

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*


**National Environmental Policy Act  
Finding of No Significant Impact**


No. 17-SCAO-012-FONSI

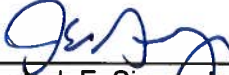
Torrance Van Ness Well Field Project  
Los Angeles County, California

The Bureau of Reclamation is providing a Drought Resiliency Project grant for the City of Torrance to install three new groundwater wells and a four-mile water main to convey groundwater from the Torrance Van Ness well field to an existing treatment and storage reservoir in Los Angeles County, California.

Based on our review of an Initial Study/Environmental Checklist Form for the *Van Ness Avenue Well Field Project*, California State Clearinghouse No. 2018101064, we have determined that the financial assistance does not constitute a major Federal action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Accordingly, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.

Recommended:  Date: 1/14/19  
Doug McPherson, Environmental Protection Specialist

Reviewed By:  Date: 4/14/19  
Leslie Cleveland, Water Resources Manager

Approved:  Date: 4/14/19  
Jack E. Simes, Jr., (Acting) Area Manager



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Lower Colorado Region  
Southern California Area Office  
Temecula, California

## **Mission Statements**

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to Indian tribes and our commitments to island communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

Grant Agreement no. R17AP00097 provides Drought Resiliency Project funds to the City of Torrance. The City will develop three new groundwater wells and 4 miles of associated pipeline in Van Ness Avenue. Water from the three well sites will be conveyed to the existing Border Avenue water treatment and storage facility.

## **PURPOSE AND NEED**

The Drought Response Program provides assistance to states, tribes, and local governments to prepare for droughts in advance of a crisis. The Drought Response Program supports a proactive approach to drought by providing financial assistance to water managers to implement projects that will build long-term resiliency to drought.

Drought Resiliency Projects are funded to increase the reliability of water supply; improve water management; implement systems to facilitate the voluntary sale, transfer, or exchange of water; and provide benefits for fish, wildlife, and the environment to mitigate impacts caused by drought. Projects carried out through Drought Resiliency Project grants can increase water management flexibility, making our water supply more resilient. This helps to prepare for and address the impacts of drought.

The Torrance Van Ness Wellfield Project will increase local supply and reduce the City's dependence on imported water. The City has available groundwater pumping rights within the adjudicated West Coast Groundwater Basin under a 2014 Conjunctive Use Amendment to the original 1961 judgment.

The project will expand groundwater production capacity by 4,500 acre feet per year, representing about 19% of the City's total water supply. The project will allow the City to use more of its adjudicated supply of groundwater and reduce its dependence on imported supplies in dry years, which is identified as a priority in the City's drought contingency plan. In wet years, the City will be able to "bank" a portion of its groundwater supplies to support conjunctive use during drought.

The proposed drought resiliency project will allow Torrance to tap into local groundwater for:

- Purchase of additional rights
- Store and pump up to 1,128 AF of carryover groundwater.
- Purchase and store up to 25,800 AF in the Basin for future use.
- Potable use for an emergency situation.
- Provide extra or emergency water to California Water Services Company, a neighboring water delivery system.

## **AUTHORITY**

Section 9504(a) of the SECURE WATER ACT, Subtitle F of Title IX of the OMNIBUS PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2009, Public Law 111-11 (42 United States Code 10364).

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project will install three new groundwater wells and a four-mile municipal water main to pump and convey high quality groundwater from the Torrance Van Ness well field to the existing Border Avenue water treatment and storage facility. The project is located entirely in the City of Torrance in Los Angeles County, California. The grant agreement scope of work includes:

- **Groundwater Well Drilling.** The City will construct and equip three new groundwater wells (well Nos. 12, 13, and 14). This will include the drilling of three new wells. The wells will utilize energy efficient, variable speed pumps. Pilot wells have been drilled and confirm that each of the well sites is capable of producing 1,400 gallons per minute.

- **Wellhead Facilities.** The City will construct three wellhead facilities to house well mechanisms as part of the Van Ness Well Field Project. This will include the purchase, installation, and testing of well pumps and motors; installation and construction of three well buildings; purchase and installation of wellhead piping and appurtenances; purchase and installation of electrical equipment and conduits; purchase and installation of instrumentation and control equipment; prepare and submit Operation and Maintenance manual and provide hands-on training; and maintain and provide record drawings.
- **Conveyance Pipeline.** The City will furnish and install approximately 15,071 linear feet of 24-inch diameter High Density Polyethylene water main pipe, including fittings, joining, thrust blocks, restrained joints, trenching, backfill, potholing, replacing signal control detector loops, temporary paving, pavement replacement, restoration of surface features, dewatering, pressure testing, disinfection and testing, and all appurtenances required for a complete system, in place and operational in accordance with the plans, specifications and standard drawings.

The project is entirely within City-owned property and the existing public right-of-way. Two of the well sites are in existing City parks.

### **ADOPTION OF EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT**

NEPA requires review of a proposed Federal action to determine its impact on the human environment. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations direct Federal agencies to cooperate with State and local agencies to the fullest extent possible to reduce duplication between NEPA and State and local requirements (40 CFR 1506.2). Department of Interior regulations for implementing NEPA encourage tiering of environmental documents and provide for adoption of existing environmental documents if, upon evaluation by a responsible official, it is found to comply with relevant provisions of the CEQ regulations.

Reclamation staff reviewed the CEQA initial study for the *Van Ness Avenue Well Field Project* (EAS17-00001, California SCH No. 2018101064) and concluded that it adequately identifies and discloses the reasonably foreseeable environmental effects of the action. We adopt the document in accordance with regulations for implementing NEPA promulgated by the CEQ at 40 CFR 1506.3 and by the Department of the Interior at 43 CFR 46.320(a).

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Environmental impacts associated with the project were assessed in CEQA initial study EAS17-00001. An Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Memorandum, and a Noise and Vibration Technical Memorandum were prepared as independent attachments.

The initial study concluded that the project would result in either no impact or less than significant impacts to aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, geology/soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use/planning, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, utilities and service systems. The project results in less than significant impacts with Mitigation Measure incorporation with respect to the following environmental analysis areas: Cultural resources, noise, tribal cultural resources, and CEQA mandatory findings of significance.

The City Planning Commission adopted a mitigated negative declaration on December 5, 2018, finding that an environmental impact report is not required under CEQA. A Notice of Determination was filed at the California State Clearinghouse.

### **OTHER FEDERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

#### Clean Air Act

The South Coast Air Basin is designated non-attainment for ozone, PM10 and PM2.5. The *de minimis* thresholds at 40 CFR 93.153(b) will not be exceeded. No conformity determination is required.

Endangered Species Act

No endangered species or critical habitat areas are located within the action area.

National Historic Preservation Act

No properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places were identified within the Area of Potential Effect. Pipeline installation will avoid remnant elements of the former Pacific Electric Car rail line by boring under the rail line.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

No trees will be removed. No impacts to nesting birds are anticipated.

Water Resources

The West Coast Groundwater Basin was adjudicated in 1961 and is administered by a watermaster. The judgement was amended on December 5, 2014. The City currently pumps 1,800 acre-feet per year from the basin, but they have adjudicated rights to 5,649 acre-feet per year. The City can also purchase additional pumping rights in accordance with the amended judgement.

Prime and Unique Farmlands

The project will not convert farmland to non-agricultural use. No prime or unique farmland or farmland of statewide or local importance is mapped in the area. The project area is already in urban development, mapped as developed by the California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, and identified as "urbanized area" by the Census Bureau.

Wetlands and Floodplains

The project is not located within the a 100-year flood hazard area. No wetlands are involved.

Clean Water Act

The project contractor will be required to file a notice of intent with the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board for the General Construction Stormwater Permit (Adopted Order 2009-0009-DWQ, as amended by 2010-0014-DWQ and 2012-0006-DWQ).

Socioeconomic Resources

Adverse socioeconomic impacts are not expected. The project will provide drought year reliability, improve local water supplies, sustain municipal water demands, and support economic vitality in the area. The project will not induce population growth. No housing or people will be displaced. No communities will be divided. No effects to public health and safety were identified. Economic or social effects are not intended by themselves to require preparation of an EIS (40 CFR 1508.14).

Environmental Justice

No impacts relevant to Environmental Justice are anticipated. The water main alignment crosses two Census Block Groups south of the Torrance refinery designated as disadvantaged communities by the California Department of Water Resources. Installation of a 24-inch pipeline within the street right-of-way will not result in disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects.

Indian Trust Assets

No Indian Trust Assets are involved.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

No Wild & Scenic Rivers or waterways listed on the National Rivers Inventory are involved.

Coastal Zone

The project is about 4 miles inland from the California Coastal Zone Boundary.

Sole Source Aquifers

The West Coast Basin is not an EPA-designated sole source aquifer.

## **AGENCY CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is not required.

### California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)

The California SHPO concurred with our "No Historic Properties Affected" finding on December 12, 2017 (ref: BUR\_2017\_1120\_002).

### California Coastal Commission

Coastal Zone Management Act consistency certification is not required.

### U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service

Farmland Protection Policy Act consultation is not required.

### Tribal Consultation

The City of Torrance conducted several conference calls with the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation. The Kizh Nation and City of Torrance representatives worked together to draft mutually agreeable mitigation measures. The Gabrieleños are not a federally recognized tribe.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS**

Mitigation measures identified in the initial study will be implemented. The required CEQA mitigations are ameliorative design elements per 43 CFR 46.130(b). No NEPA environmental commitments are required.

## **REFERENCES**

Environmental Checklist Form: *Van Ness Avenue Well Field Project*, Case No. EAS17-00001, City of Torrance Community Development Department. <https://www.torranceca.gov/our-city/community-development/planning-division/reports-information/van-ness-avenue-well-field-project>

## **ATTACHMENTS**

California SHPO concurrence



As part of historic properties identification efforts, a cultural resources records search was done on August 10, 2017 and a field survey was done on September 12, 2017 (ESA 2017). The file and records search indicates that no archaeological or architectural properties have been previously recorded in the APE. No Native American sacred sites or cultural resources were identified within the APE. No new cultural resources were identified during the survey.

The linear APE for the new water main crosses the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe rail line north of Del Amo Boulevard and crosses the former Pacific Electric Red Car rail line at Torrance Boulevard. These pipeline crossings will be installed by boring secure casings 10 feet below the roadbed, which will result in no effects to either rail line.

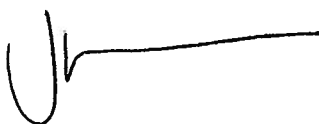
On behalf of Reclamation, ESA sent a Sacred Lands File search request to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on September 11, 2017 who responded with a negative finding. ESA then sent outreach letters on September 18, 2017 to Native American tribes, groups and individuals identified on a list provided by the NAHC. One response was received from Andrew Salas, Chairperson of the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians-Kizh Nation who stated that the Project is located within a sensitive area and who requested consultation. Although not specifically stated, it appears that Reclamation did not contact Native American tribes or groups directly. Should any concerns subsequently arise, Reclamation will need to address them and make notifications as required. Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.2(c)(2) and 800.2(d), Federal agencies have responsibility for direct Native American government-to-government and interested party consultation and it cannot be delegated. As a note, Reclamation's consulting letter was copied to Mr. Andrew Salas, Chairman, Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians-Kizh Nation, Covina, CA.

Reclamation states that no archaeological resources, cultural properties, or properties of historical interest were identified within the APE. Following OHP staff review of the documentation, the following comments are offered.

- Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4(a)(1), there are no objections to the APE as defined;
- Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4(b), Reclamation has documented a reasonable and good faith effort to identify historic properties within the area of potential effects.
- Reclamation has determined that the proposed undertaking will result in no historic properties affected. Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1), **I do not object.**

Please be advised that under certain circumstances, such as unanticipated discovery or a change in project description, Reclamation may have additional future responsibilities for this undertaking under 36 CFR Part 800 (as amended). Should you require further information, please contact Jeanette Schulz at [Jeanette.Schulz@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Jeanette.Schulz@parks.ca.gov) or by her desk phone at (916) 445-7031.

Sincerely,



Julianne Polanco  
State Historic Preservation Officer