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov and Project name in the subject line.



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