



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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SENT VIA E-MAIL:

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Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Murrieta Road Warehouse Project (Proposed Project) (SCH No. 2023110162)

South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) staff appreciate the opportunity to review the above-mentioned document. The City of Menifee is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency for the Proposed Project. To provide context, South Coast AQMD staff has provided a brief summary of the project information and prepared the following comments which are organized by topic of concern.

South Coast AQMD Staff's Summary of Project Information in the Draft EIR

Based on the Draft EIR, the project consists of constructing a 517,720 square foot warehouse, 409 automobile parking spaces, and 192 truck trailer parking spaces on a 28.27 acre site.¹ Based on a review of aerial photographs, South Coast AQMD staff found that the nearest sensitive receptor (e.g., residential development) is located approximately 47 feet north of the Project site.² Construction is expected to begin the first quarter of 2025 and last for 11 months.³ The Proposed Project is located on the northwest corner of McLaughlin Road and Murrieta Road.⁴

South Coast AQMD Staff's Comments

Potential Underestimation of Emissions Due to Inaccurate Assumptions for Truck Trip Lengths and Trip Rates in Emissions Analysis

Upon reviewing the Draft EIR, it was found that the air quality impact analysis was based on the assumption that the average truck trip length is 34.51 miles.⁵ However, the project site is 86.3 to 84.9 miles from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, respectively. Therefore, the air quality analysis underestimated the emissions from trucks traveling from the Ports to the Proposed Project site. For this reason, the Lead Agency is recommended to revise the calculations in the Final EIR by taking a project-specific approach to the vehicle trip length and trip rates. This can be achieved by applying more conservative trip lengths, such as designating 40 miles for local trips and 90 miles for Port-related trips. Tailoring these parameters and

¹ Draft EIR. Page 7.

² *Ibid.* Page 149.

³ *Ibid.* Page 84.

⁴ *Ibid.* Page 7.

⁵ *Ibid.* Page 144.

assumptions based on project-specific data will ensure a more accurate assessment of emissions, accounting for the unique circumstances and logistical realities of the Proposed Project.

Cumulative Impacts during Operation

Based on the Draft EIR, the Proposed Project consists of construction of a 517,720 square foot warehouse on a 28.27 acre site. According to the City of Menifee webpage under Planning – Environmental Documents for Public Review,⁶ other development projects are located near the Proposed Project site. Such as the Draft EIR for the Northern Gateway Logistics Center (prepared in May 2024),⁷ CADO Menifee Industrial Warehouse Project (prepared in March 2024),⁸ McLaughlin and San Jacinto Warehouses Project (prepared March 2023).⁹ Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15065(a)(3), South Coast AQMD staff is primarily concerned with the cumulative air quality impacts from increased concentrations of air toxics in the PVCCSP region. Pursuant to CEQA, which requires an analysis of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, South Coast AQMD has initiated a public process to develop additional guidance for evaluating cumulative air quality impacts from increased concentrations of air toxics for projects. To date, there have been five working group meetings (WGMs) dedicated to proposed cumulative impact policy development. For more general information on the WGMs, please visit South Coast AQMD's webpage.¹⁰

Therefore, South Coast AQMD staff recommends that, at minimum, the Lead Agency perform a qualitative analysis to provide the potential cumulative impacts from air toxics in consideration by listing all surrounding past, present, and probable future projects. The Lead Agency may also perform a more detailed and robust quantitative analysis of cumulative air toxic and potential health risk implications to be included in the Final EIR.

Rule 2305: Warehouse Indirect Source Rule - Warehouse Actions and Investments To Reduce Emissions (WAIRE) Program

On May 7, 2021, South Coast AQMD's Governing Board adopted Rule 2305 – Warehouse Indirect Source Rule – Warehouse Actions and Investments to Reduce Emissions (WAIRE) Program, and Rule 316 – Fees for Rule 2305. Rules 2305 and 316 are new rules that will reduce regional and local emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter (PM), including diesel PM. These emission reductions will reduce public health impacts for communities located near warehouses from mobile sources that are associated with warehouse activities. Also, the emission reductions will help the region attain federal and state ambient air quality standards. Rule 2305 applies to owners and operators of warehouses greater than or equal to 100,000 square feet. Under Rule 2305, operators are subject to an annual WAIRE Points Compliance Obligation that is calculated based on the annual number of truck trips to the warehouse. WAIRE Points can

⁶ City of Menifee. Planning – Environmental Documents. Access at: [Environmental Guidelines and notices | City of Menifee](#).

⁷ [Northern-Gateway-Logistics-Center-DEIR \(cityofmenifee.us\)](#)

⁸ [CADO-Draft-EIR_Public-Review-March-2024 \(cityofmenifee.us\)](#)

⁹ [Notice-of-Preparation-NOP-McLaughlin-and-San-Jacinto-Warehouses \(cityofmenifee.us\)](#)

¹⁰ South Coast AQMD's Cumulative Impacts from Air Toxics for CEQA Projects: [https://www.aqmd.gov/home/rules-compliance/ceqa/ceqa-policy-development-\(new\)](https://www.aqmd.gov/home/rules-compliance/ceqa/ceqa-policy-development-(new)).

be earned by implementing actions in a prescribed menu in Rule 2305, implementing a site-specific custom plan, or paying a mitigation fee. Warehouse owners are only required to submit limited information reports, but they can opt in to earn Points on behalf of their tenants if they so choose because certain actions to reduce emissions may be better achieved at the warehouse development phase, for instance the installation of solar and charging infrastructure. Rule 316 is a companion fee rule for Rule 2305 to allow South Coast AQMD to recover costs associated with Rule 2305 compliance activities. Since the Proposed Project consists of the development of a 643,419 square foot warehouse, the Proposed Project's warehouse owners and operators will be required to comply with Rule 2305 once the warehouse is occupied. Therefore, South Coast AQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency review South Coast AQMD Rule 2305 to determine the potential WAIRE Points Compliance Obligation for future operators and explore whether additional project requirements and CEQA mitigation measures can be identified and implemented at the Proposed Project that may help future warehouse operators meet their compliance obligation¹¹. South Coast AQMD staff is available to answer questions concerning Rule 2305 implementation and compliance by phone or email at (909) 396-3140 or waire-program@aqmd.gov. For implementation guidance documents and compliance and reporting tools, please visit South Coast AQMD's WAIRE Program webpage.¹²

South Coast AQMD Air Permits and Role as a Responsible Agency

If the implementation of the Proposed Project would require the use of new stationary and portable sources, including but not limited to emergency generators, fire water pumps, boilers, spray booths, and etc., air permits from South Coast AQMD will be required and the role of South Coast AQMD would change from a Commenting Agency to a Responsible Agency under CEQA. In addition, if South Coast AQMD is identified as a Responsible Agency, per CEQA Guidelines Sections 15086, the Lead Agency is required to consult with South Coast AQMD. In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15096 sets forth specific procedures for a Responsible Agency, including making a decision on the adequacy of the CEQA document for use as part of evaluating the applications for air permits. For these reasons, the Final EIR should include a discussion about any new stationary and portable equipment requiring South Coast AQMD air permits and identify South Coast AQMD as a Responsible Agency for the Proposed Project.

The Final EIR should also include calculations and analyses for construction and operation emissions for the new stationary and portable sources, as this information will also be relied upon as the basis for the permit conditions and emission limits for the air permit(s). Please contact South Coast AQMD's Engineering and Permitting staff at (909) 396-3385 for questions regarding what types of equipment would require air permits. For more general information on permits, please visit South Coast AQMD's webpage at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/permits>.

Conclusion

As set forth in California Public Resources Code Section 21092.5(a) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(a-b), the Lead Agency shall evaluate comments from public agencies on the

¹¹ South Coast AQMD Rule 2305 – Warehouse Indirect Source Rule – Warehouse Actions and Investments to Reduce Emissions (WAIRE) Program. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xxiii/r2305.pdf>.

¹² South Coast AQMD WAIRE Program. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/waire>.

environmental issues and prepare a written response at least 10 days prior to certifying the Final EIR. As such, please provide South Coast AQMD written responses to all comments contained herein at least 10 days prior to the certification of the Final EIR. In addition, as provided by CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(c), if the Lead Agency's position is at variance with recommendations provided in this comment letter, detailed reasons supported by substantial evidence in the record to explain why specific comments and suggestions are not accepted must be provided.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. South Coast AQMD staff is available to work with the Lead Agency to address any air quality questions that may arise from this comment letter. Please contact Sahar Ghadimi, Air Quality Specialist, at sghadimi@aqmd.gov should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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Planning, Rule Development & Implementation

SW:SG

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