

Encinitas Union School District

PAUL ECKE CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REBUILD PROJECT

May 2026 | Final Environmental Impact Report

State Clearinghouse No. 2025100767



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Encinitas Union School District

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as amended (Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq.), and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Sections 15000 et seq.).

According to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15132, the Final EIR shall consist of:

- (a) The draft EIR or a revision of the draft.
- (b) Comments and recommendations received on the draft EIR either verbatim or in summary.
- (c) A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies comments on the draft EIR.
- (d) The responses of the Lead Agency to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process.
- (e) Any other information added by the lead agency.

This document contains responses to comments received on the Draft EIR for the Paul Ecke Central Elementary School Rebuild Project during the public review period, which began February 13, 2026, and closed March 30, 2026. This document has been prepared in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines and represents the independent judgment of the Encinitas Union School District. This document and the circulated Draft EIR comprise the Final EIR, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15132.

1.1 FINAL EIR ORGANIZATION

Chapter 1, Introduction. This chapter describes CEQA requirements and the content of this Final EIR.

Chapter 2, Response to Comments. This chapter provides a list of individuals commenting on the Draft EIR; comments received during the public review period; and responses to comments.

Chapter 3, Revisions to the Draft EIR. This chapter contains revisions to the Draft EIR as a result of the comments received by interested persons, as described in Section 2, and/or errors and omissions discovered subsequent to release of the Draft EIR for public review.

Encinitas Union School District staff has reviewed this material and determined that none of this material constitutes the type of significant new information that requires recirculation of the

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Draft EIR for further public comment under CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5. None of this new material indicates that the project will result in a significant new environmental impact not previously disclosed in the Draft EIR. Additionally, none of this material indicates that there would be a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified environmental impact that will not be mitigated, or that there would be any of the other circumstances requiring recirculation described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5.

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

1.2.1 Notice of Preparation

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15084, the Encinitas Union School District (EUSD or District) determined that an EIR would be appropriate for the project and circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP). The public review period for the NOP was from October 22, 2025, to November 20, 2025, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082. Additionally, a public scoping meeting was held at the Paul Ecke Central Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room on November 5, 2025, to present the proposed project, describe the EIR process, and receive public comments. Public notification to prepare the Draft EIR was satisfied by sending the NOP to responsible and trustee agencies, the State Clearinghouse, and other interested parties to solicit input on the scope and content of the EIR.

Additionally, copies of the NOP were made available for review at the following locations:

- Paul Ecke Central Elementary School, Front Office: 185 Union Street, Encinitas, CA 92024
- Encinitas Union School District, Front Office: 101 South Rancho Santa Fe Road, Encinitas, CA 92024
- Encinitas Union School District website:
<https://www.eusd.net/departments/businessservices/facilities-safety>
- The NOP was also sent via email to parents and staff of Paul Ecke Central Elementary School

1.2.2 Draft Environmental Impact Report

Following the NOP, a Draft EIR was prepared in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15084 and the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Article 9. As the Lead Agency under CEQA Guidelines Section 21067, the District is required to evaluate and consider environmental consequences of a proposed project before approving projects within its discretionary authority. In compliance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15126.2 and 15126.4, the Draft EIR identified potentially significant adverse impacts to air quality, cultural and

1. INTRODUCTION

paleontological resources (archaeological and paleontological resources), hazards and hazardous materials, noise, and tribal cultural resources and proposed mitigation measures to reduce those impacts to less-than-significant levels.

Impacts to cultural and paleontological resources (historic resources) were found to be significant and unavoidable. All other topics analyzed in the Draft EIR would result in impacts that are considered less than significant under CEQA, or would result in no environmental impact.

Furthermore, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a), the District analyzed a range of reasonable project alternatives and locations that could feasibly achieve the project's basic objectives while avoiding or substantially lessening significant environmental effects, and evaluated the comparative merits of those alternatives.

1.2.3 Notice of Availability

Following the completion of the Draft EIR, the District issued a Notice of Availability (NOA) on February 13, 2026, in compliance with Public Resources Code Section 21092 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15087, to notify the public and federal, State, and local agencies that the Draft EIR was available for public comment for 45 days, between February 13, 2026, and March 30, 2026. Public notification of the Draft EIR included distribution of the NOA to responsible and trustee agencies and other interested parties, submission of the Draft EIR to the State Clearinghouse for review, and posting of the NOA in accordance with CEQA.

The Draft EIR and NOA for the proposed project were available for public review at:

- Paul Ecke Central Elementary School, Front Office: 185 Union Street, Encinitas, CA 92024
- Encinitas Union School District, Front Office: 101 South Rancho Santa Fe Road, Encinitas, CA 92024
- Encinitas Union School District website: <https://www.eusd.net/our-district/measurez/paul-ecke-central-rebuild-project>
- The NOA was sent to parents and staff of Paul Ecke Central Elementary School via email

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2. RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

Section 15088 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines requires the lead agency to evaluate comments on environmental issues received from public agencies and interested parties who reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and to prepare written responses.

This chapter provides all comments received on the Draft EIR and the lead agency's responses to each comment. Comment letters and specific comments are given letters and numbers for reference purposes.

2.1 LIST OF COMMENTERS

Table 2-1, *List of Commenters*, lists the individuals that provided comments on the Draft EIR during the public review period.

Table 2-1 List of Commenters

Number Reference	Commenter	Date of Comment
Individuals		
11	Jessica Dacher	March 3, 2026

2.2 CEQA REQUIREMENTS REGARDING COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

CEQA Guidelines Section 15204(a) outlines parameters for submitting comments and reminds persons and public agencies that the focus of review of and comment on Draft EIRs should be

. . . on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing possible impacts on the environment and ways in which significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated. Comments are most helpful when they suggest additional specific alternatives or mitigation measures that would provide better ways to avoid or mitigate the significant environmental effects. At the same time, reviewers should be aware that the adequacy of an EIR is determined in terms of what is reasonably feasible. . . . CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or

2. RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

demanded by commenters. When responding to comments, lead agencies need only respond to significant environmental issues and do not need to provide all information requested by reviewers, as long as a good faith effort at full disclosure is made in the EIR.

The CEQA Guidelines further advises:

Reviewers should explain the basis for their comments, and should submit data or references offering facts, reasonable assumptions based on facts, or expert opinion supported by facts in support of the comments. Pursuant to Section 15064, an effect shall not be considered significant in the absence of substantial evidence. (sec. 15204[c]).

Each responsible agency and trustee agency shall focus its comments on environmental information germane to that agency's statutory responsibility. (sec. 15204[d]).

This section shall not be used to restrict the ability of reviewers to comment on the general adequacy of a document or of the lead agency to reject comments not focused as recommended by this section. (sec. 15204[e]).

In accordance with CEQA, Public Resources Code Section 21092.5, copies of the written responses to public agencies will be provided to those agencies at least 10 days prior to certifying the EIR.

2.3 COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

This section includes a reproduction of and response to each comment received during the public review period for the Draft EIR. Comments are presented in their original form in Appendix A, *Public Review Period Comment Letters*, and annotated to identify each comment number.

Responses to individual comments are provided in this chapter following the text of each corresponding comment. Comments are arranged by category, date received, and name. Categories and their corresponding abbreviations are:

- Individuals (I)

2.3.1 Comments from Individuals

I1. Jessica Dacher, March 3, 2026

Comment I1-1

Hi Eric,

I hope this message finds you well.

I wanted to connect with you on the PEC construction before grading starts in May. I am concerned about the ground squirrel colony beneath the current PEC garden, particularly as baby season is ramping up. We often see ground-dwelling animals admitted to Project Wildlife (PW) at San Diego Humane Society due to construction and landscaping projects.

I understand that displacing the colony is inevitable; however, if the area can be made as unfriendly as possible with increased noise and activity from the west before grading, it will hopefully encourage the squirrels to relocate safely to the east side of PEC. I also suggest having crew members gently hand-excavate the area before machinery is used. Doing this could minimize potential encounters between the squirrels and the equipment. If any squirrels inadvertently come into contact with machinery they should be transported to PW on Gaines Street right away, rather than waiting to see if a parent picks up a baby or runs away on its own. If there's any question about an animal's health, it should be brought into PW for care.

I can be on-site when grading commences in that area, or available as needed to assist and transport any animals that need help. I appreciate collaborating with you to ensure the best possible outcome.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I look forward to your thoughts.

Response I1-1

As indicated in Section 5.1.2, *Biological Resources*, in Chapter 5, *Other CEQA Considerations*, of the Draft EIR, the project site and surrounding area are urbanized and heavily disturbed with developed uses that are subject to regular human activity. As such, the potential for impacts to ground-dwelling species, if present, would be low. Construction contractors would be required to implement best management practices to reduce harm to wildlife during construction activities. In addition, early construction related noise and activity, including demolition of the existing school campus facilities, would generally discourage wildlife from occupying the site during construction, allowing animals to relocate to adjacent suitable habitat areas, such as nearby open space. This comment letter does not raise issues regarding the adequacy of the

2. RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

Draft EIR, and it will be provided to the District for its consideration as part of the project review and approval process. No revisions to the Draft EIR are necessary.

3. REVISIONS TO THE DRAFT EIR

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section contains revisions to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in response to comments from agencies, organizations, and the public, as well as staff-directed changes. These text revisions include typographical corrections, insignificant modifications, and amplifications and clarifications of the Draft EIR. For each revision, the Draft EIR page and location on the page are identified, followed by the textual, tabular, or graphical revision.

Double underlined text represents language that has been added to the EIR; text with ~~striketrough~~ represents language that has been deleted from the Draft EIR. None of the revisions to the Draft EIR constitute significant new information, as defined in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15088.5; therefore, the Draft EIR does not need to be recirculated.

3.2 DRAFT EIR REVISIONS

Revisions to the Draft EIR

Table 2-2, *Actions Required*, in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, of the Draft EIR, was revised to fix a typographical error clarifying the appropriate responsible agency for the Coastal Development Permit.

Table 2-2 Actions Required

Lead Agency	Action
Encinitas Union School District	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Certification of the EIR▪ Adoption of the Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations▪ Adoption of the Mitigated Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP)▪ Approval of the proposed project
Responsible Agencies	Action
Department of General Services, Division of State Architect (DSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Review and approval of construction drawings and proposed project<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The District is potentially seeking state modernization funding and intends to submit plans to DSA by the end of 2025

3. REVISIONS TO THE DRAFT EIR

Table 2-2 Actions Required

California Coastal Commission <u>City of Encinitas</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Review and approval of the proposed project's <u>Coastal Development Permit</u>
State Water Resources Control Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Review of Notice of Intent to obtain permit coverage▪ Issuance of General Permit for discharges of stormwater associated with construction activity▪ Review of Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Issuance of a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit and Clean Water Act 401 Water Quality Certification
San Dieguito Water District	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Addition of new water, wastewater, and fire hydrant connections

APPENDIX A: Comment Letter



From: [Jessica Dacher](#)
To: [Eric Smith](#)
Cc: [Jill Van Sickle](#)
Subject: PEC construction
Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2026 12:05:34 PM

Hi Eric,

I hope this message finds you well.

I wanted to connect with you on the PEC construction before grading starts in May. I am concerned about the ground squirrel colony beneath the current PEC garden, particularly as baby season is ramping up. We often see ground-dwelling animals admitted to Project Wildlife (PW) at San Diego Humane Society due to construction and landscaping projects.

I understand that displacing the colony is inevitable; however, if the area can be made as unfriendly as possible with increased noise and activity from the west before grading, it will hopefully encourage the squirrels to relocate safely to the east side of PEC. I also suggest having crew members gently hand-excavate the area before machinery is used. Doing this could minimize potential encounters between the squirrels and the equipment. If any squirrels inadvertently come into contact with machinery they should be transported to PW on Gaines Street right away, rather than waiting to see if a parent picks up a baby or runs away on its own. If there's any question about an animal's health, it should be brought into PW for care.

I can be on-site when grading commences in that area, or available as needed to assist and transport any animals that need help. I appreciate collaborating with you to ensure the best possible outcome.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I look forward to your thoughts.

Best Wishes,
Jessie
PDL parent/PW Volunteer

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