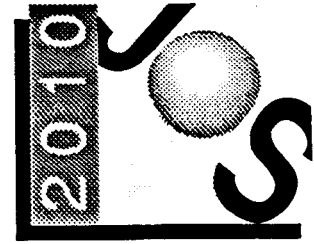


Chapter 1
Introduction



Chapter 1. Introduction

BACKGROUND

The County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Districts) are currently preparing a facilities plan for their wastewater treatment facilities in the Joint Outfall System area to meet wastewater treatment needs through 2010. This plan, entitled the *JOS 2010 Master Facilities Plan* (2010 Plan), addresses several issues, including the need to expand and upgrade the system's wastewater treatment plants, the split in wastewater flow between inland and coastal treatment facilities, biosolids disposal and reuse, opportunities for water reuse, and provision of relief for the wastewater conveyance system.

PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that state and local government agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority before taking action on those projects (Pub. Res. Code 21000 et seq.). This environmental impact report (EIR) has been prepared pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] 15000 et seq.).

The purpose of this EIR is to analyze the environmental effects of the 2010 Plan alternatives and present ways to reduce or avoid adverse effects. CEQA requires that each public agency mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects of projects it approves or implements, wherever feasible.

An EIR is an informational document used in state, regional, and local planning and decision-making processes. The draft EIR for a proposed project must disclose environmental effects that cannot be avoided; growth-inducing effects; effects found not to be significant; and significant cumulative impacts of all past, present, and reasonably anticipated future projects.

Program Environmental Impact Report

The State CEQA Guidelines encourage agencies to use a program EIR in certain circumstances involving the implementation of a series of related projects. Use of such a document allows the lead agency (in this case, the Districts) to characterize the overall

program as the project being approved at the time and to consider broad policy alternatives and programwide mitigation measures early in the facilities planning effort. This approach also avoids duplicative consideration of policies when future portions of the project are evaluated. This program EIR is a first-tier analysis of the 2010 Plan.

Project-Specific CEQA Compliance

In addition to serving as a first-tier CEQA review of the impacts of the 2010 Plan, this EIR also provides project-specific CEQA compliance for construction and operation of secondary treatment facilities and solids processing facilities at the Joint Water Pollution Control Plant (JWPCP), and for certain specific biosolids management options. The time line for the Districts to achieve full secondary treatment is mandated in a Consent Decree (Consent Decree) between the Districts, the United States, the State of California, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and Heal the Bay. Because full secondary treatment must be achieved by 2002, this element of the 2010 Plan is analyzed on a project-specific level, and impacts and mitigation measures for this element are more detailed than those for other components of this program EIR.

Subsequent Environmental Review

Specific projects included in the 2010 Plan, other than full secondary treatment at the JWPCP, will be reevaluated when proposed for implementation. Site-specific environmental documentation will be prepared at that time, if necessary.

Subsequent EIRs and negative declarations will incorporate by reference appropriate information from this program EIR regarding secondary effects, cumulative impacts, broad alternatives, and other factors. Subsequent environmental documents will focus solely on site-specific issues that have not been considered previously. If a later activity would have effects that were not examined in the program EIR, an initial study will be prepared, leading to preparation of either an EIR or a negative declaration. If the Districts find that no new effects would occur and no new mitigation measures would be required, then that activity will require no additional CEQA review.

SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This program EIR is both comprehensive and specific. It concentrates on the long-term cumulative impacts of the 2010 Plan and also contains enough details to provide project-level CEQA compliance for implementation of full secondary treatment pursuant to the Consent Decree.

The following topics are analyzed in this EIR:

- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Marine Environment
- Geologic Hazards and Soils
- Energy and Chemicals
- Transportation
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Public Health
- Botanical and Wildlife Resources
- Land Use
- Population, Employment, and Housing
- Public Services and Facilities
- Aesthetics
- Cultural Resources
- Cumulative, Growth-Inducing, and Growth-Related Impacts

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

The Districts have organized a community outreach program for the 2010 Plan and the program EIR that integrates public and agency input with document preparation. The outreach program is designed to ensure that the 2010 Plan and the program EIR are as informative as possible for decision makers and for those potentially affected by the proposed action.

The Districts have identified several key periods during preparation of the 2010 Plan and the program EIR during which agencies and the public have the opportunity to comment on the facilities planning and participate in the environmental review process. These key periods are a scoping comment period, a draft EIR comment period, and a final EIR comment period as described below.

- **Scoping comment period:** The Districts distributed a notice of preparation for the EIR on February 3, 1994, and held an agency meeting, focus group meetings, and public workshops in February and March 1994 to solicit comments, identify issues of concern regarding the 2010 Plan, and incorporate comments into the draft program EIR analysis. The Districts also met separately with key agencies, such as the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), RWQCB, South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), and Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), in March and April 1994, to discuss the methodologies and the scope of the environmental analysis in detail. A summary of scoping activities is provided in Appendix A, "Scoping

Process", and reports of these meetings are available for review at the Districts' offices in Whittier, California.

- **Draft EIR comment period:** The Districts are conducting information meetings to present the results of and solicit comments on the draft EIR. The purpose of these meetings is to provide agencies and the public with opportunities to comment on or express concerns regarding the draft EIR. The Districts will also hold public hearings on the draft EIR, during which agencies and the public can provide comments that will be addressed in the final EIR.
- **Final EIR comment period:** The Districts will hold a public hearing before certifying the final EIR, during which agencies and the public can provide additional comments on the issues addressed in that document.

In addition to holding meetings, the Districts are preparing and distributing to agencies and interested individuals newsletters that provide updates of ongoing activities associated with the 2010 Plan and announce upcoming meetings and public comment periods. The Districts included information on the 2010 Plan and program EIR in their Wastewater Speakers Bureau Slide Presentation Series, an ongoing forum used to educate the public about the Districts' wastewater treatment and reclamation system. Letters informing the public of the availability of these slide presentations were mailed to approximately 800 clubs and organizations throughout the Districts' service area.

TERMINOLOGY

This report identifies the following levels of impacts:

- a less-than-significant impact is considered to cause no substantial adverse change in the environment and requires no mitigation measures;
- a significant avoidable impact is considered to cause a substantial adverse effect on the environment, but can be reduced to a less-than-significant level by implementing mitigation measures;
- a significant unavoidable impact is considered to cause a substantial adverse effect on the environment for which insufficient feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level; and
- a beneficial impact is considered to cause a positive change in the environment.

The EIR also recommends mitigation measures to reduce impacts of the project. The State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15370) define mitigation as:

- (a) avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or part of an action;
- (b) minimizing the impact by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;
- (c) rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
- (d) reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and
- (e) compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or improvements to the environment.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

The content and format of this EIR are designed to meet the requirements of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. The report is organized into the following chapters so that the reader can easily obtain information about the 2010 Plan.

- The "Executive Summary" chapter presents a summary of the 2010 Plan and its potential impacts; a summary of the impacts and mitigation measures; and impact conclusions regarding growth inducement, short-term uses of the environment versus long-term productivity, irreversible environmental changes, and known areas of controversy.
- Chapter 1, "Introduction", provides a background of the 2010 Plan and an overview of the EIR process.
- Chapter 2, "Plan Description and Alternatives", describes the 2010 Plan alternatives.
- Chapters 3-17 are each devoted to an issue area, as listed above under "Scope of the Environmental Impact Report". Each of these chapters describes the existing conditions or setting before implementation of the 2010 Plan; specific impacts that would result from implementation of the 2010 Plan; and mitigation measures, if available, that would eliminate or reduce significant impacts.

- Chapter 18, "Draft Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan", presents the proposed CEQA-required monitoring plan to ensure that required mitigation measures are implemented.
- Chapter 19, "References", identifies the documents used (printed references) and individuals consulted (personal communications) during preparation of this EIR.
- Chapter 20, "List of Preparers", lists the individuals involved in preparing this draft EIR.

Technical appendices are included at the end of the report.

AGENCIES THAT WILL USE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Federal, state, and local agencies will use this EIR to evaluate the compliance of the 2010 Plan with statutory and regulatory requirements. These agencies include:

- SWRCB for compliance with state revolving fund (SRF) loan requirements, including coordination with the following federal and state reviewing agencies:
 - EPA,
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and
 - State Office of Historic Preservation;
- the Los Angeles RWQCB for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit renewal;
- SCAQMD for conformity with its Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) and permit issuance; and
- SCAG for review of the 2010 Plan's consistency with SCAG's projections and policies identified in the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP).