

2. Summary of Public Review Process

2.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MILESTONES

The CEQA environmental review process for the proposed El Casco System Project started on July 16, 2007, with the CPUC's issuance of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR. The public involvement milestones associated with the environmental review process for the proposed El Casco System Project are described below.

2.1.1 Scoping Process

As required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the CPUC issued a NOP on July 16, 2007 that summarized the Proposed Project, stated its intention to prepare an EIR, and requested comments from interested parties. The NOP also included notice of the CPUC's Pre-Hearing Conference for the Proposed Project, and public scoping meetings that were held on August 1, 2007 in the cities of Banning and Beaumont, California.

The NOP was filed with the State Clearinghouse on July 16, 2007 (SCH# 2007071076), which initiated the 30-day public scoping period. The review period for the NOP ended on August 14, 2007. Public notification of the NOP included direct agency and public notification, newspaper announcements in five newspapers, and posting on the project website. The NOP is available for review on the project website.

Public notices of the start of the scoping period and the scoping meetings were sent to over 800 federal, State, regional, and local agencies; elected officials; and stakeholders including property owners within 300 feet of the Proposed Project alignment.

Public Meetings During Scoping

The CPUC held one Pre-Hearing Conference (PHC) to identify issues related to the CPUC's General Proceeding and to help determine the need to conduct hearings on the Proposed Project. The PHC was held on August 1, 2007, at 1:00 pm at the City of Banning City Council Chambers.

Two public scoping meetings were held on August 1, 2007 at the City of Banning City Council Chambers and the Beaumont Civic Center, respectively. The public scoping meetings provided an opportunity for the public and government agencies to obtain more information on the proposed El Casco System Project, to learn more about the CEQA environmental review process, to ask questions regarding the Proposed Project, and to provide formal scoping comments.

Eighteen members of the public, including representatives of organizations and government agencies were documented in attendance at the PHC and the two public scoping meetings.

Scoping Comments

Fourteen comment letters were received during the scoping period, and six individuals presented oral comments during the scoping meetings. In addition to private individuals, six government agencies and one private organization submitted written and/or oral comments.

Scoping Report

In September 2007, a comprehensive Scoping Report was issued and 15 copies were distributed, summarizing issues and concerns received from the public and various agencies and presenting copies of all written comments received. The Scoping Report was made available for review at the five repositories and on the project website listed below.

2.1.2 Draft EIR Public Review Process

Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR

The Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EIR was distributed on December 12, 2007, commencing the 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR. The NOA was mailed to approximately 1,400 interested parties, agencies, county and city departments, special districts, property owners, and occupants adjacent to the Proposed Project alignment in December, 2007 at the time the Draft EIR was released. The NOA included information on the Draft EIR and how to gain access to the document; information on the Proposed Project; the dates, times, and locations of the Informational Workshops and Public Participation Meetings; and how to provide comment on the Draft EIR.

Draft EIR

The CPUC published the Draft EIR for the El Casco System Project on December 12, 2007. The Draft EIR included a detailed project description, analysis of impacts in eleven environmental disciplines, cumulative and growth inducing impacts analysis, analysis and comparison of alternatives including the No Project Alternative, and mitigation to reduce or eliminate environmental impacts of the Proposed Project. Copies of the full Draft EIR and Appendices were distributed to approximately 70 interested parties and agencies, the State Clearinghouse, and the five libraries, which have been used as project's document repository sites. Fifty-two copies of the electronic version of the Draft EIR were distributed on CD-ROM to interested parties and agencies. Additional copies of the electronic version of the Draft EIR on CD plus a bound, stand-alone version of the Executive Summary were distributed at the Informational Workshops and Public Participation Meetings conducted on January 9, 2008. The public comment period for the Draft EIR ended on January 25, 2008.

Newspaper Notification

Newspaper notices were published to indicate the release of the Draft EIR for public review. The newspaper notices included information on the Draft EIR; the project website address; and the dates, times, and locations of the Informational Workshops and Public Participation Meetings. The newspaper notices were printed in the *San Bernardino County Sun*, *the Press-Enterprise*, *the Redlands Daily Facts*, *the Calimesa New-Mirror*, and the *Record-Gazette* at the beginning of the public review period and prior to the Informational Workshops and Public Participation Meetings.

Draft EIR Informational Workshops and Public Participation Meetings

Two Informational Workshops were held on January 9, 2008 at the City of Banning Council Chambers. The Informational Workshops were intended as an opportunity for the public to learn more about the content and analysis provided in the Draft EIR. The Informational Workshops were conducted in an "open house" format that allowed members of the public and government agencies to view displays, review handouts, and ask questions about the Draft EIR and the environmental review process from the Draft EIR authors. The Informational Workshops did not include any presentations. No verbal

comments were accepted or recorded at the Informational Workshops; only written comments were accepted.

In addition to the Informational Workshops, two Public Participation Meetings were held on January 9, 2008 at the City of Banning Council Chambers. During the Public Participation Meetings, a short presentation was provided regarding the Proposed Project, the CEQA review process, and the conclusions of the Draft EIR. After the presentation, members of the public, organizations, and agencies had an opportunity to present verbal comments on the Draft EIR. All verbal comments presented at the Public Participation Meetings were transcribed by a court reporter and are included in this Final EIR as Comment Set D (Meeting Transcripts). Written comments were also accepted at these meetings.

A total of 33 members of the public were documented in attendance at the two Informational Workshops and two Public Participation Meetings. Seven members of the public provided verbal comments during the two Public Participation Meetings. A transcript of each comment is provided in Section 3 of this Final EIR.

A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR, the comments received on the Draft EIR, and responses to the comments are provided in Section 3 of this Final EIR.

Final EIR

Per the requirements of California Public Resources Code Section 21092.5 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15089, the CPUC has provided a response to each public agency that commented on the Draft EIR for at least 10 days prior to CPUC's certification of the EIR. In addition, in compliance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15094(a), the CPUC will file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse within five working days of the CPUC's decision to approve the project.

2.2 EIR INFORMATION AND REPOSITORY SITES

Five repository sites were established to allow the public to review project-related documents including the NOP, the Scoping Report, the Draft EIR, and the Final EIR. The document repository sites included:

Yucaipa Branch Library
12040 5th Street
Yucaipa, CA 92399

Calimesa Branch Library
974 Calimesa Boulevard
Calimesa, CA 92320

Beaumont Library District
125 East 8th Street
Beaumont, CA 92223

Banning Public Library
21 W. Nicolet Street
Banning, CA 92220

University of Redlands
1200 East Colton Avenue
Redlands, CA 92373

In addition, copies of all project-related documents, including the Draft and Final EIR are available for review on the project website at:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/aspen/elcasco/elcasco.htm>

2.3 PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

In compliance with CEQA Section 15105, the CPUC provided a public review period of 45 days for the Draft EIR. The CPUC allowed written comments on the Draft EIR to be submitted by U.S. mail, email, fax, or at the Public Participation Meetings and Informational Workshops. Contact information was as follows:

Mail: Juralynne B. Mosley	E-mail: elcasco@aspeneg.com
California Public Utilities Commission	Fax: (877) 576-8342
c/o Aspen Environmental Group	
30423 Canwood Street, Suite 215	
Agoura Hills, CA 91301	

The comments received by the CPUC during the public review period and at the Public Participation Meetings and Informational Workshops are reproduced in Section 3 of this Final EIR along with responses to comments.