

DATE: December 6, 2022

TO: State Clearinghouse; Responsible and Trustee Agencies; and Other Interested Parties

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report

PROJECT: Friant-Kern Canal Water Quality Guidelines Program

LEAD AGENCY: Friant Water Authority
854 N. Harvard Avenue
Lindsay, CA 93247

As part of the Friant-Kern Canal Water Quality Guidelines Program (Program), Friant Water Authority (Friant) intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for its proposed *Guidelines for Accepting Water into the Friant-Kern Canal*, which will define the water quality thresholds and required Program measures associated with the introduction or receipt of Non-Millerton water¹ into or from the Friant-Kern Canal (proposed Guidelines or proposed project). Friant is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Friant invites written comments on the scope of the environmental analysis and identification of potential environmental issues to be included in the EIR.

Notice of Preparation: This Notice of Preparation (NOP) has been sent to the Office of Planning and Research, responsible and trustee agencies, other public agencies, and interested members of the public to inform them that Friant is preparing an EIR to analyze the proposed Guidelines and to solicit information that will be helpful in the environmental review process. This notice includes a description of the proposed project and information regarding how to provide comments to Friant.

Comment Period: Friant is requesting input from responsible and trustee agencies, other public agencies, and interested members of the public regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. Responsible and trustee agency responses should provide specific detail about the scope and content of the environmental information related to the responsible or trustee agency's area of statutory responsibility that they believe should be included in the EIR and other pertinent information consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b).

State law mandates that responses must be sent at the earliest possible date but postmarked within 30 days from this notice and the CEQA Guidelines state that if a responsible or trustee agency fails to respond (with comments or a well-justified request for additional time) Friant may presume that none of those entities have a response to make. The 30-day public review period for this NOP extends from **Tuesday, December 6, 2022** to **Monday, January 9, 2023**. Please provide any written comments (either by mail or electronically) no later than **5:00 pm on January 9, 2023**. Please direct all comments to the following address:

¹ Collectively, Non-Millerton water is water introduced into the Friant-Kern Canal other than directly from Millerton Lake to the headworks of the Friant-Kern Canal.

Ian Buck-Macleod
Friant Water Authority 854 N. Harvard Avenue, Lindsay, CA 93247
Email: ibuckmacleod@friantwater.org.

Document Availability. This NOP and current draft of the *Guidelines for Accepting Water into the Friant-Kern Canal* are available for review on Friant's website: https://friantwater.org/s/Friant_WQ_Guidelines_NOP_120622.pdf and https://friantwater.org/s/12062022_Proposed_WQ_Guidelines.pdf, respectively, and at the Friant Water Authority office at 854 N. Harvard Avenue, Lindsay, CA 93247.

Scoping Meeting: A virtual public meeting will be held during the 30-day NOP review period to solicit comments on the scope and content of the EIR. The meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, December 13, 2022** via the Zoom web conference application. To join the meeting, please click the following link or join by phone:

Join on your computer or Zoom mobile application:

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting URL: <https://esassoc.zoom.us/j/5575729291?from=addon>

Meeting ID: 557 572 9291

Or call in (audio only)

+1 877 853 5247 (United States), Meeting ID: 557 572 9291#

To ensure the best experience for this meeting, please join via the Desktop or mobile Zoom application. The dial-in audio conferencing number should only be used if other options do not work or are not available.

The scoping meeting will include a brief presentation, providing an overview of the proposed project. After the presentation, comments will be accepted. Individuals wishing to provide comments during the meeting are encouraged to first register by emailing Ian Buck-Macleod at ibuckmacleod@friantwater.org (please include “**Friant Water Authority Guidelines for Accepting Water into the Friant-Kern Canal, Scoping Meeting Comment Registration**” in the subject line).

Project Location: The proposed project is located in the Friant Division of the Central Valley Project, specifically, along and within the 152-mile right-of way for the Friant-Kern Canal. The Friant-Kern Canal extends from Friant Dam at the San Joaquin River near Fresno, California to the Kern River in Bakersfield, California. It is located in the San Joaquin Valley of central California (Figure 1).

Project Description: The proposed Guidelines describe the Friant application review process, implementation procedures, and the responsibilities of water contractors and other parties authorized to introduce or receive Non-Millerton water into or from the Friant-Kern Canal (collectively, “Contractors”). The proposed Guidelines define the water quality thresholds and the required Program measures associated with introduced Non-Millerton water and corresponding water quality, as well as the methodologies and tools for monitoring and forecasting water quality in the Friant-Kern Canal. The proposed Guidelines are intended to ensure that water quality is protected for sustained domestic and agricultural use.

The proposed Guidelines are applicable to all Non-Millerton water introduced or diverted into the Friant-Kern Canal including but not limited to:

- Groundwater pump-ins
- Surface water diversions and pump-ins
- Recaptured and recirculated San Joaquin River Restoration Program Restoration Flows
- Water introduced at the Friant-Kern Canal-Cross Valley Canal ("CVC") intertie and delivered via reverse flow on the Friant-Kern Canal

A Water Quality Advisory Committee composed of Friant Division long-term contractors ("Friant Contractors") and other Contractors and users involved in either introducing or receiving Non-Millerton water to or from the Friant-Kern Canal will be established to provide recommendations to Friant on operations and monitoring requirements of the proposed Guidelines. The Water Quality Advisory Committee will operate under an established charter and will appoint a Monitoring Subcommittee to assist Friant in the implementation of the proposed Guidelines.

Implementation of the proposed Guidelines would not result in Friant making any physical modifications to the Friant-Kern Canal. However, in response to the proposed Guidelines, Contractors may need to implement Program measures to demonstrate that a proposed introduction or discharge of Non-Millerton water meets the water quality thresholds. Program measures or activities may include construction and maintenance of discharge structures, construction and operation of water treatment facilities, blending of water, changes in timing of the introduction or discharge of Non-Millerton water, etc. In addition, Friant or Contractors may need to construct facilities for monitoring and forecasting water quality (e.g., construction and maintenance of water quality monitoring stations).

Environmental Baseline: CEQA Guidelines section 15125 states that an EIR must include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the NOP is published from a local and regional perspective (existing conditions). The environmental setting will constitute the baseline physical conditions that Friant, the Lead Agency, will use to determine if an impact is significant. In general, the environmental baseline is the same as the existing on-the-ground conditions when environmental review begins.

Project Alternatives: In preparing the EIR, Friant will consider a reasonable range of Project alternatives, including the no project alternative, as well as others that may be identified in comments received in response to this NOP.

Environmental Effects and Scope of the EIR: The EIR will analyze potentially significant impacts that may result from implementation of the proposed project (i.e., implementation of Program measures to achieve water quality thresholds as defined in the proposed Guidelines).

Pursuant to section 15063(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study has not been prepared for the proposed project. The EIR will evaluate the full range of environmental issues contemplated for consideration under CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines:

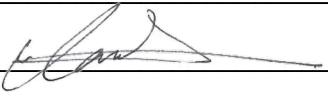
- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils and Paleontology
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials

- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise and Vibration
- Service Systems
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities
- Cumulative Impacts

Environmental issues not contemplated for consideration due to the determination that there will be no impact include:

- Growth Inducement
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Wildfire

Date: 12/6/2022

Signature: 

Title: Water Resources Engineer



SOURCE: ESA, 2022

Friant Water Authority - Friant-Kern Canal

Figure 1
Regional and
Project Area
Map