

DOCKETED

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TN #:	204371
Document Title:	CalTrans FHWA I-5 Widening North Coast Corridor FEIS FEIR - Part 4 (4 of 5)
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Submission Date:	4/24/2015 3:11:34 PM
Docketed Date:	4/24/2015

Mr. Cesar E Perez (FWS-SDG-3819.4)

If you have any questions or concerns about this letter, please contact John DiGregoria of my staff at (760) 431-9440.

Sincerely,



Therese O'Rourke
Assistant Field Supervisor

cc: Charles "Muggs" Stoll, Deputy District Director Environmental Division, Caltrans District 11 Office

Figure 5-4.1 (cont.): USFWS Concurrence with Purpose and Need

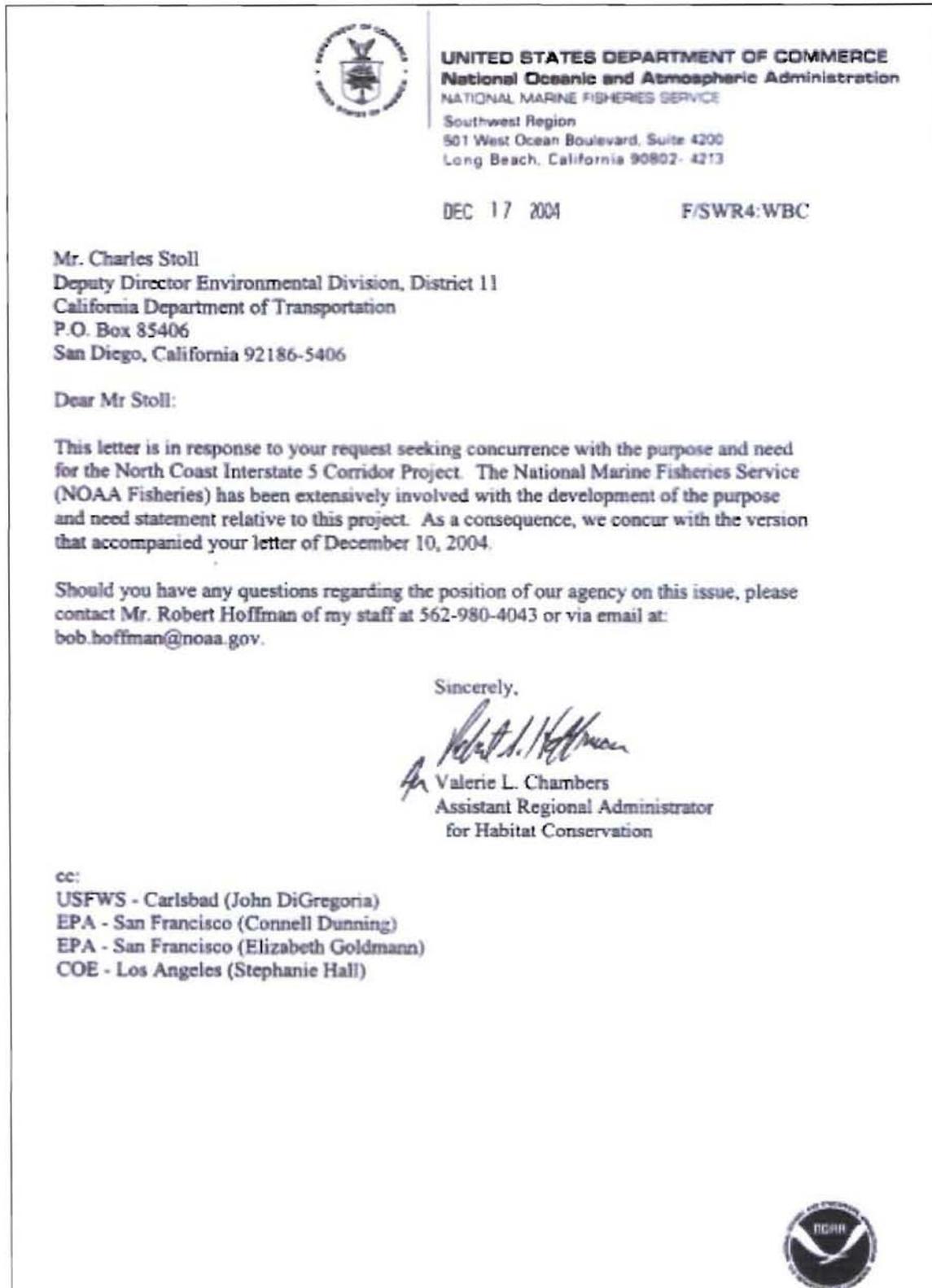


Figure 5-4.2: NOAA/NMFS Concurrence with Purpose and Need



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
 LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
 P.O. BOX 532711
 LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90053-2325

January 19, 2005

REPLY TO
 ATTENTION OF:

Office of the Chief
 Regulatory Branch

Charles Stoll
 Deputy Director, Environmental Division
 California Department of Transportation, District 11
 P.O. Box 85406
 San Diego, California 92186-5406

Dear Mr. Stoll:

This letter is in response to your request of December 10, 2004, for concurrence on the Purpose and Need statement for the North Coast Interstate 5 (I-5) Corridor Project. This request is pursuant to Appendix A of the National Environmental Policy Act/Clean Water Act, Section 404 Integration Process Memorandum of Understanding (NEPA/404MOU).

The Corps has participated with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and other regulatory agencies in the development of a supportable purpose and need statement. The Corps concurs with the project Purpose and Need as presented in the document entitled "North Coast Interstate 5 Corridor Project," dated December 10, 2004. We support the overall project purpose statement presented below, which will be used to help develop and screen the alternatives that will be evaluated in an environmental impact statement.

To maintain or improve the existing and future traffic operations in the I-5 north coastal corridor in order to improve the safe and efficient regional movement of people and goods for the planning design year of 2030.

More specifically, the project objectives are to:

- *Maintain or improve future traffic levels of service in 2030 over the existing levels of service,*
- *Maintain or improve travel times within the corridor,*
- *Provide a facility that is compatible with future bus rapid transit and other modal options,*
- *Provide consistency with the regional transportation plan, Mobility 2030 – The Transportation Plan for the San Diego Region, SANDAG, April 2003 (SANDAG 2030 RTP) where feasible and in compliance with federal and state regulations,*
- *Maintain the facility as an effective link in the national Strategic Highway Network, and*
- *Protect and/or enhance the human and natural environment along the I-5 corridor.*

The next step in the NEPA/404 Integration Process is to identify a set of screening criteria that will facilitate the selection of alternatives for evaluation pursuant to both NEPA and

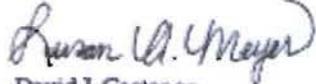
Figure 5-4.3: USACE Concurrence with Purpose and Need

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Section 404. Under Appendix A of the NEPA/404 MOU, we will be asked to concur on both the screening criteria and the range of alternatives.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the NEPA/404 MOU process and appreciate your efforts to seek our early participation in this process. We look forward to our continued involvement with the North Coast Interstate 5 Corridor project. Should you have any questions, please contact Ms. Stephanie J. Hall of my staff at (213) 452-3410. Please refer to this letter and 200401089-SJH in your reply.

Sincerely,


for David J. Castanon
Acting Chief, Regulatory Branch

cc:
USFWS – Carlsbad (John DiGregoria)
EPA – San Francisco (Connell Dunning)
EPA – San Francisco (Elizabeth Goldmann)
NOAA – Long Beach (Bob Hoffman)

Figure 5-4.3 (cont.): USACE Concurrence with Purpose and Need



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

January 10, 2004

Charles Stoll
Deputy Director Environmental Division
California Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 85406
San Diego, CA 92186-5406

Cesar Perez
Team Leader - South Region
Federal Highway Administration
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 4-100
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Stoll and Mr. Perez:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is writing in response to your request of December 10, 2004 for concurrence on the Purpose and Need statement for the proposed **North Coast Interstate 5 (I-5) Corridor Project**. The purpose of this letter is to express EPA's concurrence with the Purpose and Need statement. Your request is in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act/Clean Water Act Section 404 Integration Process for Surface Transportation Projects in California, Arizona, and Nevada Memorandum of Understanding (NEPA/404 MOU).

Concurrence on Purpose and Need

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) propose improvements along the I-5 Corridor from Miramar Road north to Vandergriff Boulevard. Widening of the highway in the project area will affect an estimated 25 acres of wetlands and has the potential to affect wildlife and sensitive habitats associated with six lagoons: San Dieguito, San Elijo, Bataquitos, Agua Hedionda, Buena Vista, and Los Pensaquitos. EPA has been involved with the development of the Purpose and Need statement through multiple interagency meetings. We are pleased with the incorporation of our comments and recognize the efforts of Caltrans and FHWA in finalizing a Purpose and Need statement that addresses the concerns of the federal regulatory agencies.

EPA concurs with the following Purpose and Need statement:

OVERALL PURPOSE STATEMENT

To maintain or improve the existing and future traffic operations in the I-5 north coastal corridor in order to improve the safe and efficient regional movement of people and goods for the planning design year 2030.

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Figure 5-4.4: USEPA Concurrence with Purpose and Need

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this project are to:

- Maintain or improve future traffic levels of service in 2030 over the existing levels of service,
- Maintain or improve travel times within the corridor,
- Provide a facility that is compatible with future bus rapid transit and other modal options,
- Provide consistency with the regional transportation plan, Mobility 2030 - The Transportation Plan for the San Diego Region, SANDAG, April 2003 (SANDAG 2030 RTP) where feasible and in compliance with federal and state regulations,
- Maintain the facility as an effective link in the national Strategic Highway Network, and
- Protect and/or enhance the human and natural environment along the I-5 corridor.

Status of Other Transportation Projects along the I-5 Corridor

On September 9, 2004 a manager-level meeting was convened to discuss the Purpose and Need statement as well as the status of multiple projects along the I-5 Corridor that are in various stages of planning and construction. At that time, and in previous interagency meetings, EPA as well as Army Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Marine Fisheries Service, expressed concerns regarding the potential for decisions resulting from other projects along the corridor to preclude the analysis of a range of reasonable alternatives to be studied through the North Coast I-5 Corridor Project. Caltrans and FHWA committed to discuss this matter internally and to provide a response to the regulatory agencies regarding this issue. As of this date, EPA has received no formal response regarding our concerns. While it does not affect our concurrence on the Purpose and Need statement, resolution on this matter is integral to an understanding of the scope of the North Coast I-5 Corridor Project as the NEPA/404 integration process continues.

Other Federal Mitigation Efforts

Several mitigation projects that were established as permitting requirements for other federal projects occur within the footprint of the proposed project, including the Bataquitos Lagoon Enhancement Project and the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) Marine Mitigation Program. The Bataquitos Lagoon Enhancement Project is one of the largest wetland restoration projects undertaken as mitigation for a port project in the United States and was developed as a requirement to mitigate resources lost in the Outer Los Angeles Harbor due to dredging and construction. The SONGS Marine Mitigation Program is an environmental enhancement program developed to mitigate unavoidable impacts to the marine environment resulting from operation of the SONGS Units 2&3 cooling water systems. The program includes restoring degraded wetlands at San Dieguito Lagoon, improving the in-plant fish protection systems, and funding for Coastal Commission staff oversight and monitoring of these mitigation projects. Because these mitigation efforts are required as a result of federal permitting actions, it will be important for Caltrans and FHWA to develop alternatives that are designed to allow for

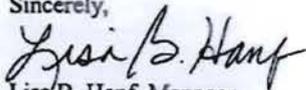
Figure 5-4.4 (cont.): USEPA Concurrence with Purpose and Need

the continued implementation of these mitigation commitments.

We are pleased that the Purpose and Need statement indicates that Caltrans and FHWA “will seek to not impede these efforts and will identify opportunities to offset potential project impacts to the maximum extent practicable” and that “enhancements to the conditions of sensitive environmental habitat will be incorporated, where feasible and practicable when considering cost, logistics, and technology.” This supports the objective of “protecting and/or enhancing the natural environment” and conveys the transportation agencies’ intentions to protect the coastal lagoon ecosystem during project development.

Thank you for this opportunity to participate in the development of the North Coast I-5 Corridor Study Purpose and Need statement. We look forward to continued participation in this project through the NEPA/404 MOU. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at 415-972-3854. You can also contact Connell Dunning at 415-947-4161 (dunning.connell@epa.gov) or Elizabeth Goldmann at 415-972-3398 (goldmann.elizabeth@epa.gov).

Sincerely,



Lisa B. Hanf, Manager
Federal Activities Office

cc: John DiGregoria, Fish and Wildlife Service
Stephanie Hall, Army Corps of Engineers
Bob Hoffman, National Marine Fisheries Service

Figure 5-4.4 (cont.): USEPA Concurrence with Purpose and Need

