

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4
OFFICE OF REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
P.O. BOX 23660, MS-10D | OAKLAND, CA 94623-0660
www.dot.ca.gov



April 9, 2026

SCH #: 2023020346
GTS #: 04-SCL-2023-01495
GTS ID: 28949
Co/Rt/Pm: SCL/280/19.35

Steve Rothert, Manager of the Division of Multibenefit Initiatives
California Department of Water Resources
P.O Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

Re: Searsville Watershed Restoration Project – Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Steve Rothert:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Searsville Watershed Restoration Project. The Local Development Review (LDR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with our mission and state planning priorities. The following comments are based on our review of the updated March 2026 NOP.

Please note this correspondence does not indicate an official position or approval by Caltrans on this project and is for informational purposes only.

Project Understanding

The proposed project involves reestablishing sediment transport processes and fish passage conditions past Searsville Dam, restoring stream and riparian habitats above the dam, removing a substantial amount of sediment trapped behind the dam, relocating the Searsville Reservoir water diversion downstream to the Pump Station, expanding the Pump Station's capacity, and relocating historic non-potable water supply and storage from Searsville Reservoir to an expanded Felt Reservoir and new Felt Dam, to enhance water supply reliability during drought and other emergency conditions and improve public safety. Additionally, the project has been updated to include construction of a detention basin downstream of Searsville Dam to attenuate peak flows. The project area is adjacent to segments of Interstate 280 (I-280) and State Route (SR) 82, and may also impact the U.S. Route 101 (U.S. 101) bridge crossing over San Francisquito Creek.

Steve Rothert, Manager of the Division of Multibenefit Initiatives
April 9, 2026
Page 2

Climate Change/Sea Level Rise

In response to the February 2023 NOP, Caltrans provided a comment regarding sediment management and potential impacts to the U.S. 101 bridge crossing over San Francisquito Creek and the sensitive habitats around U.S. 101. The updated NOP acknowledges that comments provided previously during 2023 NOP will be considered and do not need to be resubmitted.

Additionally, the I-280 bridge crossing over San Francisquito Creek may be affected by changes in water levels, particularly during heavy precipitation events. Caltrans is also interested in how the project will influence the creek ecologically, including potential improvements to habitat function, water quality and levels, and public access, further downstream beyond the San Francisquito Creek Pumping Station. Please also consider looping in the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority (SFCJPA), if they are not already involved, given that the SFCJPA helps address flood risk from the creek.

Please reach out to the Climate Change Branch at D4_ClimateResilience@dot.ca.gov for any questions or concerns.

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Luana Chen, Associate Transportation Planner, via LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov. For future early coordination opportunities or project referrals, please visit Caltrans LDR website ([link](#)) or contact LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



YUNSHENG LUO
Branch Chief, Local Development Review
Office of Regional and Community Planning

c: State Clearinghouse