

BOARD MEETING DATE: February 2, 2024

AGENDA NO. 15

REPORT: Intergovernmental Review of Environmental Documents and CEQA Lead Agency Projects

SYNOPSIS: This report provides a listing of environmental documents prepared by other public agencies seeking review by South Coast AQMD between December 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023, and proposed projects for which South Coast AQMD is acting as lead agency pursuant to CEQA.

COMMITTEE: Mobile Source, January 19, 2024, Reviewed

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
Receive and file.

Wayne Natri
Executive Officer

SR:MK:MM:BR:SW:ET

Background

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statute and Guidelines require public agencies, when acting in their lead agency role, to provide an opportunity for other public agencies and members of the public to review and comment on the analysis in environmental documents prepared for proposed projects. A lead agency is when a public agency has the greatest responsibility for supervising or approving a proposed project and is responsible for the preparation of the appropriate CEQA document.

Each month, South Coast AQMD receives environmental documents, which include CEQA documents, for proposed projects that could adversely affect air quality. South Coast AQMD fulfills its intergovernmental review responsibilities, in a manner that is consistent with the Board's 1997 Environmental Justice Guiding Principles and Environmental Justice Initiative #4, by reviewing and commenting on the adequacy of the air quality analysis in the environmental documents prepared by other lead agencies.

The status of these intergovernmental review activities is provided in this report in two sections: 1) Attachment A lists all of the environmental documents prepared by other public agencies seeking review by South Coast AQMD that were received during the reporting period; and 2) Attachment B lists the active projects for which South Coast AQMD has reviewed or is continuing to conduct a review of the environmental documents prepared by other public agencies. Further, as required by the Board's October 2002 Environmental Justice Program Enhancements for fiscal year (FY) 2002-03, each attachment includes notes for proposed projects which indicate when South Coast AQMD has been contacted regarding potential air quality-related environmental justice concerns. The attachments also identify for each proposed project, as applicable: 1) the dates of the public comment period and the public hearing date; 2) whether staff provided written comments to a lead agency and the location where the comment letter may be accessed on South Coast AQMD's website; and 3) whether staff testified at a hearing.

In addition, the South Coast AQMD will act as lead agency for a proposed project and prepare a CEQA document when: 1) air permits are needed; 2) potentially significant adverse impacts have been identified; and 3) the South Coast AQMD has primary discretionary authority over the approvals. Attachment C lists the proposed air permit projects for which South Coast AQMD is lead agency under CEQA.

Attachment A – Log of Environmental Documents Prepared by Other Public Agencies and Status of Review, and Attachment B – Log of Active Projects with Continued Review of Environmental Documents Prepared by Other Public Agencies

Attachment A contains a list of all environmental documents prepared by other public agencies seeking review by South Coast AQMD that were received pursuant to CEQA or other regulatory requirements. Attachment B provides a list of active projects, which were identified in previous months' reports, and which South Coast AQMD staff is continuing to evaluate or prepare comments relative to the environmental documents prepared by other public agencies. The following table provides statistics on the status of review¹ of environmental documents for the current reporting period for Attachments A and B combined²:

¹ The status of review reflects the date when this Board Letter was prepared. Therefore, Attachments A and B may not reflect the most recent updates.

² Copies of all comment letters sent to the lead agencies are available on South Coast AQMD's website at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/commenting-agency>.

Statistics for Reporting Period from December 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023	
Attachment A: Environmental Documents Prepared by Other Public Agencies and Status of Review	80
Attachment B: Active Projects with Continued Review of Environmental Documents Prepared by Other Public Agencies (which were previously identified in the October 2023, and November 2023 reports)	11
Total Environmental Documents Listed in Attachments A & B	91
<i>Comment letters sent</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Environmental documents reviewed, but no comments were made</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Environmental documents currently undergoing review</i>	<i>12</i>

Staff focuses on reviewing and preparing comments on environmental documents prepared by other public agencies for proposed projects: 1) where South Coast AQMD is a responsible agency under CEQA (e.g., when air permits are required but another public agency is lead agency); 2) that may have significant adverse regional air quality impacts (e.g., special event centers, landfills, goods movement); 3) that may have localized or toxic air quality impacts (e.g., warehouse and distribution centers); 4) where environmental justice concerns have been raised; and 5) which a lead or responsible agency has specifically requested South Coast AQMD review.

If staff provided written comments to a lead agency, a hyperlink to the “South Coast AQMD Letter” is included in the “Project Description” column which corresponds to a notation in the “Comment Status” column. In addition, if staff testified at a hearing for a proposed project, a notation is also included in the “Comment Status” column. Copies of all comment letters sent to lead agencies are available on South Coast AQMD’s website at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/commenting-agency>. Interested parties seeking information regarding the comment periods and scheduled public hearings for projects listed in Attachments A and B should contact the lead agencies for further details as these dates are occasionally modified.

In January 2006, the Board approved the Clean Port Initiative Workplan (Workplan). One action item of the Workplan was to prepare a monthly report describing CEQA documents for projects related to goods movement and to make full use of the process to ensure the air quality impacts of such projects are thoroughly mitigated. In accordance with this action item, Attachments A and B organize the environmental documents received according to the following categories: 1) goods movement projects; 2) schools; 3) landfills and wastewater projects; 4) airports; and 5) general land use projects. In response to the action item relative to mitigation, staff maintains a compilation of mitigation measures presented as a series of tables relative to off-road engines; on-road engines; harbor craft; ocean-going vessels; locomotives; fugitive dust;

and greenhouse gases which are available on South Coast AQMD's website at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/mitigation-measures-and-control-efficiencies>. Staff will continue compiling tables of mitigation measures for other emission sources such as ground support equipment.

Attachment C – Proposed Air Permit Projects for Which South Coast AQMD is CEQA Lead Agency

The CEQA lead agency is responsible for determining the type of environmental document to be prepared if a proposal requiring discretionary action is considered to be a “project” as defined by CEQA. South Coast AQMD periodically acts as lead agency for its air permit projects and the type of environmental document prepared may vary depending on the potential impacts. For example, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is prepared when there is substantial evidence that the project may have significant adverse effects on the environment. Similarly, a Negative Declaration (ND) or Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) may be prepared if a proposed project will not generate significant adverse environmental impacts, or the impacts can be mitigated to less than significance. The ND and MND are types of CEQA documents which analyze the potential environmental impacts and describe the reasons why a significant adverse effect on the environment will not occur such that the preparation of an EIR is not required.

Attachment C of this report summarizes the proposed air permit projects for which South Coast AQMD is lead agency and is currently preparing or has prepared environmental documentation pursuant to CEQA. As noted in Attachment C, South Coast AQMD is lead agency for three air permit projects during December 2023.

Attachments

- A. Environmental Documents Prepared by Other Public Agencies and Status of Review
- B. Active Projects with Continued Review of Environmental Documents Prepared by Other Public Agencies
- C. Proposed Air Permit Projects for Which South Coast AQMD is CEQA Lead Agency

ATTACHMENT B
ACTIVE PROJECTS WITH CONTINUED REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PREPARED BY
OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES

SOUTH COAST AQMD LOG-IN NUMBER PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF DOC.	LEAD AGENCY	COMMENT STATUS
<p><i>Plans and Regulations</i></p> <p>RVC231101-14 Eastvale 2040 General Plan Update</p>	<p>The project consists of updating the City’s General Plan elements and strategies for land use, circulation, conservation, open space, noise, safety, housing, environmental justice, economic development, public health, and sustainability with a planning horizon of 2040 on 13.12 square miles. The project is bounded by the City of Ontario to the north, Jurupa Valley to the east, cities of Norco and Corona to the south, and City of Chino Hills to the west. Reference RVC220809-08</p> <p>http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/comment-letters/2023/december-2023/RVC231101-14.pdf</p> <p>Staff previously provided comments on the Notice of Preparation for the project, which can be accessed at: http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/comment- letters/2022/august/RVC220809-08.pdf.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Comment Period: 10/31/2023 - 12/15/2023</p>	<p>Draft Environmental Impact Report</p>	<p>City of Eastvale</p>	<p>Comment letter sent on 12/15/2023</p>
	<p>Public Hearing: N/A</p>			

Key:

= Project has potential environmental justice concerns due to the nature and/or location of the project.

LAC = Los Angeles County, ORC = Orange County, RVC = Riverside County, and SBC = San Bernardino County

Notes:

1. Disposition may change prior to Governing Board Meeting
2. Documents received by the CEQA Intergovernmental Review program but not requiring review are not included in this report.

ATTACHMENT C
PROPOSED AIR PERMIT PROJECTS FOR
WHICH SOUTH COAST AQMD IS CEQA LEAD
AGENCY THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2023

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROPONENT	TYPE OF DOCUMENT	STATUS	CONSULTANT
<p>Quemetco is proposing to modify existing South Coast AQMD permits to allow the facility to recycle more batteries and to eliminate the existing daily idle time of the furnaces. The proposed project will increase the rotary feed drying furnace feed rate limit from 600 to 750 tons per day and increase the amount of total coke material allowed to be processed. In addition, the project will allow the use of petroleum coke in lieu of or in addition to calcined coke, and remove one existing emergency diesel-fueled internal combustion engine (ICE) and install two new emergency natural gas-fueled ICEs.</p>	<p>Quemetco</p>	<p>Environmental Impact Report (EIR)</p>	<p>The Draft EIR was released for a 124-day public review and comment period from October 14, 2021 to February 15, 2022 and approximately 200 comment letters were received.</p> <p>Staff held two community meetings, on November 10, 2021 and February 9, 2022, which presented an overview of the proposed project, the CEQA process, detailed analysis of the potentially significant environmental topic areas, and the existing regulatory safeguards. Written comments submitted relative to the Draft EIR and oral comments made at the community meetings, along with responses will be included in the Final EIR which is currently being prepared by the consultant.</p> <p>After the Draft EIR public comment and review period closed, Quemetco submitted additional applications for other permit modifications which are also being evaluated by staff.</p>	<p>Trinity Consultants</p>
<p>Sunshine Canyon Landfill is proposing to modify its South Coast AQMD permits for its active landfill gas collection and control system to accommodate the increased collection of landfill gas. The proposed project will: 1) install two new low emission flares with two additional 300-horsepower electric blowers; and 2) increase the landfill gas flow limit of the existing flares.</p>	<p>Sunshine Canyon Landfill</p>	<p>Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR)</p>	<p>South Coast AQMD staff reviewed and provided comments on the preliminary air quality analysis, health risk assessment (HRA), and Preliminary Draft SEIR which are currently being addressed by the consultant.</p>	<p>SCS Engineers</p>
<p>Tesoro is proposing to modify its Title V permit to: 1) add gas oil as a commodity that can be stored in three of the six new crude oil storage tanks at the Carson Crude Terminal (previously assessed in the May 2017 Final EIR); and 2) drain, clean and decommission Reservoir 502, a 1.5 million barrel concrete lined, wooden-roof topped reservoir used to store gas oil.</p>	<p>Tesoro Refining & Marketing Company, LLC (Tesoro)</p>	<p>Addendum to the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the May 2017 Tesoro Los Angeles Refinery Integration and Compliance Project (LARIC)</p>	<p>South Coast AQMD staff reviewed and provided comments on the Preliminary Draft Addendum, which are currently being addressed by the consultant.</p>	<p>Environmental Audit, Inc.</p>