



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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Notice of Preparation of a Draft Focused Environmental Impact Report for Solar Photovoltaic Renewable Energy Initiative Project

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) staff appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above-mentioned document. SCAQMD staff's comments are recommendations regarding the analysis of potential air quality impacts from the Proposed Project that should be included in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Please send SCAQMD a copy of the Draft EIR upon its completion. Note that copies of the Draft EIR that are submitted to the State Clearinghouse are not forwarded to SCAQMD. Please forward a copy of the Draft EIR directly to SCAQMD at the address shown in the letterhead. **In addition, please send with the Draft EIR all appendices or technical documents related to the air quality, health risk, and greenhouse gas analyses and electronic versions of all air quality modeling and health risk assessment files¹. These include emission calculation spreadsheets and modeling input and output files (not PDF files). Without all files and supporting documentation, SCAQMD staff will be unable to complete our review of the air quality analyses in a timely manner. Any delays in providing all supporting documentation will require additional time for review beyond the end of the comment period.**

Air Quality Analysis

The SCAQMD adopted its California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Air Quality Handbook in 1993 to assist other public agencies with the preparation of air quality analyses. The SCAQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency use this Handbook as guidance when preparing its air quality analyses. Copies of the Handbook are available from the SCAQMD's Subscription Services Department by calling (909) 396-3720. More recent guidance developed since this Handbook was published is also available on SCAQMD's website at: [http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/ceqa-air-quality-handbook-\(1993\)](http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/ceqa-air-quality-handbook-(1993)). The SCAQMD staff also recommends that the Lead Agency use the CalEEMod land use emissions software. This software has recently been updated to incorporate up-to-date state and locally approved emission factors and methodologies for estimating pollutant emissions from typical land use development. CalEEMod is the only software model maintained by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) and replaces the now outdated URBEMIS. This model is available free of charge at: www.caleemod.com.

On March 3, 2017, the SCAQMD's Governing Board adopted the 2016 Air Quality Management Plan (2016 AQMP), which was later approved by the California Air Resources Board on March 23, 2017.

¹ Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15174, the information contained in an EIR shall include summarized technical data, maps, plot plans, diagrams, and similar relevant information sufficient to permit full assessment of significant environmental impacts by reviewing agencies and members of the public. Placement of highly technical and specialized analysis and data in the body of an EIR should be avoided through inclusion of supporting information and analyses as appendices to the main body of the EIR. Appendices to the EIR may be prepared in volumes separate from the basic EIR document, but shall be readily available for public examination and shall be submitted to all clearinghouses which assist in public review.

Built upon the progress in implementing the 2007 and 2012 AQMPs, the 2016 AQMP provides a regional perspective on air quality and the challenges facing the South Coast Air Basin. The most significant air quality challenge in the Basin is to achieve an additional 45 percent reduction in nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions in 2023 and an additional 55 percent NO_x reduction beyond 2031 levels for ozone attainment. The 2016 AQMP is available on SCAQMD's website at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/library/clean-air-plans/air-quality-mgt-plan>.

SCAQMD staff recognizes that there are many factors Lead Agencies must consider when making local planning and land use decisions. To facilitate stronger collaboration between Lead Agencies and the SCAQMD to reduce community exposure to source-specific and cumulative air pollution impacts, the SCAQMD adopted the Guidance Document for Addressing Air Quality Issues in General Plans and Local Planning in 2005. This Guidance Document provides suggested policies that local governments can use in their General Plans or through local planning to prevent or reduce potential air pollution impacts and protect public health. SCAQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency review this Guidance Document as a tool when making local planning and land use decisions. This Guidance Document is available on SCAQMD's website at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/planning/air-quality-guidance/complete-guidance-document.pdf>. Additional guidance on siting incompatible land uses (such as placing homes near freeways or other polluting sources) can be found in the California Air Resources Board's *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective*, which can be found at: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/ch/handbook.pdf>. Guidance² on strategies to reduce air pollution exposure near high-volume roadways can be found at: https://www.arb.ca.gov/ch/rd_technical_advisory_final.PDF.

The SCAQMD has also developed both regional and localized significance thresholds. SCAQMD staff requests that the Lead Agency compare the emission results to the recommended regional significance thresholds found here: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/scaqmd-air-quality-significance-thresholds.pdf>. In addition to analyzing regional air quality impacts, SCAQMD staff recommends calculating localized air quality impacts and comparing the results to localized significance thresholds (LSTs). LSTs can be used in addition to the recommended regional significance thresholds as a second indication of air quality impacts when preparing a CEQA document. Therefore, when preparing the air quality analysis for the Proposed Project, it is recommended that the Lead Agency perform a localized analysis by either using the LSTs developed by the SCAQMD or performing dispersion modeling as necessary. Guidance for performing a localized air quality analysis can be found at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/localized-significance-thresholds>.

When specific development is reasonably foreseeable as result of the goals, policies, and guidelines in the Proposed Project, the Lead Agency should identify any potential adverse air quality impacts and sources of air pollution that could occur using its best efforts to find out and a good-faith effort at full disclosure in the Draft EIR. The degree of specificity will correspond to the degree of specificity involved in the underlying activity which is described in the Draft EIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15146). When quantifying air quality emissions, emissions from both construction (including demolition, if any) and operations should be calculated. Construction-related air quality impacts typically include, but are not limited to, emissions from the use of heavy-duty equipment from grading, earth-loading/unloading, paving, architectural coatings, off-road mobile sources (e.g., heavy-duty construction equipment) and on-road mobile sources (e.g., construction worker vehicle trips, material transport trips). Operation-related air quality impacts may include, but are not limited to, emissions from stationary sources (e.g., boilers),

² In April 2017, CARB published a technical advisory, *Strategies to Reduce Air Pollution Exposure Near High-Volume Roadways: Technical Advisory*, to supplement CARB's *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective*. This technical advisory is intended to provide information on strategies to reduce exposures to traffic emissions near high-volume roadways to assist land use planning and decision-making in order to protect public health and promote equity and environmental justice. The technical advisory is available at: <https://www.arb.ca.gov/ch/landuse.htm>.

area sources (e.g., solvents and coatings), and vehicular trips (e.g., on- and off-road tailpipe emissions and entrained dust). Air quality impacts from indirect sources, such as sources that generate or attract vehicular trips, should be included in the analysis. Furthermore, for phased projects where there will be an overlap between construction and operation, the air quality impacts from the overlap should be combined and compared to SCAQMD's regional air quality CEQA operational thresholds to determine significance.

The Lead Agency should identify any potential adverse air quality impacts that could occur from all phases of the Proposed Project and all air pollutant sources related to the Proposed Project. Air quality impacts from both construction (including demolition, if any) and operations should be calculated. Construction-related air quality impacts typically include, but are not limited to, emissions from the use of heavy-duty equipment from grading, earth-loading/unloading, paving, architectural coatings, off-road mobile sources (e.g., heavy-duty construction equipment) and on-road mobile sources (e.g., construction worker vehicle trips, material transport trips). Operation-related air quality impacts may include, but are not limited to, emissions from stationary sources (e.g., boilers), area sources (e.g., solvents and coatings), and vehicular trips (e.g., on- and off-road tailpipe emissions and entrained dust). Air quality impacts from indirect sources, such as sources that generate or attract vehicular trips, should be included in the analysis.

Mobile Source Health Risk Assessment

Notwithstanding the court rulings, SCAQMD staff recognizes that the Lead Agencies that approve CEQA documents retain the authority to include any additional information they deem relevant to assessing and mitigating the environmental impacts of a project. Because of SCAQMD staff's concern about the potential public health impacts of siting sensitive populations within close proximity of, SCAQMD staff recommends that, prior to approving the project, Lead Agencies consider the impacts of air pollutants on people who will live in a new project and provide mitigation where necessary.

When specific development is reasonably foreseeable as result of the goals, policies, and guidelines in the Proposed Project, the Lead Agency should identify any potential adverse health risk impacts using its best efforts to find out and a good-faith effort at full disclosure in the CEQA document. Based on a review of aerial photographs and information in the NOP, SCAQMD staff found that the Proposed Project will be located immediately next to State Route 91 (SR-91). Because of the close proximity to the existing freeway, residents at the Proposed Project³ would be exposed to diesel particulate matter (DPM), which is a toxic air contaminant and a carcinogen. Diesel particulate matter emitted from diesel powered engines (such as trucks) has been classified by the state as a toxic air contaminant and a carcinogen.

Since future residences of the Proposed Project would be exposed to toxic emissions from the nearby sources of air pollution (e.g., diesel fueled highway vehicles), SCAQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency conduct a health risk assessment (HRA)⁴ to disclose the potential health risks to the residents from the vehicle emissions coming from vehicles operating on the Harbor Freeway in the Draft EIR⁵.

Guidance Regarding Residences Sited Near a High-Volume Freeway or Other Sources of Air Pollution

SCAQMD staff recognizes that there are many factors Lead Agencies must consider when making local planning and land use decisions. To facilitate stronger collaboration between Lead Agencies and the

³ According to the Project Description in the Notice of Preparation, the Proposed Project would include new construction of up to approximately 425 new housing units.

⁴ "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>.

⁵ SCAQMD has developed the CEQA significance threshold of 10 in one million for cancer risk. When SCAQMD acts as the Lead Agency, SCAQMD staff conducts a HRA, compares the maximum cancer risk to the threshold of 10 in one million to determine the level of significance for health risk impacts, and identifies mitigation measures if the risk is found to be significant.

SCAQMD to reduce community exposure to source-specific and cumulative air pollution impacts, the SCAQMD adopted the Guidance Document for Addressing Air Quality Issues in General Plans and Local Planning in 2005. This Guidance Document provides suggested policies that local governments can use in their General Plans or through local planning to prevent or reduce potential air pollution impacts and protect public health. SCAQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency review this Guidance Document as a tool when making local planning and land use decisions. This Guidance Document is available on SCAQMD's website at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/planning/air-quality-guidance/complete-guidance-document.pdf>. Additional guidance on siting incompatible land uses (such as placing homes near freeways or other polluting sources) can be found in the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective*, which can be found at: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/ch/handbook.pdf>. Guidance⁶ on strategies to reduce air pollution exposure near high-volume roadways can be found at: https://www.arb.ca.gov/ch/rd_technical_advisory_final.PDF.

Mitigation Measures

In the event that the Proposed Project generates significant adverse air quality impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures that go beyond what is required by law be utilized during project construction and operation to minimize or eliminate these impacts. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4 (a)(1)(D), any impacts resulting from mitigation measures must also be discussed. Several resources are available to assist the Lead Agency with identifying possible mitigation measures for the Proposed Project, including:

- Chapter 11- Mitigating the Impact of a Project, of the SCAQMD *CEQA Air Quality Handbook*
- SCAQMD's CEQA web pages available here: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/mitigation-measures-and-control-efficiencies>
- SCAQMD's Rule 403 – Fugitive Dust, and the Implementation Handbook for controlling construction-related emissions and Rule 1403 – Asbestos Emissions from Demolition/Renovation Activities
- SCAG's MMRP for the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy available here: http://scagtrtpscs.net/Documents/2016/peir/final/2016PEIR_ExhibitB_MMRP.pdf
- CAPCOA's *Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures* available here: <http://www.capcoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/CAPCOA-Quantification-Report-9-14-Final.pdf>

Alternatives

In the event that the Proposed Project generates significant adverse air quality impacts, CEQA requires the consideration and discussion of alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any of the significant effects of the project. The discussion of a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives, including a "no project" alternative, is intended to foster informed decision-making and public participation. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(d), the Draft EIR shall include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the Proposed Project.

⁶ In April 2017, CARB published a technical advisory, *Strategies to Reduce Air Pollution Exposure Near High-Volume Roadways: Technical Advisory*, to supplement CARB's *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective*. This technical advisory is intended to provide information on strategies to reduce exposures to traffic emissions near high-volume roadways to assist land use planning and decision-making in order to protect public health and promote equity and environmental justice. The technical advisory is available at: <https://www.arb.ca.gov/ch/landuse.htm>.

Permits

In the event that the Proposed Project requires a permit from SCAQMD, SCAQMD should be identified as a responsible agency for the Proposed Project. For more information on permits, please visit SCAQMD webpage at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/permits>. Questions on permits can be directed to SCAQMD's Engineering and Permitting staff at (909) 396-3385.

Data Sources

SCAQMD rules and relevant air quality reports and data are available by calling the SCAQMD's Public Information Center at (909) 396-2039. Much of the information available through the Public Information Center is also available via the SCAQMD's webpage (<http://www.aqmd.gov>).

The SCAQMD staff is available to work with the Lead Agency to ensure that project air quality and health risk impacts are accurately evaluated and mitigated where feasible. Please contact Robert Dalbeck, Assistant Air Quality Specialist, at rdalbeck@aqmd.gov, if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

Daniel Garcia

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