

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: State Clearinghouse From: County of Tulare – RMA
PO Box 3044/ 1400 Tenth St 5961 S Mooney Blvd
Sacramento CA 95814 Visalia CA 93277

Date: July 8, 2016
Subject: Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Report (Supplemental DEIR)
Project Title: General Plan Amendment to Update the Safety Element
Applicant: Tulare County Resource Management Agency
Project Location: Tulare County is located in the Central Valley and extends over 4,839 square miles. The County is geographically diverse with mountainous areas, agricultural lands, and foothill areas. The County is bounded by Fresno County to the north and Kern County to the south. Kings County is located on the west side of Tulare County while Inyo County borders the County to the east.

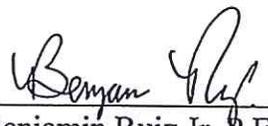
Tulare County Resource Management Agency (RMA) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information, which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed Project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the Project.

The Project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the following attached materials. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. A scoping meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 21, 2016, 1:30 P.M. in the RMA Main Conference Room, 5961 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia, CA.

Please direct your response to Hector Guerra, Chief Environmental Planner, at the address shown above. He may be contacted by e-mail at hguerra@co.tulare.ca.us or by telephone at (559) 624-7121. Please provide us with the name of a contact person in your agency.

Signature: 
Hector Guerra
Title: Chief Environmental Planner

Date: 7/7/16

Signature: 
Benjamin Ruiz Jr. P.E., S.E.
Title: Interim Director/Environmental Assessment Officer

Date: 7/7/16

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines). Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.

Project Location and Setting:

Tulare County lies in the southern half of and on the east side of the San Joaquin Valley, the great central valley of California, which is bounded on three sides by mountains – the Coast Range to the west and the Sierra Nevadas to the east and south (See Figure 1). The County itself covers approximately 4,863 square miles and encompasses 3,112,320 acres. Federal and State owned lands comprise approximately 51 percent of the County area.

Project Description:

Tulare County is located in Central California in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. The County is composed of eight incorporated cities and numerous unincorporated communities. Most of the unincorporated communities and all of the cities are located on the Valley floor. The foothills and Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks form the eastern half of the County

The Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update was approved by the Board of Supervisors on August 28, 2012. At that time, the Board also certified the Final Environmental Impact Report (State Clearinghouse No. 2006041162). The General Plan Update includes several state mandated Elements and several optional Elements. The seven State of California mandated Elements include: Land Use, Housing, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, Safety and Noise Elements. In addition to these required Elements, the General Plan 2030 Update includes nine optional Elements: Planning Framework, Animal Confinement Facilities Plan, Public Facilities and Services, Flood Control Master Plan, Economic Development, Agriculture, Scenic Landscapes, Air Quality and Water Resources. The General Plan Update also includes the adoption of a Climate Action Plan.

The County's five-year strategic plan includes the "Safety and Security Initiative" to provide for the safety and security of the public. Through the initiation of the General Plan Amendment Safety Element Update, the County will be effectively planning and providing coordinated emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation capabilities for both natural and man-made disasters, such as floods and wildfires.

The update to the Tulare County Safety Element will be further bolstered as follows:

- Areas vulnerable to wildfires will be more explicitly defined.
- Areas for groundwater recharge will be more explicitly defined.
- New FEMA maps will be incorporated into the General Plan flood figures.
- The Flood Control Master plan will be reviewed for consistency with any proposed changes to the Safety Element policies.
- Policy HS-6.5 will be cross-referenced to codes or regulations that will provide minimum road widths and standards.
- The following new informational requirements will be added related to Fire Safety:
 - Fire hazard severity zone maps available from the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.
 - Historical data on wildfires available from local agencies or a reference to where the data can be found.
 - Information about wildfire hazard areas that may be available from the United States Geological Survey.
 - General location and distribution of existing and planned uses of land in very high hazard severity zones and in state responsibility areas, including structures, roads, utilities, and essential public facilities.

- Local, state, and federal agencies with responsibility for fire protection, including special districts and local offices of emergency services.
- Add discussion into the Health and Safety Element from the General Plan Background Report regarding liquefaction potential.
- Incorporate by Reference into the Health and Safety Element the County Multi-Hazard local hazard mitigation plan (California Government Code 65302 (g) (4)).
- Coordinate with Tulare County OES regarding addressing Climate Adaptation and Resiliency as part of the County Multi-Hazard local hazard mitigation plan update project (California Government Code 65302 (g) (4)).
- Incorporate new information as appropriate (California Government Code 65302 (g) (4) (D) (5)).

Potential Environmental Impacts:

The County, as the CEQA Lead Agency, has determined that a Supplemental EIR is required to address the potential for significant environmental effects to occur as a result of its implementation. The Supplemental DEIR will contain only the information necessary to make the previously approved FEIR for the Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update adequate for the Safety Element Update. This focus meets the requirements for supplemental analysis under Section 15163 of the CEQA Guidelines, which requires that only minor additions or changes to the FEIR for the Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update that may result in significant impacts and were not evaluated and disclosed in the previously certified Final EIR be included in this Supplemental DEIR.

Because the Supplemental DEIR is intended to serve as a supplement to the previously adopted FEIR for the Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update, impacts and conditions presented in the previous FEIR for the Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update will serve as the primary base of comparison for the analysis. Not all of the environmental topics included in the CEQA Guidelines Initial Study Checklist will be addressed in the Supplemental DEIR. The topics that are not addressed in the Supplemental DEIR are excluded because the previous FEIR for the Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update concluded that there were no significant impacts associated with those topics, that the mitigation measures proposed in the FEIR for the Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update would still be feasible and would mitigate impacts of the proposed Project to a less-than-Significant level, or for which level of significance is unchanged from that described in the FEIR for the Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update. It is anticipated that potentially affected environmental impacts may include: Agricultural Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, Public Services, Transportation/Traffic, and Utilities and Service Systems. Each of these resources will be analyzed in the Supplemental DEIR. All other issues addressed in the FEIR for the Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update are considered adequate and do not need to be updated in the Supplemental DEIR.

Agricultural Resources: The Supplemental DEIR will address potential impacts related to farmland, agricultural uses, and forest lands. The analysis will be based on existing information derived from technical analysis and the 2030 General Plan Final EIR.

Air Quality: The Project is located in the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). The county is designated as an extreme non-attainment area for the federal and state 8-hour ozone (O₃) standards; a severe nonattainment area for the state 1-hour ozone standard; and a non-attainment area for the federal and state particulate matter of 2.5 microns or smaller (PM_{2.5}) standards and the state particulate

matter of 10 microns or smaller (PM₁₀) standard. For all other criteria pollutants, the County is designated as an attainment and/or unclassified area. The Supplemental DEIR will address potential impacts related to air quality, the analysis will be based on existing information derived from technical analysis and the 2030 General Plan Final EIR.

Biological Resources: The Supplemental DEIR will address potential impacts related to special status species, riparian habitat, wetlands, marshes, and vernal pools, movement of any native residents, migratory fish, wildlife species, and waters of the U.S. The analysis will be based on existing information derived from technical analysis and the 2030 General Plan Final EIR.

Cultural Resources: The Supplemental DEIR will address potential impacts related to historical resources, archaeological resource, paleontological resource, geologic feature, and subsurface human remains. The analysis will be based on existing information derived from technical analysis and the 2030 General Plan Final EIR.

Geology and Soils: The Supplemental DEIR will address potential impacts related to earthquake faults, seismic ground shaking, ground failure, landslides, soil erosion, and expansive soils. The analysis will be based on existing information derived from existing geotechnical analysis and the 2030 General Plan Final EIR.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions: The Supplemental DEIR will address potential impacts related to direct or indirect greenhouse gas emissions. The analysis will be based on existing information derived from technical analysis and the 2030 General Plan Final EIR.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: The Supplemental DEIR will address potential impacts related to hazardous materials and wildland fires. The analysis will be based on existing information derived from technical analysis and the 2030 General Plan Final EIR.

Hydrology and Water Quality: The Supplemental DEIR will address potential impacts related to water quality, groundwater supplies, groundwater recharge, and flooding. The analysis will be based on existing information derived from technical analysis and the 2030 General Plan Final EIR.

Noise: The Supplemental DEIR will address potential impacts related to ambient noise levels and groundborne vibration. The analysis will be based on existing information derived from technical analysis and the 2030 General Plan Final EIR.

Public Services: The Supplemental DEIR will address potential impacts related to fire and police protection. The analysis will be based on existing information derived from technical analysis and the 2030 General Plan Final EIR.

Transportation/Traffic: The Supplemental DEIR will address potential impacts related to circulation, congestion, air traffic patterns, and design features. The analysis will be based on existing information derived from technical analysis and the 2030 General Plan Final EIR.

Utilities and Service Systems: The Supplemental DEIR will address potential impacts related to wastewater treatment, storm water drainage, and water supplies. The analysis will be based on existing information derived from technical analysis and the 2030 General Plan Final EIR.

If you require additional information related to this notice, please contact:

Hector Guerra, Chief Environmental Planner

hguerra@co.tulare.ca.us or at (559) 624-7121

Reviewing Agencies:

State and Federal:

- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency
- California Department of Conservation
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife - Region #4
- California Department of Toxic Substance Control
- California Environmental Protection Agency
- California Geological Survey
- California Office of Emergency Services
- Central Valley Flood Protection Board
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board – Region #5
- Caltrans District 6
- San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District
- Native American Heritage Commission
- Office of Historic Preservation
- Department of Food & Agriculture
- Department of Forestry & Fire Protection
- Department of General Services
- Flood Control Commission

Local:

- City of Dinuba
- City of Exeter
- City of Farmersville
- City of Lindsay
- City of Porterville
- City of Tulare
- City of Woodlake
- Tulare County Association of Governments
- County of Fresno
- County of Kings
- County of Kern
- Environmental Health and Human Services Agency
- Tulare County Airport Land Use Commission

- Tulare County Fire Warden
- Tulare County Sheriff's Office
- Tulare County Resource Management Agency:
 - Tulare County Flood Control
 - Tulare County Fire
 - Economic Development and Planning Branch (Environmental Planning, Project Review, Building and Housing Divisions)
 - Public Works Branch
 - Tree Mortality Task Force

The following interested persons/parties are also included in this notification:

- Sierra Club Kaweah Chapter

Figures

- **Figure 1: Vicinity Map**

Figure 1 – Vicinity Map

