State Water Resources Control Board

August 18, 2026

Ms. Candice Hughes
Riverside County
4080 Lemon Street, 12th floor
Riverside, CA 92501

RIVERSIDE COUNTY (LEAD AGENY), ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) FOR THE CABAZON INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN AND CABAZON COMMUNITY PLAN PROJECT [GPA NO 01206 AND ZR6234] (PROJECT), STATE CLEARINGHOUSE # 2026030377

Dear Ms. Candice Hughes:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the EIR for the proposed Project. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), Division of Drinking Water (DDW), issues domestic water supply permits under the Safe Drinking Water Act. This Project falls under the jurisdiction of DDW's Riverside District. The Riverside District issues permit amendments according to the Title 22, California Code of Regulations (Cal. Code Regs.), chapter 16. Public water systems need a permit amendment for modification of the water supply, including new sources, new reservoirs with 100,000-gallon capacity or greater, service area expansions of twenty percent or more, and treatment design capacity or process changes as per Cal. Code Regs. § 64556. The Cabazon Water District needs to apply for a water supply permit amendment for three new drinking water sources and six new reservoirs.

The State Water Board, DDW, as a responsible agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has the following comments on the EIR:

- Under Section 2.4.2, when discussing the Cabazon Infrastructure Overview Plan and in Section 3.15.2, under “State Water Resources Control Board”, please indicate the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water is a responsible agency for approving domestic water supply permit amendments for the planned domestic groundwater wells and reservoirs.
- In the Biological Resources section, Impact 3.3-3, it is unclear if the intention is to make significance determinations based on mapped biological sensitivity zones. If this is the intention, significant impacts to wetlands in low biological resource sensitivity zones cannot be ruled out without ground truthing whether wetlands exist in these areas.

  - Please clarify that impacts to all state and federally protected wetlands could be potentially significant (PDF page 234), including in low biological resource sensitivity zones, if wetlands exist in these areas and regulatory requirements are not followed.
  - Please add language to the BIO-8 Mitigation Measure to ensure that the actions required in the mitigation will also be implemented for wetlands discovered through ground truthing in low biological resource sensitivity zones.
- Cal. Code Regs. § 64572 and Cal. Code Regs. § 64560 requires separation of drinking water service lines and domestic supply wells from sources of potential contamination. One of the proposed wells appears to be in proximity to Superfund sites (Figure 3.8-2, PDF page 417) (Figure 2-5). Evaluate whether these Superfund sites may have led to contamination of the local groundwater aquifer and outline the steps that will be taken to assess this possibility. Additionally, consider selecting alternative well site locations or water treatment infrastructure if it is found that the groundwater has been impacted by contamination.
- The EIR includes a mitigation measure that requires the completion of a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment at two existing Superfund sites (HAZ-1) and if Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) are identified, the Hazardous Materials Specialist would identify remedial activities. This mitigation measure fails to require cleanup to occur, based on the REC's recommendations. Please add a requirement to the mitigation measure that will ensure clean up prior to use of the contaminated area.
- The EIR states that the amount of water available may not meet water systems' demands (PDF page 609). Please clarify the amount of additional water that will be required and whether the increased demand can be addressed through the proposed water conservation measures, State Water Project allocations, and the recharge policies.
- Please clarify if the Project's increased water demand will conflict with or obstruct implementation of the sustainable management plan.

Once the CEQA process is completed, please forward the following items in support of Cabazon Water District's permit application to the State Water Board, DDW Riverside District at DWPDIST20@waterboards.ca.gov:

- The Draft and Final EIR, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP), and SOC if applicable;
- The Resolution or Board Minutes certifying the environmental document, adopting the MMRP, and approving the Project; and
- The Notice of Determination filed at the County Clerk's Office and the State Clearinghouse.

Please contact Lori Schmitz of the State Water Board at (916) 449-5285 or Lori.Schmitz@waterboards.ca.gov, for questions regarding this comment letter.

Sincerely,

Lori Schmitz

Digitally signed by Lori Schmitz
Date: 2026.08.18 08:20:01 -07'00'

Water Boards

Lori Schmitz
Environmental Scientist
Division of Financial Assistance
Special Project Review Unit
1001 I Street, 16th floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Cc:

State Clearinghouse

Chun Huang
District Engineer
Riverside District

Roberta Kang
Water Resource Control Engineer
Riverside District