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CITY OF RIO VISTA
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July 27, 2023

Lori Price
Division of Multi-Benefit Initiatives
California State Department of Water Resources
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

Via email

Re: Little Egbert Multi-Benefit Project Notice of Preparation (NOP)

Dear Ms. Price:

On behalf of the City of Rio Vista (City) the following comments are provided in response to the Little Egbert Multi-Benefit Project Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) issued by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) on June 13, 2023. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

The proposed Little Egbert Slough Multi-Benefit Project (Project) proposes a 3,000+ acre project located immediately north of the City of Rio Vista. The City appreciates efforts to increase recreation and tourism.

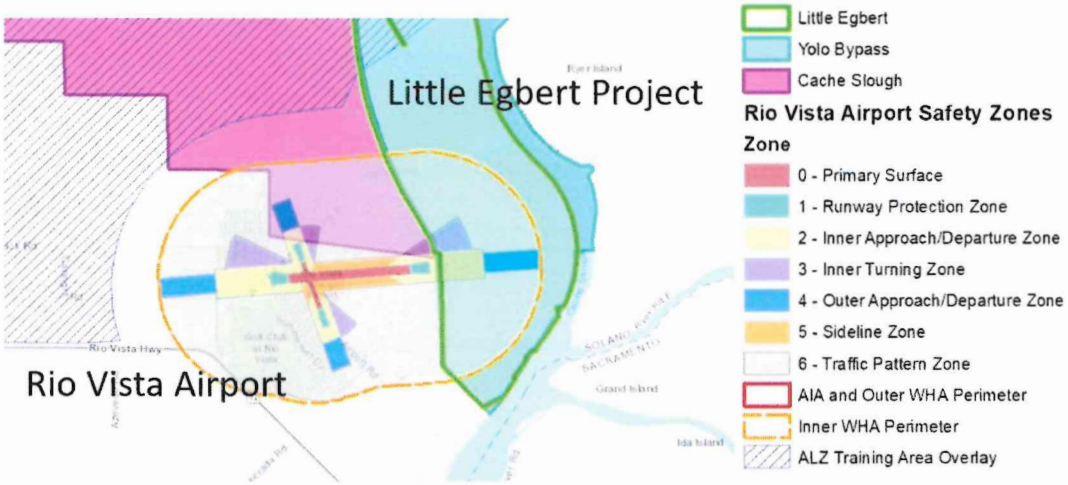
Given the proximity of the Project to the City, we request that the potential impacts of the following items be studied in the project EIR:

1. Understanding the importance of levee infrastructure to the safety of Rio Vista residents, it is critical the Mellin Levy be improved to stand up to a 200-year flood threat, as proposed by the California Department of Water Resources financed Rio Vista Flood Wall Feasibility Study.

2. The Wildlife Hazard Assessment (WHA) appears to conclude the expansion of permanent wetlands directly adjacent to the Rio Vista Municipal Airport will not result in increased bird strike hazards. This seems to conflict with our experience in the winter of 2022-23. During this very wet winter open water accumulated near the airport as well as at the landscape level across the region. During this period of inundation, the Rio Vista Airport experienced significant increases in bird presence, requiring efforts to disperse birds and impacting Airport operations. This recent experience appears to contradict the WHA and the City requests the potential for increased bird strike at the Rio Vista Airport resulting from the Project be studied in greater detail.

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3. The project proposes wetland restoration directly adjacent to the Rio Vista Municipal Airport. As depicted in the following exhibit, the Project site includes land designated Zone 2: Inner Approach/Departure Zone, Zone 3: Inner Turning Zone and Zone 4: Outer Approach/Departure Zone by the Rio Vista Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. These designations reflect the sensitivity of lands that the Project proposes for wetlands restoration. Please ensure the EIR fully and accurately describes the potential impacts to aircraft safety and operations of the Rio Vista Municipal Airport and identifies mitigation measures that will minimize the significance of these impacts.



4. The City of Rio Vista discharges stormwater flows in open channels that traverse the proposed Project area. The City requests the hydrologic impacts of the Project on existing drainage flows from the City be studied to determine the potential impacts of increased localized flooding in the City be evaluated and mitigated as may be determined necessary. Please also include modeling for sea level rise and winter storms of increasing severity that result from global warming as well as the coincidental impacts of high tide events.

5. Shallow wetlands with slow moving or stationary water have the potential to increase populations of mosquitos and other vectors. Please evaluate the risk of increased disease transmission that may result from larger vector populations within the restored wetlands.

6. The project description indicates the project proposes recreational opportunities. The City requests the specific features of public access and recreation be identified and analyzed in the project EIR.

The City appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments and work collaboratively with DWR on this significant project.

Respectfully,

Ronald Kott

Mayor Ronald Kott