

Dear Reviewer:

In accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the California Public Utilities Agency (CPUC) encloses for your review the joint Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement (DEIR/EIS) for the proposed Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project.

A permit application was submitted by California American Water Company for construction and operation of its proposed Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project (MPWSP or Project). The purpose of the MPWSP is to replace existing water supplies for CalAm's Monterey District service area. The MPWSP comprises various facilities and improvements, including: a sub-surface seawater intake system; a 9.6-million-gallons-per-day (mgd) seawater reverse osmosis (SWRO) desalination plant; desalinated water storage and conveyance facilities; and expanded Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) facilities.

On August 25, 2015, a Notice of Intent was issued to prepare a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the MPWSP. During the NEPA scoping period, MBNMS held a scoping meeting in Pacific Grove on September 10, 2015 to discuss the proposed project and to solicit public input as to the scope and content of the EIR/EIS. CPUC issued a Notice of Preparation for the previous MPWSP Draft EIR on April 30, 2015, for a 60-day review period and held public meetings.

This environmental document identifies and assesses potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed Project, and identifies six alternatives. Federal and state agencies would use the EIR/EIS to consider related permits or other approvals for the Project as proposed.

The DEIR/EIS will be released on January 13, 2017, and any comments received during the 45-day comment period will be reviewed and considered for their input for the Final EIR/EIS issuance. The comment period will close on February 27, 2017.

The CPUC and MBNMS will host three (3) public meetings to facilitate review of the DEIR/EIS:

- 1) Wednesday, February 15, 11:00-1:00 pm, Marina Public Library, Community Meeting Room, 188 Seaside Ave., Marina, CA 93933
- 2) Wednesday, February 15, 6:00-8:00, Oldemeyer Center, Seaside Room, 986 Hilby Ave., Seaside, CA 93955
- 3) Thursday, February 16, 4:00-8:00 pm, Sunset Center, Carpenter Hall, San Carlos Street, Carmel, CA 93921

Written comments will be accepted until February 27, 2017 and can be submitted online or through the mail to the agency officials identified below.

Mary Jo Borak, CEQA Lead
California Public Utilities Commission
c/o Environmental Science Associates
550 Kearny Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94108

Karen Grimmer, NEPA Lead
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
99 Pacific Avenue
Building 455a
Monterey, CA 93940

Or, Online:

Visit the federal eRulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the search window, type NOAA-NOS-2016-0156, click the “Comment Now!” icon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Armor', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

John Armor, Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries