



Meeting: **Reservoir Committee Agenda Item 2.10**

November 19, 2021

Subject: **Terminal Regulating Reservoir Early Evaluation Geotechnical Investigations**

Requested Action:

Authorize the Executive Director to approve the Terminal Regulating Reservoir (TRR) Early Evaluation Geotechnical Investigations and file a Notice of Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Detailed Description/Background:

Additional geotechnical investigations in the area of TRR West (alternate location to TRR East) are being proposed to help determine the preferred location of the TRR facilities. Proposed limited field investigations are needed to inform a detailed comparative engineering analysis and select a preferred TRR location for the Project's permit applications and final environmental documentation. The subsurface conditions significantly influence the cost and selection of the TRR location. The additional geotechnical investigations proposed for the TRR Early Evaluation effort include approximately 6 borings, 7 cone penetration test probes, 2 seismic cone penetration test probes, and installation of up to 4 piezometers. The proposed investigations are scheduled to take place in the first quarter of 2022. These were not done with the investigation done in 2021 because the TRR West option was developed after the planning and permitting was completed for the 2021 geotechnical investigations. The alternative is to delay this work until the larger scale geotechnical investigations start in late 2022 but this is not recommended because the geotechnical information would not be available to make an informed engineering and cost decision on the preferred TRR location in the Final EIR/EIS and key permit applications. Changing the TRR location after the Final EIR/EIS and issuance of key permits would result in substantial re-work, increasing costs and resulting in possible Project delays.

To avoid adverse effects on environmental resources and on existing agricultural activities, geotechnical investigations would be confined to areas previously disturbed or developed and where specific access is granted by the landowner. Similar to the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 geotechnical investigation efforts, the Authority will implement standard geotechnical project protocols and procedures to avoid potential environmental effects. Locations for the TRR Early Evaluation Geotechnical Investigations have specifically been selected to provide additional information to help determine the appropriate and final

location of the TRR while avoiding and minimizing impacts to environmental and cultural resources, as well as current landowner operations.

Fugro and its contractors, under contract with the Authority will complete the TRR Early Evaluation Geotechnical Investigations. The Authority will be using its delegated authority under the approved Real Estate Policy and with consultation of the Land Management Committee to approve agreements, including compensation, for access to private property. The Authority will also provide biological, cultural, and Tribal monitors for the effort, and dust control services, where needed. Legal Counsel is supporting the development of land access agreements that will be signed by the Executive Director with landowners. Consultants performing work for the Authority are required to insure for any damages to landowners under the existing contracts. The Authority will be the point of contact for any issues.

Based on the implementation of standard geotechnical project protocols and procedures as part of this effort, impacts have been determined to be localized, temporary and minor. As such, the TRR Early Evaluation Geotechnical Investigations meet the criteria for a Categorical Exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 and 15306 and staff is now preparing a Notice of Exemption. The project approach to avoid environmental effects and file a Notice of Exemption is the same approach as was taken for the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 geotechnical investigation efforts.

Prior Authority Board Action:

None.

Fiscal Impact/Funding Source:

Actual costs to prepare the CEQA Notice of Exemption and the supporting evaluations along with completing the Authority's components of the TRR Early Evaluation Geotechnical Investigations are within the amounts budgeted in the Amendment 2 Work Plan (Budget), which was approved by the Authority at its August 26, 2020 Board meeting.

Staff Contact:

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Primary Service Provider:

HDR

Attachments:

None.