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# I. INTRODUCTION

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## A. PURPOSE OF THE EIR

The subject of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) is the Dutra Haystack Landing Asphalt and Recycling Facility (proposed project). The project consists of construction and operation of an asphalt batch plant, an asphalt recycling area, and an aggregate materials off-loading, storage and distribution facility for Dutra Materials (aka The Dutra Group). The proposal includes the construction and operation of new dock facilities within and adjacent to the Petaluma River for the receipt of barged aggregate materials, a conveyor and distribution system, stockpiled aggregate materials, sand and recycled asphalt and concrete, an asphalt mixing and loading facility, a portable asphalt and concrete recycling plant, and related office with truck scale. The project also involves construction and operation of a fire station facility for vehicle storage and training for the San Antonio Volunteer Fire Department.

The lead agency for this project is the County of Sonoma, Permit and Resource Management Department, located at 2550 Ventura Ave., Santa Rosa, California, 95403-2829. A detailed description of the proposed project is contained in Section III (Project Description) of this report.

Because the proposed project would require discretionary approvals by the County of Sonoma and other governmental agencies, the proposed project is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Based on the preparation of a detailed Initial Study (Appendix A), it was determined that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment and that an EIR should be prepared pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines.

The County has commissioned this EIR on the Dutra Haystack Landing Asphalt and Recycling Facility for the following purposes:

- To satisfy CEQA requirements;
- To inform the general public, the local community, and responsible, trustee, and state and federal agencies of the nature of the proposed project, its potentially significant environmental effects, feasible mitigation measures to mitigate those effects, and its reasonable and feasible alternatives;
- To enable the County to consider the environmental consequences of the proposed project;
- To provide a basis for preparation of any future environmental documents;
- For consideration by responsible agencies in issuing permits and approvals for the proposed project.

As described in CEQA and the *CEQA Guidelines*, public agencies are charged with the duty to avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental impacts, where feasible. Where impacts cannot be mitigated to less-than-significant levels, public agencies have an obligation to balance the project's significant impacts on the environment with other conditions, including economic, social, technological, legal and other benefits. This Draft EIR is an informational document, the purpose of which is to identify the potentially significant impacts of the proposed project on the environment and to indicate the manner in which those significant impacts can be avoided or significantly lessened; to identify any significant and unavoidable adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated; and to identify reasonable and feasible alternatives to the proposed project that

would eliminate any significant adverse environmental impacts or reduce the impacts to a less-than-significant level.

The lead agency is required to consider the information in the EIR, along with any other relevant information, in making its decision on the proposed project. Although the EIR does not determine the ultimate decision that will be made regarding implementation of the project, CEQA requires the County to consider the information in the EIR and make findings regarding each significant effect in the EIR.

The County must certify the EIR prior to approving the proposed project. Once certified, the EIR will serve as the base environmental document for the County and will be used as a basis for decisions on implementation of the proposed project. Other agencies may also use this EIR in their review and approval process.

This Draft EIR was prepared in accordance with Section 15151 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, which defines the standards for EIR adequacy:

*"An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR would summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection; but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure."*

## **B. PROJECT BACKGROUND**

The proposed project application was filed with Sonoma County on April 28, 2004. The project would construct and operate an asphalt producing and recycling facility on a vacant 38-acre site adjacent to Highway 101 and Petaluma River, in the southwestern portion of Sonoma County, approximately 35 miles north of San Francisco. The site had a number of older barns and a historic farmhouse built in 1860 that had been relocated to this site, which were removed or destroyed by fire in the Fall of 2004. Historically, the site was a shipping center and stopping point for people and products going between Petaluma and San Francisco. Between 1968 and 1990, the southeasterly portion of the property was used by American Rock and its successor, Dutra Materials, for settling ponds from their quarry operations. Most of the pre-existing trees on the site were removed based on aerial data.

From September 12, 2005 to September 19, 2005, unauthorized grading and equipment storage occurred on the project site. Other activities that occurred without permits include bringing in fill, installation of erosion control measures and crushed rock. The heavy equipment stored at the site was removed as part of a County Code Enforcement action on December 20, 2005.

Subsequent site inspections were completed by the applicant's biologist in conjunction with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). Based on these inspections, it was determined that the unauthorized actions resulted in impacts to approximately 0.53 acres of seasonal wetland and 0.01 acre of coastal marsh habitat subject to Corps and San Francisco Regional Water Quality Board (RWQCB) jurisdiction; pursuant to Sections 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act,

respectively. The Haystack Wetlands Mitigation Plan (available in Appendix E) will be reviewed by Corps and RWQCB and other applicable agencies to determine if the proposed mitigation will compensate for the unauthorized wetland fill in addition to the impacts that would result from the proposed project.

The project, as originally proposed in 2004, included 400 barge trips per year, and 880,000 tons of asphalt produced annually, based on the proposed facility's production capability of 400 tons per hour. Many of the applicant's technical reports available in the Appendices support this proposed volume. However, as evidenced by the correspondence included in Appendix D (Air Quality), in order to meet air quality emission standards for the Bay Area, the project reduced expected asphalt production to 225,000 tons, and barge trips to 125 trips per year. The environmental analysis in this EIR has been conducted for these new levels.

### **C. EIR REVIEW PROCESS**

#### **Notice of Preparation**

Responses from identified responsible and trustee agencies, as well as interested parties on the scope of the EIR, were solicited through a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the EIR process. The NOP for the EIR was posted and circulated for a 30-day review period starting on February 17, 2006. A public scoping meeting was also held on Monday, February 27, 2006 at the Petaluma Community Center; to solicit input from agencies, individuals, and organizations. Copies of the NOP and the Initial Study are included in Appendix A. Responses to the NOP and the public scoping meeting are included in Appendix B.

#### **Environmental Review Process**

The Draft EIR will be circulated for review and comment by the public and other interested parties, agencies, and organizations for 45 days. During the public review period, the County will hold a noticed public hearing before the County Planning Commission, to allow the Commission and interested parties and agencies to voice their opinions regarding the proposed project. Notice of the time and location will be published prior to the public hearing. All written comments or questions about the Draft EIR should be addressed to:

Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Dept. (PRMD)

ATTN: Steve Dee, AICP, Senior Environmental Specialist

2550 Ventura Avenue

Santa Rosa, CA 95403

707/565-8350

707/565-8358 (fax)

[sdee@sonoma-county.org](mailto:sdee@sonoma-county.org)

Any questions regarding the proposed project itself should be directed to Steve Padovan at 707/565-1352 or [spadovan@sonoma-county.org](mailto:spadovan@sonoma-county.org).

#### **Project Approvals**

Following the close of the public and agency comment period, the County will respond to all written comments received regarding the project's environmental impacts in the Final EIR. The Final EIR will be prepared as a separate document from the Draft EIR, and will be considered by the County at a public

meeting(s) and certified if it complies with *CEQA Guidelines*. Upon certification of the EIR, the County will consider the merits of the proposed project for approval.

### **CEQA Findings and Mitigation Monitoring**

CEQA requires that when a public agency makes findings based on an EIR, it must adopt a reporting or monitoring program for those measures that it has adopted or made a condition of project approval to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. Findings are the document that makes the connection between the analysis in the environmental document and the decision by the decision makers. The reporting or monitoring program must be designed to ensure compliance during project implementation. The mitigation monitoring program (MMP) for the EIR will be prepared at the time the Final EIR is prepared.

### **D. LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

This EIR uses a variety of terms to describe the levels of significance of adverse impacts identified during the course of the environmental analysis. The following are definitions of terms used in this EIR:

- **Less-than-significant impact:** Adverse impacts that do not exceed the specified standards of significance.
- **Potentially significant impact:** Impacts that are equivalent to significant impacts and require the identification of feasible mitigation measures. Potentially significant impacts may also be impacts about which there is not enough information to draw a final conclusion; therefore, for the purpose of the EIR, they are considered significant.
- **Significant impact:** Impacts that exceed the defined standards (thresholds) of significance and that can be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of feasible mitigation measures.
- **Significant and unavoidable impact:** Impacts that exceed the defined standards (thresholds) of significance and that cannot be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of feasible mitigation measures.

### **E. ORGANIZATION OF THE DRAFT EIR**

This Draft EIR is organized into ten sections as follows:

Section I (Introduction): This section provides an introduction and a description of the intended uses of the EIR and the review and certification process.

Section II (Summary): This section includes a summary of the project description, environmental impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed project, proposed mitigation measures, and the level of significance of the impact before and after mitigation.

Section III (Project Description): This section presents a complete description of the proposed project including location, characteristics, and objectives. This section also provides an overview of the study area's environmental setting including a description of existing and surrounding land uses, and history and background of the project site and a discussion of related projects to be analyzed in the EIR.

Section IV (Summary of the Initial Study): This section summarizes the results of the Initial Study and notes the components of the project that would not result with any environmental impacts, the environmental issue

areas that would have a less-than-significant impact with the implementation of mitigation measures, and the environmental issue areas that would have potentially significant environmental impacts and will require further analysis in this Draft EIR.

Section V (Environmental Impact Analysis): The Environmental Impact Analysis section is the primary focus of this Draft EIR. Each environmental issue contains a discussion of existing conditions for the project site, an evaluation and discussion of the significance of impacts associated with the proposed project, proposed mitigation measures, cumulative impacts, and level of impact significance after mitigation.

Section VI (General Impact Categories): This section provides a discussion of the potential growth inducement of the proposed project as well as a summary of any significant unavoidable impacts associated with the proposed project.

Section VII (Alternatives to the Proposed Project): This section includes an analysis of a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project to provide informed decision making in accordance with Section 15126(f) of the *CEQA Guidelines*. The range of alternatives selected is based on their ability to feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project and avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project.

Section VIII (Preparers of the EIR and Persons Consulted): This section presents a list of lead agency, other agencies and consultant team members that contributed to the preparation of the Draft EIR. This section also identifies persons consulted during preparation of the Draft EIR.

Section IX (References Cited): This section presents a list of all references cited in the Draft EIR.

Section X (Abbreviations and Acronyms): This section includes a definition of all abbreviations and acronyms used in the Draft EIR.