Department of Toxic Substances Control

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NOTICE OF PREPARATION FOR A SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Date: May 5, 2015

To: State Clearinghouse
Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

and

Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, Federal Agencies, Native American Tribes, and Interested Organizations and Individuals

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report, SCH No. 2008051003 (Pub. Resources Code, § 21166; Cal. Code Regs., Tit. 14, § 15162 [CEQA Guidelines])

Lead Agency: California Department of Toxic Substances Control

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PROJECT TITLE

Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the Topock Compressor Station Final Groundwater Remediation Project

PROJECT LOCATION

The Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) Topock Compressor Station (Station) is situated in the Mojave Desert approximately 12 miles southeast of the city of Needles, California, and 1 mile southeast of Moabi Regional Park in California. The Station is one-half mile west of the community of Topock, Arizona,

which is situated directly across the Colorado River from the Station, and 4 miles south of Golden Shores, Arizona. The Station is one-half mile west of the Colorado River and south of Interstate 40 and occupies a portion of the 66.8 acres of land owned by PG&E (see inset of Figure 1). The area in which the Topock Compressor Station Final Groundwater Remediation Project (proposed project) activities could occur covers additional surrounding land owned and managed by a number of private entities and government agencies, including the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, lands managed by the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, rights of way for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and California Department of Transportation, and a portion of land owned by the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe. Project activities would occur almost entirely within the project site that was established in the 2011 *Final Environmental Impact Report for the Topock Compressor Station Groundwater Remediation Project* (Groundwater Remediation Project; Groundwater final environmental impact report [FEIR]), and the 2013 Addendum to the 2011 Groundwater FEIR, with the exception being an area near Park Moabi and the use of existing evaporation ponds permitted by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (see Figure 1).

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15162 provides that when an EIR has been certified for a project, a subsequent EIR (SEIR) shall not be prepared unless the lead agency determines that one or more of the following has occurred: (1) substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified effects; (2) substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or (3) new information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete shows the project would result in one or more significant effects not discussed in the prior EIR, or that significant effects previously identified may be substantially more severe.

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is the lead agency for the proposed Project. DTSC has determined that modifications to the Groundwater Remediation Project made during the remedy design process could trigger one or more of the three provisions above for requiring preparation of an SEIR. DTSC is required to follow the notice provisions for a Notice of Preparation (NOP) as provided in CEQA Guidelines Section 15087. This NOP serves that purpose.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Groundwater beneath and near the Station has been contaminated by chemicals associated with historical wastewater discharge from Station operations related to compression of natural gas in areas known as Bat Cave Wash and East Ravine. The main contaminant of concern in groundwater is hexavalent chromium [Cr(VI)], which was used in the past as an additive to the cooling water used at the Station and is harmful to human health and ecological receptors in the environment. Other chemicals present in the groundwater include total chromium [Cr(T)], molybdenum, selenium, and nitrates.

The Groundwater Remediation Project, as analyzed and approved in the 2011 Groundwater FEIR and the 2013 Addendum to the EIR, involves manipulation of subsurface water flow to move a contaminated groundwater plume with Cr(VI) and other chemicals of potential concern (COPCs), originating from past operations at the Station, through a treatment zone. This treatment zone, or "in situ reactive zone (IRZ)," will be created by introducing a carbon substrate such as, but not limited to, ethanol, molasses, lactate, or whey to induce microbial growth, which in turn creates an environment where the Cr(VI) is reduced to less toxic trivalent chromium [Cr(III)] and precipitated.

The Groundwater FEIR was certified by DTSC on January 31, 2011 (SCH No. 2008051003); it considered the potentially significant adverse environmental impacts of adopting the preferred remedy, determined to be Alternative E—In Situ Treatment with Freshwater Flushing—through the *Final Groundwater Corrective Measures Study/Feasibility Study Report for SWMU 1/AOC 1 and AOC 10* process, completed in December 2009. The Groundwater FEIR focused its analysis on the potentially significant adverse environmental impacts of the type of selected remedy as opposed to the other alternative remedy methods considered, and explained that additional analysis may be required upon completion of the design phase for the precise facilities and their locations necessary for implementation. Although some project-specific information was discussed, the EIR mostly provided a general description of the infrastructure that would be used for the project, including IRZ wells, storage facilities, and extraction and injection wells. Relatedly, the Groundwater FEIR identified and considered the potential effects from a maximum number of wells, pipeline, footprint for tanks, control buildings, and related infrastructure anticipated at the time to be needed to construct and implement the final remedy. The exact location and specifics of these facilities was conceptual at that time.

In August 2013, DTSC adopted Addendum No. 1 to the Groundwater FEIR that evaluated Alternative Freshwater Source Evaluation Activities (DTSC 2013), which allowed for water sampling and drilling at two exploratory borehole sites (Site B and the HNWR-1 well) located outside the Groundwater EIR project boundary on the Arizona side of the Colorado River. The purpose was to identify water source of sufficient quantity and quality for the freshwater flushing component of the groundwater remedy.

In September 2014, PG&E released the *Basis of Design Report/Pre-Final (90%) Design Submittal for the Final Groundwater Remedy* (90% Design) at the Station. The 90% Design Report includes modifications to the Groundwater Remediation Project previously analyzed in the Groundwater FEIR. This SEIR will identify and consider the substantial changes to the Groundwater Remediation Project or new information, as those terms are defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15162, that would likely result in one or more new significant and unavoidable adverse impacts, not previously identified, or that would result in a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified significant effects over and above those impacts already previously considered.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project evaluated in the SEIR will focus primarily on the modifications or changes to the Groundwater Remediation Project since the 2011 Groundwater FEIR and the 2013 Addendum to the EIR that were identified through completion of the *Basis of Design Report/Pre-Final (90%) Design Submittal for the Final Groundwater Remedy* (90% Design) (PG&E September 2014) and the *Supplemental Pre-Final (90%) Design Submittal for the Final Groundwater Remedy* (Supplemental 90% Design) (PG&E

February 2015). The SEIR will be prepared for purpose of DTSC's consideration of adoption of the Final Remedy Design. Project components not refined or modified in the 90% Design and Supplemental 90% Design are not analyzed again in this SEIR; the original analysis and mitigation measures for those components included in the Groundwater FEIR are still accurate and relevant, although they may be revised as part of the SEIR process. Some of the primary changes to the Groundwater Remediation Project that will be considered in the SEIR are as follows:

- Use of freshwater from Arizona that contains elevated levels of naturally occurring arsenic
- Expansion of project area to include various project elements such as a construction headquarters and soil processing and storage area near Moabi Regional Park
- An overall anticipated increase in the amount of ground disturbance that would be required for construction and installation of infrastructure needed for implementation of the final groundwater remedial system
- An increase in the amount of electricity that would be required to operate the groundwater remedial system
- A septic system and remedy-generated water polish system that were not originally anticipated in the 2011 Groundwater FEIR
- Specific design regarding a crossing of Bat Cave Wash

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS TO BE EXAMINED IN THE SEIR

The purpose of an SEIR is to identify and consider any new or substantially more severe significant adverse impacts on the environment from the revisions to a previously approved project and to identify measures that can reduce, avoid, or mitigate significant adverse impacts. Based upon prior consultation with interested parties, comments received on the Groundwater FEIR, and the environmental assessments conducted in and around the site to date, DTSC has determined that the modifications to the proposed project as analyzed in the 2011 Groundwater FEIR and the 2013 Addendum may have new or substantially more severe significant impacts on the following resource areas:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Utilities, Service Systems, and Energy

PROVIDING COMMENTS ON THE NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Responsible agencies, trustee agencies, federal agencies, Native American Tribes, and interested organizations and individuals are encouraged to submit comments regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be contained in the draft SEIR for DTSC's consideration. DTSC requests comments on the NOP from agencies and interested parties within 30 days of issuing the NOP, as indicated in CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b).

Comments on this NOP should be submitted as soon as possible and must be submitted to DTSC, postmarked or emailed, no later than June 4, 2015. Please send written comments to Mr. Aaron Yue,

DTSC Project Manager, at the address listed on page 1 of this NOP. When submitting comments, please identify a contact person to whom the answer to the questions will be presented.

Documents related to the proposed project are available for review at the project repositories listed below and on the internet at http://www.dtsc-topock.com/.

Needles Branch Library 1111 Bailey Avenue Needles, CA 92363 Chemehuevi Indian Reservation Environmental Protection Office 2000 Chemehuevi Trail Havasu Lake, CA 92363 Golden Shores/Topock Station Library 13136 Golden Shores Parkway Topock, AZ 86436 Lake Havasu City Library 1770 McCulloch Blvd. Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403	Colorado River Indian Tribes Library Second Avenue and Mohave Road Parker, AZ 85344 Parker Public Library 1001 Navajo Avenue Parker, AZ 85344 California Department of Toxic Substances Control 5796 Corporate Avenue Cypress, CA 90630 Monday–Friday: 9 a.m.–noon or 1 p.m.–4 p.m. Please call for an appointment at (714) 484-5337.

DTSC will host two scoping meetings to give the responsible agencies, trustee agencies, federal agencies, Native American Tribes, and interested organizations and individuals an opportunity to appear and comment on the scope and content of the draft SEIR. These scoping meetings will consist of introductions, a project overview, a CEQA process overview, and an opportunity for meeting participants to comment on the scope and content of the SEIR. A reasonable amount of time will be allotted to allow all participants who wish to provide oral comments the opportunity to do so. Written comments will also be accepted at the meetings. Scoping meetings have been scheduled at the following locations and times.

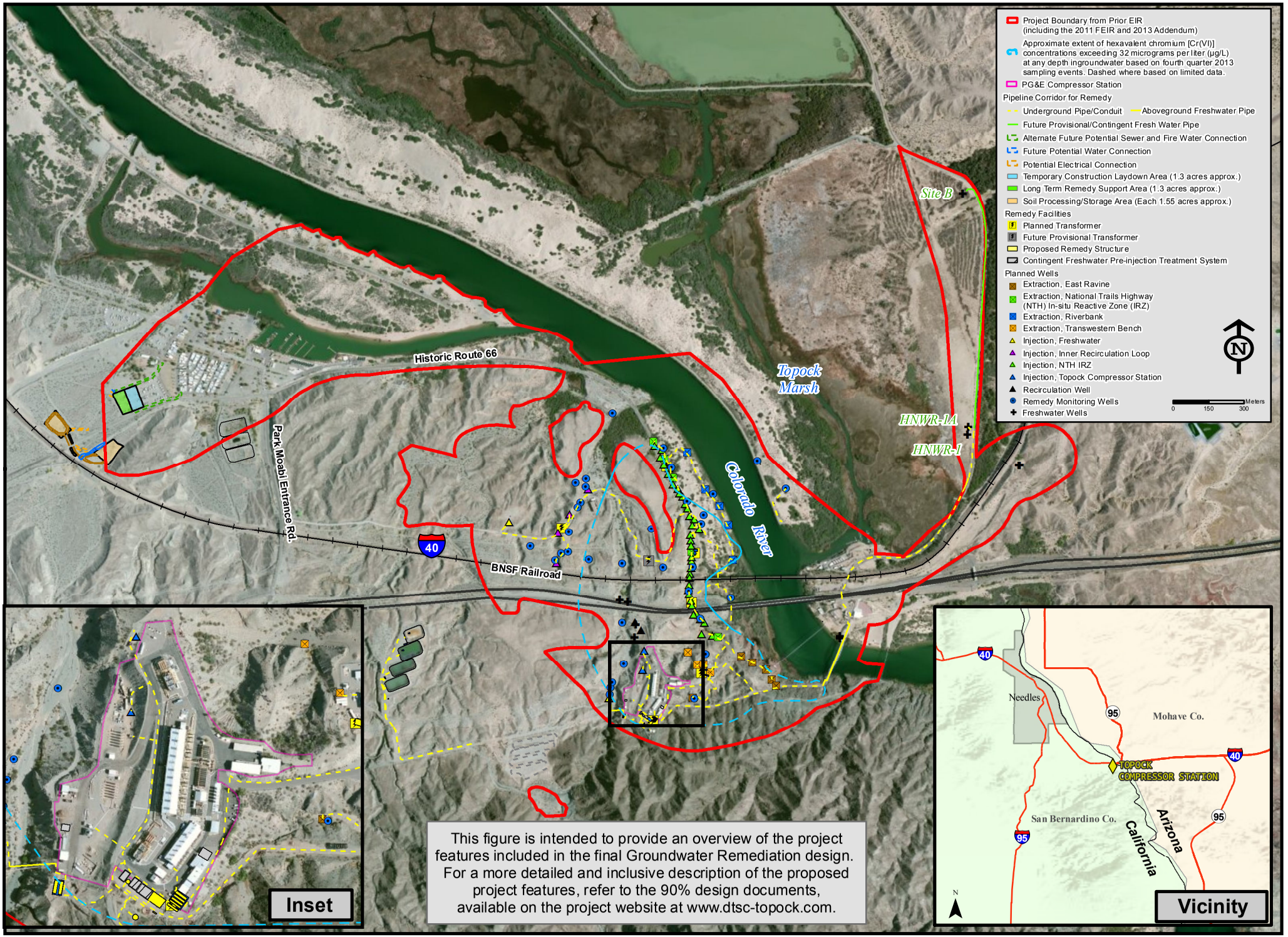
Public Scoping Meetings			
City	**Address**	**Date**	**Time**
Needles, CA	Needles Senior Center 1699 Bailey Avenue Needles, CA 92363	Tuesday, May 19, 2015	5:00–7:00 p.m.
Golden Shores, AZ	Golden Shores Community Center 13136 Golden Shores Parkway Golden Shores, AZ 86436	Wednesday, May 20, 2015	5:00–7:00 p.m.

CONTACT

If you have any questions or wish to discuss the project, please contact Aaron Yue, DTSC Project Manager, at (714) 484-5439 or email: aaron.yue@dtsc.ca.gov, or Stacey Lear, DTSC Public Participation Specialist, at (714) 484-5354 or email: stacey.lear@dtsc.ca.gov, or toll free at (800) 855-7100. For media inquiries, please contact Sandy Nax, DTSC Public Information Officer, at (916) 327-6114 or email: sandy.nax@dtsc.ca.gov.

INFORMATION FOR THE DISABLED AND HEARING IMPAIRED

The meeting rooms for the scoping meetings are accessible to people with disabilities. If translation services are needed or if additional accommodations for the disabled are needed, please notify Stacey Lear, DTSC Public Participation Specialist, at (714) 484-5354 or email: stacey.lear@dtsc.ca.gov no later than 10 working days before the meeting. TYY users may use the California Relay Service at 711 in state or 1-800-855-7100 outside California.



Source: Esri, Google Earth, PG&E 2014

Notice of Preparation
Figure 1