



1. Introduction and Purpose

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

The purpose of this ~~Draft~~ ~~Final~~ Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is to review the existing conditions, analyze the potential environmental impacts, and suggest feasible mitigation measures to reduce significant effects of the proposed Cambria Community Services District (CCSD) Desalination Plant project. The proposed project would result in construction of a desalination plant, transmission lines, intake and disposal facilities in order to obtain additional capacity of approximately 1,008,000 gallon per day (gpd) of potable water (for more detailed information regarding the proposed development, refer to Section 4, PROJECT DESCRIPTION).

The EIR has been prepared as a Project EIR, addressing the environmental effects of the proposed project. This includes, but is not limited to, direct and indirect effects resulting from construction, implementation and ultimate buildout of the Desalination Plant. As is stated in Section 15121 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a primary purpose of the EIR is to provide decision makers and the public with specific information regarding the environmental effects associated with development of a project, identify ways to minimize the significant effects and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. Mitigation measures are provided which may be adopted as Conditions of Approval in order to reduce the significance of impacts resulting from the project.

As is required by CEQA, the CCSD Board of Directors will consider the information in the EIR along with other information which may be presented during their review of the proposed project, in making an informed decision regarding the project. While the information in the EIR does not limit the CCSD's discretionary powers to approve the project, CEQA requires the CCSD to respond to each significant impact identified in this EIR by adopting feasible mitigation measures or by making findings and, if necessary, by issuing a statement of overriding considerations for any unmitigable significant effects which will occur if the project is approved.

1.2 COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA

This ~~Draft~~ ~~Final~~ EIR has been prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) §§ 21000-21178.1 of the State of California Public Resources Code, the State CEQA Guidelines sections 15000 through 15387 and the Cambria Community

Services District environmental guidelines. The principal CEQA Guidelines sections governing content of this document are Sections 15120 through 15132 (content of an EIR), and Section 15161 (Project EIR).

Pursuant to State and Local CEQA Guidelines, the CCSD initiated the environmental review process with the Notice of Preparation (refer to Appendix A, NOTICE OF PREPARATION/INITIAL STUDY). The CCSD determined that the Project may result in significant adverse effects and therefore requires an EIR. The Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study were circulated on May 16, 1994 by the CCSD. Responsible agencies had 30 days to transmit their concerns and comments on the scope and content of the EIR to the CCSD, focusing on specific information related to their own statutory responsibility. As part of the review process, the Draft EIR is subject to a 45-day review period by responsible and trustee agencies and interested parties. Following this review period, responses to comments received from these agencies are prepared. The Final EIR consists of the Draft EIR, any revisions to the Draft EIR, and responses to comments addressing concerns raised by responsible agencies or reviewing parties.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE EIR

This EIR focuses primarily on changes in the environment that would result from the proposed project. The EIR identifies impacts resulting from the construction and operation of the proposed project. The EIR provides measures to mitigate potential significant impacts of the project and identifies any impacts which cannot be mitigated to levels less than significant. This EIR addresses impacts in the following areas:

- Geology, Soils and Seismicity
- Hydrology, Drainage and Groundwater
- Water Resources
- Terrestrial Biological Resources
- Marine Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Land Use and Relevant Planning
- Aesthetics, Light and Glare
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Risk of Upset/Human Health
- Energy
- Transportation and Utilities
- Public Services

The Draft EIR is organized into 15 16 sections. Section 1, INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE, provides CEQA compliance information. Section 2, EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, provides a brief project description and summary of the environmental impacts and mitigation measures. Section 3, PROJECT LOCATION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION, provides information indicating project location, background and history, as well as associated discretionary action required. Section 4, PROJECT DESCRIPTION, provides detailed Project Characteristics from construction through operations. Section 5, DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES, contains a detailed environmental analysis of the existing conditions, project impacts, possible mitigation measures and unavoidable significant impacts. Section 6, LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT, discusses significant environmental changes that would be involved in the proposed action, should it be implemented and discusses Growth Inducing and Cumulative Impacts. Section 7, ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT, describes a reasonable range of alternatives to the project or to the location of the project which could feasibly attain the basic project objectives. Section 8, INVENTORY OF MITIGATION MEASURES, lists mitigation measures proposed to minimize the significant effects. Section 9, INVENTORY OF UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS, describes any impacts which are significant following mitigation. Section 10, EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT, provides an explanation of potential impacts which have been determined not to be significant. Section 11, GENERAL DEFINITIONS AND DESALINATION TERMINOLOGY, provides definitions and terminology of the desalination process. Section 12 is the MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM. Section 13, ORGANIZATIONS AND PERSONS CONSULTED, identifies all Federal, State or Local agencies, other organizations and individuals consulted. Section 14, BIBLIOGRAPHY, identifies reference sources for the EIR. Section 15, COMMENTS AND RESPONSES, includes comments received during the 45-day public review period. Section 15 16, APPENDICES, contains technical documentation for the project.

1.4 USE OF EIR

It is the intent of this Draft Final EIR to enable the CCSD, other responsible agencies, and interested parties to evaluate the environmental impacts of the proposed project enabling them to make informed decisions with respect to project approvals. The authority of a public agency to disapprove or approve projects is stated in Sections 15042 and 15043 of the CEQA guidelines.

1.5 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

Pertinent documents relating to this EIR have been cited and incorporated by reference, in accordance with Section 15150 of the CEQA Guidelines, as a means of reducing the redundancy and length of environmental reports.

The following documents, which are available for public review at the CCSD offices, are hereby incorporated by reference into this Draft EIR. Information contained within these documents has been utilized for each section of this EIR. A synopsis of the scope and content of this document follows:

Overview and Evaluation of Current Desalting Technology, John Carollo Engineers, March, 1994.

This report survey's recent developments of potentially applicable technology for use with the Cambria Desalination Plant. The report discusses various "pros" and "cons" of desalting technologies. Technologies discussed include membranes, Distillation and Solar Energy. Reference documents included as appendices include reports published by the California Coastal Commission, the Department of Water Resources and case studies for similar facilities.

CCSD Desalination Facility Preliminary Site Analysis and Conceptual Study, North Coast Engineering, Inc., November, 1993.

This preliminary report presented a series of alternative configurations for a desalination system, analyzed those alternatives in both technical and environmental terms, presented estimated costs for each alternative and made recommendations and conclusions.

San Luis Obispo County General Plan

The County General Plan contains several elements including the Land Use Element, Safety Element, Transportation Plan, Noise Element, Open Space Plan, Recreation Plan, Environment Plan and Seismic Safety Element. The General Plan Land Use Element (LUE) is a plan describing the official County policy on the location of land uses and their orderly growth and development. The LUE is one of several parts (elements) of the San Luis Obispo General Plan. The LUE contains several major sections: Framework for Planning, the Coastal Program Policy document, and Area Plans.

North Coast Area Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Land Use Element and Local Coastal Planning, County of San Luis Obispo, May, 1994. The North Coast Planning Area consists of approximately 92,000 acres (143 square miles) and includes the communities of Cambria and San Simeon. The Draft EIR addresses the proposed Area Plan's potential impacts on land use, traffic/circulation, aesthetics, water resources, wastewater, air quality, noise, biological resources, public services, drainage/flooding, geology, cultural resources and agricultural resources. The Draft EIR also addresses several project alternatives, including one alternative that considers additional amendments requested but not proposed in the plan. Much of the existing data for the North Coast Plan was developed in 1980 and 1984. While minor updates were made in 1987, and implementing coastal ordinances developed in 1988, this is the first comprehensive update done to the North Coast Area Plan since 1984.

East West Ranch Master Development Plan, May 23, 1994. The East West Ranch Plan was submitted to the County of San Luis Obispo on May 23, 1994 for review. On June 21, 1994, the County notified the developer that additional information and mapping is necessary before the County can continue to process the plan. The document provided the development plan summary, environmental constraints, General Plan consistency, land use, circulation and infrastructure, development standards and implementation information.

Land Use Element Framework for Planning. The Land Use Element - Framework for Planning provides development guidelines for proposed public facilities. The Framework document divides the County into twelve Area Plans in order to refine the general policies of the Framework Plan. This document identifies the Community of Cambria as located within the North Coast Planning Area. In addition, the Framework for Planning document provides definitions of land use categories and indicates what type of uses are permitted within each category. These guidelines were utilized by the CCSD in determining potential sites for the proposed project.

Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan - North Coast Planning Area. The North Coast Planning Area Policy document describes where land use categories are applied and provides policies and development criteria for each community in the form of programs and standards. This document identifies the entire project area as located within the Local Coastal Zone, as defined by the California Coastal Act. The project site is located within the County of San Luis Obispo North Coast Planning Area within the North Coast Rural-Area. The County is currently in the process of updating this document and has published a Public Review Draft of the revised LUE and Local Coastal Plan. As previously stated,

a Draft EIR for the revised document has been prepared by the County and may be considered for adoption, along with the Revised Element, within the year.

Land Use Element - Coastal Plan Policies. This document contains programs, policies and standards applicable to portions of the County, within the coastal zone, as established by the California Coastal Act of 1976. This document is part of the Local Coastal Program and LUE. This document describes policies and programs based on the respective planning area of a project site (it should be noted that when a planning area standard conflicts with a policy or standard in this document, the area plan standard shall prevail).

Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance. The Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (Title 23 of the County Code) contains standards for development based on the effects of a specific type of land use. This document describes the allowable land uses within the respective land use categories and identifies various permits required by the County. Development standards contained within this document (i.e. bluff top stabilization, erosion control, drainage guidelines, cultural resources mitigation, noise, etc.) have been included within the respective sections of this EIR.

General Plan San Simeon State Beach, September 1979. The Resource Element of this document is based on comprehensive inventory of natural and cultural resources of the State beach. It presents the Department of Parks and Recreation policies and recommendations for ensuring protection and proper management of these resources for the enjoyment and enlightenment of the general public. This document is a comprehensive long-range plan for development of facilities for visitor use, operation, and management of San Simeon State Beach. The document emphasizes landscape preservation, visual resource protection, management and interpretation of natural and cultural resources, and recreation uses compatible with the area's natural values.

Groundwater Reclamation/Recharge Project EIR, December 1991. This project improves the safe yield of the community water supply. The project replenishes the domestic supply aquifer with water extracted from the District's effluent disposal field. The treated effluent water would recharge the groundwater through discharge into San Simeon Creek, eventually percolating into the aquifer.

The project consists of the construction of a reverse osmosis treatment plant, three extraction wells, a brine water injection well, installation of associated pumps and approximately 1.5 miles of underground piping. A Final Environmental Impact Report, dated December, 1991, has been prepared and certified for this project and a pilot facility

was constructed in order to establish the technical parameters of the advanced facility. Although a Final EIR was certified for this project, a negotiation impasse with local landowners to recharge the basin resulted in the CCSD placing the Project on hold for the immediate future.

Effluent Ponds Project EIR, March, 1994. The Effluent Disposal Field Improvement project involves the installation of an irrigation pump at the storage reservoir, grading of approximately 20 acres to create four percolation basins, the drilling of an extraction well, installation of flow meters in the existing Warren, Molinari, and 9P2 extraction wells, the construction of associated underground piping and an access road. The proposed percolation ponds would have depths of up to six feet. An Erosion Control/Revegetation Mat, consisting of Geotextile Fabric, will be installed over seed and mulch in the berm paralleling San Simeon Creek and hydroseeded after installation. This mat, which will be buried in the slope of the berm, to a depth extending three feet below the base of the berm, will provide additional erosional protection along the berm face. Construction of the ponds will involve the grading of approximately 30,000 cubic yards of cut and fill.

Annual Resource Summary Report, 1993, prepared by the San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building. This fourth annual report catalogs existing information pertaining to Resource Management Systems resources including water supply and delivery systems, water disposal systems, roads, schools and air quality. The report describes resources available in the County Planning area or community where information allows detailed analysis.

Comparative Analysis of Potential Long-Term Water Supply Projects for the District, July 1991. In 1991, the District completed a detailed review of thirteen optional water supply projects to serve the community. Various considerations and factors were considered including: duration of the planning period, demand, supply, storage, conveyance, treatment distribution, water rights and costs. The following options were evaluated in considerable detail:

- Project A: Steiner Creek Dam and Reservoir
- Project B: San Simeon Creek Well Field Dam and Reservoir
- Project C: San Simeon Creek Water Diversion and Storage Project (C.T. Dam)
- Project D1: Seawater Reverse Osmosis Desalination
- Project D2: Distillation Desalination Plant
- Project D3: Solar Ponds
- Project E: Santa Rosa Creek Groundwater Wells

- Project F: Stonebrook Ranch Dam and Reservoir
- Project G: Arroyo Laguna/Arroyo de la Cruz/San Carpoforo Groundwater Wells
- Project H: Tributary to Jack Creek, Dam and Reservoir
- Project I: Lake Nacimiento Diversion/Pipeline
- Project J: Catchment Basins along San Simeon Creek and Santa Rosa Creek
- Project K: Whale Rock Exchange with State Water Project

This report led to further study of Lake Nacimiento and San Simeon Creek Diversion and storage projects in greater detail during 1992 and 1993. Refer to Section 3.3, **BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**, for further information.

Preliminary Design and Evaluation of Long-Term Water Supply Projects, July 1992. This report evaluated two water supply projects based on environmental, engineering geology and cost considerations. The Lake Nacimiento and Cambria Meadows storage project were evaluated in detail as the CCSD continued its efforts to analyze a potential long-term, reliable water source for the community.

Preliminary Analysis, Long-Term Water Supply Project Pre-Final Design-Phase I Report, March 1993. This report provides evaluation of the importation of water from Lake Nacimiento and an alternative for diversion of streamflow from San Simeon Creek and storage in a reservoir in Cambria meadows for recharge in San Simeon Creek. The scope of the study included review of previous studies, feasibility and design issues, facilities, cost estimates and environmental data. Constraints associated with environmental and cost considerations rendered both projects infeasible and were no longer considered as reliable sources for the District.

Water Pipeline Along Highway 1 Mitigated Negative Declaration, October 1994. This document was circulated for 30-day public review in October 1994, pursuant to the CEQA requirements (SCH #941110004). The analysis evaluated an approximately one mile long pipeline extension from the proposed Cambria Desalination Facility to the San Simeon potable water tie in at the southern end of Balboa Avenue in San Simeon. Although no significant adverse impacts were identified, further environmental review will be required should the Cambria Desalination Facility be upgraded to allocate to San Simeon. Refer to Section 7 Alternatives and Section 15, Response 7.2 for additional information.