

FINAL PUBLIC NOTICE

SEISMIC RETROFIT FOR SEVEN RESERVOIRS SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA HMGP-4482-712-016

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) proposes to provide federal financial assistance under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to East Valley Water District (Subapplicant) in San Bernardino County, California, to mitigate impacts from seismic activity. This will be accomplished by retrofitting seven existing aboveground welded steel water storage reservoirs in Highland, CA as well as upgrading and adding additional safety features to the reservoirs (Proposed Action). The Proposed Action would mitigate impacts from seismic activity to the reservoirs through increasing the number of braces in the reservoirs, modifying overflow pipes to incorporate air breaks, adding flexible couplings to piping, and enhancing safety features. Pursuant to Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), and FEMA's implementing regulations at Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations Part 9, FEMA hereby provides interested parties with a notice of its final decision and an explanation of the alternatives considered.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to reduce the facilities risk from seismic activity and to maintain reliable potable water service. The Proposed Action consists of a variety of the following activities on each of the seven water reservoirs, all within the existing fenced plant areas: adding a self-closing gate at the top of the water tank ladders, widening the top of the ladders, installing a roof hatch with vents, installing a new fiberglass interior ladder, adding a roof-anchored fall restraint system, constructing a concrete ring wall foundation and installing mechanical anchors to prevent sliding and uplift, attaching lateral braces, adding backflow prevention valves and flexible couplings to piping, and painting the interior and exterior of the structure. Ground-disturbing activities would be limited to excavation for foundations, in-ground vaults, and equipment pads in areas previously disturbed by existing tanks, piping, and foundations. Staging areas would be located within the existing fenced plant sites, and no vegetation removal is proposed.

The 1-acre project area for Plant 33 and the 6.9-acre project area for Plant 39 are depicted on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Number 06071C7963H, effective August 8, 2008. The 2.4-acre project area for Plant 129 is depicted on FIRM Number 06071C8707J, effective September 2, 2016. The FIRMs show that Plant 33 is entirely in Zone X, an area of minimal flood hazard; Plant 39 is entirely in Shaded Zone X, an area with a 0.2-percent annual chance of flooding; and Plant 129 has approximately 0.15 acres in Zone A, an area with a 1-percent annual chance of flooding, with the remainder of Plant 129 in Zone X. Any work that occurs in the Zone A portion of Plant 129 would be limited to minor excavation and foundation work associated with the existing reservoir and would not involve placement of fill or structures that would reduce flood storage, redirect flood flows, or increase flood elevations.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps also show riverine wetlands adjacent to the fencing surrounding all three plants. The NWI also depicts a freshwater pond within the larger Plant 39 property. All proposed work, including staging, would occur within the existing fenced, previously developed portions of the plants on asphalt, gravel, or previously disturbed soils, outside the mapped wetlands and outside the freshwater pond. Therefore, no direct impacts to wetlands or the pond are anticipated.

Maps of the project area and staging area and their location within the floodplain and wetland are available for public review. Parties interested in reviewing a copy of the maps should contact the FEMA Region 9 Environmental Officer using contact information provided in this notice.

Two alternatives to the Proposed Action were considered: the No Action Alternative and Alternative 1, Replacement. Under the No Action Alternative, no construction activity would occur to address seismic risks. This Alternative is not recommended because if no action is taken, the existing reservoirs would remain vulnerable to future seismic events and possible critical damage, disrupting potable water service. Under Alternative 1, each reservoir would be replaced by a new reservoir designed to withstand seismic events. Alternative 1 is not recommended because it is not cost effective and would result in significant disruptions to water service. Additionally, relocating these facilities outside the existing plant sites is not practicable due to hydraulic, operational, siting, and land acquisition constraints associated with maintaining existing pressure zones and service areas.

FEMA has determined that the Proposed Action is the only practicable alternative available; therefore, the Proposed Action must occur within and near the floodplain and wetlands. During construction, a storm water pollution prevention control plan will be implemented, and methods of dust control will be included. The Proposed Action would not have a significant adverse impact on the floodplain or wetlands. The work would remain within previously disturbed, developed areas and would not encroach into mapped wetlands. East Valley Water District would be responsible for the management, construction, and maintenance of the Proposed Action.

Additional information about the Proposed Action may be requested by writing to the FEMA Region 9 Environmental Officer at FEMA, 1111 Broadway, Suite 1200, Oakland, California 94607, or fema-rix-ehp-documents@fema.dhs.gov. All requests should be received no later than 15 days after publication of this notice. No action will be taken before this date.