

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: October 16-17, 2025

From: TANISHA TAYLOR, Executive Director

Reference Number: 2.2c.(6), Action

Prepared By: Cherry Zamora
Associate Deputy Director

Published Date: October 3, 2025

Subject: Approval of Project for Future Consideration of Funding – California State Route 39 (San Gabriel Canyon Road) Reopening Project, Resolution E-25-62

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), approve the attached Resolution E-25-62 (Attachment A), which accepts the Final Environmental Impact Report for the California State Route 39 (San Gabriel Canyon Road) Reopening Project (Project) in Los Angeles County; approves the Project for future consideration of funding; and makes CEQA Findings (Attachment C).

Issue:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the CEQA Lead Agency for the Project. The Project is located on State Route 39 from post mile 40.0 to post mile 44.4 in Los Angeles County. The Project would restore and reopen a segment of State Route 39 as an evacuation route and for use by Caltrans, U.S. Forest Service, and emergency-response personnel. The project includes roadway rehabilitation, roadway delineation, clearing of debris and rocks, drainage system restoration, new retaining walls, repair of existing soldier pile walls, and repair of masonry retaining walls.

For all projects that are seeking funding through a program under the purview of the Commission, full compliance with CEQA is required. The Commission will not allocate funds to projects for design, right-of-way, or construction until the environmental document is complete, and the Commission has approved the environmentally cleared project for future consideration of funding.

Background:

On February 21, 2025, Caltrans certified the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Project. Caltrans found that the Project would not have a significant impact on the environment with the implementation of mitigation measures.

Resources that require mitigation to reduce impacts to less than significant levels include biological resources (specifically, sensitive species and state or federally protected wetlands). Mitigation measures include replanting of native species, installation of silt fencing and berms, speed control measures to reduce the potential for wildlife collisions, pre-construction wildlife surveys and relocation, biological monitoring and habitat enhancements during construction, fund contributions to the U.S. Forest Service (should Bighorn Sheep vehicle collisions occur) to improve habitat quality and Bighorn Sheep population monitoring, invasive species control measures, preparation of a mitigation and monitoring plan for planting, and purchase of similar habitat in the region for areas that would be permanently impacted.

The Commission, in its independent judgment as a CEQA responsible agency, has reviewed and considered the Final Environmental Impact Report prepared by Caltrans. The Commission's Findings, included in Attachment C, have been prepared pursuant to CEQA.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Resolution
- Attachment B: Notice of Determination
- Attachment C: California Transportation Commission - Findings
- Attachment D: Lead Agency Request for Approval of Project for Future Consideration of Funding Resolution E-25-62
 - Attachment 1: Map
 - Attachment 2: California Department of Transportation -- Findings

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Resolution for Future Consideration of Funding
07-LA-39, PM 40.0/44.4
Resolution E-25-62**

- 1.1 WHEREAS**, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has completed a Final Environmental Impact Report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines for the following project:
- California State Route 39 (San Gabriel Canyon Road) Reopening Project: State Route (SR) 39 in Los Angeles County. Restore and reopen a segment of SR 39 as an evacuation route and for use by Caltrans, U.S. Forest Service, and emergency-response personnel. (PPNO 5381)
- 1.2 WHEREAS**, Caltrans has certified that a Final Environmental Impact Report has been completed pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines for its implementation; and
- 1.3 WHEREAS**, the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a responsible agency, has considered the information contained in the Final Environmental Impact Report; and
- 1.4 WHEREAS**, the project will not have a significant effect on the environment with the implementation of mitigation measures; and
- 1.5 WHEREAS**, impacts that require mitigation measures in order to be reduced to less than significant levels relate to biological resources (specifically, sensitive species and state or federally protected wetlands), and certain measures were adopted to address these impacts; and
- 1.6 WHEREAS**, the Commission has made findings as required by California Code of Regulations, section 15096, subdivision (h); and
- 2.1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the California Transportation Commission does hereby approve above referenced project to allow for future consideration of funding.

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

To: Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: California Transportation Commission
Attn: Cherry Zamora
1120 N Street, MS 52
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 654-4245

Subject: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 of the Public Resources Code.

Project Title: California State Route 39 (San Gabriel Canyon Road) Reopening Project

2022120019	Karl Price	(213) 266-3822
State Clearinghouse Number	Lead Agency Contact Person	Area Code/Telephone

Project Location (include county): The project is located on State Route (SR) 39 from post mile (PM) 40.0 to 44.4 in Los Angeles County.

Project Description: Restore and reopen a segment of SR 39 as an evacuation route and for use by Caltrans, United States Forest Service (USFS), and emergency-response personnel.

This is to advise that the California Transportation Commission has approved the above described
(☐ Lead Agency/ ☒ Responsible Agency)
project on October 16-17, 2025, and has made the following determinations regarding the above described project:

1. The project (☐ will/ ☒ will not) have a significant effect on the environment.
2. ☒ An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
☐ A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation measures (☒ were/ ☐ were not) made a condition of the approval of the project.
4. Mitigation reporting or monitoring plan (☒ was / ☐ was not) adopted for this project.
5. A Statement of Overriding Considerations (☐ was / ☒ was not) adopted for this project.
6. Findings (☒ were/ ☐ were not) made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

The above identified document with comments and responses and record of project approval is available to the General Public at: Caltrans District 7, 100 South Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

TANISHA TAYLOR

Signature (Public Agency)

Date

Executive Director
California Transportation Commission

Title

Date received for filing at LCI:



Project Name: State Route 39 (SR-39/San Gabriel Canyon Road) Reopening Project
DIST-CO-RTE-PM: 07-LA-39-PM 40.0/44.4
EA: 07-34770
EFIS ID: 0718000117
SCH#: 2022120019

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION FINDINGS OF FACT

FOR

STATE ROUTE 39 (SR-39/SAN GABRIEL CANYON ROAD) REOPENING PROJECT

The following information is presented to comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, title 14, sections 15091 and 15096, and also title 21, section 1501 et seq. Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following effects have been identified in the Final Environmental Impact Report as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

Biological Environment – Sensitive Species

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Nelson's Bighorn Sheep is present in the project area and could be impacted either directly through human/vehicle-induced mortality or changes in movement patterns, or indirectly through loss of habitat. Any loss of an individual Bighorn Sheep before the goals described in its recovery plan are met should be considered a potentially significant impact. Any loss of habitat within the project area should be considered a loss of Bighorn Sheep habitat and would also be a potentially significant impact.

Although features have been incorporated into the project to minimize these impacts, they cannot be completely avoided. With implementation of the measures below, the impacts to Nelson's Bighorn Sheep would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Habitat for the state and federally endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher is located downslope from State Route 39 and could potentially be impacted if debris is



allowed to flow downhill. Appropriate Best Management Practices have been incorporated into the project design and additional avoidance and minimization measures identified below will be implemented to reduce potential impacts to a level that is less than significant.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final Environmental Impact Report.

Statement of Facts:

With implementation of the measures below, the impacts to Nelson's Bighorn Sheep and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher would be less than significant.

- Temporarily impacted areas would be replanted with native plant species that are typical of the plants within each natural community. Details of the planting plan would be provided in a separate document and would be coordinated with the Angeles National Forest. Replanting would occur on temporarily impacted areas within Caltrans' Right-of-Way.
- Silt fencing and berms would be installed to reduce the potential for run-off of sediment during the construction phase.
- Included as part of the proposed project design, the speed limit would be reduced to 30 miles per hour along the straight portions of the highway to further reduce the potential for wildlife collisions. Signage indicating wildlife crossings would also be installed to remind drivers of the potential hazard.
- Pre-construction surveys for sensitive animal species within the project area must be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to construction. Any individuals observed within the project limits will be relocated to nearby suitable habitat (within the Angeles National Forest), prior to construction.
- Biological monitoring shall occur during construction and habitat enhancements to ensure that wildlife, including sensitive animal species, are not adversely impacted to a significant degree.
- To mitigate impacts to Bighorn Sheep habitat and any short-term direct impacts resulting from vehicle collisions, if they occur, Caltrans would contribute funds to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) for the implementation of the strategic plan to



improve habitat quality and Bighorn Sheep population monitoring in the vicinity of the proposed project site.

- Temporarily impacted areas would be replanted with native plant species that are typical of the plants within the surrounding plant community. Approved plant palettes would be coordinated with USFS biologists.
- In compliance with the Executive Order (EO) on Invasive Species (EO 13112) and guidance from the Federal Highway Administration, the landscaping and erosion control included in the project would not use species listed as invasive. None of the species on the California list of invasive species is used by Caltrans for erosion control or landscaping.
- All equipment and materials would be inspected for the presence of invasive species and cleaned, if necessary. In particularly sensitive areas, extra precautions would be taken if invasive species are found in or next to the construction areas. These include the inspection and cleaning of construction equipment and eradication strategies to be implemented should an invasion occur.

Biological Environment – State or Federally Protected Wetlands

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Ten (10) drainages have been identified that cross the proposed project location and a jurisdictional determination has been conducted to identify the areas that are under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) jurisdiction. Impacts to jurisdictional resources are potentially significant. Prior to the start of construction, all required permits and agreements shall be obtained from the USACE, Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and CDFW. Areas that would be temporarily impacted would be replanted after the construction phase is completed. A mitigation and monitoring plan would be prepared that addresses planting procedures, location, success criteria and maintenance.

Mitigation for areas that would be permanently impacted would be achieved by purchasing similar habitat within the region of the project at a ratio of 5:1, or as required by the permits. This land would be transferred to an organization that is approved by CDFW and USFS for management in perpetuity.



A Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from CDFW, a Section 404 permit from USACE, and a Section 401 permit from the RWQCB would be required prior to project initiation.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final Environmental Impact Report.

Statement of Facts:

With implementation of the measures below, the impacts to state and federal wetlands would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

- Impacted vegetated areas would be replanted with native plant species that are typical of the plants within each natural community.
- A mitigation and monitoring plan would be prepared that addresses planting procedures, location, success criteria and maintenance.
- Mitigation for areas that would be permanently impacted would be achieved by purchasing similar habitat within the region of the project site at a rate of 5:1. This land would be transferred to an organization that is approved by CDFW and USFS for management in perpetuity.

Mandatory Findings of Significance

Adverse Environmental Effects:

As discussed above, the proposed project has the potential to adversely impact the Nelson's Bighorn Sheep through direct mortality or indirectly through loss of habitat. Habitat for the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher might also be impacted.

In addition, the preferred alternative (Alternative 2) would result in 2.9 acres of permanent impacts and 4.5 acres of temporary impacts to natural, terrestrial plant communities. Also, 10 drainages cross the proposed project location, resulting in an additional 0.340 acres of aquatic habitat that would be permanently impacted and another 0.340 acres that would be temporarily impacted. The size of the impact would be small, especially considering the large amount of habitat available adjacent to the project area.



Together, these effects could potentially adversely affect the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher or cause the population on Nelson's Bighorn Sheep to drop below self-sustaining levels.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final Environmental Impact Report.

Statement of Facts:

The project includes measures to address potential impacts to terrestrial and aquatic habitat as well as direct and indirect impacts to Nelson's Bighorn Sheep. Temporarily impacted habitat would be restored onsite while permanent impacts to aquatic habitat would be offset as required by resource agency permits. Measures to minimize direct impacts to Bighorn Sheep would be implemented and Caltrans would help fund mitigation to offset impacts to Bighorn Sheep habitat and any short-term direct impacts resulting from vehicle collisions, if they occur.

Overall, significant impacts are avoidable with the inclusion of project features designed to minimize impacts and appropriate mitigation measures that would compensate for impacts that could not be avoided.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

Documents or other material which constitute the record of the proceedings upon which the California Transportation Commission's decision is based are available at:
<https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-7/district-7-programs/d7-environmental-docs>.

Tanisha Taylor

Executive Director

Signature

Date

MEMORANDUM

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: October 16-17, 2025

From: STEVEN KECK, Chief Financial Officer

Reference Number: 2.2c.(6), Action Item

Prepared By: Jeremy Ketchum, Chief
Division of Environmental Analysis

Subject: **APPROVAL OF PROJECT FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING
RESOLUTION E-25-62**

ISSUE:

Should the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-25-62?

RECOMMENDATION:

The California Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the Commission, as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-25-62.

BACKGROUND:

07-LA-39, PM 40.0/44.4 Resolution E-25-62

The attached resolution proposes to approve for future consideration of funding the following project for which a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) has been completed:

- California State Route 39 (San Gabriel Canyon Road) Reopening Project: State Route (SR) 39 in Los Angeles County. Restore and reopen a segment of SR 39 as an evacuation route and for use by the Department, United States Forest Service (USFS), and emergency-response personnel. (PPNO 5381)

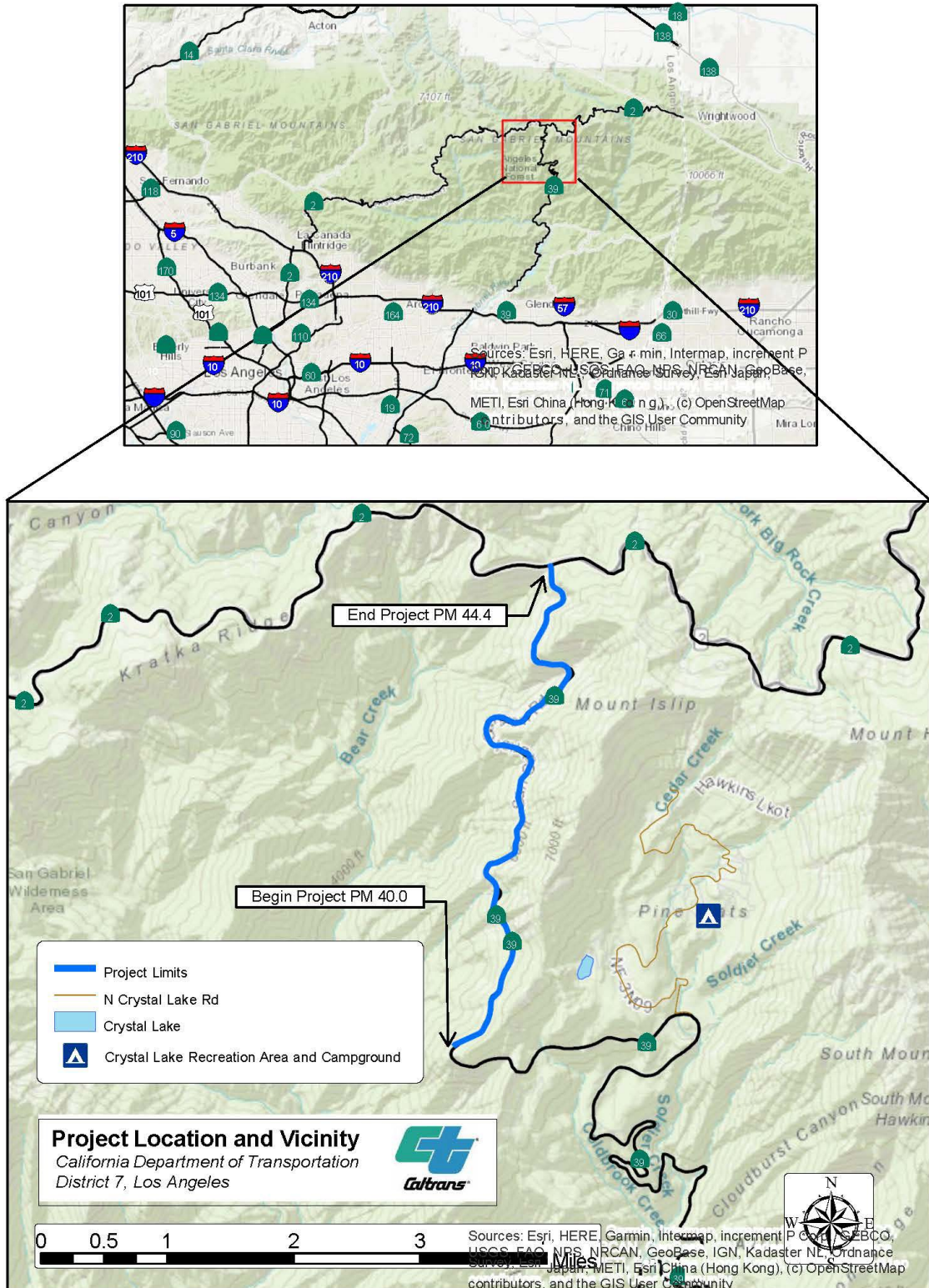
The project is located on SR 39 from Post Mile (PM) 40.0 to 44.4, in Los Angeles County. The Department proposes to restore and reopen a segment of SR 39 as an evacuation route and for use by the Department, USFS, and emergency-response personnel. The project includes roadway rehabilitation, roadway delineation, clearing of debris and rocks, drainage system restoration, new retaining walls, repair of existing soldier pile walls, and repair of masonry retaining walls. The project is currently programmed in the 2024 State Highway Operation and

Protection Program (SHOPP). The total programmed amount which includes Right of Way (Capital), and Construction (Support and Capital) is \$81,496,000. Construction will begin in Fiscal Year 2028-29. The scope, as described for the preferred alternative, is consistent with the project scope as programmed by the Commission in the 2024 SHOPP.

A copy of the FEIR has been provided to Commission staff. Resources in the project area that may be significantly impacted by the project, but would have mitigation measures implemented to reduce impacts to less-than-significant, include biological resources (specifically, sensitive species and state or federally protected wetlands). Mitigation measures will reduce potential effects on the environment to below significant. These measures include, but are not limited to, replanting of native species, installation of silt fencing, speed control measures to reduce the potential for wildlife collisions, pre-construction wildlife surveys and relocation, biological monitoring and habitat enhancements during construction, fund contributions to the USFS (should bighorn sheep vehicle collisions occur), invasive species control measures, preparation of a mitigation and monitoring plan, and purchasing of similar habitat in the region for areas that would be permanently impacted. As a result, an FEIR was prepared for the project.

Attachments

Attachment 1





Project Name: State Route 39 (SR-39/San Gabriel Canyon Road) Reopening Project
DIST-CO-RTE-PM: 07-LA-39-PM 40.0/44.4
EA: EA: 07-34770
EFIS ID: 0718000117
SCH#: 2022120019

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FINDINGS
FOR
STATE ROUTE 39 (SR-39/SAN GABRIEL CANYON ROAD) REOPENING
PROJECT**

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15091) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21, California Code of Regulations, Division 2, Chapter 11, Section 1501 et seq.). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following effects have been identified in the EIR as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

Biological Environment – Sensitive Species

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Nelson's bighorn sheep is present in the project area and could be impacted either directly through human/vehicle-induced mortality or changes in movement patterns, or indirectly through loss of habitat. Any loss of an individual bighorn sheep before the goals described in its recovery plan are met should be considered a potentially significant impact. Any loss of habitat within the project area should be considered a loss of bighorn sheep habitat and would also be a potentially significant impact. Although features have been incorporated into the project to minimize these impacts, they cannot be completely avoided. With implementation of the measures below, the impacts to Nelson's bighorn sheep would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Habitat for the state and federally endangered southwestern willow flycatcher is located downslope from SR-39 and could potentially be impacted if debris is allowed to flow downhill. Appropriate BMPs have been incorporated into the project design and

additional avoidance and minimization measures identified below will be implemented to reduce potential impacts to a level that is less than significant.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

With implementation of the measures below, the impacts to Nelson's bighorn sheep and southwestern willow flycatcher would be less than significant.

- Temporarily impacted areas would be replanted with native plant species that are typical of the plants within each natural community. Details of the planting plan would be provided in a separate document and would be coordinated with the ANF. Replanting would occur on temporarily impacted areas within Caltrans' Right-of-Way.
- Silt fencing and berms would be installed to reduce the potential for run-off of sediment during the construction phase.
- Included as part of the proposed project design, the speed limit would be reduced to 30 miles per hour along the straight portions of the highway to further reduce the potential for wildlife collisions. Signage indicating wildlife crossings would also be installed to remind drivers of the potential hazard.
- Pre-construction surveys for sensitive animal species within the project area must be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to construction. Any individuals observed within the project limits will be relocated to nearby suitable habitat (within the Angeles National Forest), prior to construction.
- Biological monitoring shall occur during construction and habitat enhancements to ensure that wildlife, including sensitive animal species, are not adversely impacted to a significant degree.
- To mitigate impacts to bighorn sheep habitat and any short-term direct impacts resulting from vehicle collisions, if they occur, Caltrans would contribute funds to USFS for the implementation of the strategic plan to improve habitat quality and bighorn sheep population monitoring in the vicinity of the proposed project site.

- Temporarily impacted areas would be replanted with native plant species that are typical of the plants within the surrounding plant community. Approved plant palettes would be coordinated with USFS biologists.
- In compliance with the EO on Invasive Species (EO 13112) and guidance from the FHWA, the landscaping and erosion control included in the project would not use species listed as invasive. None of the species on the California list of invasive species is used by Caltrans for erosion control or landscaping.
- All equipment and materials would be inspected for the presence of invasive species and cleaned, if necessary. In particularly sensitive areas, extra precautions would be taken if invasive species are found in or next to the construction areas. These include the inspection and cleaning of construction equipment and eradication strategies to be implemented should an invasion occur.

Biological Environment – State or Federally Protected Wetlands

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Ten (10) drainages have been identified that cross the proposed project location and a jurisdictional determination has been conducted to identify the areas that are under USACE and CDFW jurisdiction. Impacts to jurisdictional resources are potentially significant. Prior to the start of construction, all required permits and agreements shall be obtained from the USACE, Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and CDFW. Areas that would be temporarily impacted would be replanted after the construction phase is completed. A mitigation and monitoring plan would be prepared that addresses planting procedures, location, success criteria and maintenance. Mitigation for areas that would be permanently impacted would be achieved by purchasing similar habitat within the region of the project at a ratio of 5:1, or as required by the permits. This land would be transferred to an organization that is approved by CDFW and USFS for management in perpetuity.

A Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from CDFW, a Section 404 permit from USACE, and a Section 401 permit from the RWQCB would be required prior to project initiation.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

With implementation of the measures below, the impacts to state and federal wetlands would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

- Impacted vegetated areas would be replanted with native plant species that are typical of the plants within each natural community.
- A mitigation and monitoring plan would be prepared that addresses planting procedures, location, success criteria and maintenance.
- Mitigation for areas that would be permanently impacted would be achieved by purchasing similar habitat within the region of the project site at a rate of 5:1. This land would be transferred to an organization that is approved by CDFW and USFS for management in perpetuity.

Mandatory Findings of Significance

Adverse Environmental Effects:

As discussed above, the proposed project has the potential to adversely impact the Nelson's bighorn sheep through direct mortality or indirectly through loss of habitat. Habitat for the southwestern willow flycatcher might also be impacted.

In addition, the preferred alternative (Alt. 2) would result in 2.9 acres of permanent impacts and 4.5 acres of temporary impacts to natural, terrestrial plant communities. Also, 10 drainages cross the proposed project location, resulting in an additional 0.340 acres of aquatic habitat that would be permanently impacted and another 0.340 acres that would be temporarily impacted. The size of the impact would be small, especially considering the large amount of habitat available adjacent to the project area.

Together, these effects could potentially adversely affect the southwestern willow flycatcher or cause the population on Nelson's bighorn sheep to drop below self-sustaining levels.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project includes measures to address potential impacts to terrestrial and aquatic habitat as well as direct and indirect impacts to Nelson's bighorn sheep. Temporarily impacted habitat would be restored onsite while permanent impacts to aquatic habitat would be offset as required by resource agency permits. Measures to minimize direct impacts to bighorn sheep would be implemented and Caltrans would help fund mitigation to offset impacts to bighorn sheep habitat and any short-term direct impacts resulting from vehicle collisions, if they occur.

Overall, significant impacts are avoidable with the inclusion of project features designed to minimize impacts and appropriate mitigation measures that would compensate for impacts that could not be avoided.

Gloria Roberts

District Director (or designee)



Signature

02/20/2025

Date