

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



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

September 25th, 2014

Raymond Sukys
Director, Office of Planning and Program Development
Federal Transit Administration, Region 9
201 Mission Street, Suite 1650
San Francisco, CA 94105-1839

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Redlands Passenger Rail Project, San Bernardino County, California (CEQ# 20140228)

Dear Mr. Sukys:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Redlands Passenger Rail Project. Our review and comments are provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as NEPA lead agency, working with the San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) acting in its role as the San Bernardino County Transportation Commission, propose extending passenger rail operations east, from the City of San Bernardino to the City of Redlands in an approximate 9 mile corridor. The DEIS evaluates three Alternatives, including a Preferred Project, a Reduced Project Footprint, and a No Build. The DEIS includes three Design Options for the build Alternatives.

EPA provided Scoping comments on May 17th, 2012. We appreciate the additional information incorporated into the Draft EIS in response to those comments, including committing to diesel-powered locomotives that would meet Tier 4 engine emissions requirements, and completing a traffic study that identified queuing impacts and mitigation at the numerous at-grade crossings of the proposed rehabilitated track. Following our review of the DEIS, EPA has rated the proposed project as Lack of Objections (LO) (see enclosed *Summary of EPA Rating Definitions*). While the DEIS identifies that project implementation, combined with proper mitigation, should not result in significant environmental impacts, we offer the following recommendations for your consideration going forward.

Waters of the United States

The DEIS identifies less than 1 acre of impacts to the Waters of the United States (WUS) resulting from the project, and FTA is still in the process of completing a jurisdictional delineation to be approved by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). EPA encourages FTA to continue to work closely with the ACOE to identify and commit to minimization and mitigation of any WUS impacts. In particular, EPA recommends that FTA document how the reduced length of bank improvements along the Mission Zanja Channel (associated with Alternative 3) and proposed Design Options may minimize impacts to the Waters of the US.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the DEIS. When the FEIS is available for review, please send one copy to the address above (mail code: ENF 4-2). If you have any questions, please contact Zac Appleton, the lead reviewer for this project. Zac can be reached at 415-972-3321 or appleton.zac@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Connell Dunning, Transportation Team Supervisor
Environmental Review Section

Enclosures: Summary of EPA Rating Definitions

cc: Mitchell Alderman, SANBAG
Dominique Paukowits, FTA