



AGENDA STAFF REPORT

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Agenda Number: C
File ID: 0322.3

Section Name: Environmental Services
Project ID:

MEETING DATE: February 14, 2023

SUBJECT: California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Review for the Mid Canal Storage project

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: ENV SVCS - ENVIRONMENTAL, STEVE BIGLEY

**GENERAL MANAGER
RECOMMENDATION:**

RECOMMENDATION:

Certify the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the Mid Canal Storage Project, and provide authorization for staff to file a Notice of Determination to complete CEQA review.

BUDGET IMPACT:

N/A

PROCUREMENT METHOD:

If other, please explain: .

BACKGROUND

The proposed project is located on a 4.9-mile segment of the Coachella Canal in Imperial County northeast of the City of Niland. The project consists of creating a single wide channel by joining two existing parallel canal channels consisting of the original earthen canal constructed in the 1940s, and the second concrete-lined canal constructed in 2005 as a part of the Coachella Canal Lining Project (CCLP). All earthwork required to join the two channels and create the storage reservoir will be conducted within the existing fence lines defining boundaries of the federal right-of-way within which the parallel canals are located. The project will provide up to 728 acre-feet of water storage to alleviate water storage deficiencies and increase water storage capacity, reliability, and efficiency within the CVWD water distribution system. The project will also resolve an ongoing maintenance problem in the affected lined canal segment caused by high clay content that results in significant cracking of the concrete. All earthwork will be balanced on site with no material to be exported. Imported rock material will be placed on the eastern reservoir bank for erosion control. Work will be staged so that water supply deliveries are maintained throughout

project development. Earthwork and related construction activities are expected to be completed in 6 to 8 months beginning in late summer 2023 and concluding in late winter 2024.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION:

N/A

DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S)/OBJECTIVES(S):

The Mid Canal Storage Project aligns with CVWD's core objective for Operational Optimization

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Yes, attachments included:

An IS/MND was prepared and included five appendices. A 30-day public review period required under CEQA was completed December 22, 2022, through January 23, 2023. CVWD posted notices in the public newspaper and distributed mailed notices to interested parties and Responsible agencies. CVWD noticed the availability for public comment with the State Clearinghouse where Responsible and Trustee agencies were similarly noticed. A total of four comment letters were received, to which CVWD responded on February 3, 2023, thus meeting the CEQA requirement of 10 days prior to the Board approval hearing date. All comments were addressed, and no responses resulted in substantial changes to the document. In AB-52 Tribal Consultation, one tribe requested to consult on the project, and no significant concerns for the Project were identified. The IS/MND environmental review included an evaluation of 22 CEQA resource topics and concluded that all impacts from the project can be reduced to less than significant with mitigation. Ten mitigation measures in the accompanied MMRP are identified across the following resource topics: Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, and Hazardous Materials. Upon Board certification of the documents staff will file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse and the Riverside County Clerk within 5 days to complete the CEQA review process.

PUBLIC NOTICE REQUIRED

A 30-day public review and comment period was held on December 22, 2022, through January 23, 2023. The anticipated board approval hearing date of February 14, 2023 was identified in the public notice. All commenters have been adequately noticed 10 days prior to the Board approval hearing date.

LEGAL REVIEW

BB&K- Ali Tehrani

ATTACHMENTS

- Att 1 - Final IS/MND Mid Canal Storage Project
- Att 2 - Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- Att 3 - Notice of Determination
- Att 4 - Appendix A Tribal Consultation Letters
- Att 5 - Appendix B Biological Resource Assessment
- Att 6 - Appendix C Cultural Resources Report
- Att 7 - Appendix D Mid Canal Storage Feasibility Report
- Att 8 - Appendix E Air Quality and GHG Assessment
- Att 9 – Appendix F Comment Letters
- Att 10 - Board Presentation (Optional)