

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

June 21, 2006

Ms. Jane Rinck
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Subject: Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the American River Watershed Project (CEQ# 60163)

Dear Ms. Rinck:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the DSEIS for the project referenced above. Our review is pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The final Supplemental Plan Formulation Report EIS/EIR to the American River Watershed (2002), upon which EPA provided extensive comments (October 29, 2001), evaluated alternative measures to provide additional flood protection for the City of Sacramento, including raising Folsom Dam, raising bridges, and increasing flood releases. As part of the authorization of the Folsom Dam Project, Congress authorized construction of a permanent bridge to mitigate for the closure of Folsom Dam Road during construction of the dam raise. In the DSEIS, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Folsom are proposing the construction of a 935-foot bridge and roadway across the American River immediately downstream of Folsom Dam. The alternatives differ in the configuration of the intersections, with Alternative 3 being the tentatively recommended plan. We have rated this project as EC-2, Environmental Concerns - Insufficient Information (see attached "Summary of the EPA Rating System").

The Lower Sacramento Valley Air Basin is designated as nonattainment for the Federal and State National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone and particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM-10) (p. 3-47). The project will have a regional influence on travel patterns and is estimated to increase the number of roadway segments operating at worse than the minimum acceptable Level of Service (LOS) thresholds by approximately 15% over the no action alternative, according to 2025 estimates (p. 4-28). The DEIS notes that prior to construction, a traffic management plan will be prepared. EPA recommends that the traffic management plan include monitoring requirements and adaptive management strategies if the number of segments operating at less than LOS thresholds increases.

In addition, the DSEIS notes that the feasibility of implementing traffic mitigation measures is uncertain due to a lack of authority (p. 4-50). While it recommends forming partnerships with Caltrans and other transportation agencies to implement mitigation measures, there is no discussion on steps to get these partnerships underway. The Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) should discuss coordination with the agencies, upcoming projects, and the feasibility of the mitigation measures proposed in figures 5.15-18 as the level of impacts resulting from the project will depend on the implementation of these measures. Part 1502.16(h) and Part 1502.2 of 40 CFR note that all relevant, reasonable mitigation measures that could improve the project must be identified, even if they are outside the jurisdiction of the lead agency or the cooperating agencies. These sections also state that the EIS should indicate the likelihood that these measures will be adopted or enforced by the responsible agencies.

A Clean Water Act Section 404 permit will be needed for the loss of 2-3 acres of jurisdictional wetlands as a result of the project. Therefore, the FSEIS should address compliance with those Guidelines, which require that the Least Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) be selected (40 CFR 230.10(a)). While we understand that the 404(b)(1) analysis is provided in Appendix D, this appendix was not provided in the DSEIS. A summary of the analysis should be provided in the FSEIS.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this DSEIS. Please send two copies of the FSEIS to this office at the same time it is officially filed with our Washington, D.C. office. If you have questions or wish to discuss our comments, please call me at (415) 972-3988 or Summer Allen, the project manager, at (415) 972-3847 or allen.summer@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/S/

Duane James, Manager
Environmental Review Office

Enclosures: Summary of the EPA Rating System

MI# 000631