

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



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

August 19, 2013

Kurt Heidelberg  
Senior Environmental Planner  
Environmental Studies "D" Branch Chief  
Environmental Project Management  
California Department of Transportation, District 8  
464 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor MS820  
San Bernardino, California 92401-1400

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the State Route 58 Kramer Junction Expressway Project, San Bernardino County, California (CEQ# 20130193).

Dear Mr. Bricker:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed SR-58 Kramer Junction Expressway 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 California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as NEPA lead agency, is proposing to realign and widen State Route 58 (SR-58) from a two-lane conventional highway to a four-lane expressway near the unincorporated community of Kramer Junction. Caltrans further proposes constructing a railroad grade separation and an expressway interchange at Kramer Junction. The total length of the project is 13.3 miles, from 0.4 miles west of the Kern County/San Bernardino County line to a point 7.5 miles west of United States Route 395. The DEIS evaluates four proposed alternatives, as well as a No Build Alternative. No preferred alternative has been identified.

EPA commends Caltrans for their efforts to reduce impacts to biological resources near Kramer Junction to the greatest extent possible. We are particularly encouraged to see the inclusion of mitigation measures BIO-39 and BIO-41 in the DEIS, providing a commitment to further minimize the impact to the desert tortoise and Mohave Ground Squirrel with compensatory mitigation.

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 in preparing the FEIS.

*Impacts to Boron*

Boron is an unincorporated area of 2,253 residents on the edge of the proposed project, connected to Kramer Junction by SR-58, and is in the same community cohesion analysis. Boron has two schools near SR-58 (470 feet for West Boron Elementary, 1100 feet for Boron High School) that would also be exposed to increased particulate matter emissions (+29% by 2019 and +124% by 2039) from daily truck traffic forecast for Kramer Junction. EPA

also notes that Alternative 2 presents significant adverse impacts to community cohesion that cannot be fully mitigated. EPA recommends Caltrans consider protecting likely sensitive receptors in Boron with effective filtration of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems at Boron's schools to mitigate for expected air quality impacts, and to commit to implementing that mitigation in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). We also note that at least six years have passed since Caltrans held project scoping meetings, and that these meetings generated numerous useful comments from interested residents and businesses in Kramer Junction and Boron. Because of this, we recommend that Caltrans renew community engagement and document any additional mitigations these meetings identify for the preferred alternative in the FEIS.

*Hazardous Waste/Materials Evaluation*

Site evaluation in the proposed project area noted structures built before 1979, and identified numerous sites with possible asbestos, lead paint, and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination concern. EPA has discovered new sources of PCB contamination in the form of caulk widely sold before the chemical's ban, and has developed evaluation and cleanup tools to assist in site evaluation. We recommend Caltrans use the EPA information on PCBs in Caulk (<http://www.epa.gov/pcbsincaulk/>) with follow up site evaluation in structures built before 1979, and to document any additional PCB discoveries in the FEIS.

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: CED-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](mailto:appleton.zac@epa.gov).

Sincerely,

/s/

Connell Dunning, Transportation Team Supervisor  
Environmental Review Office  
Communities and Ecosystems Division

Enclosures: Summary of EPA Rating Definitions

cc: David Bricker, Caltrans District 8  
Chris Newman, FHWA  
Tay Dam, FHWA