



# South Coast Air Quality Management District

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SENT VIA USPS AND E-MAIL:

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County of Los Angeles | Department of Regional Planning

Zoning Permits East Section

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**Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the  
City Terrace Recycling Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) & Transfer  
Station (TS) (“Proposed Project”) (Project No. R2012-00279, CUP No.  
201200025, Environmental Case No. 201200039)**

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) staff appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above-mentioned document. The following comments are meant as guidance for the Lead Agency and should be incorporated into the Final MND.

### Project Description

The Proposed Project includes a request for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow continued operation of the existing MRF & TS with an increase in the daily waste intake. Currently, there are two municipal solid waste (MSW) and recyclable material processing buildings, a canopy for construction and demolition (C&D) debris, inert materials, green waste and other materials on 1.6 acres.

The Proposed Project will be developed in two phases. Phase I includes an increase in the current permitted level of daily waste intake of MSW, including recyclable materials, from 700 tons per day (tpd) to 1,000 tpd. In addition, the existing 3,600-square-foot canopy will be retrofitted and expanded by an additional 2,400 square feet to provide a covered tipping and load-out area for C&D debris, inert materials, greenwaste, and other materials. Finally, a second loadout station would be added during Phase I. Phase II involves an increase in the daily waste intake to 1,500 tpd and will start three years into Phase I. The increase will be granted only after the Proposed Project meets required facility improvements as identified in the site plan, which includes the full enclosure of the waste processing and transfer loading areas.

It is expected that the Proposed Project will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Mondays through Saturdays, to receive and process material but closed on Sundays and most major holidays. Solid waste materials may be exported from the Proposed Project between the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Mondays through Saturdays. At the full 1,500 tpd capacity, the Proposed Project will employ approximately 18 employees. Recyclables will be baled and shipped to market. Non-salvageable materials will be loaded into transfer trucks and hauled to local landfills for disposal. At 1,500 tpd, approximately 270 vehicles per day are expected during

operation. These vehicles include 188 waste collection trucks, 44 transfer trucks, 19 commodity trucks, and 19 vehicles from employees and visitors<sup>1</sup>.

Although the Proposed Project is situated in a primarily industrial and manufacturing area<sup>2</sup>, residential uses are located less than one-quarter mile south and east to the Proposed Project<sup>3</sup>. In addition, trucks operating along N. Eastern Avenue and Valley Boulevard, which is part of the inbound and outbound truck routes for the Proposed Project<sup>4</sup> are expected to pass by residences, thereby exposing people to adverse vehicle emissions.

### Project Background

On March 17, 2017, SCAQMD staff provided comments to assist the Lead Agency's preparation of the air quality and health risk analyses for the Proposed Project in the MND<sup>5</sup>. The Lead Agency circulated the MND for a 30-day public review and comment period from June 19 to July 19, 2017<sup>6</sup>. Before the close of the 30-day comment period, on July 18, 2017, SCAQMD staff received a letter providing additional information to support the use of the AERSCREEN model for the health risk analysis<sup>7</sup>. A copy of the letter is included in the attachment. SCAQMD staff have comments on the MND and the July 18, 2017 letter as follows.

## **PART I: SCAQMD STAFF COMMENTS ON THE MND**

### Air Quality Analysis

The Lead Agency found that the Proposed Project's regional operational emissions would exceed SCAQMD's regional air quality CEQA significance threshold for NOx<sup>8</sup>. However, the Lead Agency assumed that all of the Proposed Project's inbound collection trucks were not new trips because they would have traveled to another solid waste facility such as Sunshine Canyon Landfill even if the Proposed Project were not implemented<sup>9</sup>. As such, the Lead Agency found that the Proposed Project's regional operational impacts are less than significant<sup>10</sup>.

SCAQMD staff has concerns about the air quality analysis. The Lead Agency's finding was based on a displaced truck trip methodology that incorrectly assumed that the Proposed Project would reduce emissions by changing the distances that the collection trucks would travel<sup>11</sup>. The Proposed Project would not eliminate collection truck trips that would otherwise haul materials to another waste facility. Further, there is no analysis that collection truck trips would be eliminated to support such an assumption. By excluding the emissions from collection truck

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<sup>1</sup>Traffic Queuing Analysis for City Terrace Recycling MRF & TS. February 2015. Page 11.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, Page 1, Facility Information.

<sup>3</sup> MND, Page 2 – Surrounding Land Uses; Air Quality and GHG Impacts Analysis (Giroux & Associates. April 23, 2013) (AQ Impact Analysis). Single and multi-family residences located 160 feet south (AQ Impact Analysis, Page 13) and multi-family residences approximately 327 feet (aerial map inspection) west of the project.

<sup>4</sup> Traffic Queuing Analysis, Inbound/Outbound Truck Routes, Figures 2 and 3, Pages 5 and 6.

<sup>5</sup> SCAQMD staff comments. March 17, 2017. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/comment-letters/2017/ipc-cityterracerecyclingmrf-031717.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> E-mail correspondence. June 13, 2017. From the Lead Agency (Mr. Steve Mar) to SCAQMD staff (Ms. Lijin Sun). In the e-mail, the Lead Agency informed SCAQMD staff that the public comment period for the Proposed Project begins June 19 and ends July 19 and that a public hearing is scheduled on July 19, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> E-mail correspondence. July 18, 2017. From Clements Environmental Corp. (Ms. Cynthia Lilies) to the Lead Agency (Mr. Steve Mar) and SCAQMD staff (Ms. Lijin Sun and Mr. Gordon Mize).

<sup>8</sup> Giroux & Associates. April 23, 2013. Table 8, *Daily Regional Operational Impacts*. Page 17. Also See MND. Page 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* Page 14.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* Page 17.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* Page 14.

trips caused directly by the Proposed Project, the MND has likely underestimated the Proposed Project's operational impacts. Therefore, SCAQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency include the emissions from collection truck trips in the Final MND.

One of the basic purposes of CEQA is to inform government decision makers and the public about the potential, significant environmental effects of proposed activities (CEQA Guidelines Section 15002). "CEQA establishes a duty for public agencies to avoid or minimize environmental damages where feasible" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15021). To fulfill this duty, the Lead Agency should take the responsibility for analyzing and disclosing all of the emissions generated by the Proposed Project. "Each public agency is responsible for complying with CEQA and these Guidelines. A public agency must meet its own responsibilities under CEQA [...]. For example, a Lead Agency is responsible for the adequacy of its environmental documents [...]" (CEQA Guideline Section 15020).

#### Health Risk Assessment (HRA)

The Lead Agency used the AERSCREEN model to conduct a screening level HRA. SCAQMD staff does not agree with conducting a screening level HRA. As described above, residential uses are located immediately south and east to the Proposed Project, and along the truck routes. By performing a screening level HRA, the MND has likely not fully disclosed the potential health risks to the people living in proximity to the Proposed Project. The AERSCREEN model is intended for a single emission source and is not appropriate for the Proposed Project with multiple emission sources from truck idling, on-site travel, off-site travel, and operation of heavy duty equipment. Additional comments on the AERSCREEN model are included in Part II below. Therefore, SCAQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency perform a HRA<sup>12</sup> by using AERMOD<sup>13</sup> in the Final MND.

#### Permits

SCAQMD should be identified as a responsible agency for the Proposed Project in the Final MND. Further, the Proposed Project will require the submittal of complete and timely permit applications for the following equipment/systems:

1. The installation of a mechanized Solid Waste Sorting and Resource Recovery System.
2. The installation of any grinders and screeners.
3. The installation of any internal combustion engines (ICE) greater than 50 horsepower used to drive grinders and screeners that are not used for the locomotion of said equipment.
4. The installation of any emergency ICE powering a backup generator.
5. The installation of any baghouse or dust collector used to control particulate emissions from the process equipment or materials recovery facility and transfer station enclosures.

Should there be any questions on permits, please contact SCAQMD's Engineering and Permitting staff at (909) 396-2737. For more general information on permits, please visit the SCAQMD's webpage, at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/permits>.

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<sup>12</sup> South Coast Air Quality Management District. *Health Risk Assessment Guidance for Analyzing Cancer Risk from Mobile Source Diesel Idling Emissions for CEQA Air Quality Analysis*. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/mobile-source-toxics-analysis>.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. EPA. Preferred/Recommended Model. Accessed at: [https://www3.epa.gov/scram001/dispersion\\_prefrec.htm](https://www3.epa.gov/scram001/dispersion_prefrec.htm).

### Compliance with SCAQMD Rules and Regulations

In addition to the discussion on SCAQMD Rule 410 – Odors from Transfer Stations and Material Recovery Facilities and Rule 1193 – Clean On-Road Residential and Commercial Refuse Collection Vehicles<sup>14</sup>, the Final MND should discuss how the Lead Agency will comply with other applicable SCAQMD rules and regulations, including, but are not limited to:

1. Rule 212 – Standards for Approving Permits and Issuing Public Notice
2. Rule 401 – Visible Emissions
3. Rule 402 – Nuisance
4. Rule 403 – Fugitive Dust
5. Rule 404 – Particulate Matter Concentration
6. Rule 1133.1 – Chipping and Grinding Activities
7. Regulation 13 – New Source Review
8. Rule 1401 – New Source Review of Toxic Air Contaminants.

Odor management methods include, but not limited to, utilizing the misting systems and odor neutralizers or other additives. Odor neutralizers<sup>15</sup> or other additives may contain Volatile Organic Compounds and toxic compounds. If using these products are reasonably foreseeable odors management methods for the Proposed Project, and to facilitate a good-faith effort at full disclosure during the CEQA process (CEQA Guidelines Section 15003(i)), the Lead Agency should calculate the air emissions and include them in the Proposed Project's operational emissions in the Final MND. Questions on odor management methods or other SCAQMD rules and regulations can also be directed to the SCAQMD's Engineering and Permitting staff.

### **PART II: SCAQMD STAFF COMMENTS ON THE JULY 18, 2017 LETTER**

As described above, SCAQMD staff received a letter before the end of the 30-day public review and comment period (Attachment). No technical supporting documents for the AERSCREEN modeling were provided to SCAQMD staff<sup>16</sup>. SCAQMD staff was unable to review the AERSCREEN modeling input assumptions, vehicle fleet information, model output results, or emission calculations to determine if the conclusion – “the ultra-conserving input assumptions and the negligible resultant predicted impact using the accepted screening tool [...]” – was appropriate<sup>17</sup>.

SCAQMD staff disagrees with using the AERSCREEN modeling to conduct a screening level HRA. A screening level assessment is inappropriate here and likely not conservative due to the modeling complexity of the Proposed Project (e.g., idling at loading bays, on-site travel, and truck routes) and the location of sensitive receptors (e.g., immediately south and east to the Proposed Project, and along the truck routes). “The AERSCREEN program is currently limited to modeling a single point (vertical uncapped stack), capped stack, horizontal stack, rectangular

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<sup>14</sup> MND. Page 9, 14, 18, and 24.

<sup>15</sup> The odor neutralizing products used in the odor misting system should have no adverse environmental impacts. The formulations should be free of toxic compounds, VOC, and fragrance. Many products available in the market attempt to mask odors with fragrances, which can also result in odor complaints.

<sup>16</sup> E-mail correspondence. June 21, 2017. From SCAQMD staff (Mr. Gordon Mize) Clements Environmental Corp. (Ms. Cynthia Lilies) and the Lead Agency (Mr. Steve Mar). In this e-mail, SCAQMD staff informed the Lead Agency that SCAQMD staff “will likely make a comment that AERMOD not AERSCREEN is the appropriate model to evaluate health for this project MND”, and that the Lead Agency should decide if they would provide the electronic files related to the AERSCREEN model analysis to SCAQMD staff for review. No electronic files were provided to SCAQMD staff for review before the July 18, 2017 letter.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

area, circular area, flare, or volume source”<sup>18</sup> and not for multiple emission sources. The Proposed Project has several non-uniform emissions throughout the site that should not be generalized as a single volume source. Therefore, SCAQMD staff disagrees with the conclusion in the July 18, 2017 letter and recommends using AERMOD to properly model individual emission sources, discrete receptor locations, wind data, and terrain data.

Further, the July 18, 2017 letter was provided to SCAQMD staff for review during the 30-day public review and comment period. Subsequently, SCAQMD staff reviewed the letter and found that the letter included additional information to support the AERSCREEN model for the Proposed Project. This letter will likely be used by the Lead Agency as substantial evidence to support the finding that the Proposed Project will have no significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 150741(b)). Therefore, the Lead Agency should include the letter in the MND in order to provide the public an opportunity to review and/or comment on the letter pursuant to the CEQA Guideline Sections 15070 to 15075.

In closing, SCAQMD staff is available to work with the Lead Agency to address these issues and any other questions that may arise. If you have any questions regarding the comments, please contact me at (909) 396-3308.

Sincerely,

*Lijin Sun*

Lijin Sun, J.D.

Program Supervisor, CEQA IGR

Planning, Rule Development & Area Sources

Attachment  
JW:LS:AS/JC/GM  
LAC170613-01  
Control Number

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<sup>18</sup> U.S. EPA. December 2016. *AERSCREEN User's Guide*. Page 2. Accessed at: [https://www3.epa.gov/scram001/models/screen/aerscreen\\_userguide.pdf](https://www3.epa.gov/scram001/models/screen/aerscreen_userguide.pdf).

**ATTACHMENT**  
**Copy of the July 18, 2017 Letter**

**GIROUX & ASSOCIATES**

**1800 E. Garry Ave. #210**  
**Santa Ana, CA 92705**

Clement Environmental  
Attn: Cynthia Liles  
15230 Burbank Blvd., #103  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91411

Dear Ms. Liles:

Please excuse the delayed response to SCAQMD comments on the proposed City Terrace MRF expansion air quality impacts/health risk. I am semi-retired, and my associate has had serious medical issues/back surgery. The residual technical issue is whether the use of the EPA AERSCREEN risk assessment model as used in the technical report is adequate to characterize the diesel exhaust health risk, or whether the more comprehensive AERMOD dispersion model should have been used. We continue to believe that use of the AERSCREEN model results exceed all CEQA analysis requirements for the following reasons:

1. AERSCREEN is designed to indicate whether an AERMOD analysis is necessary if the screening level result indicates a worst-case individual cancer risk of more than ten in one million. The AERSCREEN finding for this project was 0.8 in a million or less, or less than 8 percent of the AERMOD trigger level.
2. The AERSCREEN finding was based on a 2015 vehicle fleet. Project implementation clearly has not yet begun even by 2017. Diesel trucks are becoming cleaner every year and the percentage of compressed natural gas refuse trucks is growing year by year.
3. AERSCREEN assumed an instantaneous increased throughput of 800 tons per day upon project approval. That approval is still pending and maximum throughput will not necessarily happen the day after approval, but will grow gradually.
4. AERSCREEN assumed that the closest neighbor would reside outside their residence for the next 250,000 hours, including the last trimester of pregnancy, without leaving for school, work, medical care, etc. without any change in wind direction for 30 years.

Given the ultra-conserving input assumptions and the negligible resultant predicted impact using the accepted screening tool, the Lead Agency may comfortably find that the associated health risk impact from diesel exhaust is less than significant by an adequate margin of safety.

Sincerely,  
Hans Giroux, Giroux & Associates