
State Water Resources Control Board

**Public Notice of Application for
Water Quality Certification for California Department of Transportation
State Route 55 Improvement Project Between Interstate 405 and Interstate 5
(Orange County Transportation Authority Measure 2 Project F South)**

State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Quality
Water Quality Certification Program
Date Posted: July 30, 2020

Affected County: Orange

The following information is provided in satisfaction of the public notice requirements of Section 3858, Title 23, of the California Code of Regulations, which govern the State's Water Quality Certification Program.

State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) staff are proposing to regulate this Project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. **Staff will consider all comments submitted in writing and received at this office during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter (July 30, 2020) and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period (August 20, 2020).** To submit comments, or if you have any questions, please contact the State Water Board staff person listed below.

State Water Resources Control Board Contact:

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Note: No regulatory decision on the application is implied or intended in this public notice.

Project Name: State Route 55 Improvement Project Between Interstate 405 and Interstate 5 (also known as Orange County Transportation Authority Measure 2 Project F South, or SR 55 Project) (Reg. Meas. ID: 437685 and SWRCB ID: SB20015IN)

Background: On April 15, 2020, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), District 12 submitted an application for Clean Water Act section 401 water quality certification for the SR 55 Project. Additional information was received on June 10 and June 19, 2020.

The SR 55 Project, also known as “Project F South” of the Orange County Transportation Authority’s (OCTA) Measure 2 (M2) Freeway Program, is within the jurisdiction of the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board. The overall M2 Freeway Program includes thirteen freeway improvement projects throughout Orange County which are located in the jurisdictions of the Santa Ana and San Diego Water Quality Control Boards. The SR 55 Project is to be managed by Caltrans in collaboration with OCTA who administers the overall M2 Freeway Program.

The M2 Freeway Program’s projects are regulated under a single Clean Water Act section 404 permit through Letters of Permission (LOP) Procedures administered by the Los Angeles District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). This project is a “covered freeway project/Project F” under the OCTA M2 Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) and the associated permitting framework and agreements. For these reasons, the M2 Freeway Program has been deemed multi-regional, even though some individual projects may fall within the boundaries of only one water quality control region. Therefore, the State Water Board has jurisdiction over the SR 55 Project.

On October 23, 2017, Caltrans, acting as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), filed a Notice of Determination (NOD) for the SR 55 Improvement Project Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) (State Clearinghouse No. 2015111075). A revalidation for the project was completed on April 8, 2020.

Project Description: Caltrans District 12, in cooperation with OCTA, proposes to widen State Route 55 (SR-55) in both directions from approximately just north of the Interstate 405 (I-405)/SR-55 Interchange to just south of the Interstate 5 (I-5)/SR-55 Interchange between Post Mile 6.3 and Post Mile 10.3, within the cities of Santa Ana, Tustin, and Irvine in Orange County, California. Total project area is approximately 295 acres.

The project purpose is to improve mobility and reduce congestion, improve traffic operations, and increase capacity. Due to the widening of SR-55 and associated modifications to onramps and off-ramps within the project limits, the Lane Channel (Orange County Flood Control District Facility No. F08) will be modified and realigned adjacent to southbound SR-55 between Dyer Road and MacArthur Boulevard in the city of Santa Ana, California. This segment of the Lane Channel is currently a concrete-lined open trapezoidal channel, 8 feet (ft) wide at the bottom and 9 ft deep. The Lane Channel crosses under SR-55 in a double 10 by 9 ft reinforced concrete box (RCB) just north of the MacArthur Boulevard interchange.

Lane Channel will be realigned slightly farther west, and changed from a trapezoidal channel to an 18 by 10 ft. rectangular concrete channel. The total length of channel modifications would be approximately 3,300 linear feet, and result in a net increase of approximately 0.61 acre of waters of the U.S.. The project application reports impacts to waters of the state, including waters of the U.S., as shown in Table 1 below. A total of 1.49 acres (4,425 linear feet) of temporary impacts to Lane Channel and adjacent storm channels are reported. No permanent impacts that would require compensatory mitigation are expected.

Table 1: Total Project Fill/Excavation Quantity

Aquatic Resource type	Riparian Zone	Stream Channel
Acres of temporary impact	0.000	1.49
Linear feet of temporary impact	0.000	4,425
Acres of permanent physical loss of area	0.000	0.000
Linear feet of permanent physical loss of area	0.000	0.000

A Certification or Denial will be prepared by the State Water Board for the SR 55 Project in response to this application.

Applicant: Caltrans District 12
Applicant Contact: Bo Gould, LSA Consulting
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Date Application Deemed Complete: July 22, 2020

KEEP INFORMED OF PROJECT MILESTONES

To be informed of milestones in the development of this proposed Water Quality Certification, any interested persons should enroll in the State Water Board's 401 Program e-mail notification service.

Click the SUBSCRIBE button under the "Quick Links" section of the [401 Program Webpage public notices section](#)

(http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/index.shtml)

Select "CWA401 Certification and Wetlands Program." By enrolling in this list, you will receive notices for all current 401 project applications, including the project announced in this notice. You will need a valid e-mail address to use this service. If you do not have internet access or do not wish to participate in the Lyris list, contact the staff person named in the notice to express your interest in receiving notices by other means.

You can enroll or un-enroll at any time. The State Water Board will not disclose your name or e-mail information to any outside parties, and will not use this information for any other purpose.