

## California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 11  
4050 TAYLOR STREET, MS-240  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92110  
(619) 985-1587 | FAX (619) 688-4299 TTY 711  
[www.dot.ca.gov](http://www.dot.ca.gov)



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11-SD-5  
PM 36.037

San Dieguito Lagoon Levee, Habitat Enhancement,  
and Trail Project  
MND/SCH#2026030742

Ms. Amanda Lee  
Principal Planner  
City of Del Mar  
1050 Camino del Mar  
Del Mar, CA 92014

Dear Ms. Lee:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the San Dieguito Lagoon Levee, Habitat Enhancement, and Trail Project located near Interstate 5 (I-5). The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. The Local Development Review (LDR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with our mission and state planning priorities.

Safety is one of Caltrans' strategic goals. Caltrans strives to make the year 2050 the first year without a single death or serious injury on California's roads. We are striving for more equitable outcomes for the transportation network's diverse users. To achieve these ambitious goals, we will pursue meaningful collaboration with our partners. We encourage the implementation of new technologies, innovations, and best practices that will enhance the safety on the transportation network. These pursuits are both ambitious and urgent, and their accomplishment involves a focused departure from the status quo as we continue to institutionalize safety in all our work.

Caltrans is committed to prioritizing projects that are equitable and provide meaningful benefits to historically underserved communities, to ultimately improve transportation accessibility and quality of life for people in the communities we serve.

We look forward to working with the City of Del Mar in areas where the City and Caltrans have joint jurisdiction to improve the transportation network and connections

between various modes of travel, with the goal of improving the experience of those who use the transportation system.

Caltrans has the following comments:

### **Environmental**

Caltrans welcomes the opportunity to be a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) should potential impacts directly or indirectly effect Caltrans' Right-of-Way (R/W). Caltrans would then have discretionary authority of a portion of the project that is in Caltrans' R/W through the encroachment permit process.

We recommend that this project specifically identifies and assesses potential impacts caused by the project or impacts from mitigation efforts that occur within Caltrans' R/W that includes but is not limited to impacts to the natural environment, infrastructure (i.e. highways, roadways, on- and off-ramps, etc.) and appurtenant features (i.e. lighting, signs, guardrail, slopes, etc.). Caltrans is interested in the analysis for any work identified in Caltrans' R/W and any additional mitigation measures identified for the Final Environmental Document.

Transportation is the primary use within Caltrans' R/W. Please identify any other use that is non-transportation as a secondary use within Caltrans' R/W.

Please clarify if there will be any hydraulic effects to tidal flow in the San Dieguito River that may affect Caltrans San Dieguito Lagoon (W19) Restoration Project upstream of I-5. Additionally, SANDAG has proposed new alternatives to tunnel/moving railroad off Del Mar Bluffs that traverse along one side of that channel or the other. Please clarify if or how this may affect Caltrans' R/W.

### **Hydrology and Drainage Studies**

Please clarify if the proposed levees are pre-placing existing levees or a new proposed feature.

Please provide detailed mapping that shows proposed levee alignment in relation to the FEMA flood plain and floodway mapping.

The provided report cross-sections do not show effective floodplain and floodway limits, nor proposed floodplain and floodway limits. Please provide updated cross-sections with this information

In the Effective Study, please clarify why there are two different Q's in the floodway summary output.

In the Duplicate Effective Model, it appears that the 100-year flood plain is only calculated at 40,880 cfs, not 41,800 cfs. Therefore, Caltrans cannot confirm the "No-Rise" statement made.

There appears to be a significant difference between the Duplicate Effective and the proposed Water Surface Elevation (WSE), which does not support the conclusion that remapping is not required. Additionally, there is a significant difference between the mapped Base Flood Elevation (BFE) in the FRIM mapping, and the proposed model's WSE.

Please submit a Corrective Effective Model. This is required in a flood plain study. Also, please submit a cross-section of the Duplicate Effective and the Corrective Models.

Please provide additional cross-section at the beginning and end of the floodwall, berm, and any significant change in the berm/flood wall alignment.

Provide submit Improvement Plans.

The No Rise Analysis Report, Table 3 compares the WSE of the existing and proposed model, but Table 3 will need to be revised to include the Effective, Duplicate Effective and Corrective Effective Models.

Please outline how this project and associated floodway/floodplain improvements coordinate with SANDAG's North County Corridor improvements (including I-5 and lagoon improvements).

Early coordination with SANDAG and Caltrans regarding impact and remapping of the floodplains and floodway is strongly recommended.

Please clarify if the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers is participating in the design and construction of the levee.

Caltrans generally does not allow development projects to impact hydraulics within the State's R/W. Any modification to the existing Caltrans drainage and/or increase in runoff to State facilities will not be allowed.

### **Hauling**

Caltrans has discretionary authority with respect to highways under its jurisdiction and may, upon application and if good cause appears, issue a special permit to operate or move a vehicle or combination of vehicles or special mobile equipment of a size or

weight of vehicle or load exceeding the maximum limitations specified in the California Vehicle Code.

The Caltrans Transportation Permits Issuance Branch is responsible for the issuance of these special transportation permits for oversize/overweight vehicles on the State Highway network. Additional information is provided online at: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/transportation-permits>.

### **Right-of-Way**

Per Business and Profession Code 8771, perpetuation of survey monuments by a licensed land surveyor is required, if they are being destroyed by any construction.

Any work performed within Caltrans' R/W will require discretionary review and approval by Caltrans and an encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans' R/W prior to construction.

Additional information regarding encroachment permits may be obtained by visiting the website at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep>. Projects with the following:

- require a Caltrans Encroachment Permit
- have completed the Caltrans Local Development Review (LDR) process
- have an approved environmental document

need to have documents submitted for Quality Management Assessment Process (QMAP) process via email to [D11.QMAP.Permits@dot.ca.gov](mailto:D11.QMAP.Permits@dot.ca.gov). Early coordination with Caltrans is strongly advised for all encroachment permits.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Shannon Aston, LDR Coordinator, at (619) 992-0628 or by e-mail sent to [shannon.aston@dot.ca.gov](mailto:shannon.aston@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

*Kimberly D. Dodson*

KIMBERLY D. DODSON, GISP  
Branch Chief  
Local Development Review