

SECTION 7.0

Introduction to Responses to Comments

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7.1 Public and Agency Review Process

On January 17, 2002, IID filed a Notice of Completion with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse, indicating that the Draft EIR/EIS had been completed and was available for review. On January 25, 2002, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) filed a Notice of Availability (NOA) with the Federal Register, also indicating that the Draft EIR/EIS was complete and available for review. IID and Reclamation made the Draft EIR/EIS available for public review and comment for 90 days, from January 18, 2002 to April 26, 2002. The Draft EIR/EIS was distributed to Responsible and Trustee Agencies pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and to Cooperating Agencies pursuant to the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and was made available to members of the public at public libraries and on the Internet.

On April 2, 3, and 4, 2002, IID and Reclamation held public hearings in La Quinta, El Centro, and San Diego, California, respectively, to receive oral comments on the Draft EIR/EIS. Written comment letters were accepted by both Lead Agencies, IID and Reclamation, until the close of the review period on April 26, 2002. This Final EIR/EIS contains copies of all written and oral comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS and responses to those comments in Section 10.0 Responses to Comments Received on Draft EIR/EIS.

7.2 List of Commenters

Section 8.0 includes a complete list of federal, state, regional and local agencies, tribes, organizations, and individual citizens that submitted comments on the Draft EIR/EIS.

7.3 Master Responses

More than 200 letters, which represented more than 1,700 individual comments, were received on the Draft EIR/EIS. Although these comments reflect various concerns regarding the Project and EIR/EIS, many of the commenters expressed concerns on similar issues. In an effort to avoid redundancy in responses to individual comments and to provide a thorough response that addresses related issues, Master Responses were prepared for a number of issues that were raised by multiple commenters. The Master Responses are found in Section 9 and are organized according to the following environmental resource categories:

- Hydrology
- Biology
- Recreation
- Air Quality

- Socioeconomics
- Other

Within each category, there are Master Responses on specific topics. The advantage of the Master Responses is that they are comprehensive: all the clarifying information provided on a particular subject area can be found in one place, and multiple cross-referencing between individual comments is not necessary. Each individual comment to which a Master Response applies is addressed with a cross reference to the appropriate Master Response.

7.4 Comments and Individual Responses

Section 10.0 contains a complete copy of all comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS and responses to those comments. The section is presented in landscape format with each comment letter on the left and the corresponding response on the right.

Each comment letter is assigned a code (based on the category to which a commenter belongs – agency, tribe, organization, or citizen), and each separate, specific comment made within a letter is given a unique identifying number. The letter codes and comment numbers are shown on the left side of each letter. Responses to each comment are shown on the right and labeled with the corresponding letter code and comment number.

As described above, many of the comments are addressed by the Master Responses. When appropriate, these comments are referred to in the applicable Master Response.