

CHROMIUM-6 WATER

TREATMENT FACILITIES PROJECT

State Clearinghouse No. 2015071022



FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT JUNE 2016



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1.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE FINAL EIR

1.1 Introduction

The Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) consists of the Draft EIR, comments received during the public comment period, responses to those comments, and errata to the Draft EIR. The Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) has prepared this EIR to evaluate the potential environmental impacts related to the Chromium-6 Water Treatment Facilities Project (Project). CVWD is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Project.

The EIR has been prepared in accordance with CEQA (as amended) (Public Resources Code §§21000-21189.3) and the 2016 State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, §§15000-15387). Under State CEQA Guidelines §15121 (Informational Document):

- a) *An EIR is an informational document which will inform public agency decision makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effect of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. The public agency shall consider the information in the EIR along with other information which may be presented to the agency.*
- b) *While the information in the EIR does not control the agency's ultimate discretion on the project, the agency must respond to each significant effect identified in the EIR by making findings under Section 15091 and if necessary by making a statement of overriding consideration under Section 15093.*
- c) *The information in an EIR may constitute substantial evidence in the record to support the agency's action on the project if its decision is later challenged in court.*

According to State CEQA Guidelines §15089 Final Environmental Impact Report:

- a) *The Lead Agency shall prepare a Final EIR before approving the project. The contents of a Final EIR are specified in Section 15132 of these Guidelines.*
- b) *Lead Agencies may provide an opportunity for review of the Final EIR by the public or by commenting agencies before approving the project. The review of a Final EIR should focus on the responses to comments on the Draft EIR.*

1.2 Organization of the Final EIR

As directed by State CEQA Guidelines §15132, the Final EIR consists of three sections presented in one volume:

Section 1 – Introduction. This chapter provides an introduction and summarizes CEQA requirements for preparation of responses to substantive public comments on the Draft EIR.

Section 2 – Response to Comments. This chapter includes comments received during the public comment period and CVWD’s response to each comment. Master Responses are used to address issues that were frequently cited in the comments on the Draft EIR.

Chapter 3 – Errata to the Draft EIR. Minor revisions to the Draft EIR are identified for clarification, to correct typographical errors or internal inconsistencies within the document. Replacement pages represent the edits to the Draft EIR by the Lead Agency. The pages have been designed for the reader to insert the Replacement pages into the Draft EIR, making the revised Draft EIR a stand-alone document. Replacement pages are formatted in revision fashion: strikeouts indicate deleted text and underlines indicate additional text.

1.3 Draft EIR Public Review Period

The public comment period for the Draft EIR began on April 15, 2016 with the distribution of the Draft EIR by CVWD to public agencies, nearby property owners, and individuals who had expressed an interest. In addition, a notice was published in the Desert Sun, Imperial Valley Press, and La Prensa Hispana newspapers. Copies of the Draft EIR were also made available at the following locations:

CVWD Palm Desert office	CVWD Coachella office
La Quinta Public Library	Indio Library
Desert Hot Springs Public Library	Rancho Mirage Public Library
Brawley Public Library	Coachella Public Library
Palm Desert Public Library	

CVWD circulated the Notice of Completion/Notice of Availability and included a CD-copy of the Draft EIR to various federal, state and local agencies; California State Clearinghouse; Riverside County Clerk; nearby property owners; individuals; and interest groups. Copies of the Draft EIR were also made available at the Coachella Valley Water District’s Palm Desert and Coachella offices, and on-line at CVWD’s website: www.cvwd.org.

On May 19, 2016, a public meeting was held at the CVWD office in Palm Desert regarding the Draft EIR. CVWD noticed the public meeting on the CVWD website and in 3 newspapers: the Desert Sun, Imperial Valley Press, and La Prensa Hispana. A sign-up sheet was used to record attendees. Attendees were handed a comment card and a speaker card. A professional court recorder recorded the entire meeting including the CVWD presentation and oral comments.

The public comment period closed on May 31, 2016. During the 45-day public review period, CVWD received a total of 157 comments, including 143 from individuals. Also, 8 members of the public presented oral comments during the May 19th public meeting. Comments on the Draft EIR, including emails and oral comments received at the public meeting were assigned a number. The comment letters and oral comments received from individuals, agencies, and organizations are provided in Section 2.0 Response to Comments, Table 2-1.

1.4 Certification and Project Selection Process

CVWD' Board of Directors (CVWD Board) will hold a public meeting on June 28, 2016, in the Board Room at the Coachella Valley Water District- Coachella Office, located at 51-501 Tyler Street, Coachella, CA 92236 to consider certification of the Final EIR.

In order to certify the Final EIR, the CVWD Board must find that:

- a) The Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA;
- b) The Final EIR was presented to the decision-making body of the lead agency and that the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR prior to approving the Project; and
- c) The Final EIR reflects the Lead Agency's independent judgment and analysis. (State CEQA Guidelines §15090a).

If the CVWD Board of Directors certifies the Final EIR, it would then consider Project approval.

1.5 Consideration of Recirculation

If significant new information is added to an EIR after public review, the lead agency is required to recirculate the revised document (CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5). "Significant new information" includes, for example, a new significant environmental impact or a substantial increase in the severity of an impact. New information is not considered significant unless the document is changed in a way that deprives the public of a meaningful opportunity to comment upon a substantial adverse environmental effect of the project or a feasible way to mitigate or avoid such an effect that the proponent has declined to implement.

Under the standard found in CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5, no significant new information has been added to the EIR after public notice was given of the availability of the Draft EIR for public review. Therefore, CEQA does not require recirculation of the Draft EIR.